Te Ao Māori principles of Oranga and application to social work practice

Background Paper

Introduction

The purpose of the context paper is to map out a narrative of how Oranga principles from Te Ao Māori apply to statutory social work and anchor the ngākau whakairo domain of the Oranga Tamariki Practice Framework. This has been addressed in three parts:

> Part 1: explores why the application of principles from Te Ao Māori are central to Oranga Tamariki social work practice.
> Part 2: critiques the principles derived from Te Ao Māori that are currently applicable in the statutory Child Welfare environment including section 7AA, the Māori Cultural Framework and Te Toka Tūmoana.
> Part 3: Analyses how these principles from Te Ao Māori can guide application of social work values, ethics, and the more general principles in the Oranga Tamariki Act.

A general working definition of principled practice in the professional sense, is the selection, belief and understanding of fundamental truth(s) which guide people's professional practice (Kroll et al., 2005). Principled practice occurs across a wide variety of disciplines and institutions and can center around a range of cultures and worldviews. More simply put, principled practice is values-based. In terms of Te Ao Māori principles, it opens directly to Māori cultural values and beliefs and practices that guide effectively working with tamariki/mokopuna Māori and their whānau, hapū, iwi and hapori. Further, because Te Ao Māori principles are understood as relational, restorative and inclusive by nature they also resonate for working effectively with all tamariki i.e., tangata whenua and tauiwi tamariki. As a significant strand of ngākau whakairo (embedded throughout) Te Ao Māori wellbeing principles are a fundamental and influential part of all aspects of the Oranga Tamariki practice framework[i].

Part 1: Te Ao Māori Principles of Oranga are central to Oranga Tamariki social work practice

Māori centred[ii] approaches to social work practice have a philosophical foundation grounded in the rights and obligations Māori possess under Te Tiriti O Waitangi. This positional starting point preferrences the significance of Māori worldviews and thus its practices. Māori centred approaches occur in a dynamic relational space between tangata whenua [Māori] and tauiwi [non-Māori], though control largely resides in the mainstream welfare system. Māori centred approaches are not kaupapa Māori approaches[iii]. Kaupapa Māori approaches are validated driven, determined and owned by Māori.

Oliver (1988) contends that Te Tiriti O Waitangi is the first formal social policy document of New Zealand's post-contact history. Four overarching principles have emerged from numerous critiques of this document: the principles of participation, partnership, protection and religious freedom. It became a guiding light for future developments in Aotearoa/New Zealand. However, against this post-treaty background, relationships between Māori and Tauiwi unravelled as breaches occurred. The significance of this historical journey for Māori through assimilation and oppression towards survival, restoration, self-determination and emancipation is an important recognition point for kaimahi (Chile, 2006). Ruwhiu (2001; 2009; 2013), therefore contends that indigenous Māori theoretical frameworks informing best practice with mokopuna and whānau Māori have helped practitioners navigate in a principled fashion, through a quagmire of cultural politics at the border[iv] of engagement to a place of

influence in responding to real heartfelt concerns and needs that require healing of tapu breaches (Eruera, 2014). Te Ao Māori principles[v] to achieve oranga[vi] have been utilised continuously by Māori to work in partnership with Te Tiriti O Waitangi partners at all levels of government; to maintain their sense of cultural integrity, to galvanize strategies to improve health, education, welfare locally, regionally for their whānau, hapū, iwi and hāpori. Subsequently, Te Ao Māori wellbeing principles are central to Oranga Tamariki social work practice.

Part 2: Te Ao Māori principles of Oranga, social work values, ethics & The Oranga Tamariki Act (1989)

There is overwhelming evidence which shows that principled approaches, through Māori health frameworks and models, strengthens practice and advances understandings of the dynamics of Māori wellbeing and diversity within whānau, hapū and iwi (Ruwhiu, 1999; Durie, 2001; Ruwhiu et al., 2009; Pohatu, 2008; Eruera, 2015; Dobbs, 2015). Within social work, the emergence of Te Ao Māori principles of Oranga within frameworks and models was tied to the fight for social, cultural, economic equality, liberation and self-determination by Māori activists, social workers and communities. The 1970s and 1980s saw a new generation of young, educated and urban Māori highlight the economic and health disadvantages faced by Māori due to racial inequality, breaches under Te Tiriti O Waitangi and the impact of colonisation[vii].

Pūao-Te-Ata-Tū (1988), the report of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Māori perspective for the Department of Social Welfare, identified the institutional racism faced by staff and whānau Māori involved with Public Services and detailed the historical, legislative, and cultural factors negatively impacting Māori. Although *Pūao-Te-Ata-Tū* was not fully upheld within social policy in the long-term, it was enough to raise awareness and contributed to the paradigm shift away from the dominant, Eurocentric view (Oranga Tamariki, 2020, p. 16). As King (2017) stated: "Pūao-Te-Ata-Tū had a profound impact on my understanding of racism, colonisation, biculturalism and the right of tangata whenua . . . to develop indigenous social work at the micro, meso and macro levels of society" (p. 2). Moreover, Māori health and education models such as Te Wheke (1982), Te Whare Tapa Whā (1984) and Ngā Pou Mana (1988) followed by Māori models in social work, including Āta (2011), Te Mahi Whakamana - Mana enhancing practice (2013) and He Kōrari, he kete, he kōrero (2016) significantly influenced the emergence of Te Ao Māori principled practice models within indigenous social work in Aotearoa.

Te Ao Māori principles of Oranga come out of Te Reo Māori, the Māori language, and are embedded within Māori oral histories. The phrase *"Tihei Mauri Ora"* which originates from the creation of the first woman, Hineahuone, when Tāne breathed life into her, is well known. Subsequently, Mauri Ora [life force] is one of the most referenced Māori wellbeing principles across Health, Education and Public Services in New Zealand (Pere, 1991; Durie, 2001; Te Puni Kōkiri, 2004; Pohatu, 2011). The recognition and use of Te Ao Māori wellbeing principles within social work emerged from an emphasis in the mid-1990s on "Māori-centred practice". It was first articulated by Mason Durie in relation to research involving Māori. The use of the term coincided with other research of the 1990s which examined indigenous research methodologies and approaches (Smith, 1999; Oranga Tamariki, 2020, p. 20). Māori-centred theory applies to research where Māori are significant participants, the main researchers, and most importantly where Māori analysis takes place (Hollis-English, 2015). It is generally carried out under the control of mainstream organisations. Therefore, Māori-centred research does not sit within the Māori community, as the case would be with Kaupapa Māori research (Oranga Tamariki, 2020 cited Boulton, 2005). With a focus on developing healthy relationships, Pohatu (2008) highlighted the importance of understanding Te Reo Māori, firstly to position oneself toward Māori worldviews and secondly, to better understand the complexity and applicability of Te Ao Māori principles: "language is a valued and integral companion allowing entry to deeper readings of Māori positions" (p. 242).

In drawing this to section to a conclusion, within Aotearoa/New Zealand the professional association of social workers highlight clearly in their Code of Ethics, the importance of key overarching principles[viii] in conjunction with Te Ao Māori wellbeing principles[ix] to guide in adjudicating whether a member is competent to practice or not within Aotearoa and specifically with Māori - its indigenous peoples.

Part 3: Te Ao Māori principles of Oranga currently in the statutory Child Welfare environment

In critically examining the principles derived from Te Ao Māori that are currently applicable in the statutory Child Welfare environment of Aotearoa there are five sources to consider: first, the three overarching Te Ao Māori wellbeing principles in the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989; second, the Oranga Tamariki Way that espouses six key values; third, section 7AA of the Oranga Tamariki Act (1989), which reinforces other parts of the Act that reinforce Treaty obligations through legislation and advances quality assurance in development, design and review of initiatives to address child welfare; fourth, the five overarching Te Ao Māori principles for action guiding the Oranga Tamariki Māori cultural Framework; fifth and finally, Te Toka Tūmoana and its eight Māori wellbeing principles guiding practice in working effectively with tamariki/mokopuna Māori and their whānau.

Firstly, the three overarching Te Ao Māori principles of Oranga within The Oranga Tamariki Act (1989) are: Mana Tamaiti[x], Whakapapa[xi] and Whanaungatanga[xii]. A paramount change to the Children Young Persons and their families Act was that all policies, practices, and services of Oranga Tamariki need to consciously be guided by these three overarching principles.

Secondly, the Oranga Tamariki Way has five key Māori Oranga values (also considered principles) that have become the mantra of expectation the organisation is hoping to advance in the delivery of its activities and services of practice when engaging with users of this statutory welfare service, its internal staff and external support communities/organisations. These collectively driven organisational values have been written as follows: We put Tamariki first; we believe Aroha is vital; we respect the mana of people; we are tika and pono; we value whakapapa, we recognise that Oranga is a journey.

Thirdly, section 7AA of the Oranga Tamariki Act now sets out clearly an expectation that the Chief Executive Office of Oranga Tamariki is responsible for reporting regularly and directly to Cabinet about what has been done to reduce child protection/youth justice hugely disproportional disparities between Māori and non-Māori children and young people in Aotearoa/New Zealand. To support our staff to implement section 7AA more effectively, we have developed the Section 7AA legislation requirements[xiii].

Fourthly, in changing from the department of Child Youth and Family to Oranga Tamariki [2017] the Māori Cultural Framework was developed with the aim of strengthening all staff confidence and competence to work effectively with Māori to improve outcomes for tamariki/mokopuna and their whānau. The quality assurance standards complement the Māori cultural framework that comprise of five Māori wellbeing action principles orientated around mana: Mana Tamaiti; Manaakitanga, Whakamana Tangata; Mana Whenua – Kaitiakitanga; and Mana Motuhake – Rangatiratanga. The key goal of this framework was to deepen all staff understanding of key Māori values, practices, concepts, and events that have impacted on Māori through an individual staff self-reflection/self-assessment competency process.

Fifth, Te Toka Tūmoana and its eight Māori Oranga principles guiding practice in working effective with tamariki/mokopuna Māori and their whānau were initially used as an Indigenous and bicultural wellbeing principled practice framework in 2013, however construction to turn this into a model of practice is in development. The eight Te Ao Māori wellbeing principles of Wairuatanga, Whakapapa, Rangatiratanga, Tikanga, Te Reo Māori, Whakamanawa,

Kaitiakitanga, and Manaakitanga will remain an integral part of its composition utilising the verb aspects of each principle within an EAPIR[xiv] process.

Common to all five sources where Te Ao Māori wellbeing principles are currently applicable in the statutory Child Welfare environment of Aotearoa, is acknowledging the centricity of 'mana' and its derivatives of manaakitanga, whakamānawa, mana tamaiti, mana motuhake, mana whenua. When working in an environment of trauma [mana trampled on, tapū violated, mauri ora diminished and whakapapa disconnected] it is important to both qualify and quantify a journey towards oranga that often involves unravelling those elements[xv] of mana. In unison, all these principles derived from Te Ao Māori that are currently applicable in the statutory Child Welfare environment of Aotearoa suggests there are real attempts to change the way this system engages with tamariki/mokopuna Māori and their whānau, and that has positive implications for the whole welfare service in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Conclusion

The narrative presented in this paper displays the historical and current significance of Te Ao Māori principles of Oranga in both understanding the journey towards oranga for service users and within the application of best principled practice for professional social work practitioners of Oranga Tamariki. There is a unique relationship generated by Te Ao Māori Principled Practice that is foundational within the Oranga Tamariki practice framework illustrated by the core component of ngākau whakairo - values ethics and principles that privileges Te Ao Māori. There is both national and international evidence within the social work profession that indigenous principles and in this case Te Ao Māori principled practice might address the section 7AA legislation requirements. A word of caution. There is a chance that this practice shift, while innovative, has yet to be accompanied by the other major systemic levers to facilitate a whole Oranga Tamariki change.

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[i] In the Oranga Tamariki Practice Framework has five components that provide a single, unifying articulation of the Oranga Tamariki practice commitment to have as its foundation Te Ao Māori Principled Practice. It comprises of five components. Ngākau whakairo (rights, ethics, values principles – addresses why I do) is the universal component that weaves the framework together. Whai Matauranga (Māori knowledge/understanding with Tauiwi knowledge/understanding that addresses knowing what to do) provides a core knowledge base needed for practice and for building shared understanding. Whai oranga (mana enhancing models of practice will show how I do it) highlights that our practice draws predominantly from the profession of social work. Whai pūkenga (Skills that demonstrate what I do) The essential skills for professional practice. Finally, Whai akona (learning and support focuses on how I'm supported or extended) and covers applying my learning.

[ii] It is strongly imbued with Māori values and aims to enhance Māori wellbeing. Health and social services design and delivery described as 'Māori centred' was also explicitly articulated in the 1990s. A Māori centred position requires that Māori be significant players in design and delivery processes within mainstream settings. Core components of a Māori centred position may be gleaned, They include appreciation of an overarching philosophical foundation grounded in te Ao Māori concepts of wellbeing and care; recognition of the rights and obligations Māori possess as a Te Tiriti o Waitangi partner; understanding that Māori centred approaches occur in a relational space between Māori and Tauiwi; and recognition that the locus of control resides, for the most part, within the mainstream system and not with Māori (Whakauae Research,2020 - evidence brief summary of Māori centred social work practice)

[iii] Māori knowledge, Māori wisdom, Māori pūrākau & pakiwaitara, Māori intelligencia, Māori history, Māori lore, Māori social structures, Māori language, Māori oranga, and Māori practices are preference by Māori centred but Kaupapa Māori is validated and legitimated by Māori, for Māori. It has a whakapapa line from ancient times and thus can only be determined and owned by Māori.

[iv] Much has been written about the politics of meeting at the border (Ihimaera, 1993; Giroux, 1992;), albeit as individuals or when cultural realities intersect. Furthermore Barthe (2009) a French theorist, aptly signals that border crossings can be viewed as places of knowledge exchanges, and though wrought with obstacles, is worth pursuing. As he states: . . . Will burns us, and power destroys us, but knowledge leaves our frail organism in a perpetual state of calm . . . (pg. 112)

[v] Those principles that follow are not an exhaustive list of these Māori values/beliefs and related practices: for example, Rangatiratanga, Manaakitanga, Wairuatanga, Kaitiakitanga, Aroha, Utu, Mauri, Oranga, Whakatohatoha, Whakapono, Tikanga, Te Reo Māori, Ūkaipo, Koha, Pure, hoatanga, Whakapapa, Whanaungatanga, Mana, Ihi, Wehi, Whakamanawa, Māreikura, Whatukura, Tautetanga, Pai Marire, Takutaku, Taonga Tuku iho, Ako, Mātauranga Māori, Whānau, Kaupapa, Āta, Mauri ora, Tapu, Noa, Whakarite, Kaumātuatanga etc.

[vi] Oranga – Wellness, Wellbeing, and also traditionally described that sustenance must be provided on a daily regular basis to address the overall needs of tamariki/mokopuna Māori and their whānau – their tīnana, wairua, hinengāro, whānau (Durie, 1986)

[vii] Ngā Tamatoa, formed in 1970, played a significant role in promoting Te Reo Māori and establishing Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa full immersion schools. In 1975, Te Rōpu o te Matakite o Aotearoa hīkoi from Te Hāpua to Parliament in Wellington in peaceful protest of Māori land rights resulted in the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 which established the Waitangi Tribunal (Hill, 2009). Without the influence of these two groups (among many others), the arousal of public awareness of Māori rights and self-determination would not have occurred until the 1980s.

[viii] The international federation of Social Workers contend that social work is a practice based professional and an academic discipline that facilitates social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. In New Zealand, the professional body (ANZASW – Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers) identified the follow ethic principles as empowerment for people to have control over their own circumstance, social justice, partnership, biculturalism and accountability. (Dobbs et al., 2016).

[ix] Advocacy also for the seven following Te Ao Māori wellbeing principles was also evident in understanding the dynamics of ethically informed social work practice. These were identified as Rangatiratanga, Manaakitanga, Whanaungatanga, Aroha, Kōtahitanga, Mātātoa and Wairuatanga.

[x] Mana tamaiti focuses specifically on the welfare needs of the child and in particular Māori tamariki/mokopuna whose mana has been trampled on and their tapū violated.

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xi Whakapapa – there are two concepts highlighted in this principle: Whaka (to cause something to happen) and papa (layers/or short for Papatuanuku – mother earth). These concepts combined together refers to genealogical roots, bloodlines, authentic connections of people to their ancestors, to their environment and to their gods.

xii Whanaungatanga highlights the importance of developing meaningful relationships with others albeit those you connect to through whakapapa or through Kaupapa.

xiii These standards set out how we will meet the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and apply s7AA in the development of our polices, practices and services. In constructing a Welfare system fit for purpose that privileges Te Ao Māori principles and thinking, five quality assurance standards have been identified: one - we uphold and protect Māori rights and interests; two - we hear the voices of Māori; three - we ensure equity by reducing disparities for tamariki Māori and their whānau; four - we have regard Te Ao Māori wellbeing principles of mana tamaiti, whakapapa and whanaungatanga; and five – we value the Māori evidence base.

xiv EAPIR – reflecting an acronym for a well-known social work process – engagement, assessment, planning, intervention review.

xv Currently we are exploring element of mana such as one's power, honour, prestige, authority, self-esteem, level of influence, voice, humility and expect in dialogue with our external subject matter experts to see these further develop. The point is that mana can be qualified and quantified, it can be increased and decreased through a person's actions and/or others, therefore analysing the elements of mana can assist in restoration and healing towards oranga.