# Table of Contents

## PART A: VA’AIFETU .................................................................................................................. 1

- Background .......................................................................................................................... 1
- Roots of Resilience ............................................................................................................. 2
- Guiding Policies .................................................................................................................. 3
  - Voice of the Child ............................................................................................................. 3
  - Working Together ............................................................................................................. 3
  - Culturally Responsive Practice ....................................................................................... 3
- Practice Policy ..................................................................................................................... 4
- Purpose ................................................................................................................................. 4
- Methodology ........................................................................................................................ 5
- Va’aifetu Principles ............................................................................................................. 6

## Part B: Cultural Frameworks for Practice ........................................................................... 8

- Cultural Profile of Families ............................................................................................... 8
- Cook Islands Māori ............................................................................................................. 9
- Fijian and Fijian-Indian ..................................................................................................... 15
  - iTaukei – Original Settlers of Fiji .................................................................................. 16
  - Fijian-Indian ................................................................................................................... 19
- I-Kiribati ............................................................................................................................. 24
- Niuean ................................................................................................................................. 27
- Samoan ................................................................................................................................. 33
- Tokelauan ............................................................................................................................. 38
- Tongan ................................................................................................................................ 43
- Tuvaluan ............................................................................................................................... 50

## Part C: Practice Guidance for Integration of Culture .......................................................... 55

- Pathway of Culturally Responsive Practice ...................................................................... 56
- First Contact and Intake ...................................................................................................... 56
- Reception – Front Door ...................................................................................................... 56
- Intake and Critical Response ............................................................................................. 56
- Assessment, Planning, Implementation, Review (APIR) .................................................... 57
- Cultural Consultation ........................................................................................................ 57
- Cultural Supervision .......................................................................................................... 57
- Case Allocation .................................................................................................................. 58
- Research .............................................................................................................................. 58
- Approach ............................................................................................................................. 59
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mannerisms</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity, Belonging, Hopes and Aspirations</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity, Belonging, Hopes and Aspirations – Child/Young Person</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity, Belonging, Hopes and Aspirations – Caregiver/Family</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Meetings and Family Group Conferences</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation – Sharing Information</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation – Managing Emotions</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invitation List</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and Facilitation</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time and Venue</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Discussion</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restorative Justice</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concluding the Meeting or FGC</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Plan – Follow up, Monitoring</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part D: Practice Scenarios</strong></td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporating Pacific notions of Restorative Justice into an FGC</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigating the Child’s Voice Through to Outcome</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing Relationships and Overcoming Resistance</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with Shame and Taboo</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Responsiveness Working Cross Agency</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Cultural Insights to Establish a Home for Life placement (1)</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Cultural Insights to Establish a Home for Life Placement (2)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Cultural Insights to Establish a Home for Life Placement (3)</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who Matters to the Child Matters</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanency with Non-Kin within Own Cultural Community</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**PART A: VA’AIFETU**

### Background

The presence of Pacific people in New Zealand Aotearoa has influenced the nation’s cultural identity and character. While Pacific people only make up around 7.4% of Aotearoa’s population, their influence is seen in the arts, sports, local and national politics, the public service, and in youth culture. Pacific children make up 11.7% of all 0-19 year olds. As a growing population with a median age of 22 years compared to 38 years for the general population, Pacific children are important to New Zealand’s future. Pacific families raise their children guided by values, protocols, expectations and priorities that are influenced by culture, life experience, spirituality, knowledge, and contextual factors some of which are beyond their control.

Pacific children that come to the notice of the state due to child abuse and youth offending is significant (see Va’aifetu Part 1). In 1998, a Cook Islands model of social work practice ‘E Kaveinga was launched. Unfortunately ‘E Kaveinga could not be applied to the other Pacific groups. Va’aifetu has thus been developed to support Oranga Tamariki practitioners work effectively and respectfully with all Pacific children and families that come to notice.

‘O Au o matua fanau’ was the first Pacific strategy for statutory social work in New Zealand (2010), and was formulated after a nationwide consultation with Pacific communities to identify key social work priorities. The priorities that resulted related to the quality of social work practice, the number of Pacific children in state custody, youth offending, leadership, and cultural competency. In 2012, the development of Va’aifetu began as one response to ‘O Au o matua fanau’. The Ministry’s Auckland Pacific Island Network (APIN) initially undertook this work, focussed on the Pacific groups with the bigger populations and numbers of children in state care, which were Cook Islanders, Niuean, Samoan and Tongan. In 2014, the Fijian-Indian group was added.

Cultural knowledge related to the Pacific groups with smaller populations in Aotearoa (Fijian (iTaukei), I-Kiribati, Tokelauans) were largely sourced from Nga Vaka o Kāinga Tapu. Nga Vaka o Kāinga Tapu was co-produced by the Ministry of Social Development and experts from those communities, so it was important to honour that work and use it accordingly in Va’aifetu.

Va’aifetu responds to the weakness’ in cultural competency identified in the 2014, Child, Youth and Family Workload and Casework Review. The tool will also equip the Ministry with the Pacific cultural guidance to support the delivery of the values of Oranga Tamariki, the administration of its duties and responsibilities according with the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (Act 1989) and other associated legislation, including the care regulations that recognised the value of spirituality and cultural identity it all its diversity.

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The Pacific cultures referred to in this document are not indigenous to Aotearoa New Zealand. They are people who have come from lands where their ethnicity is the majority, their indigenous languages, spirituality, epistemologies and worldviews are dominant, they own a bulk of the natural resources, are self-reliant, and where state support is very limited. Fiji is the exception, where non-indigenous populations make up around 40% of the population\(^4\), with recognised influence on the country’s social, economic, cultural and political context.

The strength of Pacific peoples is connected to traditions of collective self-determination and guardianship of collective assets; namely people, lands, spiritual beliefs and ocean territory. Land, kin and sea are important to sustaining life, identity, unity, social security and are to be preserved for future generations. The wealth is physical, spiritual, political, cultural and economic. Customary land makes up at least 80% of the lands in the Pacific nations (except Tonga and Palau)\(^5\). It is perceived to be gifted from the gods to sustain life. In the land and beneath the ocean are minerals, precious metals and other natural resources sought after by foreign interests\(^6\). Fisheries are a source of income for the mostly small Pacific populations. The combined exclusive economic zone of the Pacific Islands covers around 20 million square kilometres\(^7\) of the Pacific Ocean, providing food and income for the peoples and economies of the Pacific, Asia, Europe, and the United States\(^8\). Every indigenous Pacific child is connected to this heritage even if they have not grown up knowing it.

The Pacific homelands continue to hold spiritual significance to those who are emotionally, socially and politically tied to them, and where they wish to rest when they die, sometimes so future generations can trace their roots ‘home’. Most Pacific peoples have experienced colonial rule. Now there is destruction to environments from mining, nuclear testing, unsustainable logging, mass leasing of lands, and exploitation of fisheries. Large parts remain out of the control of indigenous populations as in West Papua. Climate change now threatens the low lying islands of Tuvalu and Kiribati and heritage for future generations.

The search for social and economic opportunities and new places to settle led to the Pacific diaspora around the globe. For many generations of the Pacific diaspora, Aotearoa and other places are now ‘home’, where they do not consider themselves ‘visitors’. Cultural traditions and values inevitably shift between generations and in different contexts; but spirituality, language, identity, guardianship, and collectivism remain important characteristics of Pacific communities. Va’aifetu provides a window into how these translate as strengths, to protect and improve the quality of life of vulnerable Pacific children and their families in Aotearoa.

Guiding Policies

Voice of the Child

In all actions by practitioners, the *paramount* interest of the child is the primary consideration in accordance with sections 6, 11 and 13 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (Act 1989), and Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC).

Accordingly:
- Every Pacific child must be engaged in a manner, language, context, and timeframe that will enable her or him to engage meaningfully in return.
- The child’s dignity will be respected at all times, and their best interest upheld.
- Caregivers, family and collectives of significance to and for the child, will be engaged with respect and in shared purpose to achieve the child’s best interest.

Working Together

We know that when children come to the notice of the state, their needs and situations are often complex, and require the combined commitment of different parties to help them heal, build resilience, take opportunities, and have improved quality of life.

The Vulnerable Children Act 2014 (VCA 2014) requires the Ministries of Education, Health, Justice, Social Development and Police to work collectively to achieve the Government’s priorities for vulnerable children. The domino expectations upon services contracted and funded by the state create opportunities for community stakeholders to take part in the ownership and development of solutions for children. The spirit of the VCA 2014 resonates with Pacific peoples’ beliefs and traditions about collective responsibility for ensuring and securing the best interests of children.

Culturally Responsive Practice

Every person is born with an identity, spirituality, dignity and significance - within all, culture is a core element. Culture is a core consideration in the pursuit of children’s wellbeing and outcomes under New Zealand law.

- Section 5(g) of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 states that decisions affecting a child should take into consideration, without limitation, the child’s age, identity, cultural connections, education, and health.
- Section 6 of the VCA 2014 specifies child well-being to be inclusive of their physical, emotional, education, cultural, social and economic state. *Va’aifetu* offers a tool for interagency partners to develop standards of social work practice with Pacific children and families.

*Va’aifetu* will support cultural responsiveness in the application of duties and powers in accordance with the Act 1989, VCA 2014 and the Adoption Act 1955.

*Va’aifetu* will help grow practitioners understanding of Pacific cultures, and develop cultural competency to meet professional registration and accreditation requirements.
Practice Policy

- Va’aifetu must be used when working with Pacific families alongside existing practice tools as part of best practice.
- The application of Va’aifetu must be reflected in case records.
- Application is to be weaved through the Assess-Plan-Implement-Review cycle.

A – Assess, P – Plan, I – Implement and R – Review

Associated with core outcomes of safe, healthy, achieving, belong, participate and improved life outcomes, are priority measures for Pacific children and young people.

Purpose

Va’aifetu claims space for the Pacific child’s culture in statutory social work. The purpose is to achieve best outcomes for Pacific children by improving cultural competency at individual, group and organisational levels of practice. The knowledge is also relevant to practice, workforce development, research, policy, communications, and non social work business to support outcomes for children and their families.

Primary Audience:
- Social workers, youth workers, co-ordinators, support workers
- Supervisors, team leaders, clinical leaders, administration support
- Practice advisors, practice leaders, training advisors.
For the purposes of this work, cultural competence is composed of cultural awareness, cultural knowledge and cultural skills, as described by Dunway, Morro and Porter (2012).

‘Cultural awareness includes the process of understanding one’s own culture, biases, tendency to stereotype, reference-group membership, and power relations. Cultural knowledge includes learning about the attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours of cultural groups. Cultural skills focus on communication ability and training learners to be aware of cross-cutting cultural issues.’ (Dunaway, Morrow, & Porter, 2012, p. 498)

Methodology

The value of cultural competency to the achievement of outcomes for Pacific populations has been well recognised in health and education sectors in Aotearoa, but to a lesser extent in statutory social work. The international literature on cultural competency shows that the more familiar practitioners are with the cultures of the people they work with, the more likely that intervention will lead to meaningful outcomes.

Va’aifetu was developed by experienced Pacific practitioners to assist colleagues of all ethnicities to meaningfully integrate the Pacific child’s cultural identity and connections into intervention for their best interest. This is based on evidence of what works and why, using a combination of cultural and professional knowledge and expertise, and official records from engagements with children. The developers engaged academics, community advisors, and non Pacific colleagues in the shaping of this knowledge.

The co-ordination of the ethnic specific work was overseen by the Auckland Region management team. Research, production and strategic leadership was provided by the Office of the Chief Social Worker. Data and reviews were provided by different parts of Oranga Tamariki, and the wider Ministry of Social Development.

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Va’aifetu Principles

Va’aifetu is a Samoan word derived from the words ‘va’ai’ – take care of, look, see, observe, consider; and ‘fetu’ – star, stars. Va’ai is the role of families, practitioners and organisations. The stars are the child, the family, and the practitioner. Va’aifetu is hereby used as a metaphor to denote the guardians and guardianship of stars – people.

Va’aifetu consists of eight ethnic specific approaches, and an umbrella of overarching principles that connect the spaces of diversity between Pacific cultures beyond those specifically included here. Fundamental differences between Pacific cultures, generational and context influences, and increasing ethnic mixing mean that there can be no single cultural model or prescribed set of behaviours that would work for everyone.

Va’aifetu has been designed with the paramount interest of the child as the central purpose, to be used within the New Zealand human rights legislative context.

Guardianship

Child’s Best Interest

Dignity

Relationships

Humility

Responsibility

Spirituality

C – Child; F – Family; P – Practitioner

Guardianship is the encompassing principle of the framework.

- Guardianship is the unwritten understanding of care of and responsibility for people. This principle is the umbrella under which all notions of alofa/ofa/aloha/aroha/love, kinship, belonging, identity, responsibility and protection lie. This is the enabling space for recognition, dignity, forgiveness, recovery, reciprocity, resilience, restoration, and shared prosperity.
Child’s best interest is paramount

- **C**: The child’s best interest is the purpose of intervention and the paramount consideration. Pacific children are considered gifts from God. Their wellbeing and prosperity is connected to that of unique Pacific cultures and communities.
- **F**: The Pacific child’s interests and sense of belonging are the family’s concern and responsibility. Where interests conflict, those of the child will be paramount.
- **P**: Practitioners are expected to act in the best interest of the child at all times.

**Dignity**

- **C**: The child’s dignity will be protected. This includes respect for the child’s self-defined cultural, gender, sexual, spiritual and social identity.
- **F**: Respect for the dignity of Pacific families is essential. This will be demonstrated through the inclusion of cultural and social collectives that are significant to the child, observation of relevant protocols, professionalism, meaningful and non-intimidating engagement.
- **P**: The practitioner’s dignity and that of others will be respected.

**Humility**

- **C**: Showing humility to the child elevates them, and conveys genuine commitment and respect for her/his voice, dignity and potential.
- **F**: Humility is an action associated with integrity and dignity. It is fundamental to meaningful relations with Pacific people and alleviates feelings of disempowerment and resistance. Humility is shown through hospitality, sharing of speaking time, vulnerabilities, personal histories, and status.
- **P**: Humility is a skill for those who hold power. It is especially important to show humility towards children who hold the least power or are unaccustomed to it.

**Spirituality**

- **C**: Traditional Pacific cultures believe that a child is a gift from the God and therefore sacred. The child is the bond between families, the connection between the past, the present and what could be. Neglect or violation of this sacredness has spiritual implications for those associated with the child.
- **F**: Spiritual beliefs are powerful influences on Pacific peoples’ parenting practices, gender interactions, societal relationships, identity, resilience, motivations, worldviews, and responses to situations. Spirituality includes indigenous beliefs and religions like Christianity, Hindu, and other faiths.
- **P**: The value of spirituality in the lives of Pacific children and families is explored, and appropriately incorporated into engagement and the pursuit of outcomes.

**Responsibility**

- **C**: A child’s responsibilities indicate purpose and place within collectives and affiliations. Putting things right with others restores dignity and shows integrity.
- **F**: Pacific families believe in their fundamental responsibility for their children. Responsibility is connected to family identity, esteem, dignity, guardianship, duty, accountability, and self-determination.
- **P**: Responsibility is enacted according to one’s duty and consciousness. It is also about learning, growing, and exercising courage in the face of conflict.

**Relationships**

- **C**: The Pacific child has a fundamental right to belong with people who will love, protect, defend, and nurture them.
- **F**: Good relationships are a form of social currency in Pacific families and communities. These provide protection and support in times of difficulty. Traditional kin relationships have associated expectations, and severe consequences when they are violated.
- **P**: Relationships are purposeful and child focussed. The best outcomes for vulnerable children are achieved and sustained through collective effort.
Part B: Cultural Frameworks for Practice

Culture is inherent, contextual, and ever evolving. Established traditions, values and behavioural nuances particular to any group of people vary over time. To prescribe a definition for a people based on historical, adult, or dominant ideas, risks excluding those already disempowered, prescribed to, and silenced by power hierarchies, especially children. Accordingly, while the ethnic specific approaches provided here are rooted in unique traditions they take into account context, mixed ethnicity, and generational differences.

The approaches are most effective when applied using the relevant Pacific language. Overall however, families value practitioners who care about their children, collaborate genuinely, are professional, and honour agreements. Most Pacific families will have a cultural profile somewhere along this continuum.

Cultural Profile of Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Child – Parented with traditional values and expectations such as respect and obedience towards elders and those in authority. The child’s perception of ‘family’ is wide, and may be living with kin who are referred to as parents. Child is confident of own identity and has a reasonable knowledge of cultural affiliations and family connections. Child has responsibilities for others and duties in the household. Child may speak a Pacific language as well as English. It is common to have friends of the same ethnic group depending on school, family and community.</th>
<th>Family - Connected with extended kin in Aotearoa and overseas. Often involved in religious, village, island or other ethnic based associations. Usually patriarchal unless headed by a woman. Pacific languages are likely to be spoken. English is a second or third language. Support network is identifiable but not always accessible including overseas based. May find state authority intimidating.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary</td>
<td>Child – Voice may have more influence on household decisions than the traditional group. May be of mixed ethnicity so fluency in a Pacific language may be limited. May be more involved in non-ethnic and non-religious associations. Friends may be of more diverse backgrounds beyond Pacific. May struggle at times with different expectations and parenting practices if parents are of different ethnicities.</td>
<td>Family – Often multi ethnic and multilingual. Are connected with extended families, church or ethnic communities but less so than the Traditional group. Friendship and associations circles are often socially diverse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td>Child – The Pacific identity and heritage language may/may not be as important to the child. May be more individualistic in worldview. Definition of ‘family’ may be very nuclear and network of significant other’s is small. Some may not know their ancestral heritage.</td>
<td>Families – Less inclined to involve extended family in ‘private’ matters but otherwise connected. It may be challenging to identify and engage supports due to family history, geography, influence of a non-Pacific partner or/and other factors. A few may refuse contact with extended/cultural links.</td>
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Cook Islands Māori

Background

The Cook Islands is a self-governing country in free association with New Zealand. The Cook Islands was a dependent territory of New Zealand Aotearoa in 1901. In 1965 it adopted a constitution that changed its status from dependent to self-governing in free association with Aotearoa. This allows people in the Cook Islands to hold dual citizenship there and in Aotearoa. In 2016, the population of the Cook Islands was 11,700.

Cook Islands Māori are part of the Polynesian group. The country is made up of fifteen islands and has eight dialects. Rarotonga is considered to be the main dialect and is the language used in Cook Islands legislation, the education curriculum, and the Bible.

Different dialects are used in Rarotonga, Mangaia, Aitutaki, Penrhyn and Palmerston. A shared dialect is used in Atiu, Mauke and Mitiaro, another in Manihiki and Rakahanga, and another in Pukapuka and Nassau.

Cook Islands Māori in Aotearoa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cook Island Māori (nfd)</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2013</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51,483</td>
<td>56,895</td>
<td>61,077</td>
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The majority (93.1%, 57,588) live in the North Island, and a small percentage (6.9%, 4,251) live in the South Island. Most (86.5%, 53,487) live in urban areas. Significant numbers are in Auckland (59.5%, 36,810), Wellington (11.5%, 7,113), and the Waikato (7.8%, 4,839) regions. The majority of those in the Auckland region are concentrated in Mangere-Otahuhu (20.0%), Otara-Papatoetoe (19.9%), and Manurewa (14.0%). Only 22.6% (13,764 people) of Cook Islands Māori in Aotearoa in 2013 were born overseas.

'E Kaveinga - Cook Islands Māori Cultural Framework for Practice

Purpose

To provide a guideline for working with Cook Islands Māori families within legislative frameworks including the CYF&F Act 1989 and the VCA 2014.

The name 'E Kaveinga' was inspired by a Cook Islands folk hero in Polynesian myths by the name of Maui.
"Maui is a major folk hero in Polynesian myths. The story of Maui has been passed down from generation to generation. Maui was the son of a god and possessed magical powers. These powers enabled him to achieve many great feats such as snaring the sun with a net he made from his sister's hair so that we could have more hours of daylight.

Maui and his brothers were renowned fishermen. Maui however, was different from his brothers. While they were content with life as it was, Maui was always searching for something better. His greatest feat was the fishing up of Havaiki - the land many Polynesians refer to as the homeland of their origin. Maui however, could not have achieved this feat without the help of another family member - his grandmother, Hina-te-Papa, who later chanted words of wisdom and encouragement in praise of Maui's achievement."

Maui's myth contains positive cultural messages about family relationships, family collaboration, strength, skill, and courage in the face of new challenges, overcoming problems and being successful. The surfacing of land from the depths of the sea as a result of Maui's fishing efforts symbolises a new beginning, opportunities for growth and development. 'E Kaveinga conceptually means compass, a tool for guidance. It will continue to evolve as knowledge and skills develop and grow.

'E Kaveinga was originally launched in 1998, and was the first Oranga Tamariki Pacific ethnic specific model of practice. Training for Oranga Tamarikistaff on the model was delivered in Auckland in 1998 and 1999, and was open to community agencies. Unfortunately an evaluation was never conducted of the impact of the 'E Kaveinga on outcomes for Cook Islands children. Since 1998, the statutory social work landscape has shifted so the model has been revised.

The Vaka (canoe) symbolises the new 'E Kaveinga.
Descriptors

1. Ama / Small outrigger: Represents the Oranga Tamariki social worker.

2. Tino vaka / bigger canoe: Represents the family which includes all the different levels of Pirianga (relationships).

3. Kiato / Bridge: Represents Pirianga / relationship between the social worker and the family. This includes the immediate & extended family, people of the same village & island.

4. Taura - Rope: Represents the linking together of two sets of values & ideologies (mutual respect, humility, service, responsibility, reciprocity) and legislation which connects certain parts of the vaka.

5. Oe - Paddles: Represents the tools of Engagement, Assessment & Decision making which both the family and social worker will use to ensure that the vaka continues to stay the course.

6. Nooanga - Seating or Positioning: Represents the CHILD and the Vaa tuatua (spokesperson). The CHILD is positioned in the front of the vaka while the Vaa tuatua is positioned in the back of the vaka. The positioning of the CHILD in the front ensures that the CHILD is protected from all sides. The role of the Vaa Tuatua is significant as the paddler and steers the vaka to ensure it stays on course.

7. Tata Riu - Scooper: Is a small cup like instrument that scoops the excess water out of the vaka to prevent it from sinking. This symbolises the working partnership between the family and the social worker. It includes responsibility for the removal of things that hinder progress for the child, young person and the family.

In order to apply the model appropriately, it is important to first understand the basic family hierarchy and structure, and traditional societal factors that characterise Cook Islands families.

From birth, Cook Islands children are recognised as belonging to a particular family (ngutuare tangata, kopu tangata) and a particular part of the Cook Islands. Children are
encouraged to maintain their collective way of functioning into adulthood, remaining with parents and contributing to the financial and physical running of the household.

Cook Islands society has a hierarchical, collective, tribal structure. Each individual is seen to contribute to a larger group such as family, church, and community. Each individual has a role to play that supports and complements the roles of others. The ariki (high chief), for instance, is a traditional leader and accordingly enjoys a prestigious position within the community. The mataiapo and ariki are mainly based in the Cook Islands. Leaders in the Aotearoa context could be senior family members of kopu tangata, community leaders such as church ministers (orometua), healers (ta'unga) and other respected individuals.

Each island has a particular identity (some characteristic), social structure and associated dialect. The family's enua anauanga (island/s of origin) and extended family are key identifiers, noting however that families have blood links to people from different areas. The island centric communities for Cook Islands Māori makes them different to other indigenous Pacific communities that tend to congregate based on religious and village affiliations.

Key Principles for Practice

1. **Tino - The concept of 'being Cook Islands Māori' - Mind, body, spirit & soul**

   Cook Islands practitioners who work with Cook Islands families are able to see, hear, feel and connect on a deeper level than non-Cook Islands people, minimising misinterpretation. For example, a Cook Islands practitioner who is familiar with people from Aitutaki and Atiu would be aware that they are known to speak loudly, are often direct, and are physically expressive. A non-Cook Islands person may incorrectly interpret such behaviours as aggression, when it may not be the case.

2. **Turanga i roto i te kopu tangata - Positioning or status within the family**

   It is important to know who resides in the home and what role each person plays. For example a single mother who cares for her son may not necessarily be the decision maker. It could be her uncle who also resides in the home. Social workers can ascertain this information by asking the mother or others in the home to identify the Mataiapo (leader of the family).

3. **Te au Pirianga - Relationships**

   The concept of Te au Pirianga recognises different levels of relationships significant to the child or young person. Traditionally Cook Islands children are represented by their parents or other adult family member in formal discussions. The role of children is changing and it is becoming more acceptable for them to speak in less formal gatherings, though only with the permission of a parent or elder.

   The parents' roles within the family are complementary. Men have precedence and a higher profile in many positions of responsibility and power in Cook Islands society. Women are influential in family decision-making and are income earners. Increasingly, men are taking on a greater role in domestic duties. In most situations, both parents should be approached when there are concerns about a child or young person. With issues such as sexual abuse, initial contact should be made through an appropriate adult female family member.

   Traditionally, Cook Islands Māori relationships do not recognise the titles of Aunty or Uncle. People in these roles are referred to instead as ‘Mama’ or ‘Papa’. A cousin is

4. Te peu enua - The concept of the 'Cook Islands way of doing things'

This principle recognises important traditional and spiritual protocols. For example, before commencing a meeting with the family it is important to open with a pure (prayer). This helps to alleviate people’s anxieties before an important discussion. The opening of prayer acknowledges the importance of vaerua (spirituality) and the reliance on God for a good outcome. Concluding with a prayer is also important as this again acknowledges God and the collective desire for a good outcome for the child or young person.

The sharing of food is part of bringing people together, particularly if there has been conflict. This is an effective way to engage with families as is interpreted as a form of humility.

*Engagement, Assessment, Decision Making*

A holistic approach that encompasses physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing is needed when working with Cook Islands families.

When problems for the children stem from within the family, the social worker should be focusing his or her attention on identifying the relevant issues affecting the whole family. The physical wellbeing (tu kopapa), spiritual wellbeing (vaerua) and emotional wellbeing (tu ngakau) of the child and the rest of the family (ngutuare tangata) are fundamental and complementary to the overall health of the family unit. If one of the elements (physical, emotional, spiritual) is problematic, then the other two will consequently be weakened.

The use of te reo Māori Kuki Airani (Cook Islands’ language) is the most effective way to show respect, build rapport, and establish constructive relationships with Cook Islands families. It is important to keep in mind the different dialects and consult regarding any particular nuances associated with people from different parts of the Cook Islands.

Only a minority of Cook Islands children and young people speak their reo (refer to Va’aiifu Part 1). The rates are likely to be much lower for children and young people who are NZ-born, and/or are from mixed ethnicity. It is important to ascertain which language would best suit the child or young person concerned, and ensure that she/he is meaningfully engaged and included in conversations where different languages are used. Children and young people who may not be fluent in a Cook Islands reo may still understand common terms and cultural concepts used during engagement, depending on their home environment and upbringing. Hearing their native language may help alleviate a child’s or young person’s anxiety upon contact, and to build rapport.

*Signs of concern within Ngutuare Tangata*

*Tu Kopapa - Physical Wellbeing*
- Presence of physical and/or sexual abuse (for example, domestic violence, excessive physical discipline, incest).
- Neglect of health, medical, physical needs (through lack of knowledge, skills, motivation, resources).
- Problem behaviour (offending, running away from home).
- Lack of supports, isolation from family or communities of significance.
- Poor housing, accommodation.
- Drug and/or alcohol abuse.
- Lack of resources (money, job, qualification).
• Physical illness due to imbalance in emotional and/or spiritual wellbeing.

**Tu ngakau - Emotional Wellbeing**
- Emotional abuse (such as constant criticism, put downs).
- Isolation from family/community supports.
- High stress level (money worries, job pressures, relationship problems).
- Cultural conflicts.
- Conflicts between values of parent (traditional base) and a child/young person raised in New Zealand.
- Suicidal feelings, depression and other mental health issues.
- Motivation - lack of or misguided.
- Relationship difficulties (lack of respect for the - child, parents, elders; marital problems).
- Unresolved trauma (e.g. historical abuse, grief).

**Vaerua - Spiritual Wellbeing**
- Impact of physical/sexual/emotional abuse, neglect and unresolved trauma.
- Isolation from spiritual or religious supports.
- Conflict in spiritual and/or religious beliefs (e.g. between a child and caregiver).
- Curse (*tauma’a*), possession.
- Mental illness (may be perceived as a sign of being spiritually unwell).

**Useful Words and Phrases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Greetings and Phrases</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kia orana</td>
<td>Greetings, hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aere mai</td>
<td>Welcome come in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turou <em>(formal)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peea koe? <em>(you)</em></td>
<td>How are you? <em>(to one person)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peea korua? <em>(two people)</em></td>
<td><em>(to two people)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peea kotou? <em>(more than two people)</em></td>
<td><em>(to three or more people)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meitaki</td>
<td>I’m fine thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meitaki</td>
<td>Thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akakoromaki</td>
<td>Excuse me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ka kite aere ra</td>
<td>Goodbye <em>(to one person)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goodbye <em>(to people)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kia manuia</td>
<td>Blessings, best wishes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Family Terms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tamaine</td>
<td>daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamaiti</td>
<td>son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pepe</td>
<td>baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mokopuna</td>
<td>grandchild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tama <em>(can be female or male)</em></td>
<td>child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamariki</td>
<td>children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metua vaine *(or) mama</td>
<td>mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metua tane *(or) papa</td>
<td>father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kopu tangata</td>
<td>family, extended family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruau</td>
<td>grandparents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mama ruau</td>
<td>grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>papa ruau</td>
<td>grandfather</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fijian and Fijian-Indian

Background

Indigenous Fijians are part of the Melanesian group, with some Polynesian influence in its culture. Fiji is an independent Pacific nation.

There are three main ethnic groups in the Fijian population: the iTaukei (indigenous original settlers of Fiji), indigenous Rotuman people, and Fijian-Indian. The Fijian-Indian population are descendants of labourers from East India who began entering Fiji in 1879\(^{21}\). The Fijian Constitution that came into force in September 2013 is published in iTaukei, English and Hindi languages. The Constitution acknowledges the indigenous rights of Rotuman and iTaukei to customary land, cultures, customs and values. While Fijian-Indians are recognised as full citizens of Fiji, they do not have ownership rights to customary land, although they can lease it\(^{22}\).

The last Census conducted in Fiji was carried out in 2017 which showed a total population of 884,887\(^{23}\).

Fijians in Aotearoa

The general Fijian population in Aotearoa experienced significant growth between 2001 and 2013. The growth has been more significant for the Fijian-Indian largely due to the displacement effects of the political coups in the country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fijian</th>
<th>Fijian-Indian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7041</td>
<td>9,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,983</td>
<td>5,616</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2013, by place of birth, Fijians were the largest Pacific group living in Aotearoa. Around 60.2% of Fijians (8,577 people) excluding Fijian-Indians, were born overseas\(^{24}\).

The ‘Fijian’ category used in the Aotearoa Census count, is likely to have non- iTaukei as well as iTaukei as it is a self-identifying count. The figures do not however include all Fijian-Indians (classified under Asian), Rotuman, Asian, European and other Fijians as indicated by the much bigger ‘Fiji Born’ number of 52,755 (Census 2013).

The groups of focus in Va’aifetu are the two largest groups, iTaukei the original settlers, and the Fijian-Indians. The Rotuman group is the other indigenous group in Fiji but they have a very small population (783) in Aotearoa\(^{25}\).


Language

Fijian, Fiji Hindi (local version of Hindi) and English are the main languages spoken in Fijian homes, but they are not the only ones. Often the different ethnic groups have familiarity with each other's languages. It is not uncommon for iTaukei to speak a bit of Hindi, and vice versa. Integration into Aotearoa society and its education system has decreased the use of indigenous languages particularly among NZ-born Fijians and Fijian-Indians. Fijian Indians have their own version of Hindi referred to commonly as Fijian Hindi which varies from the original language.

Like other migrant groups, Fijian families face ongoing challenges to their traditional values, spiritual beliefs, cultures and languages in Aotearoa. Acculturation has affected fundamental aspects of family hierarchy, gender roles, and the status of the child. Like other Pacific groups, family and faith-based communities are key bastions for cultural identity.

Socio-Economic

Fijians are more likely to be self-employed or employers than other Pacific Islanders. Fijian-Indians are highly visible in Aotearoa communities running small businesses such as dairies, clothing stores and taxis. Wealth creation, high educational achievement, high positions in occupations and strong socio-economic standing are common aspirations for families and individuals.

Fijian families are at different stages of integration into Aotearoa society. Many are recent settlers in comparison to the more populous Polynesian groups, particularly the Fijian-Indians who left Fiji in large numbers due to political instability, loss of livelihoods and threats to safety over the last 20 years.

iTaukei – Original Settlers of Fiji

The majority (89.1%, 12,873) of people who identify as 'Fijian' in Aotearoa live in the North Island, while a smaller number (10.9%, 1,572) live in the South Island. Most (88.2%, 12,747) live in urban areas. The Auckland region has the highest concentration (58.8%, 8,493), followed by Wellington region (9.3%, 1,338), and the Waikato Region (7.6%, 1,092). Of those living in the Auckland Region, the majority live around Henderson-Massey (13.1%), Mangere-Otahuhu (11.1%), and Manurewa (10.9%) areas.

The number of Fijian children that come to Oranga Tamariki notice has not traditionally been high. When considering a cultural approach to working with Fijian families, Oranga Tamariki has sourced from Vuvale Doka Sautu - a Fijian cultural framework for addressing family violence for guidance. This approach will be further developed as knowledge and understanding develop about what works best when engaging with Fijian children and families.

The use of the Fijian native language and some common terms (refer to table at the end of section) would aid engagement with iTaukei children, young people, parents and elders. It is important to ascertain what language would best suit the child or young person as only a small proportion in Aotearoa speak Fijian (refer to Va’aietu Part 1). Ensure the child is meaningfully engaged and included in conversations where different languages are used. Children and young people not fluent in native Fijian may still understand common terms and cultural concepts used during engagement. Hearing their native language may help alleviate a child’s or young person’s anxiety and build rapport.

Engagement, Assessment and Decision Making

Relational Concepts and Expectations

Fijian worldview - The iTaukei worldview is shaped by traditional social order and structures in the family and wider community. Chiefs (mainly male) occupy the top level, followed by others based on their roles in the community. Traditional roles define the nature of relationships between people, and the different levels of hierarchy within families and within wider society. Order is maintained and promoted when members understand their position in the hierarchy, and act accordingly. Stiff sanctions follow the wilful breaking of protocols and rituals that govern social conduct.

Sautu (family wellbeing) - Sautu denotes a state of being. Sau – reflects being filled with mana arising from one’s position or performance of a role. Tu – is to rise following the successful discharge of one’s duty. Fijian families aspire to achieve a certain state of harmony, prosperity and stability, where relationships between members are mutually reinforcing and respectful.

Sautu represents a positive achievement for a family. It is compared to the top-most part of a house (doka ni vale) which serves as the crowning glory in the building process. Sautu is related to a family’s ability to sustain itself and deal with life’s challenges. It is about good health that is epitomised in the Fijian greeting bula vinaka (good health).

Tabu - (derived from veitabui) is closely associated with mana and limits the practice of certain activity or behaviour. This is to reflect the sacredness of a matter, relationship or event. For instance, a chief is said to have mana. Being sacred, a chief is approached with deference and respect. There is also tabu between family members especially between brothers and sister.

Veitabui establishes codes of conduct to ensure relationships do not become abusive or violent. Public knowledge of the violation of tabu lowers the reputation of a family in their surrounding community. This can result in silence within families about shameful violations, such as incest.

Vakarokoroko - Vakarokoroko (respect) is critical to the harmonious relationships within a Fijian family, and by extension, a community. The closer the relationship, for example brother and sister; the stronger the expectations are to demonstrate respect.

Respectful behaviour is expressed through acts of courtesy and the language used by people to refer to each other. A person who regularly displays respect will be regarded as being vakaturaga (of chiefly conduct and manner). Veidokai (respect or honour) has the same meaning as vakarokoroko and they are often used interchangeably.

Matuvuvale (Family) - While individualism has traditionally been seen as counter to the collective/common good, it is an increasing reality for Fijians living in Aotearoa. Veitokoni denotes mutual support between family members. Reciprocal relationships between family members determine the functioning and strength of their unit. Parents are expected to actively practise veitokoni in the family.
Veirogorogoci - For family relationships to be sustainable there has to be veirogorogoci - a practice of ongoing communication, sharing, listening to each other. For example, when a parent is talking to a child, the child is expected to listen and not interject or interrupt the parent; the child is given time to voice her view after the parent has spoken and the parent is expected to role model veirogorogoci. Mediated by the observance of tabu, veirogorogoci reflects obedience to, and observance of the family order, rituals and processes.

Veivakabekabei - The term veivakabekabei (praising) denotes the practice and importance of ‘valuing and nurturing’ others. This promotes relationships and unity. Boasting or grandstanding run counter to Fijian values of vakarokoroko and veidokai. It is good manners not to put yourself first and allow others to hold standing before you, to show deference. Veivakaliuci is often displayed through veiqaravi – actions of serving or caring for others including children and elders.

Kawa - Fijians place great importance on family lineage and history (kawa). In the iTaukei custom, every transitional stage in a child’s life is celebrated. Some communities have traditional practices such as naming ceremonies for a first born.

A good kawa is interpreted as a reflection of a person’s ancestral history, family and quality of rearing. All including children are expected to uphold their family’s legacy through achievement and social conduct. To be labelled as ‘kawa ca’ (opposite of good kawa) is a grave insult to a Fijian and her/his family, and can result in retribution.

Mana - The concept of mana implies having supernatural powers arising from one’s position at birth and connection to the spiritual world. Mana reflects a state of reverence and sacred ground in very close relationships, particularly among family. Care is taken to ensure mana is not violated and to avoid causing offence. In formal gatherings, mana is respected by observing traditional protocols and rituals of engagement.

In traditional customary Fijian gatherings a shout of mana e dina! at the conclusion of a presentation signifies an appeal to the gods for a blessing; this is a typical expression used in kava ceremonies. In modern Fijian society, the link to the supernatural is now merged with that of Christian teachings and rituals around blessings. ‘Amen’ now takes the place of a shout of mana in the appeal to the Christian god.

Useful Words and Phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Greetings and Phrases</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bula (informal)</td>
<td>Greetings, hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bula vinaka (formal)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bula, ni gole mai</td>
<td>Welcome come in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ni bulabula vinaka?</td>
<td>How are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Au bulabula vinaka, vakacava o kemuni?</td>
<td>I’m fine thanks, and you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerekere</td>
<td>Please</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinaka</td>
<td>Thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulou</td>
<td>Excuse me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moce</td>
<td>Goodbye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vosoti au</td>
<td>Apologise, sorry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Terms</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>luvequ yalewa</td>
<td>daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>luvequ tagane</td>
<td>son</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fijian-Indians in the Pacific

Between 1879 and 1916 about 60,000 Indians were hired to work as labourers in Fiji’s sugar industry. The workers called themselves Girmitiyas, a word meaning ‘agreement’.[31] Later, those who were able to return to India did, while many either could not or chose to stay in Fiji. Those that remained developed their own particular cultural identity while maintaining certain elements of their original cultures. One of the key elements that lost its significance was the caste system.

The Fijian-Indian population thrived to the point where from 1946 to the late-1980s, their population actually exceeded that for indigenous Fijians. Their social, economic, cultural and political influence helped shape modern Fiji. Over time, certain sections of the indigenous population became concerned about their ability to hold power in Fiji. Tensions eventually led to political unrest and the coups that began in 1987. These were difficult times particularly for the Fijian-Indian population who suffered violence and persecution. Families that had leased customary lands to grow crops for industry and had lived on those lands for generations, suddenly found themselves landless and homeless when the leases expired and were not renewed. The unrest led many Fijian-Indians to leave and resettle elsewhere, particularly in Canada, the United States, Australia and Aotearoa.[32]

Fijian-Indians have not traditionally been included in Pacific models of practice in Aotearoa. This has resulted in a gap in our understanding and left these children of the Pacific somewhat invisible. The knowledge contained in this cultural framework is based on information from Fijian-Indian practitioners and cultural advisors.

Cultural Identity

Fijian-Indians value their cultural identity deeply and resist the intrusion of any foreign values and cultures. Their experiences of gradual loss of their original culture, unequal rights with the indigenous population, and history of displacement go some way to explaining their preciousness around cultural identity. The traditional caste system still holds value for some Fijian-Indians as a link to original cultures and homeland. Attempts to reconnect with Indians from India have mixed results, as Janifa Khan Janif illustrates:

My leanness enabled me to fit
the “South Asian” box for health officials
My ”Indianess” was not an entry criteria
to the “Mainland India Club” as I spoke funny Hindi
and didn’t know my caste or class
In the eyes of Mainland Indians the generations of hard work
and prosperity in Fiji by my ancestors could never free me from the shackles of
being from a lower class with origins in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in India

---

I could only be a descendant of the slaves not fit to be associated with.  

Despite the political unrest that caused many to leave Fiji, the island nation remains in people’s hearts as their homeland. Some Fijian-Indians have never been to India.

Ethnic intermarriage has not traditionally been supported in Fijian-Indian communities although this is becoming more frequent. Historically, some Fijian-Indian families disowned members who married outside their ethnicity which resulted in people being disconnected from each other for generations. This has been found by practitioners who found extended family for those who originally denied having any in Aotearoa.

**Religion and Spirituality**

The four main religions are Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh. Groups in New Zealand have established religious communities and places of worship such as *mandir* (temple), and *mandalis* (religious gatherings). It is important to understand the religious characteristic of a family and associated expectations of their children. Spirituality affects many aspects of a person’s life including dress, friendships, choice of partner, gender roles, food, time of worship, and so on.

Spirituality is sacred. A red flag outside a Fijian-Indian home is a typical Hindu marker that indicates a sacred space on the family’s property that strangers should not encroach on. The family will take offence if Lord Hanumana who has the head of a monkey is addressed as Monkey God. Likewise, Lord Ganesha who has the head of an elephant is not to be addressed as Elephant God; he is Lord Ganesha who wards away evil. Lord Ganesha’s statue would often be located at the entrance of the house. Generally the prayer shrines are located in a room in a closed cupboard.

Hindus observe certain days of the week as sacred, some might observe Mondays and pray to God Shiva, some might abstain from eating meat. Others might treat Tuesday as sacred, be vegetarian for the day and pray to God Hanumana; others might observe Fridays and pray to a Goddess such as Latchmi (Goddess of Wealth). Some Muslims might pray five times in the day. Throughout the year there are other ceremonies that a family or individual may observe. For example Shiv Ratri – a day in the year when families fast and pray to God Shiva, offering sacrifices usually at the local temple. Likewise there is a nine-day celebration called Nauratam where special prayers and sacrifices are offered to Durgaa Maa (Goddess of Strength). Deepawali festival of Lights is a commonly known annual festival that is very important to Hindus.

There is a strong preference among Fijian-Indians to marry within their religion. Where this is not possible, one of the partners may be required to change religion upon marriage, often to the religion of the male. Caregivers or parents would impress upon their children from childhood to uphold their religious orientation. Elders have a role in passing on spiritual and religious knowledge to the younger generation.

**Patriarchy and Hierarchy**

Fijian-Indian families are usually patriarchal in nature. Some religions have segregated places and times for worship for men and women. The men are often the gate keepers of families, depending on where the family sits in the traditional – contemporary continuum.

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A Muslim woman might wear a Burka (veil) and will not unveil herself in front of a man. While Fijian-Indian Muslim women wearing a burka might not unveil she might engage with a male professional, unlike women wearing a burka from other parts of the world. Female professionals might not encounter any difficulty engaging with Muslim men but having a male professional would help engagement. Wherever possible, female professionals should engage with Muslim women. If this is not possible then make an appointment to meet the male leader of the family. Most times it might be easier to meet the family in a neutral place outside their home.

The inferior position of women is reinforced by traditional religions, despite the abuse of power as seen in domestic violence. Arranged marriage is an enduring part of traditional Fijian-Indian culture in Fiji and in Aotearoa. During difficult times, women are expected to uphold their marriage at all costs. Working women still carry primary responsibility for child rearing and the care of the household, although this is slowly changing. The shifts in attitudes and beliefs are due to exposure to new environments, education, and the changing professional and financial position of women. Women are becoming increasingly active in decision-making and are increasingly supported by men.

**Status and Social Standing**

Families work hard to build wealth and status; financial success is paramount. Power and control in families is associated with finance and educational status. Fijian-Indians bring with them the ‘Panchait’ system from India which is a process where elders of the community would gather to deliberate on matters concerning the security and safety of their community. Today, elders with limited earning capacity may have little influence in decision-making within a household. This is a key difference between Fijian-Indian and indigenous Pacific cultures.

Fijian-Indian families have a more nuclear focus compared to the traditional collective nature of indigenous Pacific families. The sharing of resources and ideas is limited to the immediate family, and the extended family is not encouraged to get involved in matters considered the business of the nuclear unit. A family might reluctantly concede to involving extended family in exceptional circumstances such as a Family Group Conference out of respect for statutory authority.

**Parenting**

Child rearing practices aim to build resilience to counteract life’s adversities. The show of affection may not be as readily demonstrated by Fijian-Indian families as it may be by other Pacific families. Children are raised with high expectations to succeed and to contribute to the family’s wealth. Values that may take children away from this traditional path are resisted. Fijian-Indian families look negatively upon children’s rights to express views and have more social freedom. This is the biggest area of contention for Aotearoa raised children who are torn between traditional expectations and rules, and other social norms and values that surround them.

A male child is still considered important in order to carry on the family genealogy. The girl child has a spiritual position; for Hindus, she is considered a representative of the Goddess Latchmi.

Childless Fijian-Indian families would adopt children from within their extended family including those born outside of marriage. Stigma is associated with pregnancy outside wedlock. Orphans or children who lose their fathers are integrated into extended families to maintain their identity. Generally a boy would be integrated into his father’s family while a girl may be allowed to go with the maternal side.
Bhavish – Fijian-Indian Cultural Framework for Practice

*Bhavish* means ‘future’ in the Hindi language.

**Guiding Principles**

- **Child’s Best Interest** – The child is treasured and considered the most important aspect of a family’s future.

- **Relationships** – Understanding hierarchy within family/social structure. Leadership and decision making in families is often male dominated.

- **Respect** – Honouring what is important to the child and his/her family.

- **Reciprocity** - Respecting and understanding core values that harness good outcomes for the child.

- **Integrity and Dignity** - Harnessing integrity by imparting knowledge and dealing with denial whilst upholding people’s dignity.

- **Responsibility** – Reintegration of the child who has been detached from family into the guardianship and care of kin, is a priority.
**Spirituality** - This is the foundation of lives of most Fiji Indians. It impacts family hierarchy, roles, decision making, beliefs, and social, cultural and political structures.

*Engagement – Assessment – Decision Making*

The use of first languages will greatly assist the rapport and ongoing relationship with parents and elders.

Hindi is used daily in many Fijian-Indian families. Children and young people who are not fluent in their native tongue may still understand common terms and cultural concepts used during engagement. Hearing their native language may help alleviate the child’s or young person’s anxiety and build rapport. It is important to ascertain what language would best suit the child or young person, and to ensure that she/he is meaningfully engaged in conversations where different languages are used.

**Useful Words and Phrases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Greetings and Phrases (in Fiji Hindi, adaptation of Hindi)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Namaste <em>(formal)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaise <em>(informal)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svāgata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aap kiaseh hain?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahut acha, shukriya aur aap?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(or) bhahut thik hain <em>(hey)</em> aur aap?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theek hai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meharbani she</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shukriya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maaf kijiyeh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nameste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māphī māmīgatā hūm*</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Terms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>beti</td>
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<tr>
<td>beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baccē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baccē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baccōṁ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>māṁi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pitā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parivāra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I-Kiribati

The Republic of Kiribati is made up of the Gilbert Islands, Banaba, Phoenix and the Line Islands. The nation became independent from the United Kingdom in 1979.

The estimated population of the Republic of Kiribati in 2009 was 112,850. The nation has 33 islands of which 21 are inhabited, spread across approximately 3.5 million square kilometres of the Pacific Ocean. The capital, Tarawa, is about half way between Hawaii and Australia. The terrain is mostly low-lying coral atolls surrounded by extensive reefs, with a total coastal area of 1,143 km².

Global warming and rising sea levels fuelled significant outward migration of people to from their indigenous homeland to nations such as New Zealand, particularly in the early 21st century. The I-Kiribati population in New Zealand is thus a more recent settler group compared with Cooks Islands Māori, Tokelauan, Niueans, Samoans and Tongans who have more established communities and higher population numbers in Aotearoa. The main immigration pathways for I-Kiribati to New Zealand are the Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme (established in 2007) which allows temporary labour migration for I-Kiribati workers, the Pacific Access Category (established between 2001 and 2002) which enables permanent migration for 75 Kiribati citizens per year, and the Skilled Migrant Scheme.²⁶

I-Kiribati in Aotearoa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I-Kiribati</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>645</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>2,115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2013, 45% of I-Kiribati lived in Auckland. There is a significant community in Warkworth north of Auckland where Kiribati is the second most spoken language.³⁷

The median age of I-Kiribati in New Zealand in 2013 was 20.6 years. Around a third (32.8%) were born in New Zealand, and 67.2% were born overseas. The majority (77.7%) of people aged 15 years and over had a formal qualification. The median income for those aged 15 years and over was $14,700.³⁸

The new I-Kiribati settlers to Aotearoa are experiencing similar challenges faced by new waves of migrants into a new country. These include learning a new language (English), adjusting to new contexts, finding employment, not having adequate resources for food, housing, and other basic needs. I-Kiribati are very concerned about the potential degradation of their culture and they strive to maintain their language, spirituality and recreational activities.³⁹

The number of I-Kiribati children that have come to the notice of child protection or young justice over the year to date, is not identifiable due to the limitations of the

³⁹ http://presbyterian.org.nz/sites/default/files/gmo/kiribati/Kiribati_migration_to_New_Zealand.pdf; p.30
recording system of Oranga Tamariki. At the time of writing, efforts are being made to add I-Kiribati to the records management system to enable a view of this in future.

When considering a cultural approach to working with I-Kiribati families, Oranga Tamariki has sourced from *Boutokaan Te Mweeraoi* (I-Kiribati cultural framework to address family violence) for guidance. While Boutokaan Te Mweeraoi is predominantly about working with adults, it signals important cultural considerations that are also relevant to work in child protection and youth offending. The cultural approach will be further developed and be more child centred as Oranga Tamariki develops knowledge and understanding about what works best when engaging with I-Kiribati children and families.

**Traditional Kiribati Society and Structure**

*Kainga* - extended family
  *Kaawa* - village
  *Abwamakoro* - island
  *Maneaba* - the whole of society

Males are culturally privileged over females, and hold significant power in decision making. The *unimwane* (male elders) make decisions and resolve conflicts.

**Wellbeing**

The fundamental aspects of *te maiu raoi* or wellbeing for I-Kiribati are:
- *Marin abara* - a healthy environment and ecology.
- *Te toronibwai* - skills of self-reliance related to subsistence and spiritual communion with nature.
- *Te katei* - customary practices distinct to I-Kiribati.
- *Te karinerine* - the demonstration of respect within *te utuu* (the family), *te kaainga* (the extended family hamlet), *te mwaneaba* (the customary hall of community governance), and *te aba* (the land and people).

**Engagement, Assessment, Decision Making**

**Engagement**
- *Kaokorora ngaira aine ma mwaane* - understanding of the culturally constructed differences between men and women in Kiribati society.
- *Te tia mwakuri ae e rabakau n taetae ni Kiribati ao ni maiuakina naba te katei ni Kiribati*. Ngkana akea ao e kakaawaki bwa e na iai te tia raitaeka ae e konabwe ii itera Aikai - a practitioner who is a fluent speaker of Kiribati and well grounded in one or more versions of Kiribati culture, or ensure the provision of appropriately skilled people.

**Assessment**
- *Te atatai i aon ara katei aika a kaineti ma aron te marooroo ke te inoonoo ma te

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41 Ibid: p.9
aomata ae e kakaea buokana - having the cultural knowledge to engage respectfully with members of Kiribati communities, taking into consideration the importance of spoken and unspoken communication, and body language.

- Ataakin rongorongon te aomata ae e buokaki ao kakaawakin te reitaki ma ngaia bwa e na atai ma n ota ni bwaai aika a karaaoaki - recognising the importance of knowing the person’s background, communicates clearly with them to explain things, keeps them informed.

**Decision Making**

- Kakaawakin te mwakuri ni ibuobuki bwa e na aki kauntaba ma nanon te aomata ae Buokaki - recognising the importance of consulting with the service recipient, and not assuming to know best.
- Ataakin tokin ana konabwai te tia mwakuri ao kakaaean te buoka ae e kokoauaaki bwa te kabanea n tamaaroa - the ability to recognise one’s own limitations and seek appropriate support when necessary.

**Practitioner traits**

- seeks to understand, listens
- trustworthy, respectful, maintains confidentiality
- has love and compassion
- stays impartial, recognises and manages conflicts of interest

**Useful Words and Phrases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Greetings and Phrases42</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mauri</strong></td>
<td><strong>Greetings</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko na mauri (sg); Kam na mauri (pl)</td>
<td>Hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kam na bane ni Mauri (crowds)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko uara?</td>
<td>How are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arau … (or) Arau ngai</td>
<td>My name is…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiaoka</td>
<td>Please, excuse me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko rab'a (or) Ko rab'a, Ko bati n rab'a</td>
<td>You are kind or Thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tekeraoi am bong!</td>
<td>Have a nice day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ti a boo (or) Ti a kaboo</td>
<td>Goodbye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabara au bure</td>
<td>I am sorry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Family Terms**

| aine | daughter |
| næ/ti | son |
| bebi | baby |
| atáei | child, children |
| kánoanáine | a sister’s child |
| kánoanim’aáne | a brother’s child |
| tina | mother |
| Baba, táma | father |
| unimane | elders |
| útu | family, household, relatives, society, congregation |

42 [https://www.trussel.com/kir/dic/find_s.htm](https://www.trussel.com/kir/dic/find_s.htm); [https://www.omniglot.com/language/phrases/kiribati.htm](https://www.omniglot.com/language/phrases/kiribati.htm)
**Prologue**

*Tuku atu e tau nava mo e tau fakaheke ke he Atua he lagi likoliko ha ko e haana tau Monuina oti kua fakatapulu aki a tautolu oti ko e tau tagata Niue.*

*Aga fakamotu mo e aga fakaniue* encompass Niuan values and beliefs, customs, practices, language, heritage and songs. They describe the essence of what it is to be a Niuean.

**Background**

In 1900 Niue became a British Protectorate and was annexed by Aotearoa in 1901. In 1974 following an act of self-determination, Niueans adopted a constitution that provided for full self-government in free association with Aotearoa. Under the free association arrangement, Niueans are entitled to dual citizenship to both countries. Niue is part of Polynesia.

Niue is one of the biggest coral islands in the world and is favourably known as the ‘Rock’ of Polynesia due to its physical make up. The cliffs of Niue island rise up to around 70 metres high, providing some protection for its inhabitants from the rough sea.

Niue was settled by groups from Tonga, Samoa and the Cook Islands and their influences are visible in the Niue language (*vagahau Niue*). These groups used to war with each other until the arrival of Christianity.

Niue was originally named Nukututaha which means ‘an island standing alone’. One legend goes that a group of Niuean men were gifted coconuts by people of Tonga and Samoa. The men were advised to return home and plant the fruits for their people. The value of the tree soon became clear, and the coconut has since become a symbol of life to Niueans. The people of Niue eventually changed the name of their island from Nukututaha to Niue in remembrance of this ‘gift of life’. ‘Niu’ means ‘coconut’, and ‘e’ meaning ‘here’; when Niu-e is translated it says ‘here is the Coconut’!

Niueans hold previous their people, lands, cultural identity and language. Niue lands are considered sacred and cannot be sold although they can be leased. Fishing grounds have also been claimed historically as family property. In 2011 Niue had a population of 1,611; the locals are often outnumbered by visitors on an annual basis.

**Niueans in Aotearoa**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Niueans</td>
<td>20,148</td>
<td>22,476</td>
<td>23,880</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of Niueans in Aotearoa live in the North Island (95.8%, 22,884), while 4.2% (996) live in the South Island. Most (92.2%, 22,014) live in urban areas. The Auckland region contains the bulk (77.7%, 18,555) of the Niuean population, followed by

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46 Internet Niue. (2010). Internet Niue Ltd.
48 Ethnic group (total responses), for the census usually resident population count, 2001, 2006, and 2013 Censuses
Wellington (6.6%, 1,575), Waikato (4.3%, 1,038), then other regions. Of those living in the Auckland region, there are concentrations in Mangere-Ötahuhu (18.4%), Otara-Papatoetoe (13.9%), and Manurewa (11.0%) areas. Only 4,197 of Niueans in Aotearoa in 2013 were born overseas.

**Ko e Niu-e: Niuean Cultural Framework for Practice**

**Purpose**

To give social workers insight and understanding of what defines a Niuean person and family. The aim is to help practitioners work more effectively with Niuean children and their families.

The framework name denotes its land of origin and the notion of ‘gift’ of life. The customary gifting of a coconut is symbolic of the gifting of life because the coconut is considered the most important tree in Niue. The niu (young coconut) symbolises the child, and whose interest is the central purpose of Ko e Niu-e.

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**Falanakiaga – Ko e tau matua ni e falanakiaga he tau mena oti he tau fanau – Children are dependent on their parents for everything**

Ko e Niu-e is informed by relational concepts and cultural principles that will enable the achievement of best outcomes for the Niuean child.

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51 Coconut image borrowed from http://www.red23.co.uk/Fresh-Young-Green-Coconuts_p_1566.html
Ko e Niu-e was developed by Niuean practitioners in consultation with tupuna (elders) and other advisors, and embraces all Niueans in Aotearoa.

**Description of Important Relational Terms**

- *Fakaalofa lahi atu* – greetings (*Fakaalofa* – to show compassion and love)
- *Fakatokolalo* – humility, to bring yourself down to the same level as the family, to be humble
- *Fakafeiloaki* – to agree on a peaceful settlement, to reconcile
- *Fakalataha* – to come together
- *Fakamafanatia* – to encourage, to uplift
- *Fakamolemole* – apologising for the intrusion (expression of respect)
- *Fakalilifu* – respect towards the family, prayer, spirituality
- *Fakaue lahi* – thank you, appreciation, acknowledgement
- *Falanakiaga* – to lean on, to depend on
- *Fakatutala (Tutalanoa)* – using small talk to build rapport and break the tension
- *Fefakaalofaaki* – to love one another
- *Felagomataiaki* – mutual support and assistance
- *Tama mo e Magafaoa* – child and family
- *Magafaoa* – family connections, genealogy, village, identity

**Traditional Societal Structure**

"A person is complete when he or she knows who they are and where they belong" (Audrey Talima, Oranga Tamariki practitioner)

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The inner layer of a young coconut consists of the juice and the flesh which represent the *magafaoa*, the core Niuean Family. The child or children in the unit

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are supported by their parents or caregivers. The father is traditionally the head of the family unit, although not all families are the same.

- The second layer is the coconut’s hard shell that protects the family unit. This represents the *magafaoa laulahi* (extended family).
- The third layer is the netted husk that represents the family’s community, particularly religious communities and village affiliations.
- The final outside layer is the skin of the coconut, which represents one’s unique cultural identity as a Niuean: ‘*Ko au ko e tagata Niue*’.

**Traditional Context**

A child’s wellbeing is linked to her/his *magafaoa*, church, village/community and cultural identity. Every child belongs to a traditional family of a mother, father, siblings, extended family, and for some, close friends. People in Niue often know each other, so it is safe and acceptable for a child to wander to a nearby home in the village, as long as the parents know where the child is and who they are with. Extended family and friends in the community/village will sometimes feed the child, and then later use the opportunity to return the child home to catch up with the family.

Traditional Niuean society was organised according to the village system. Every married man was entitled to take part in discussions about village affairs. Over time, this somewhat individualistic mechanism influenced Niuean people to pursue interests from a more individualistic rather than a collective view, as in most other Pacific cultures.\(^{53}\)

**Language**

Niueans regard their language (*Vagahau Niue*) as the essence of their identity. Niue has one indigenous language although some words and phrases are linked to certain villages. When Niue was ruled by New Zealand, their children were obligated to speak English and were punished if caught speaking Niuean. This has had long lasting detrimental effects on the Niuean language and culture, a situation further exacerbated by the outflow of people from the homeland to places like Aotearoa. In 2006, only 25% of the Niue population in New Zealand were able to hold an everyday conversation in *Vagahau Niue*. For NZ-born Niueans, this rate was only 11%. *Vagahau Niue* is now considered a language at risk of being lost.

*Vagahau Niue* is used to convey humility and consideration for the others. The loss of the language has been linked to a degradation of traditional values, cultural traditions, and affected rituals of engagement that acknowledge and convey respect between people.

**Social Conduct**

Dignified conduct and observation of protocols of engagement are important to Niueans, as they are in other Pacific cultures. People who openly express their views and feelings with little consideration for others, or who fail to recognise their contribution to their own predicament may be perceived to lack respect and humility.

**Social Work Engagement - Fakamatutakiaga or Matutakiaga**

Engagement should primarily involve the core family, the extended family, village and church contacts, depending on the child/young person and the family. Schools, professionals and others are also part of the external layer of associations and influences especially for the child or young person.

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The use of *Vagahau Niue* and common terms (refer to table at the end of section) will generally help to establish rapport and build relationships during engagement with families. However not many Niuean children or young people speak Niuean fluently. It is important to ascertain the most appropriate language of engagement with the child or young person concerned, and to ensure that they are meaningfully engaged in discussions that are not conducted in her/his main language.

Children and young people who are not fluent in *Vagahau Niue* may still understand common terms and cultural concepts used during engagement. Hearing their native language may help alleviate a child’s or young person’s anxiety, and build rapport.

**Pointers for Meaningful Engagement**

**Introductions**

- Greet the child or the family with ‘*Fakaalofa lahi atu*’ or ‘Hello’ in a genuine way.
- Apologise for the intrusion into their time – show humility and respect.
- Clearly state your name and who you work for.
- If you are Niuean, families will often find it comforting to know that fact. This helps alleviate anxieties about state power. The family may then expect you to be able to understand their story, ways, and to care about their child and them.
- If you are Niuean, families may make some connection with your kin in Niue, some may know who you are and respect you accordingly. They may see you as someone who can help, whether or not you can speak Niuean. It will not be unusual for them to ask about your cultural lineage and affiliations. Forming connections will help to break the ice while collecting meaningful information.

**Conveying the Concerns – Ko e heigoa e lekua kua hoko taki ke he magafaoa**

- Acknowledge everyone in the room. Ascertain who is the leader or spokesperson in the home.
- Reiterate/explain why you are there, and what you would like to share and discuss with them.
- Give the family opportunities to tell their story.
- Ascertaining people’s understanding of Oranga Tamariki, emphasise the role of the Ministry in the protection of children and work with young people who offend.
- Express your wish to work with them and the importance of exchanging the right information. Give an assurance of confidentiality considering small communities.
- Explain in simple terms the role of Police, courts and any other agency that may be involved or may become involved, and why.
- Know that you may have to return and go over the same conversations in future – families need time with the information. Discuss the next visit.

**Assessment: Kumikumiaga (ke he nofoaga he tama)**

- Ascertain the family’s economic situation as this plays an important part in how the children are cared for.
- Ascertain the type and quality of relationships between the *tau magafaoa* and other supports.
- Ascertain the view of the child/young person and their needs.
- What is the form of discipline practiced in the home?
- How are the children viewed? What is their place within the family?
- Explore views on the value of education, understanding of the law.

**Decision Making – Ko e higoa e fakahikuaga he fekau**
• Ensure that decision making processes are explained, transparent, inclusive, and that the magafaoa (family) is fully informed. This affirms the family’s place in their child’s life and in statutory process involved. The child’s magafaoa existed before Oranga Tamariki and will be there after intervention ends.
• The father is traditionally the decision maker. Not all families are traditional however and some are headed by women.

**Fakaue lahi – Closing an Engagement**

• Do not be eager to leave once you have obtained your information.
• Tell the family what will happen next. Give people the opportunity to ask questions. Respond as well as you can, without making promises.
• Tell the family that this is the beginning of gathering information and that you will be talking to others such as school, Police, and other professionals as needed.
• Thank the family for their time, hospitality and for having you in their home.
• You may be embraced and offered food. It can be seen as rude to turn the food down as sharing symbolises willingness on both sides to work together. It is not about the food. Handle the offer sensitively.
• The family may want to end with a prayer or blessing of sort. Be respectful.
• Leave on good terms regardless of any hostility shown to you. If you do not leave a good impression the family may not be as forthcoming in future.

Useful Words and Phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Greetings and Phrases</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fakaalofa lahi atu</td>
<td>Greetings, hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hau, Omai ki kaina (or) ki fade</td>
<td>Come, Welcome (come) home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malolo nakai a koe?</td>
<td>How are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malolo fakaue lahi</td>
<td>I’m fine thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fakamolemo - Fakamolemo la ma Matua, (or) ma matakainaga.</td>
<td>Please, would you please excuse me; I apologise for the intrusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fakaue lahi</td>
<td>Thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulou</td>
<td>Excuse me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koe kia</td>
<td>Goodbye (to one person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mua kia</td>
<td>Goodbye (to two people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutolu kia</td>
<td>Goodbye (to many people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monuina e aho (or) Mafola e aho</td>
<td>Have a good day, all the best</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Terms</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tama fifine</td>
<td>daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tama taane</td>
<td>son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tama mukemuke</td>
<td>baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pulapulaola</td>
<td>grandchild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tau pulapulaola</td>
<td>grandchildren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tama</td>
<td>child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tau fanau</td>
<td>children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>matua fifine</td>
<td>mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>matua taane</td>
<td>father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>magafaoa</td>
<td>family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tau mamatua</td>
<td>parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tau mamamatu tupuna</td>
<td>grandparents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>magafaoa laulahi or tau magafaoa</td>
<td>extended family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Background

Samoa is an independent country and is part of the Polynesian group. It has a land area of 2,820 square kilometres. It has two main islands of Upolu and Savai’i, plus seven small islands. Gagana Samoa is the sole indigenous language, and Samoan and English are the official languages. In 2016 Samoa had a population of 195,97954.

Samoa originally included what is now American Samoa after those islands were incorporated by the United States in the early 1900’s. In 2010 American Samoa had an estimated population of 66,432. The official languages there are Samoan and English55.

Samoans in Aotearoa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Samoans</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>115,017</td>
<td>131,103</td>
<td>144,138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is the largest Pacific group in Aotearoa. The majority (92.9 %) live in the North Island, a small percentage (7.1%) live in the South Island, and 3 people live in the Chatham Islands. Most (93.7%) live in urban areas. Significant numbers are in Auckland (66.5% or 95,916), Wellington (15.5% or 22,383), and the Canterbury region (4.8% or 6,984). For those living in the Auckland region, concentrations are in Mangere-Otahuhu (18.3%), Otara-Papatoetoe (17.6%), and Manurewa (14.9%)56. Around 50,661 of the 144,138 were born overseas57.

Tautua - Samoan Cultural Framework for Practice

"O le ala i le pule o le tautua" - the path to leadership is through service

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The tanoa is the ceremonial bowl used to prepare the traditional ceremonial drink ‘ava’ used in formal gatherings of chiefs of extended families (matai). The gathering of matai occurs when there is matter of importance to be discussed that affects the interests of the extended family or the whole community. The tanoa is used here to symbolise collective unity, ownership of and responsibility for solutions for children’s interests. At the centre of the tanoa are the fanau/children. Surrounding them is the extended aiga/family, and beyond that are the surrounding communities of significance (including faith based communities). Children are the future of families; their wellbeing, safety, prosperity, and dignity are concerns for the collectives in which they belong.

The Tautua model is based on a fundamental belief in the role and responsibility of the aiga/family for its children. The proverb ‘E fofō e le alamea le alamea’ refers to a tropical fish —alamea that carries the antidote to its poison in its body. The proverb reflects the Samoan belief in the strength and capacity of families to find their own solutions to challenges, especially in relation to their children and when those challenges come from within.

**Purpose**

To provide a best practice framework for social work engagement, assessment, decision making and action for the betterment of Samoan children and their families.

The tautua approach serves the best interests of vulnerable children and young people. Those who perform tautua to are families, practitioners, community partners and supporting agencies.

**Philosophy: Fa’a Samoa**

Fa’a Samoa is the way of life and umbilical cord that attaches Samoans to their culture. This is the overarching philosophical framework for working with Samoan children, young people and their aiga. Mulitalo-Lauta broadly refers to fa’a Samoa as the total make-up of the Samoan culture, that which encompasses the invisible and visible which form the basis of principles, values and beliefs of Samoans.\(^\text{58}\)

Central to fa’a Samoa is the notion of tautua, or service to God and to others. It stems from the philosophy of alofa/love, responsibility, hospitality, caring, and dignity. This is not service in a hierarchical relationship, but actions that are carried out with consideration and integrity\(^\text{59}\). Tautua is congruent with the notions of selflessness, putting others before oneself.

From the Samoan cultural worldview, social work has a purpose to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. It enriches the world through service to communities, the agencies, and humanity. In addition, as Samoans have strong Christian values, there is a belief that the more one takes the needs of others to heart the more one becomes close with God.

**Tautua** has different aspects, the most pertinent are:

- **Tautua Matavela** – (mata – eyes, face; vela – cooked) service with full commitment and honesty.
- **Tautua Mataililo** – (mata – eyes, face; lilo – unseen, hidden) service done behind the scenes.

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- **Tautua Toto** – *(toto – blood)* service with sacrifice.
- **Tautua Aitaumalele** – service from a distance e.g. a family member who lives overseas but supports the ones at home.
- **Tautua nofotuanae** - The word *nofotuavae* means – to sit behind or at the feet of someone. This *tautua* exemplifies the person who stands behind his/her matai/leader/agency ready to serve.

**Aga Tausili – Values**

Symbolised by the legs of the *tanoa*:

- **Alofa**: Love, compassion, empathy.
- **Fa’aaloalo**: Behaviour and language that convey respect, and honours vā tapuia.
- **Fa’asinomaga**: Reference points or indicators of identity and belonging. This refers to one’s role, place, and responsibilities to others in the aiga, village, and extended family. Connected to *fa’asinomaga* are *fa’alupega* and *fa’alagiga* which are genealogical and honorific references and salutations of the client’s specific home district, village and family.

For children born or raised predominantly in Aotearoa, identity markers may include school, religious affiliation, suburb, or town of their upbringing.

- **Fa’ia**: Genealogical and historical connections and purpose in relation to others kin and community. This includes ancestral lineages and kinship ties. Knowledge of *fa’ia* is important as well as knowledge of associated roles and responsibilities of individuals within their families.

- **Gagana**: Knowledge and use of the Samoan language. *Gagana* is considered a gift from God. It articulates how members should co-exist with others especially within the aiga and certain places of significance. *Gagana* is the vehicle that connects Samoans with their world views and for responding to the world they live in. The different levels of language *Gagana o le fa’aaloalo* (formal language) and *gagana mo aso uma* (common-use language) are applied according to the audience and situation. *Gagana Samoa* is rich with idioms, riddles and implicit meanings that can only be fully appreciated by native speakers.

- **Tapua’iga fa’a Samoa**: Cultural and spiritual contemplation of success for an undertaking.

- **Vā Tapuia**: The divinely appointed, mutually respectful and sacred inter-relationships between people; between people and lands and the environment; with inanimate objects, and with the Divine. Violations of vā tapuia are believed to result in dire spiritual and physical consequences.

A very important vā *tapuia* is the *feagaiga*, which is the relationship between a brother and sister. Interpreted in the widest sense, *feagaiga* includes

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64 Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families, Ministry of Social Development
relationships between kin of the opposite sex. In a non-traditional context a version of this relationship is noted between Samoan young people and colleagues of the opposite sex.

- **Vā fealoa‘i**: Respectful, dignified and harmonious relationships in face-to-face engagement between people, including the observance of relational and cultural protocols.

- **Tofā mamao**: A long term vision or insight of wellbeing, security and prosperity for children and families.

### Engagement Assessment Decision Making

During any part of engagement (fa'atalanoaga) through assessment (iloiloga), decision making (filifiliga ma fa'aiuga), plan implementation and review; a social worker may draw on a few or all of the aga tausili (key values), and experience the different aspects of tautua at once.

The use of gagana Samoan and common terms (see table at the end of the section) would greatly help engagement with children, young people, parents and elders.

It is important to ascertain what language would best suit the child or young person concerned, and to ensure that she/he is meaningfully engaged and included in conversations where different languages are used. Many Samoan children and young people speak Samoan compared to other Pacific populations because it is frequently spoken in homes and in churches communities. The possibility of a child or young person speaking Samoan however decreases for children from ethnically mixed families and among NZ-born generations. Those who are not fluent in Samoan may still understand common terms and cultural concepts used during engagement. Hearing the native language may help alleviate a child’s or young person’s anxiety and build rapport.

Be sure to engage all people who may have an influential role in the future of the child or young person. Every household has a lead person or people; it is often not a matai. A matai does not hold sole authority in Samoan families; he or she must consult widely before representing the family’s interests. Some matai are appointed ahead of their leadership capability and become mentored over time, for future responsibility. In Samoa and Aotearoa, many families are headed by women who may or may not carry
matai titles and responsibilities, but are nevertheless leaders and decision makers. Women’s role in leadership is something Samoans have in common with matrilineal communities in other parts of the Pacific.

The Samoan proverb ‘Pae ma auli’ refers to a process of smoothing out rough stones. In a parallel way, practitioners working with Samoan children and families will be required to draw on the different aspects of the tanoa and work collaboratively to address the challenges posed by abuse, neglect and criminal offending. It is important for practitioners to have in-depth understanding of the cultural characteristics of these families in order to be effective. Success in doing so establishes a foundation of cultural competency, and will build confidence that will contribute to best outcome for children and their families.

Useful Words and Phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Greetings and Phrases</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talofa or Malo le soifua</td>
<td>Greetings, hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maliu mai or Afio maia</td>
<td>Welcome come in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O a mai oe?</td>
<td>How are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuia faafetal. O ai mai oe?</td>
<td>I’m fine thanks. How are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faamolemole</td>
<td>Please</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faafetai</td>
<td>Thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulou</td>
<td>Excuse me (to pave the way before saying something that may offend, or when crossing in front of someone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tofa Soifua</td>
<td>Goodbye (formal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tofa</td>
<td>Goodbye (informal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faamalie atu or Faamalulu atu</td>
<td>Sorry, my apologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ia manuia</td>
<td>Blessings upon you, all the best</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Family Terms

tama teine (mother to a daughter)  
afafine (father to a daughter)  
daughter

taine  
girl

tama tama (mother to a son)  
atali‘i (father to a son)  
son

tama  
boy, child (of any sex)

pepe  
baby

fanau a fanau  
grandchild

alo (formal); tama (informal)  
child

Fanau (plural, informal)  
nofoaalo (formal)  
children

tinā  
mother

tamā  
father

aiga  
family

Tinā matua  
grandmother

Tamā matua  
grandfather

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Tokelau

Background

Tokelau is a non-self-governing territory and has been administered by New Zealand Aotearoa since 1926. It has a land area of 12 square kilometres, and is part of Polynesia.

Tokelau formally became a British protectorate in 1889. In 1926 Britain passed the administration of Tokelau to Aotearoa. While Tokelau was declared to be part of Aotearoa from 1 January 1949, it has a distinctive culture and its own political, legal, social, judicial and economic systems.

The population of Tokelau in 2016 was 1499, spread across its three small atolls - Atafu, Fakaofo and Nukunonu. Visitors to Tokelau must go via Samoa then travel by boat as there is no air service to Tokelau.

Tokelauans in Aotearoa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tokelauans</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6,204</td>
<td>6,822</td>
<td>7,176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority (95.1% or 6,825) live in the North Island and a small number (4.8% or 348) live in the South Island. Most (90.7% or 6,507) live in urban areas. Tokelauans are the only group that is concentrated in the Wellington region (49.1% or 3,525), followed by the Auckland region (27.3% or 1,959), and the Bay of Plenty region (6.4% or 456). Of those living in the Wellington region, concentrations are in Porirua (56.9%), Lower Hutt City (27.5%), and Wellington City (8.3%).

Only 1,338 of the 7,176 Tokelauans in Aotearoa in 2013 were born overseas. The high degree of integration and assimilation into Aotearoa society has affected Tokelauan cultural identity, possibly more so compared to say the Tongans and Samoans. Gagana Tokelau (Tokelauan language) is now perceived to be under threat of loss.

The number of Tokelauan children and young people that come to the notice of Oranga Tamariki has not traditionally been high, and is concentrated in the Wellington region. When considering a cultural approach to working with Tokelauan families, Oranga Tamariki gathered cultural advice from its practitioners and sourced from Kāiga Māopopo, a conceptual framework that was developed to address family violence with Tuvalu communities. This approach will be further developed as knowledge and understanding develop about what works best when engaging with Tokelauan children and families.

**Kāiga Māopoopo** informs of cultural principles and relational concepts that are important for practitioners to understand and incorporate appropriately, when working with Tokelau children, families and communities. *Kāiga Māopoopo* is based on a fundamental belief that all people are entitled to happiness, protection and the opportunity to fulfil their potential. *Kāiga Māopoopo* also stresses traditions around community guardianship of its members particularly the most vulnerable. This cultural framework aligns very well with the purpose of Oranga Tamariki.

**Engagement, Assessment and Decision Making**

"*Ko fanau ko te au o matua*" - Children are the heart of a parent.

‘*Our children and our elders are the most vulnerable in our communities. How well they are doing or how well we care for them signals how well we are doing as Tokelauans*’: (Suria Aukuso, Oranga Tamariki practitioner)

**Cultural Considerations**

**Spirituality**

Tokelauans are very spiritual and religious people. The church is very much at the centre of village and social life in Tokelau where everyone is a member of a parish family. In Aotearoa, integration into kiwi society has somewhat eroded this aspect of life for some Tokelauans. Consequently, it is not unusual to come across Tokelauans who are not members of a church, or some who are have chosen to isolate themselves from local Tokelauan communities. For the majority however, churches continue to be social and communal centres for Tokelauans and a great resource for finding family.

**Gagana Tokelau - Tokelauan language**

The use of *gagana Tokelau* and common terms (see table at the end of the section) would greatly help engagement with parents, elders and community leaders.

A small proportion of Tokelau children and young people speak their native language, and the possibility decreases with ethnically mixed families and NZ-born generations. It is important therefore to ascertain what language best suits the child or young person, and ensure that they are meaningfully engaged in discussions that are not held in their preferred language. Children and young people who are not fluent in Tokelauan may still understand the words and cultural concepts used during engagement. Hearing their native language may help alleviate a child’s or young person’s anxiety and build rapport.

The Samoan language is the closest language to Tokelauan, and most Tokelauans are fluent in it. The ability to speak some Samoan may also be helpful when engaging with Tokelauan families.

**Important Relational Concepts and Values for Practice**

**Traditional Expectations of Children**

Children are expected to show respect to parents and elders. ‘*Ko te ava ki matua ko te kimataga o te poto*’ - ‘Respect for your parents and elders is the beginning of wisdom’. In some households children eat after the parents or elders have had their meal. When walking in front of a parent or elder, one must always show respect by bowing the head or body and uttering the word ‘*tulou ni*’. When children address their parents or elders, they show respect by sitting down or kneeling before talking.
Tokelau villages are made up of ancestral plots where family homes are built and they have special names. A child who misbehaves or has done something bad or transgressed against someone else, is often rebuked with the saying ‘Manatua o ivi ma tulaga-va’e’ – ‘Remember your bones (ancestors) and place of standing (where you come from)’. To behave badly or to transgress against others signifies a person who does not know to whom she/he belongs and brings a loss of face for the family.

**Fatupaepae – Matriarchal Leader**

An influential position in the Tokelau kāiga is that of the fatupaepae. This is the honourable title given to elderly women or women of seniority descended from the female line. These matriarchs are responsible for overseeing the equal and fair distribution of resources as a means of maintaining the welfare and care of the entire extended kāiga. The solidarity of the family group and success of the day-to-day operations depend upon the fairness and authority of the fatupaepae.

The fatupaepae holds a privileged role and is influential in making key family decisions. This role, more than any other, is the central symbol of kāiga and is not based on hierarchy but rather on leadership. The fatupaepae represents wisdom, compassion, justice, strength and decision making based on consensus by kāiga.

**Toeaina – Male Elders**

Toeaina (male elders) are the repositories of Tokelau knowledge. In faka-Tokelau, toeaina are stewards who guide and lead kāiga.

‘Manatua te toeaina i te mulivaka’ - ‘Remember the old man at the helm of the canoe’ signifies the prestigious place male elders hold in their guardianship and leadership role as head of the kāiga. They are the keepers or guardians of tradition, knowledge and wisdom. A Tokelauan gathering or a meeting is without mana if there is no toeaina present. They are the ones who always open, watch over and close any gathering or meeting. Toeaina work alongside fatupaepae in making decisions that affect kāiga and Tokelauan communities.

**Kāiga – Kinship Arrangements**

The different arrangements of kin groups, the circumstances under which they come together and their purpose, are focused on the wellbeing of family members. Traditional features of the kāiga are the complementary roles of the tamatāne (male) and the tamafafine (female). Males are responsible for providing and working for the benefit of the kāiga, while females are responsible for the distribution of food and resources provided by the males.

The communal social constraints of living in small island village communities in Tokelau where village affairs are governed by a patriarchal council of elders; or where family life, lore and protocols are often sanctioned by its matriarchal and religious counterparts, have evolved over time as a result of the assimilation of Samoan and western languages, ways, ideas, and values. In New Zealand there are strong local Tokelauan communities in Auckland, Rotorua, Taupo, Porirua and Lower Hutt. Smaller groups have been established in Northland, Hawkes Bay, Masterton and Dunedin. These communities keep alive Tokelauan values of collective responsibility for the welfare of kāiga and community. They are a resource for advice and exploring kin connections.
**Vā o te tamatâne ma te tuafafine** - the special relationship between brother and sister

The Vā (relationship) between brother and sister is sacred. It is the most significant and cherished relationship in Tokelau culture. This is concerned with mutual welfare, the welfare of kāiga, and that of the wider kin network.

The reciprocal obligations underpinning this relationship are traditionally marked by the brother taking responsibility for the needs and care of his sister once she is married. In turn, the sister would give her son to her brother (a custom known as *mate*) especially if the brother was to leave Tokelau. The sister’s son becomes the protector of his uncle to the point of death. This tradition showed this special bond between brother and sister, and some Tokelauans continue it today.

The moral code of behaviour between brothers and sisters includes the observation of respectful language and behaviour between them and towards their children. Their children also commonly refer to their aunts and uncles as mother or father.

**Te Kāiga Māopoopo: Unity and purpose to achieve individual and collective wellbeing through peace and respect.**

Adherence to hierarchy and expectations of conduct support family harmony and wellbeing. Typically in a gathering, children and young people do not talk when the elders are present due to cultural hierarchy and respect. If there are visitors, it is the male head of the household whose role it is to engage while his wife, sister or children refrain from talking or joining in the conversation. The male may then signal permission to the others to speak. Social workers who wish to engage with children and adult women in the family may need to initially engage the male head of household as appropriate.

**Alofa fai tamāmanu:** Compassion shown towards the most vulnerable members of kāiga.

Traditionally this was symbolised by the equitable distribution of fish from a fishing expedition to all members of the village. If a mother with children had no one to take part in the communal fishing exercise she was still given a share of the catch.

*Alofa fai tamāmanu* is shown especially towards those without kāiga, without connection to fenua (land), those experiencing suffering, and those unable to take care of themselves including the elderly, sick, physically and mentally disadvantaged.

**Vā feāloaki:** Establishment and maintenance of harmonious relationships.

*Vā* feāloaki describes and represents the different relationships and special connections that family members have with each other. For example, under *inati* a brother will give his catch to his sister to distribute to the rest of the kāiga. This describes his acknowledgement of his duty and obligations to maintain *vā feāloaki* with his sister and kāiga in the context of faka-Tokelau.

Respect and honour is shown through the use of language, rituals and dignified behaviour. *Vā* feāloaki is preserved in families through the fulfilment of duties and responsibilities for each other. Honouring these relationships is of high importance.
**Fakaaloalo:** Expressions via behaviour and language to honour and respect vā feāloaki (harmonious relationships).

*Fakaaloalo* is exemplified by mutual respect and fulfilment of roles and responsibilities that maintain peace and harmony within the kāiga.

*Fakaaloalo* between kāiga members is essential to wellbeing. This is particularly true in the case of toeaina and lōmatutua (elderly men and women), the tamana (older male sibling) and fatupaepae (senior female) with other members of the kāiga. The tamana of the kāiga works alongside the fatupaepae to make decisions for the kāiga. The fatupaepae is the matriarch, nurturer and protector of the kāiga. Fakaaloalo is deeply embedded in the special bond between the tamatāne and tamafafine (brother and sister).

**Māopoopo:** The harmonious synchronicity of members of the community working together for a common good.

*Māopoopo* begins at the planning stage of a mission or endeavour which includes the distribution of benefits to members of the collective. Every person has a role and responsibility to ensure the success of the undertaking.

**Fakahoa lelei:** The spirit of fairness involved in the equal distribution of communal resources. In the traditional context, this was illustrated by the fair distribution of a catch to ensure the needs and wellbeing of every person in the kāiga were met.

### Useful Words and Phrases

#### Common Greetings and Phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greetings, hello</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malo ni</td>
<td>Greetings, hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malo hau (single person)</td>
<td>Welcome come in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omai (more than one person)</td>
<td>Welcome come in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E a mai koe?</td>
<td>How are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuia fakafetai, ka ko koe?</td>
<td>I’m fine thanks, and you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fakamolemole</td>
<td>Please</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fakafetai</td>
<td>Thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulou ni</td>
<td>Excuse me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tofa ni</td>
<td>Goodbye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulou ni kupu kua kua hala ni</td>
<td>Apologise, sorry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Family Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>afafine</td>
<td>daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ataliki</td>
<td>son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pepe</td>
<td>baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mokopuna</td>
<td>grandchild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tama, tamaiti</td>
<td>child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamaiti</td>
<td>children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>matua</td>
<td>mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamana</td>
<td>father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tupuna</td>
<td>grandparents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaiga</td>
<td>family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Tongan**

**Fakatapu – Clearing the path for Mo’ui Fakalata**

Holo pe ho’o mou me’a, ka mau hao atu he,
Kuo mau ta’imalie ‘i he ‘ofa ‘a e ‘Otua
Tu’unga ai ‘a ‘emau fakafetai ‘i he’etau ‘inasi ‘i he mo’ui pea tau femaila’aki ai he ‘aho ni;
Fakatapu ki he kekeke ‘eiki ni
Fakatapu ki he Hou’eiki ‘oku me’aa, Te Ariki nui Kingi Tuheitia moe Tangata whenua ‘o Aotearoa
Fakatulou atu ki he Taki ‘o e Potungaue
Fakafe’iloaki atu ki he sola mo e Vulangi
Pea talangata ‘iate kimautolu ‘o fai ki tu’a mama’o, kae ‘ataa ke fakahoko atu e fakamatala ko eni ki he fakakaukau kuo fatu ‘e he kau ngaue Tonga ‘o e Potungaue ni, ke tatåki’aki ‘a ‘emau ngaue.

**Background**

Tonga is part of the Polynesian group. It is an independent nation with a land area of around 750 square kilometres. Tonga is the only constitutional monarchy in the Pacific and with a class structure in its constitution. The Tongan 2016 Census showed a population of 100,74570. Tonga is one of only two Pacific nations where there is no customary land, a feature that sets it apart from most other Pacific cultures where existence is rooted in the collective ownership and guardianship of land and natural resources. *Fakatuputapu* — clearing the path— (above) is a demonstration of Tongan beliefs in acknowledging land, people of the land, God, and expressing the meaning of a particular engagement. Tongan is the national language.

**Tongans in Aotearoa**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tongans</td>
<td>40,719</td>
<td>50,478</td>
<td>60,336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority (94.0% or 56,685) in Aotearoa live in the North Island while (6.1% or 3,651) live in the South Island. Most (92.3%) live in urban areas. Concentrations are in the Auckland region (77.8% or 46,971), followed by Wellington (4.1% or 2,448), and Waikato (3.9% or 2,370) regions. The population living in the Auckland region mainly live around Mangere-Otahuhu (27.1%), Otara-Papatoetoe (14.2%), and Maungakiekie-Tamaki (13.4%) areas71. Around 22,416 of Tongans in Aotearoa in 2013 were born overseas72.

**Traditional Society Structure**

Knowledge of this structure and some of the key relational expectations are important for practitioners to understand in order to engage appropriately and respectfully with Tongan children and *kainga*.

*Kakai Tonga* (Tongan people) are divided into three classes:
1. *Tu’i* (the King)
2. *Hou’eiki* (nobility) and *matapule*
3. *Kakai Tu’a* (commoners)

Tongans are born into their place in Tongan society. It is expected that every Tongan is taught their place and their *fatongia* (responsibility) to self, family, church, King and country. Privileges, duties and responsibilities are associated with class. People address each other in language that is appropriate to their rank, for example: greetings for royalty *‘Malo e Lakoifie’*, for nobility – *‘Maloe e Laumalie’* and for commoners *‘Malo e lelei’*.

Tonga has a system of 31 noble titles plus three *matapule* who are stewards of the King’s lands. All land in Tonga belongs to the King according to the Tongan Constitution.

**Lotu - Christianity**
Tongans adopted Christianity as the national religion in the early to mid-1800s when Tonga’s King George I converted to Christianity and declared Tonga to be protected only by God. The Tongan coat of arms has the words *‘Otua mo Tonga Ko hoku tofi’a’* – *‘God and Tonga are my inheritance’*. Christianity has since become deeply imbedded in Tongan culture. Churches are an important part of *kainga he nofo* and form *kainga lotu* (Church family); they provide support and are a focus of *kainga* association.

**Nofo ‘a kainga – Tongan Family Structure**
The traditional kainga is collective in nature. The relationship between the members of the kainga is reciprocal and interdependent, with each member fulfilling an expected role and responsibilities to another.

Traditional roles within the kainga:

- **Tamai** (father) is usually the head of the 'api. If the father is no longer in the 'api the role is then taken by the fa'e (mother).

- **'Ubumotu’a** – is the head of the paternal kainga. The 'ulumotu’a is a male and this role is inherited by the oldest of the paternal line. It is regarded as fale hufanga (house of refuge). Traditional family decision making is based on a collective consensus, but where there is disagreement, the 'ulumotu’a makes the final decision. When the 'ulumotu’a is absent, making and guidance is deferred to the elders (who are women or men).

- Paternal kainga often hold higher standing than maternal kainga in decision making, depending on the situation, family concerned and context.

- Sisters are socially superior to brothers within families. For example, mehikitanga (paternal aunts) or fahu (eldest paternal aunt in a family line that extends beyond the nuclear unit) are matriarchal figure heads. Women in these positions traditionally have naming rights over their brother’s children.

- Elders are respected by the young.

**Fanau - Children**

Tongans view children as treasures and gifts from God – Koe fanau koe mata'i koloa. The birth of the first born child is the link that connects the maternal and paternal family from just kainga he nofo (associations of non kin) to kainga (family). The kainga has the responsibility to teach, care and guide the children about talangofua (obedience), akonaki (expected behaviour), and consequences.

- **Birth Order, Gender, Class**
  First born sons and daughters hold particular status and are raised to be aware of responsibility and expectations from an early age; these include looking out for younger siblings and over time, the kainga. Subsequent children are also taught their roles, responsibilities within and duties to the kainga. The child’s gender is also significant to legal rights and entitlements. Males have legal privilege over females in land inheritance and succession to the throne in Tonga.

- **Fakahingoa 'ae fanau** – Naming of children
  The honour of naming the children usually is usually given to the paternal aunt, mehikitanga. This tradition creates an attachment between children and their kainga.

- **Fakame - Children’s Day**
  Children are celebrated annually in May. Church services are led by the youth while parents, mehikitanga and grandparents prepare for the occasion with kainga gathering and sharing food. In January every year, children and adults attend church in their school uniform or graduation regalia to mark the importance of education.

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Mo’ui Fakalata – Tongan Cultural Framework Practice

Philosophy

Mo’ui denotes life and wellbeing; it refers to a multi-relational living that is healthy and well. Mo’ui refers to the physical, mental, spiritual and wellbeing of families and communities. Additionally, it refers to the wellbeing of peoples and communities as important components of the ecology (fonua). Fakalata means enjoyment of life from a Tongan perspective, a life that enables people to be themselves and where it’s pleasant, happy, safe and content. Joined, the concepts of Mo’ui and Fakalata symbolise one’s specific and collective relationships and responsibilities. This conceptual framework underpins effective practice with fanau Tonga, their kainga and kainga he nofo, applying a holistic approach to life and peaceful co-existence.

This framework encompasses three essential and inseparable aspects of wellbeing: ’atamai (mind), loto (spirit) and sino (physical). Together these aspects radiate harmony within each member of the kainga and by extension the whole kainga. This harmony is referred to as ‘napangapanga malie’ — that all dimensions are well and balanced. The absence or compromise of any one of these disrupts harmony and can result in a home without peace, safety, joy or laughter.

Kainga is fundamental in Mo’ui Fakalata because it reflects the collective, reciprocal and supportive role each individual member contributes to achieving Mo’ui fakalata.

The spirit of Mo’ui Fakalata is aspirational. It focuses on the potential and strengths of people and nofo ‘a kainga. At its core is a belief in the innate power of the human spirit to overcome obstacles and difficulties. It recognises that each kainga has the spirit and strength to make decisions for their fanau. The framework supports practitioners to understand and build with fanau Tonga and their kainga situations to achieve positive outcomes.
Purpose

Mo’ui Fakalata provides cultural knowledge and information to inform planning, engagement and decision making with Tongan families, communities and colleagues. In light of the fact that most decisions made within Oranga Tamariki about Tongan children are made by non-Tongans, this framework targets both Tongan and non-Tongan users.

The framework developers strongly recommend using this knowledge to develop best practice with Tongan children and kainga (families), and where possible, using the Tongan language. The language and culture significantly influence the way many Tongan children and families conceptualise and analyse their experiences, and the way they communicate with others of Tongan and non-Tongan background. Whether Tongan or non-Tongan, the practitioner must seek cultural consult, this recognises that not all kainga are the same.

The development of Mo’ui Fakalata was assisted by works of Tongan researchers, Puao-Te-Atatu, the strategic vision and goals of Oranga Tamariki, and input from Tongan Oranga Tamariki practitioners and staff.

Mo’ui Fakalata recognises the strengths and potential of people based on the innate power of the human spirit and ones bond with the divine. It is a sense of congeniality (fakaholonofo).

Tefito’i tui - Key Values:

- Feveitokai’aki – reciprocal respect
- Faka’apa’apa – respect
- ‘Ofa – love, care, compassion
- Fetokoni’aki – reciprocity
- Fatongia – duty and responsibility. Fatongia is rooted in ’ofa fonua (fervent patriotism), mateaki (commitment and loyalty), tauhi fonua (cultural obligations), melino (peace) and faaitaha (unity)
- Tauhi vaha’a – maintaining relationships

The essence of the Tongan heart and spirit are comprised of these elements:

- Loto ‘ofa - loving spirit, compassion
- Loto ma’a - honest spirit
- Loto lelei - good spirit
- Loto meline - peaceful spirit
- Loto fieia - joyful spirit
- Loto to’a - courageous spirit
- Loto hangamalie - free spirit
- Loto mafana - warm spirit

The framework focuses on three key elements of social work engagement:

1. Fakafehokotaki – engagement
2. Vaka’i pea fakama’opo’opo – assessment
3. Fakalotofale’ia – decision making
Engagement – *Fakafehokotaki*

The use of *faka Tonga* (Tongan language) and simple terms (see table at the end of the section) would greatly help engagement with parents, elders and community leaders. It is important however to ascertain what language best suits the child or young person concerned. A significant proportion of Tongan children and young people speak Tongan because it is a language that is still used frequently in homes and faith-based communities. The possibility of this decreases however with ethnically mixed families and NZ-born generations (refer to Va’ai’efetu Part 1).

It is important to ascertain what language best suits the child or young person concerned, and ensure that they are meaningfully engaged in discussions that are not held in their preferred language. Children and young people not fluent in Tongan may still understand the words and cultural concepts used during engagement. Hearing their native language may help alleviate a child’s or young person’s anxiety and build rapport.

Engagement should be inclusive of ‘*‘api, kainga, kainga he nofo* (home, extended family and community). When this occurs, decisions are more likely to reflect and promote individual and *kainga* responsibility for outcomes for *fanau* (children).

- *Fakafehokotaki* emphasises the importance of cooperation and relationships, established through *a‘u tonu* (face to face contact). Using Tongan greetings or inclusive words to *fehokotaki* with the *kainga*.
- *Matakainga* (behaving with mutual respect). Through the *fakafehokotaki* stage the social worker’s mannerism, acknowledging *kainga* by sharing some information about their background, story to connect with *kainga*. Where roles are identified and understood and engagement occurs in a context of mutual respect.
- *Anga Fakatokilalo* (acting with humility) accentuates the social worker’s *loto* and good intentions for the *kainga*. Once a relationship is created or acknowledged then the social worker’s distinct role and purpose can begin to be discussed one step at a time.

Assessment – *Vakai’i pea fakama’opo’opo*

- *Vakai’i pea fakama’opo’opo* reflects the individual’s and collective strength of the *kainga*. A *kainga* that understands and realises its capabilities through its members is one that can ensure the safety and wellbeing of its children.
- The Tongan child’s world is often intertwined with that of the *kainga*, the collective to whom she/he belongs and is the main support. It is important therefore to understand the situation of the surrounding *kainga* as well as that of the child. The information obtained will aid the interpretation of information, situation, decision making with the family, and enable the collaborative development and implementation of realistic, achievable, child focussed plans.

Decision Making – *Fakalotofale’ia*

- *Fakalotofale’ia* is the process of *kainga* decision making that encompasses the strengths and spirit of the *kainga* to achieve best interest of *fanau* (children) and safety of *kainga he nofo* (wider community).
- *Fakalotofale’ia* is evoked in times of crisis, because of its restorative and preventative elements. For example, the care of *fanau* Tonga – Tongan children, can sometimes be stressful, accordingly, the members of the *kainga* hold a *fakalotofale’ia* to discuss how this could be addressed. The kainga members express their commitment to fulfil the *fatongia* – obligation’ towards *fanau*, based on values such as ‘*ofa* – love/compassion.
• **Fakafolofale'ia** is characterised by the following values among many others: 'Ofa (love or compassion), fetokoni'aki (interdependence), makafetoli'aki (reciprocity), uouongataha (collective), faka'apa'a'apa (respect), and fe'ofo'ofani (harmony/share and care/looking out for each other). The practice of Fakalotofale'ia promotes the internalising of key values (tefito'i tui) among the members’ relationships within the **kainga**\(^{74}\).
• **Fakalata'ia** is the outcome of the **fakalotofale'ia** that will lead up to a plan.

### Useful Words and Phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Greetings and Phrases</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mālo e lēlei</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mou me'a mai</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mou me'a a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fēfē hake?</td>
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<tr>
<td>'Oku ou sai pe malo, fefe ā koe?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fakamolemole, kataki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mālo (or) fakafeta'i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Alu a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nofo a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fakamolemole</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mulī</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Family Terms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'o fefine</td>
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<tr>
<td>fohā</td>
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<tr>
<td>pēpē</td>
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<tr>
<td>mokopuna</td>
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<tr>
<td>tamasi'i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ta'ahine</td>
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<tr>
<td>tamaiki</td>
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<tr>
<td>fanau</td>
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<tr>
<td>fa'e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fa'e tangata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kainga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mehikitanga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tokoua</td>
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<tr>
<td>'ulumotu’a</td>
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Tuvalu

Background

Tuvalu is an independent Polynesian nation. Tuvalu has nine islands. It is one of the smallest countries in the world, with a total land area of approximately 26 square kilometres across its nine islands. The capital is on the island of Funafuti. The population estimate for Tuvalu in 2011 was 11,206.\(^75\)

Tuvalu has three main languages – Tuvaluan, English and I-Kiribati. It has two main dialects, one spoken in the northern set of islands and one in the southern group. There are many similarities between Tuvaluan, Tokelauan and Samoan languages. Most Tuvaluans are members of the Christian Church of Tuvalu (Ekalesia Kelisiano o Tuvalu).\(^76\)

Tuvaluans value their land as an asset and a symbol of status. All families live on their inherited lands. With the exception of land that has been gifted, adopted, exchanged or bequeathed under the terms of a will, land is customarily passed on through the eldest son. Tuvalu has become one of the most endangered countries in the world due to climate change. Some of its people have already left and resettled in other countries, such as on the island of Kioa off the east coast of Fiji's Vanua Levu,\(^77\) and in West Auckland, Aotearoa. The contamination and loss of homeland due to climate change has potentially severe implications for Tuvaluan culture, identity, spirituality, and future generations.

Tuvaluans in Aotearoa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tuvaluans</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>2625</td>
<td>3,537</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most (95.6% or 3,381) live in the North Island and the rest (4.4% or 156 people) in the South Island. The people are concentrated in the Auckland region (72.4% or 2,562), followed by Wellington (12.5% or 441) and Otago (3.1% or 111) regions, mostly in urban settings. Of those living in the Auckland region, the majority live around Henderson-Massey (64.8%), Whau (6.2%), and Waitakere Ranges (6.2%) areas.\(^78\) Around 40.1% (1,419) of Tuvaluans in Aotearoa in 2013 were born overseas.\(^79\)

The number of Tuvaluan children that come to the notice of Oranga Tamariki is not high. When considering the appropriate cultural approach to use, the organisation has sourced from Toku fou tiale, a Tuvaluan conceptual framework developed to address family violence with Tuvaluan communities.\(^80\) Toku fou tiale informs of important relational concepts and life principles that practitioners need to understand and incorporate into their practice when working with Tuvaluan children, families and communities.

\(^77\) Ibid.
approach will be further developed as knowledge and understanding develop about what works best when engaging with Tuvaluan children and families.

**Epa Faliki – Tuvaluan Cultural Framework for Practice**

**Definition**

The Epa Faliki is a special mat specifically made for a baby in preparation for their birth. ‘Faliki’ means sacred, and is derived from the word ‘Aliki’ means God. For these reasons, the Epa Faliki was been chosen to symbolise the Tuvaluan cultural framework for practice.

“Lalaga a te Epa Faliki mo fakanofo a te tamaliki mo ona ola puipui”

“The weaving of the Sacred Mat is for the wellbeing and protection of the child”

The Epa Faliki symbolises the strong foundation from which tamaliki develop. The Epa Faliki is where the tamaliki rests, where they lie while being fed, taught, and cared for by their parents and kaaiga.

**Philosophy**

The philosophy that underpins the Epa Faliki is reflected in Tuvalu’s national emblem and anthem with the phrase “Tuvalu Mo Te Atua” or Tuvalu For The Almighty. Preparations for the tamaliki begin before they are born as the Epa Faliki is weaved until it is complete. Every tamaliki has their own Epa Faliki, and each mat carries with it the child's genealogy, identity, hopes and dreams for their future.

The weaving of the Epa Faliki is a celebration of tamaliki that has been gifted from God, and therefore a blessing to matua (parents), te kaaiga (family including extended) and the community. The safety and wellbeing of tamaliki is “sacred”, making the care and protection of, and love for tamaliki, the priority not just for matua, but also te kaaiga and the surrounding community.

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81 God – refers to the Christian religion
82 Photo used with permission of Litala Eliuta, grandmother of child pictured.
83 The Pandanus plant is considered the best source of weaving material for the Epa Faliki, because only the best materials can be used to hold the precious and sacred life. The Pandanus leaf (colour and texture) is used because of its beauty, strength, durability and quality.
Traditional Societal Structure

Kaaiga - nuclear family
Pui Kaaiga - extended family
Sologa - genealogy
Fenua - individual islands
Atufenau - nation
Fakapotopotoga – groups, church, island, island group

Values

When working with Tuvalu tamaliki and kaaiga, practitioners must understand core Tuvalu values that in order to get it right with them.

Children: Children are gifts from God
Tuvalu tamaliki are valued and precious to kaaiga, because they are blessings from God. The practice approach regardless of the presenting concerns should always take this into account.

Love: Unity in God’s love
Tuvalu kaaiga support and care for each other in any situation.

Respect: For life and each other
Tuvalu people value respect, humility, and a willing to help those in need.

Family: Guardians for tamaliki
Love, support, and care is collectively provided.

Tuvalu Language: Carries cultural identity
Language carries and holds the past, present, and the future for tamaliki.

Weaving Culture into – Decision Making, Engagement, Collaboration

Fakatokaga – Planning, Preparation, Creation of the Epa Faliki
- a metaphor for practice

The Pandanus (kie) must be prepared for weaving. The preparation includes:
- the location and collection of the kie to be used;
- preparation of the kie (cut, dry, store);
- decision on who will weave the Epa Faliki; and
- design of the pattern of the Epa Faliki.

The roles and responsibilities for the preparation work is given to people with mana and integrity. Through their work and weaving, their mana is transferred to the Epa Faliki, and it becomes sacred and blessed for the tamaliki. When these preparation steps are applied to practice with Tuvaluan tamaliki and kaiga, it means getting the right planning and people involved in order to achieve best outcomes for tamaliki.

Faaitega (weaver/practitioner)

The weaver skilfully weaves, shapes, moulds and colours the kie to create a beautiful Epa. The weaver, a mother herself, is key female
relationship to the tamaliki, and a woman of status and mana within the kaaiga. It is believed that the love, care, beauty, skill and expertise in the weaver's hands are transferred into the Epa Faliki. The pattern and colours used in the weave are significant to the genealogy and heritage of the kaaiga. When applied to engagement with Tuvalu tamaliki and kaaiga, the weaving is a joint venture between the kaaiga and the Ministry.

Important considerations are:

(i) **Kie** – contributing people and voices
Parents, kaaiga and community must work alongside the Ministry to ensure the wellbeing, safety and care of tamaliki in the kaaiga. The voice of the tamaliki is to be weaved throughout this process.

(ii) **Family Decision Making** – Identification of the lead weaver
The kaaiga will identify who among them will take the lead in working alongside the Ministry.

(iii) **Tools - kaaiga and community resources**
Ensure key members of the kaaiga (include extended), church, and island community are involved in making plans, monitoring and reviewing plans.

(iv) **Design** – identity, heritage, connection
Weave island community and services into plans for tamaliki. Ensure community and service providers participate in planning. Provide additional resourcing that may be required to support kaaiga to carry out plans.

(v) **Colour** - beautifying and enhancing
Build and maintain strong, loving, caring and respectful working relationships with the parents, kaaiga and community to ensure continuity of wellbeing, safety and care of tamaliki in kaaiga.

**Relational Considerations**

(i) **Traditional ways of upholding the Child’s rights**
In the wider community setting, children views are for the most part, represented by adults. With the migration to New Zealand, the influence of western thinking, and legislation support, Tuvalu tamaliki are exercising their right to express their own views. This shift can often create tension in the tamaliki-matua\(^\text{84}\) relationship.

(ii) **Gender roles and Decision making**
Women contribute equally with men in discussions, but men are usually the decision makers in kaaiga.
The first cousin relationship (e.g. a female and her male first cousins or a male and his female first cousins) is tapu in Tuvalu culture and can be more significant than a brother-sister relationship. These relationships can take the lead in the support, care and protection of children.

(iii) **Relevance of culture and language**
Tuvalu kaaiga in Aotearoa are primarily first and second generation New Zealanders, and cultural practices in Tuvalu are still largely adhered to. The Tuvalu language is primarily the language used in many kaaiga. However, it is becoming more common for

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\(^{84}\) tamaliki-matua – child-parent
generations born in Aotearoa not to do so. With migration, interracial relationships are common, and this is also impacting on the use, or lack of use, of the Tuvaluan language.

(iv) Role of churches and community
Most Tuvalu people are connected to a church. As most Tuvalu kaaiga in Aotearoa are first and second generation New Zealanders, the connections to church, community and tradition is still strong. Elders, church, and Tuvalu community networks can provide cultural support and advice to kaaiga.

(v) Tuvalu Island identity and connections
Each family is linked to an island/s, and each island has its own church. The bond with one’s island is often more significant than being known as a Tuvaluan.

Useful Words and Phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Greeting and Phrases</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fakatālofa atu</td>
<td>Formal greeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tālofa</td>
<td>Greetings, hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulufale mai</td>
<td>Welcome come in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E ā koe?</td>
<td>How are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Au e 'lei, fakafetai, kae e ā koe?</td>
<td>I’m fine thanks, and you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fakamolemole, au kō ‘sē!</td>
<td>Please</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fakafetai / Fāfetai</td>
<td>Thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulou</td>
<td>Excuse me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tofa</td>
<td>Goodbye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fakamolemoale</td>
<td>Please</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fakatosee atu</td>
<td>I am sorry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Terms</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tamaaki</td>
<td>child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamaliki fafine</td>
<td>daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamaliki tagata</td>
<td>son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pepe</td>
<td>baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mokopuna</td>
<td>Grandchild (mokopu – great grandchild)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>matua</td>
<td>Mother, parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamana</td>
<td>father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaaiga</td>
<td>family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha’a</td>
<td>Aancestral family/ancestors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part C: Practice Guidance for Integration of Culture

The ethnic specific knowledge and Va’aifetu’s umbrella principles have been developed to complement the existing Oranga Tamariki Core Practice Framework for mainstream application. The New Zealand Social Workers Registration Act 2003, Section 6 requires a practitioner to be competent in working with indigenous people and different ethnic and cultural groups in Aotearoa to be registered. Va’aifetu and its cultural frameworks will directly support this.

Va’aifetu’s umbrella principles will keep practice and practitioners focussed on the child during the application of ethnic specific principles and manner of engagement.

C- Child, F – Family, P - Practitioner

For many Pacific and non-Pacific staff, this will affirm existing cultural-practice knowledge, awareness, and encourage ongoing development. For others, the information will be new and they will need time and support to apply it purposely and safely. Keep in mind the differences between Pacific cultures as well as the commonalities indicated by the overriding principles. Refer to Va’aifetu Part 1 for background and data.

The guidelines and prompts are designed to be weaved through the assessment, planning, implement and review (APIR) phases of engagement. They are to complement the core questions of enquiry and considerations of statutory social work intervention.
**Pathway of Culturally Responsive Practice**

- **Contact**
- **Intake & Critical Response**
- **Site Allocation**
- **Review**
- **Cultural Consultation**
- **Child**
- **Young Person**
- **Implement**
- **Assess**
- **Plan**

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**First Contact and Intake**

**Reception – Front Door**

- Smile and acknowledge people especially if they have been waiting. This simple courtesy lets them know they have not been forgotten.
- The display of Pacific artefacts such as tapa, Pacific greetings, and children’s art may be useful. Be mindful of non-verbal gestures that can put Pacific children, young people, adults and elders at ease.
- A conversation about cultural background may help put people at ease as this is often the way Pacific people build connections.
- Do not leave people waiting for long periods. A person may have taken time off work, have dependents waiting for them, may be unwell, feeling unsafe, angry, anxious, be under the influence of some substance, or accompanied by children.

**Intake and Critical Response**

- Ethnicity, island, village affiliations - ascertain ethnicity/ethnicities and island group of primary caregivers and significant others to the child.
- Religious affiliation - ascertain which denomination and church location if possible.
- Language needs - Ascertain primary language/s of communication with child, caregivers, and significant others. Is a translator needed?
- Child’s community affiliations - may be different to caregivers.
• Cultural characteristic – based on the case history/information, is this family traditional, contemporary or nuclear?
• Dignity and humility - Removal of a child from a community venue (e.g. church, community hall, childcare facility) is a potentially risky situation for all those present especially children. It is also a severe breach of privacy, confidentiality, and humiliating for children and families. Negotiate less risky ways to conduct the uplift unless it is absolutely necessary.
• Feelings of anxiety and shame are commonly felt by Pacific families when they are approached by statutory agencies. Does the information at hand (historical and new) warrant Oranga Tamariki involvement?

Assessment, Planning, Implementation, Review (APIR)

Cultural Consultation

Cultural Consultation is to be conducted in all cases involving Pacific children, regardless of the ethnicity of the practitioner. This formal process is used to provide cultural advice to support a specific cultural knowledge or skill need. It can occur at any time and at multiple times during the lifetime of a case from initial Contact/Intake to Review of plans and cases.

• Cultural Consultation MUST involve advisors of matching ethnicity to the client, e.g. Tokelau for Tokelau; not Samoan for Tongan. There are unique protocols, lineages, values, local knowledge, potential risks and mitigating factors that only those of the child’s culture will be able to advise on.
• If the site cannot match the ethnicity, seek advice from the pool of Pacific staff from the wider region, then nationally. Is there as Pacific person on the Care and Protection Resource Panel?
• If the expertise is absent in the organisation, consider contracting an appropriate Pacific organisation, community group, or respected individual. Do we need a mediator, interpreter, or facilitator? How will that person be prepared, are they child centred?
• Consider greetings, language/dialect, protocols including religious, non-verbal communication, physical presentation, gender, status, time needs; ways to convey sensitive matters, work through resistance, get past history, and repeat simple messages.
• Pacific Child and family preparation - How to prepare a child with limited English or recent migrant to be uplifted/returned home/permanently placed; and similarly the caregivers?
• Pacific Victims - what fears, anxieties, cultural, gender, spiritual or cultural protocols, perceptions of justice, and history need to be considered?
• Confidential files – allowing temporary access to those involved in cultural consultation will yield the best advice. Family names, cultural and religious affiliations case history can all help cultural advisors to form a picture of the cultural characteristics of the family (e.g. traditional, nuclear, contemporary, disconnected) that would help planning, shape the engagement approach, and any anticipated risks to the child, family and workers.
• Record the issues discussed/agenda, participants, cultural advice given, advice used rationale for choices or decisions, outcomes from use of advice, any feedback on practice.

Cultural Supervision

Cultural Supervision is a formal, intentional, professional development mechanism. It is child and family centred because it is about practice that starts from understanding the people we serve from whatever cultural background they are from, including Pacific. Understanding the people we serve is important in order to better support them navigate their way through a journey of change over rough seas. Perhaps as important, is using cultural supervision realise one’s own unconscious biases and being appropriately guided to address them. Done well, learning could shift attitudes,
change behaviour, break stereotypes, and help people ‘tune in’ better to Pacific children and families.

Cultural supervision should be considered for all practitioners including supervisors, co-ordinators, youth workers, therapists, psychologists, practice leaders and advisors, caregivers, and managers where appropriate.

- Cultural Supervision can work on an individual basis or as a group. It needs to occur regularly to build knowledge and encourage incorporation of learning into practice.
- Pacific staff will benefit from separate sessions of cultural supervision in addition to joint sessions with non-Pacific staff. This will support the development of personal and professional resilience for Pacific within a non-Pacific environment and statutory context.
- A supervisor MUST be a respected Pacific professional, child focussed, have appropriate practice experience, and a depth of understanding and general knowledge of Pacific children and people. It is not necessary to match the ethnicity of the supervisee/s and the supervisor.
- Have a supervision agenda. Experience and expertise with one or a few Pacific cultures does not equate to expertise in others. Be open, share, ask.
- If the site or region cannot provide cultural supervision, negotiate to have an external supervisor if this will help you or your group work better with Pacific children and families. Set protocols for confidentiality, reporting back, expectations, quality supervision, and engagement in sessions.
- **Record** the cultural issues discussed/agenda, participants, learning obtained, impact on practice, sense of confidence and competence.

**Case Allocation**

- **Case workers** – Cultural responsiveness occurs here. Allocating the right workers to a case is a pivotal decision. Where possible, allocate at least one practitioner as keyworker, co-worker or supervisor who is of the same culture as the child, balancing cultural and professional expertise as relevant.
- Co-working responsibilities need to be clear, appropriate and reflected in case records.
- Pacific families are commonly large and the children may have different needs. Is there a need to assign an additional key or co-practitioner?
- If there is no Pacific practitioner on site but the information suggests the need for cultural expertise, consider cross site co-working, or collaborating with an agency that can provide that professional cultural expertise.
- **Supervisor** - Consider how cultural supervision could be provided to the case if it is not available within the site. Collaboration across sites and contracting in external expertise may be options.
- Consider the needs of the non-Pacific supervisor who must supervise the case, whether or not the social worker involved is Pacific. Collaboration across sites and contracting in external expertise may be options.

**Research**

- Research is important as part of assessment, kinship search, and as part of review, before contact with the child, family and other individuals of interests.
- What does the case history/information suggest about the child/young person?
- What does the case history suggest about the family? Traditional collective or independent? Language needs, decision makers, style of engagement, etc.
- Map out nuclear and extended family, religious, sports, friendships, and other significant associations for the child, young person, and key family members. Review these in your engagements.
- What cultural elements were considered last time and what was the impact of our response?
Identify significant elders and other family/community members to consult with or be part of a family meeting/FGC.

Approach

- Anticipate a positive outcome, it will show in your attitude. You may not be the first social worker the child or family has encountered; other children may have been removed; history with the state may not have been constructive; plans have fallen down.
- Be mindful of gender, age, cultural and spiritual protocols when deciding what words to use, how to say things, and the pace of the dialogue e.g. family members together or separate, the genders, participation or not of children, young people, elders and others.
- Trust needs time to develop or rebuild.
- Prepare your approach using the cultural advice gained beforehand. If you can speak the family’s language prepare an appropriate greeting and closing response to show and reciprocate respect.
- Whether home visiting or meeting the child, young person or family in the office, act, dress and behave as a professional. Professional presentation signals your respect and consideration for the child, young person, the family, or any other person you intend to engage.
- Ensure the time of your visit is appropriate. People often have commitments to extended family, community and faith based organisations.
- Prepare any external mediator/interpreter/liaison person who may be accompanying you. Introduce them and explain the reason for their presence, then they can introduce themselves.
- If using community advisors or working with NGO’s, ensure they hold a position that is respected by the family. Ensure you have confidence in the person’s ability to keep the child’s interest central, and is not perceived to have authority they do not have.
- Note that you are being assessed by the person/people you are engaging.

Mannerisms

- It is advisable not to park on the family’s driveway – that is not your space until you are invited and you may cause inconvenience to family members.
- Remove your shoes if entering a home to signal respect for the cleanliness of the family’s space. Sometimes people may tell you it is ok to walk in with your shoes.
- If you are the host, ask the family if they would like to start the meeting with prayer or in some other way. This helps put people at ease and acknowledges the importance of the spiritual element in the lives of Pacific people. If you are not the host and the family proceed without a spiritual protocol, go with it.
- Offering hospitality may be interpreted as a sign of respect, humility, consideration, and a desire to work together. Hospitality connects and is good manners in the Pacific world.
- Families may share personal information in an effort to make a connection with you; it is typical Pacific style of engagement. They may want to know who you are, who you belong to. Use discretion when sharing about your own identity and cultural roots. The family may feel timid or become concerned about privacy and confidentiality if a close connection is made so assure confidentiality and boundaries.
- Silence and long pauses are part of the Pacific manner of dialogue - do not worry about it. Check it is not due to confusion, intimidation or misunderstanding. Do not assume.
- People may not look at you directly during the conversation - it is usually a sign of respect while they are considering your words and presentation. Depending on cultural background, prolonged eye contact can be a sign of challenge or confrontation.
- If people appear not to be listening or eyes are closed, assume they are listening.
- Some mannerisms (e.g. talking loudly, waving arms, or apparent indifference) may seem like rudeness or aggression, but they may just be a characteristic of the cultural group you are engaging with. Religious and cultural protocol may make it uncomfortable for a man to talk to a woman for example, and vice versa. Status may result in a request to deal with a manager instead of a practitioner.
- Do not rush off once you have obtained your information, courtesies matter.
Identity, Belonging, Hopes and Aspirations

Identity, Belonging, Hopes and Aspirations – Child/Young Person

Refer to Va’aifetu Part 1 on Pacific Child.

- Holistic approach requires understanding of physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.
- Talk to the child/young person/children separately from the adults - give them protected space to talk and question. Be aware of your gender, age, tone of voice, physical presentation, and position of authority. You will need to earn trust as well as consent. Assessment will need to span a number of engagements and observations, not just one interview.
- The Pacific child may feel uncomfortable about speaking to a person of authority as this is usually an adult role. Greeting the child/young person in their Pacific language could help alleviate anxiety.
- The child may have been involved with Oranga Tamariki before and had a negative experience. Reassurance from a parent, trusted family member, older sibling, may help the child feel more comfortable to talk about what is going on.
- If using an interpreter or other expert for the interview, ensure the child or young person understands and is comfortable with this.
- Explore the child’s perception of her/his identity, place in the birth line and family hierarchy, expectations and responsibilities (family and elsewhere), church or other affiliation. Not every child will have detail knowledge of their family origins.
- Explore feelings of belonging, purpose, definition of family?
- Who named them, who raised them, customary care shifts if applicable and her/his feelings about it; significance of any of this to the child?
- Who matters to the child/young person, why? Important for a child who has been separated from siblings, kin, good friends, previous caregivers.
- If the child/young person is in an Oranga Tamariki secure facility or with a non-kin caregiver, how can his/her identity be respected and nurtured while there, e.g. dietary, spiritual routines/needs, associations of identity.
- Returning a child home or transition to a permanent home – consider customary processes, spiritual preparation.

Identity, Belonging, Hopes and Aspirations – Caregiver/Family

Refer to Va’aifetu Part 1 on Pacific Family, Pacific Providers

- Identify the island origins, village, genealogy, significant kin who live overseas, and religious affiliations for the child and significant others.
- Do not expect ready access disclosure of family information – some of this knowledge may be privileged, or may come in time based on trust. Complete pictures are not formed from one visit or a couple of phone calls.
- Ask about community networks that may be important to the family. These are potential contributors to decision making, planning and safety placements.
- Explore the physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of caregivers/family.
- Explore the family’s aspirations. Where does the child/young person fit in, if at all?
- If the child/young person is in Oranga Tamariki care of or with a non-kin caregiver, what can the family suggest to ensure that cultural, religious needs are respected and maintained for the child/young person? What will help the family maintain their connection with the child/young person?
- If using engaging an interpreter, provider or other expert, ensure the family understand why and are comfortable with this. Assure confidentiality.
- Have you briefed the expert appropriately? Is he/she qualified? Do they have sufficient understanding of Oranga Tamariki processes?
Family Meetings and Family Group Conferences

Preparation – Sharing Information
Refer to Va’aifetu Part 1 on Pacific Family.

- Professionals especially police hold power and might intimidate or reignite negative feelings. Reassure families of their rights, protections, and the purpose of the meeting.
- Information can be imparted in stories, written format, using visual aids, music - communicate in manner that will be helpful to the family and child.
- Sensitive matters may need separate meetings between men and women.
- Each new face to face visit to share information may require observation of cultural protocols and other considerations previously discussed in the assessment phase. If the family’s previous experience with the state was negative, your acts of respect will help restore dignity and rebuild relationships.
- Ensure interpreters, external advisors and other experts maintain professional and keep to role.
- Anticipate in your case or court plan that it may take more than one meeting or Family Group Conference to get a genuine plan that all parties can take ownership of.

Preparation – Managing Emotions

- Be sensitive, clear, do not rush.
- Prepare child, family members (emotionally, information wise) well before a meeting or Family Group Conference.
- Consider potential impact on the child (or victimised caregiver) of re-exposure to a perpetrator or family pressure during meetings and court hearings.
- Check how people are feeling about the issue at hand. Shame affect people’s willingness to participate, manner of engagement, information volunteered, and action post engagement.
- In the case of youth offending, check that there will be no repercussion for the young person, e.g. physical discipline by family members (refer to Va’aifetu Part 1 on Youth Offending and Restorative Justice).
- Prayer before a meeting can help alleviate anxiety and focus people on the matter at hand.
- Be optimistic, encourage, and be constructive. Families and recidivist offenders (adults or young people) may question what difference they or the process could make.
- Build in enough time for families to consider all the information and potential consequences. This will signal a genuine commitment to engage with them meaningfully, and encourage participation and ownership of responsibility.

Invitation List

- Get the right people there or reschedule the meeting or Family Group Conference.
- Talk with the child/young person about the list prior to the meeting. Is there someone missing, are they comfortable with those invited?
- Who named, who raised the child? Is that person important to the child now?
- Check the list includes people of key positions in the family according to the relevant culture(s; e.g. aunts and uncles; mehikitanga/paternal aunts, fahu/family matriarch paternal side or ulumotu’a/head of the family (extended) for Tongans; matai/family chief (Samoa’s), mataiapo or ariki for Cook Islanders, pule (Tuvalu), fatupaepae or toeaina (Tokelau). Are both maternal and paternal families represented?
- A family may choose to have their church Minister attend for support.
- A Pacific community agency may be suggested to the family as support.
- Family members or associates may arrive on the day without being invited which is normal for Pacific families but they may not know there is a criteria for participation. Some may attend to show moral support to the child/children, but may not be in a position to offer anything financial or practical to the plan. Their presence matters the child and the collective.
Language and Facilitation

- Would holding the Family Group Conference in the relevant Pacific language produce a better outcome for the young offender? Would it promote family ownership and responsibility for ensuring the plan’s success?
- If using an interpreter or other expert, prepare the appropriate mechanism to obtain and evidence consent from the child, young person, and family to use this person. Section 17 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 supports the use of relevant expertise.
- Experts/professionals – have you briefed them appropriately? Are they appropriately qualified? Do they have sufficient understanding of Oranga Tamariki processes?
- Would co-facilitation of the meeting/FGC with a Pacific colleague (ideally of the same ethnicity as the child/young person) engage the child or family better?

Time and Venue

- A child’s readiness and preparation is a core consideration for setting environment and timing for meetings that involve them.
- Work around the child and main caregivers. If you do not, participation and quality of engagement may be affected because:
  - A significant person may not attend because they are too afraid to ask an employer for time off in case they lose their job or precious work hours.
  - A caregiver or parent may not want to disclose to an employer the reason for time off if they feel ashamed about what their son/daughter has done, or about the abuse, neglect or family violence in their home.
  - A caregiver or parent may not want to disclose to an employer the reason for time off if they feel ashamed about what their son/daughter has done, or about the abuse, neglect or family violence in their home.
- If using an interpreter, be guided by the discussion about which language/s the child/young person would be most comfortable with.
- If you are hosting a meeting, have you briefed them on email about how they would like the meeting to proceed.
- Opening— invite the family to open the meeting/FGC; they may choose prayer or another way. Not every Pacific family is comfortable with other kin let alone agencies knowing their family business.
- Speak with clarity and humility (sit on the floor if they are) by avoiding jargon and talking over people.
- Introduce yourself and your co-worker/accompanying person. Explain what your jobs are and who you work for (carry identification). Check you have been understood.
- Apologise for your unannounced visit if that is the case. Thank the family for making time.
- If you are taking an elder or cultural chief, it may be appropriate for them to lead with cultural protocols depending on your level of cultural competence.
- Do not rush the fono/talanoa/family meeting/FGC. Process helps to get people past old rifts and volatile emotions before they can focus on the child.
- Silence and pauses are ok - it is part of Pacific conversations; it can signal the exchange of respect, humility, permission, and is the space for reflection during dialogue.
- Your explanation of the concerns should be general not explicit, especially about sexual matters. Disclose essential details tactfully to mitigate any volatile responses.
- Be guided by the discussion about which language/s and tone should be used in future engagements. Would written resources be helpful?

The Discussion

- Think of the family’s history, cultural characteristics, speaking protocols.
- The family has come because they want the best for their child despite shame, uncertainty, anger, distrust or intimidation they may feel. Collaborate before the gathering – ask how they would like the meeting to proceed.
- Greet the family in the relevant Pacific language especially if there are elders present.
- If you are hosting, before the meeting, ask the child/young person/family’s view on the inclusion of support people, including a faith-based support person.
- Opening— invite the family to open the meeting/FGC; they may choose prayer or another way. Not every Pacific family is comfortable with other kin let alone agencies knowing their family business.
- Speak with clarity and humility (sit on the floor if they are) by avoiding jargon and talking over people.
- Introduce yourself and your co-worker/accompanying person. Explain what your jobs are and who you work for (carry identification). Check you have been understood.
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- Be guided by the discussion about which language/s and tone should be used in future engagements. Would written resources be helpful?

Restorative Justice

- Incorporation of Pacific cultural restorative justice principles and processes may be effective and relevant if the victim and offender are both of Pacific ethnicity, including Māori. These may be integrated into FGCs and family meetings with appropriate guidance.
- If the family is traditional (e.g. recent migrants from the islands, first language is not English), what principles of restorative justice in their culture (e.g. ifoga for Samoans)
could be incorporated into the FGC without compromising anyone’s safety, breaking any laws, or causing any further harm or discomfort to the victim?

- Youth Justice: A Pacific family may wish to take their son/daughter to visit the victim to offer an apology face to face as opposed to writing a letter. Discuss the intentions, potential benefits for a young person who offends and the victim, potential risks, supports needed to perform customary principles with dignity.
- If the victim is Pacific including Māori, what are his/her expectations of the child/young person through the FGC process? Principles such as manaakitanga and wairuatanga could be applied for example.
- If cultural principles of restorative justice are to be incorporated, what sort of venue would create an environment that would encourage meaningful and safe engagement – for the child/young person, victims, and families?

Concluding the Meeting or FGC

- Check again that those present (especially the child/young person) understood all that was discussed not just the spokespeople, keeping in mind language barriers. It may be necessary to speak to people separately at the meeting and after.
- Remember that a nod or ‘yes’ may be expressions of acknowledgement or respect, not necessarily of consent or full comprehension.
- Have the different agencies conveyed their commitment to the child and the plan in a way that the child and the family feel confident about that support? Families may feel too intimidated to ask.
- If you or any other party hand out reading material, do a brief rundown of what it is and what it is for. Do not assume people can/will read it, or have the ability to act on it.
- Acknowledge the child/young person/family for their hospitality (the financial cost may have extended them), time and collaboration.
- A blessing may be placed upon you by the family through prayer or verbal expressions. This relates to their integrity, dignity and willingness to work with you for their child. Be prepared to reciprocate this in your own way so it comes out genuine.
- Invite the family to close the meeting or FGC in a way they consider appropriate. This gives them the final word, settles upset feelings, and puts the focus back on the child.
- Provide hospitality as appropriate – keep it simple.

The Plan – Follow up, Monitoring

- Allocate protected time to talk with the child separately from the adults. Ensure the child understands and actually agrees with the plan, and the back-up plan.
- Ensure the family is a key player in the plan, not just a receiver of information or services, or subtly left to feel like a problem to be fixed.
- Does the plan need to be translated?
- Visit family members after the meeting to go over the plan in case of any second thoughts. Pacific families, children/young people are known to feel intimidated in FGC’s leading to agreement to plans that they may have no means or intention of complying with. Pride, guilt, fear of losing a child can also result in silence or denial of limitations.
- Build relationships with family members, not just with the spokespeople. Spokespeople may not be the decision makers.
- Ensure interagency partners understand and agree to the plan, responsibilities, timeframes, and consequences.
- Ensure family members know who to talk to in other agencies, and have their contact details.
- Address any apparent shifts in people’s commitment post meeting, early.
- Use cultural consultation for practical advice throughout the planning, implementation and review phases.
- Seek regular cultural supervision for complex cases.
Part D: Practice Scenarios

The following scenarios are from real cases. They demonstrate how to incorporate cultural principles into practice. Full cases are not provided in order to protect confidentiality because Pacific communities are very small. Names used are fictitious and identifying details have been omitted.

Definitions:

- **Care and Protection (C&P)** – the arm of Oranga Tamariki that works with children and young people in need of care and protection.

- **Community agency** – a non-government provider or community body (church, ethnic based association) that provides services to families including advocacy, therapeutic, parenting, and cultural programmes.

- **Lay Advocate** – the support person for a young person who offends. A Lay Advocate can be an elder, church elder, youth worker, or any other person; usually someone respected in the community. The Lay Advocate must be approved by the Youth Court Judge before he/she can assume this role.

- **Family Meeting** – A structured meeting between the family and Oranga Tamariki to talk about the problems and plan what to do about them, including setting goals for the child. This meeting is usually held after the initial investigation and assessment phase of a case. The agreement that results is between the family and Oranga Tamariki, and is reviewed after three months.

- **Family Group Conference (FGC):** This is more formal than a family meeting and is arranged by an FGC Co-ordinator. There are two types of FGCs:
  
  (i) **C&P FGC** – Where there are serious concerns for a child/young person’s safety and wellbeing. The conference includes extended family, the child, social worker, and relevant professionals. The meeting considers the key questions of whether people believe that a child is in need of ‘care and protection’. The family has a significant say in how the meeting is run, and gets an opportunity to have ‘family only’ time to consider all the information shared with them before a plan is agreed to.

  (ii) **YJ FGC** – The FGC is held if the Police believe a young person has broken the law. The FGC is a meeting where the young person who has offended, her/his family, victim/s, and other people like the police, come together to talk about the alleged offence/s, the impact of the alleged offences on the victim/s, and develop a plan to help the young person make things right. The plan should be fair to the victim and help the young person learn from her/his mistakes. If the young person denies the office, the FGC ends and the Police or the Court will decide what to do next.

- **Social worker/practitioner (S/W)** – Oranga Tamariki social worker/supervisor under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.

- **Youth Advocate** – a lawyer appointed by the Youth Court for a young person charged with a criminal offence. This advocate is paid by the State.

- **Youth Justice (YJ)** – the arm of Oranga Tamariki that works with young people who offend.
Incorporating Pacific notions of Restorative Justice into an FGC

Presenting Concern
Sam was a 16year-old Samoan male who was born in Samoa and migrated with his family to New Zealand when he was a toddler. Sam lived with his mother and younger siblings. His father left the family when Sam was three years-old and his whereabouts was initially unknown.

Sam was charged with Assault with Intent to Commit Sexual Violation. The victim was a 16year-old female neighbour, of a different culture to Sam. Sam was under the heavy influence of alcohol at the time he committed the offence. Although Sam claimed to have no recollection of the incident but he admitted to the charge against him. Sam’s victim was a child in need of care and protection and had her own social worker (s/w). Sam and the victim's s/workers remained in contact throughout the process. Sam was allocated a female social worker (s/w) who was of Samoan ethnicity. The family records indicated that Sam’s family was likely to have a Traditional cultural profile.

Cultural Expertise Applied
(i) Awareness of cultural taboos
The s/w was aware that sexual crimes cause enormous shame to Samoan families. Such offences are severe violations of va tapuia between individuals (refer to Samoan Tautua framework). Given the seriousness of the offence and the shame the family was suffering, it was important that certain cultural processes take place to restore the family’s mana so they could engage meaningfully in discussion about the FGC restorative process.

(ii) Use of gagana Samoa (Samoan language)
Sam’s family was originally from Samoa, and Samoan was their first language. The s/w was NZ-born and spoke limited Samoan. The s/w sought cultural and language support from a Samoan colleague to plan the engagement and carry it out with Sam’s aiga (family).

(iii) Knowledge of cultural hierarchy and respect of va fealoa’i (harmonious and constructive relations)
The supporting Samoan colleague held cultural status as a matai/chief, and had the language ability to hold the necessary sensitive conversations with Sam and his aiga. (Note: Not all matai can speak the formal language spoken by elders and family leaders, especially those who were born outside Samoa).

Having the matai colleague acknowledge the dignity, cultural status and identity of the family (mamalu - honorifics) paved the way for the sensitive discussion to follow.

(iv) Navigating emotions and relationships
A family meeting needed to be held to find a safe placement for Sam, as his victim lived next door. In preparation for the family meeting, the s/w met with Sam, his mother, siblings, and maternal cousins. The relatives engaged were those identified by Sam’s mother as key supporters for Sam.

Sam’s biological father and mother divorced when he was three years-old. Since the divorce, the father has been absent from Sam’s life and his whereabouts was unknown. When asked about his biological father, Sam said that his father was his step-father, and he wasn’t interested in looking for his biological father or having anything to do with him. Sam was almost 17years-old and his wish was respected.

Using the Samoan informal language, the s/w was able to build a rapport with Sam and key family members, and talk with them about the FGC and court processes. The talanoaga/fono fa’a’aleiga (family meeting) was then held to discuss who Sam could be bailed to as his victim lived next door. The aiga developed a plan that was acceptable to the Court. Sam was also engaged in a sexual offender programme that deemed he was not a risk to the young children at his interim placement. Sam remained engaged in the sexual offenders programme.

Incorporation of Pacific restorative justice principles into social work practice
Two FGC’s were held for Sam, convened and facilitated by a non-Samoan YJ Coordinator, with a Samoan YJ Coordinator interpreting.
The first FGC was to sort out a place for Sam and this was satisfactory resolved.

Before the second FGC, the s/worked visited with her Samoan speaking colleague to prepare Sam and his mother for the meeting. The discussion was about the seriousness of the offence and the importance of family attending to support Sam. Sam’s mother was reluctant for family members to attend because of the shame (māsiasiai) associated with Sam’s offence. Despite this, Sam’s mother thanked the s/ws for visiting and said that she would talk to her extended family about the FGC. Mother and son were told that the victim’s family would be attending.

The second FGC was attended by numerous professionals, members of Sam’s maternal family, and members of the victim’s family who represented her as she declined to be at the conference. Because the victim was a young person herself she was attended to by the Care and Protection arm of the Ministry.

The victim’s family attended the initial part of the conference to present their views. When the opportunity was given to Sam’s family to address the conference, his mother spontaneously knelt before the victim’s family, bowed her head to the ground, and pleaded for forgiveness for what her son had done to their daughter. Sam’s mother addressed the victim’s family in the Samoan language, and the Samoan co-ordinator translated her words and actions to them. Sam’s mother was conducting an adapted version of a traditional Samoan apology process called ifoga (refer to Va’aifetu Part 1 Perceptions of Justice). According to Samoan tradition, the perpetrator’s collective perform this public apology on behalf of their persons. Sam belongs to his family hence his actions implicate them in guilt and shame. This is one example of collective responsibility for the actions of an individual, especially a child. Sam’s mother remained kneeling with her head on the ground awaiting a response from the victim’s family. Sam knelt beside his mother. Without any prompting and limited understanding of the ifoga process, the victim’s mother and grandmother went to Sam’s mother; embraced her and lifted her up off her knees to a standing position.

Sam told his s/w after the FGC that seeing his mother kneeling and begging for forgiveness was the moment he fully realised the impact of his actions, not only on those he had harmed, but on those he cared deeply for.

The ifoga is part of traditional restorative justice in the Samoan culture, where a severe offence has been caused by a member of one family against that of another; sexual offences and murder fall into this category. The word ifoga is derived from the word ifo which means to bow down. The ifoga is traditionally conducted publicly by the perpetrator’s collective going to the victimised collective’s property. The process is symbolic of genuine remorse and humility, shown by the public humiliation. An offer of redress often accompanies the apology. Dignity, integrity and moral power are on the side of the victim and victimised party. The victims have the choice of acknowledging the offending party’s apology or not, and when. The offending party may return repeatedly until the victimised party chooses to respond. The victimised party’s acceptance of the apology is the starting point of mending relationships at individual, family and collective levels. The ifoga plays another important role which is to mitigate the possibility of retaliation by the victimised party. This has wider community safety implications especially if the parties are neighbours, as in Sam’s case.

Outcome
- Sam completed the sexual offender’s programme and has not re-offended. The Samoan speaking therapist and the Ministry s/w worked closely to keep Sam on track and keep his mother engaged through the therapeutic process. Sam was professionally assessed and was not considered a risk to other children.
- The mother’s genuine expression of remorse and heartbreak over her son’s actions appeared to have provided the victim’s family the strength to find forgiveness for Sam. The s/w continued to provide the victim’s family with regular updates on Sam’s progress which they appreciated.
- In accordance with the victim and her family’s request, Sam went to live with an extended family member. Sam was allowed to visit his mother and siblings and to attend community activities with them. The victim went to live with her grandmother and attended school out of area but visited her mother’s home frequently. The victim’s family were made aware of Sam’s need to see his family and that he would be visiting now and then. Sam remained living with his relatives seven months later when the case was closed.

Adapted versions of the ifoga have been used by Samoan families in other FGCs, often with very positive outcomes for the victims, the young offender, and their associated supports. There are
encouraging signs that the courts are beginning to recognise the value of this restorative process and are including it in their sentencing deliberations for young people who offend.

Navigating the Child’s Voice Through to Outcome

Presenting Concern
Nori was a 11-year-old Fijian-Indian girl who lived with her paternal grandparents and a 14-year-old male cousin. An anonymous person reported that a lot of yelling and screaming came from the family home. A review of Ministry records found that similar concerns had been raised previously for this family, but at the time the information was insufficient to qualify statutory social work involvement.

The records suggested that this family was likely to have a Traditional cultural profile. The family were recent migrants to New Zealand, and Nori’s main caregivers were her elders/grandparents. The s/w anticipated that observance of certain traditions and etiquette for engagement would be important to establish rapport with the family and get in.

Engagement (Puch-Tach Karna) with Nori (in Hindi and English)
Engagement with Nori occurred in Hindi and English. When the s/w visited the home for the first time she saw a red flag outside the house, this signalled that this was a family that observed the Hindu faith (refer to Bhavish model).

The s/w greeted Nori with the informal Hindi greeting ‘Kaise’; she did not use ‘Namaste’ because that was too formal. Nori immediately responded in Hindi by saying ‘Theek hai’ which means ‘good’. The s/w asked Nori how she was doing at school and Nori spoke very positively about this. Nori was very shy but once she understood that the s/w was there to help and listen, she started to open and share about the things that were worrying her.

The s/w established that Nori’s parents had separated some years ago and had gone their own ways. Nori was then raised by her maternal grandmother, but the grandmother later left to go live overseas with a new partner. Nori was very attached to her grandmother and became very unhappy when she could not go with her. Nori was then placed with her father; she was eight years old at the time.

Nori was worried about the situation at home and said she got yelled at regularly which upset her. She would hear her father and grandparents fighting/arguing all the time. Sometimes Nori would hear putdowns about her mother and her by the grandmother; the grandmother would say that Nori was phagli (mentally unwell) just like her mother, and that Nori’s mother abandoned her and did not care about her. Nori did not feel she could talk with her grandmother about these things because she respected her grandmother very much and it was not respectful to confront elders like that.

Nori talked about her male cousin who she felt was treated differently to her because he was allowed to go out and be with his friends while she was not. Nori and the cousin had fights. One time the cousin cut her IPod charger just because he felt like it; this caused huge upset to Nori but the grandparents did not see what the problem was. During disagreements the cousin and the grandparents would allegedly side against Nori. Nori said that her grandparents had raised her cousin since he was very young so considered him their son and he always came first. According with cultural tradition, limitations on Nori’s movements outside the house were connected to the family’s protection of her chastity.

Nori told the s/w that because there was no one she could talk to about her problems and she was not allowed to go out, she spent a lot of time in her room listening to music. Nori felt trapped and lonely. Sometimes Nori’s mother would ring from Fiji and Nori would share her feelings with her and tell her that she did not like living with her grandparents. Nori said she loved her mother and wanted to live with her. The s/w asked Nori what she wanted to be when she grew up, Nori said she wanted to become a police woman and protect people who got abused. At the s/w’s request Nori wrote down all her worries and the things she had disclosed.
Engagement with paternal grandparents/Father (in Hindi)
The s/w met with Nori’s caregivers/grandparents and father. The grandparents expressed their frustration that the parents were not taking any responsibility for Nori. They also held the opinion that Nori was phagli (mentally unwell) just like her mother; that she did not listen to them and locked herself in the room. Nori’s father talked about his dysfunctional upbringing where he was verbally and physically abused by his parents. The father said that his upbringing did not help with his parenting of Nori.

Assessment Summary of the Child’s Position
- After the meetings with Nori, and the extended family (Parivaar), the s/w deduced that Nori loved her grandparents but felt that her wish to reunite with her mother was not being heard by them.
- Nori did not have a strong sense of belonging with anyone because from a very early age she had been transitioned between caregivers, mainly maternal to paternal grandparents.
- Nori’s appearance of not listening according to her grandparents was because she had a strong desire to be with her mother, she was very unhappy, and had become increasingly withdrawn as shown by her spending considerable time in her room.
- Nori’s past history of broken attachments, instability and constant exposure to adult conflicts left her feeling that no one cared and that all the adults in her life had let her down.
- Nori was doing well at school. She did not have a diagnosis of mental illness.

Engagement with Mother (in Hindi)
At Nori’s request the s/w contacted her birthmother in Fiji by telephone. The s/w asked the mother about her situation and why Nori was not with her. The mother advised said she was looking after her grandmother. The mother did not have any other children and explained that she could not have Nori because the paternal grandparents had custody of her. The s/w told the mother that Nori wanted to be with her. The mother said that she always wanted to look after her daughter, but could not because she was in a violent relationship and had been an illegal drug user. The mother then said that she was no longer in a violent relationship, was no longer on drugs, and if given the opportunity she would come to NZ to look after her daughter. This provided the opening to pursuing Nori’s wish to live with her mother.

The mother made her own arrangements and travelled to New Zealand. Upon arrival she found herself a place to live and offered to do whatever was needed to get her daughter back into her care.

Father’s View
When Nori’s father was told that she wanted to live with her mother, he did not appear concerned. His main priority at the time was his new partner and their child.

Plan with child & family (Yojana Banana)
A family meeting (Panchayat) was held with the grandparents, parents and Nori to discuss Nori’s proposed transition into her mother’s care and what was needed to make this happen. This meeting was held in a manner that was respectful of the family’s culture without losing sight of Nori’s interests as the central purpose. The grandparents, being the eldest, spoke first, then the parents, then the s/w on behalf of Nori. The s/w brought Nori into the meeting after ensuring that Nori felt comfortable sharing her wishes, and at the point when the family was ready to listen to her. With the s/w’s support, Nori expressed her wishes. Planning then began.

Outcome
Nori’s desire to reunite with her mother was heard by the family and professionals. With the s/w’s advocacy, Nori was eventually transitioned successfully into her mother’s care.
The mother voluntarily engaged in a parenting programme as she felt she had been away from Nori for a significant amount of time, and Nori was now a teenager. Nori’s mother was enrolled into a culturally-relevant parenting programme, which she completed.
It was three months between Nori’s disclosure to the s/w that she wanted to live with her mother and her transition. Nori’s stay with her mother was monitored for another six months to ensure her safety, stability, wellbeing and happiness. The case was reviewed (Punvichaar) through home visits and updates from Nori’s school, and was eventually closed.

The outcome was greatly helped by the following factors:
- The s/w was child focussed and advocated for her interests throughout.
• The s/w was Fijian-Indian and was able to talk with Nori and her family in their first language. The s/w also understood the pressures and challenges Fijian-Indian families face when integrating into a new country. These insights enabled the incorporation of cultural values and etiquette into engagement, which led to the positive outcome. The values observed included respect of elders, grandparent responsibility for a grandchild when parents are unable to care for them, and spirituality/strong belief that God would make everything alright.

Establishing Relationships and Overcoming Resistance

Presenting Concerns
Sione (14yrs) was a Niuean boy, NZ-born, and fifth in line of seven children. Sione’s nuclear family was made up of his mother and older brothers; his father lived elsewhere and visited occasionally. At the time of referral he was in a secured residential facility under Court order in another city from where his family lived. Sione was allegedly to have committed 45 burglaries and one count of aggravated robbery. The nature of the offending had escalated from property offences to violent offending. Three previous plans to place Sione with his family had broken down due to absconding, further offending, and the family harbouring him from being located by the Ministry and Police when he was on the run. Police thought it was unlikely that he would stop offending.

Sione had a diagnosis of foetal alcohol syndrome, borderline intellectual disability and marginal conduct disorder, which undoubtedly contributed to his challenging behaviour and offending. He was disengaged from education due to chronic truanting. Despite Sione’s criminal record and challenging behaviours, his family did not see him as a problem and saw the Ministry and Police as the parties with ‘the issues’.

Research and Prepare
The social worker (s/w) who was given the case was a male, NZ-born, and of Niuean ethnicity. When the case was allocated to the new s/w, Sione had been in non-kin care for 18 months. The s/w’s review of the family files showed that there had been generational involvement between this nuclear unit and state authorities. Sione’s older brothers had all committed offences as youths and had gone through the system. The records showed that the family had little faith in the system, refused to provide information about extended family, and were very resistant to engagement before Sione came to notice. This family’s cultural profile was likely to be somewhere between Contemporary and Nuclear.

The s/w believed that formulating a realistic plan and gaining sustainable outcomes required a meaningful relationship with the family. The s/w recognised that Sione would need his family’s support to reduce his offending. The records showed that the family cared for Sione and had the capacity to resume care of him. Building a collaborative relationship with this family required some investment. The s/w wanted to get to know the family and earn their trust before meeting Sione.

Cultural Lens Applied
The s/w recognised he had two key clients – Sione and the family. In light of the family’s apparent resistance to Child, Youth and Family, the s/w decided to use a process Niuean’s call talanoa (refer to Va’aifetu Part 1 on Decision Making) to attempt to build a relationship with them. The success of this would impact on the success of establishing a relationship with Sione. “The better and more meaningful the relationship with the family became, the better the outcome and in from him”.

• ‘Getting to know them’ - using Fakatokolalo (humility) and Tutalanoa (small talk to build rapport and break the tension)

There was no intention in the initial meeting to talk about Sione’s offending or how to fix anything. The s/w’s priority was to establish a meaningful relationship with Sione’s family. The relationship is the platform upon which to hold the more challenging conversations that need to be held. The s/w decided not to take pen and paper during this first meeting, to minimise the distance between him and the family.

Having reviewed the files on Sione and his family, the s/w made a home visit to introduce himself. The conversation was held in English instead of Niuean as is now very common when engaging Niuean families. The s/w conveyed humility in his language and behaviour he said, ‘I went in almost apologetic’.

69
As the s/w anticipated, he was challenged with emotional hostility. He responded by listening and not being defensive. According to the family, the Ministry often made plans then pretended or said it was the family’s plan. They consequently felt little ownership of plans and did not like being repeatedly treated that way. The family wanted an opportunity to be genuinely included, consulted and listened to, and to see their views reflected in plans and official documents about their son. Through this discussion, the s/w deduced that Sione’s mother was the leader of the family. Sione’s father lived elsewhere. The s/w began to understand who the family was, learnt about their village (Koe Maaga) connections in Niue, and the place of the nuclear unit (Tau Mamatua moe Tau Fanau) in the extended family (Tau Magafaoa) hierarchy. Until this meeting, the Ministry only had information about the nuclear family. All these connections helped build a picture of who Sione was and the important people in his life. The family began to warm to the s/w.

- **‘Getting to know me’ – showing reciprocity, humility, making connections to the magafaoa**
  The s/w returned to the family a second time to continue ‘getting to know’ the family and to give them an update about Sione. This time the family wanted to know about the s/w. The s/w talked about his links to Niue, his village and family. This triggered memories for the mother and both she and the s/w were able to name people in each other’s families. Humour began to come easily and sometimes Niuan terms were used to refer in jest to Sione or about life in Niue. This was the point at which the s/w felt the relationship deepening. ‘I knew that when Mum came, the family came too’. The s/w’s knowledge of Sione increased significantly as a result.

  The s/w began to learn more about the family’s view of Sione’s needs and challenges and their challenges with him. The s/w would later tell the family that he ‘had information’ that they might want to hear because it connected to Sione’s offending and other challenging behaviours. This information was about Sione’s foetal alcohol and mental health conditions, but the s/w did not press at this point. The family did not appear to be aware of any special needs that Sione had and they expected the same of him as they did of his siblings. The s/w decided to hold this conversation for another time.

- **Third meeting: ‘Talking business’**
  This time, the dialogue went deeper into the challenges faced by Sione. Sione’s father began to be present more frequently and he wanted to know about his son and be part of discussions. The father began to take on a more active role and later became the primary person to ensure that Sione kept to his plan. The s/w quickly learnt more about Sione as the family shared more openly. The most telling sign of trust from the family came when the family began to make contact of their own accord. They asked questions, or called to say when something had gone off track. At this point the s/w felt the relationship deepening.

- **Meeting with Sione**
  Now that the s/w had knowledge of Sione and his family, the process of ‘getting to know’ each other was repeated with Sione, who was still at the residential facility. Initially Sione was reluctant to engage as he had been the pattern for him and his family. But as the s/w talked about his family and mentioned things Sione knew that only his family would know, the young man appeared to relax. The s/w recognised this as the beginning of their relationship. Sione began to talk more easily and eventually talked about wanting to go home; this was his main goal.

**Outcomes:**

- **Resistance overcome constructively**
  Sione felt engaged as a whole person and not simply because he had committed offences. His s/w had taken the time to find out about him and the people who mattered to him. As the family was not rushed and genuine interest was shown in them as well as Sione, they began to feel genuinely included and acknowledged for their status in their son’s life.

- **Meaningful relationships established**
  While there was still mistrust of the Ministry and the system, Sione and the family began to feel noticed and significant. Decision making happened through face-to-face discussions and not in single meetings. Ideas were exchanged ahead of formal decision making forums like FGCs. On two occasions Sione and his family witnessed the s/w stand up in court to convey their views, not a view that was alleged to be theirs (Fakamafanatia – to encourage, to uplift).

- **Family took responsibility for seeing the plan completed and achieving outcomes**
Sione’s family took responsibility for ensuring his compliance with plans. Sione’s father attended every court hearing and FGC meeting and responded to s/w requests for advice and up when needed. This was symbolically significant to Sione. Initial hostility decreased as discussions became more constructive.

- **Support network for young person established**
  Sione was released from the secure residential facility back to his mother’s care. Initially this did not work out because Sione’s associates began to frequent his mother’s house and Sione absconded a few times. Sione was then moved to his sister’s care and extended family members became involved, including an aunt who lived overseas. They offered respite care and a permanent placement for Sione if needed. These supports did not exist before as Sione’s immediate family was closed to receiving help —partly because of his mother’s pride; she did not want her family to think she was not a capable parent.

- **Reduced offending**
  Since the specialist team has been involved with Sione his offending has significantly reduced from 45 offences in three months to four in 18 months. Sione has highly complex needs but had proven to himself and others that when surrounded by committed family and professionals he can exercise self-control and not re-offend. The case is ongoing.

### Dealing with Shame and Taboo

#### Presenting Concerns
Four Tongan teenagers (three sisters and their younger 12-year-old brother) were referred to the Ministry by a professional due to concerns about alleged historical sexual abuse by a fa’e tangata (maternal uncle), and sexualised behaviour between them. At the time of the referral the fanau (children) were living with a maternal aunt (fa’e) and her husband who was a church pastor. The alleged perpetrator (uncle) of historical sexual abuse lived elsewhere.

The children were born in Tonga. After their parents separated the children ended up in the care of extended family members. Both parents remained in Tonga. There was a time when the children were moved between family caregivers, from kainga to kainga (family to family). The children were eventually brought to NZ by their maternal uncle (alleged perpetrator) and his partner for a better education and future prospects. Due to the family becoming aware of possible abuse, the children were eventually settled in the care of a maternal aunt (fa’e) and her husband, who was a church pastor. Very little else was known about the kainga.

Several attempts were made by Ministry social workers (s/w) to meet with the kainga through telephone calls and visits to the ‘api (home and people who live there) but all were unsuccessful. Suspecting there was a cultural element to the family’s ‘silent’ response, the key worker of the case engaged the expertise of a Tongan s/w for cultural advice and support in a process referred to as ‘cultural consultation’. The key worker sought help to meet the family, develop a relationship with the children and their kainga, get information, and give cultural support throughout the case.

#### Cultural Lens Applied
A review of the case history indicated a need to use a Traditional cultural approach because of the family background (Tonga immigrants, religious aspect), violation of sacred relationships (through alleged sexual abuse and inappropriate conduct), and collective kainga dynamics.

The Tongan s/w understood that the sexual nature of the concerns would be associated with shame for the kainga. The tapu (sacred protocols to protect against violation) around sexual contact between kainga members had been broken on two levels; one by the fa’e tangata (uncle), and the other by the inappropriate sexual contact between the children. The children were teenagers and were considered old enough to understand that such behaviour was unacceptable and wrong. The state of balance between the spiritual, physical, emotional had been disrupted.

The Tongan s/w was also aware of the enormous implications of the situation for the status and reputation of the kainga within the Tongan community. Additional to this was the fact that the head of their household (mother’s sister’s husband) was a religious and therefore a community leader.
The Tongan s/w used the process of talanoa to engage the kainga (refer to Va’aifetu Part 1 for an explanation of talanoa). While the purpose of this first engagement was to develop a relationship and ensure the children’s safety, the agenda was open. The dialogue was not to be directed or controlled by the Ministry, and s/w were open to the kainga leading the discussion. It was anticipated that significant decisions may or may not be made at this first engagement.

**Fakafehokotaki moe kainga (Engagement with the kainga)**
Three Ministry staff went to visit the kainga. The Tongan s/w used Lea fakatonga (Tongan language) to greet the kainga, the fa’e (mother) and her husband. The Tongan s/w explained who they were and what agency they were from. The fa’e recognised the name of the agency and acknowledged that she had received several messages but had not responded. The fa’e then seemed reluctant to continue talking.

- **Building relationship using lea-fakatonga, centred on children**
The Tongan s/w continued to engage the fa’e in Tongan, using words to convey faka’apa’apa (respect), acknowledge the family’s status, and to demonstrate anga fakatokilalo (humility). The s/w made references to where in Tonga her Ha’a (clan) descendant from. During this introduction the fa’e referred to a place that the Tongan s/w was then able to hohoko (make a connection) to, and acknowledge the family’s genealogy. This connection helped to open the communication with the fa’e. When the s/w were told by the fa’e that her husband had gone out but would soon return, they advised that they would wait so they could discuss the issues together. The s/w understood the importance of the father’s role in the kainga and the added status of his religious position.

- **Children’s interests as the shared purpose**
When talking about the fanau the s/w referred to them as si’etau fanau (‘our’ children), indicating that both parties (Child, Youth and Family, kainga) had the children’s best interests at heart. When referring to solutions, the s/w used the collective approach by using the ‘we’ to convey the collective fatongia (responsibility) to achieve the best outcome for the children. This connection with the kainga is matakainga (behaving like family).

- **Anga Fakatokilalo - Humility**
The s/w then asked the fa’e in Tongan ‘to please give us an opportunity’ to talk with the children. At no point was the issue of sexualised behaviour or abuse mentioned in this initial dialogue. There was no immediate need to, and from the numerous messages left by the key s/w, the fa’e was likely to have understood why the Ministry was visiting. Talking inclusively, respectfully and with humility convinced this fa’e of Child, Youth and Family’s concern for the children. The fa’e then asked the visitors into the ‘api (home).

- **Ngeia - Dignity**
Part of the reason for not discussing the sexual issues during the visit was to protect the dignity of the fanau and the kainga violated by the acts, so can open up instead of closing down in shame, shock, or withdraw from engagement. The s/w kept the story and the potential risks to the children general, so not to further overwhelm the ‘api that is already feeling ashamed.

- **Laumalie - Spirituality**
When the tamai (head of household) arrived, he was greeted in Tongan by the Tongan s/w. After introductions, the Tongan s/w asked the tamai if he could lead their discussion in prayer. This request was acknowledged the status of the tamai as a religious and kainga leader, and the presence of God (Christian religion) in the family’s life. The tamai recognised this show of respect and led in prayer. This settled the aunt and uncle’s apparent anxiety. Once done, the tauhi fanau (children’s caregivers) seemed ready to discuss the sensitive matter at hand.

The children were not interviewed during this visit. The Tongan s/w told colleagues that it would breach tapu to talk with the children about sexual matters in front of their kainga.

**Outcome**
- The practitioners left with a deeper understanding of kainga, their strengths and weakness, and the names of kainga (extended family) who could be potential supports for the children. The boy was later placed with another relative while the girls remained with the fa’e and tamai.

- The Tongan s/w demonstrated fe’ongo’i’aki (intuitive sensing of feelings of others) by acknowledging the feelings of this kainga and dealing with them sensitively. This paved the way for the key s/w who was not Tongan to engage with the children and the kainga to move forward.
of apology to his victims and throughout the duration of TT's plan, agency partners worked with him to ensure he could not of TT's adherence to his bail conditions by going to his girlfriend's house. It became clear to the s/w and JK that the girlfriend's family needed to be part of TT's FGC plan if it was to succeed. Initially the girlfriend's mother appeared very staunch, but her language/dialect, which helped her to understand the importance of the cultural connection. This expressed respect, acknowledged the historical connection between JK and TT's family, and symbolised JK's willingness to work alongside them. A person who refuses to participate in a kaikai (eating/sharing of food) may be seen as having a concern.

The s/w initially had difficulty engaging the girlfriend’s parents and asked JK to visit with him. This was prompted by TT repeatedly breaching his bail conditions by going to his girlfriend's house. It became clear to the s/w and JK that the girlfriend's family needed to be part of TT's FGC plan if it was to succeed. Initially the girlfriend's mother appeared very staunch. She was from parts of the Cook Islands where such behaviour is characteristic, but doesn't necessarily mean aggression. JK was known and respected among the community for his work with Cook Island families. His reputation was also known to TT’s girlfriend’s mother. JK was able to speak with the girlfriend’s mother in her language/dialect, which helped her to understand the YJ process and the importance of TT's adherence to his bail conditions. At the end of this meeting, the girlfriend’s mother said TT could not return to her house until he had completed his plan, and his bail conditions were relaxed.

Working Collaboratively to Support the Young Person
Throughout the duration of TT’s plan, agency partners worked with him to ensure he wrote letters of apology to his victims and attended his weekly Cook Islands dance practices. These were held at

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**Cultural Responsiveness Working Cross Agency**

**Presenting Concerns**
TT was a 16-year-old boy of Cook Islands and Samoan descent. He lived with three siblings and his parents. TT’s mother was Cook Islands and his father was Samoan (village and island connections have been withheld to protect confidentiality).

TT was charged with Unlawfully Takes Motor Vehicle, Excessive Breath Alcohol, and Failing to stop for Blue / Red Flashing Lights. TT was a first-time offender who had not previously appeared before the Youth Court. He was bailed with a number of conditions related to curfews, association with co-offenders, alcohol and drug consumption, places of association, and driving a vehicle. TT had attended school irregularly for some time and his girlfriend was pregnant with their child. The family’s cultural profile was likely to be in the Contemporary group.

TT’s mother was pregnant with her fifth child, his father was the only income earner and there were four children in the home, including TT. An FGC had been held for TT with regards to the charges against him. TT denied the charges and was subsequently appointed a Lay Advocate and Youth Advocate.

**Key professionals involved**
- TT's case was allocated to a YJ Coordinator and YJ s/w, neither of whom were Cook Islanders. Another s/w became involved after TT disclosed physical abuse against one of his parents.
- A Lay Advocate (JK).
- Youth Advocate (legal representative).
- Agency support worker for educational needs and parenting support.
- School representative.

**Working collaboratively to establishing relationships with the family**
The Lay Advocate (JK) appointed by the Court identified the mother’s surname as coming from one of the islands his family had a historical connection to. Finding a connection, no matter how distant, is important to establishing relationships with Cook Islands’ families. JK then went to TT’s family home, taking Pukapuka bread (Cook Islands bread). The taking of food symbolises humility kauraro (lowering oneself) and shows akononaga (care). The choice of Cook Island bread was important because of the cultural connection. This expressed respect, acknowledged the historical connection between JK and TT’s family, and symbolised JK’s willingness to work alongside them. A person who refuses to participate in a kaikai (eating/sharing of food) may be seen as having a concern.
school, which meant TT had to attend school regularly, as well as completing the community work in his plan. Despite this network of support, TT breached his bail again, was arrested and placed in a Ministry approved community placement. The s/w visited TT who said he had been in hospital and at his girlfriend’s house because she had attempted suicide; TT had apparently planned to leave her for another girl. TT felt responsible and wanted to support his girlfriend and their unborn baby. JK and the s/w visited TT’s girlfriend but met with some resistance from her mother. She blamed TT for the situation and wanted nothing more to do with him. The conversation between JK and the girlfriend’s mother took place in the Cook Islands language. The mother was angry and in pain for her daughter. When she calmed down she apologised to the JK and he spoke with her about the importance of the unborn baby having a connection with both parents and the importance of keeping all three children well. The girlfriend’s mother agreed to continue to support TT on his plan and allow him to maintain contact with her daughter. This was a crucial outcome for TT and he was then able to focus on completing his plan. He was eventually bailed home and off remand.

Outcome
TT successfully completed his plan. All his support people were with him at his final court hearing at The Pasifika Youth Court. This court operates differently to other courts in Aotearoa. It provides space for selected community elders to be present to support the young person who has offended and their family. The judge also allows young person to express their views should he/she want to, even with legal representation.

TT had prepared a Pe’e (traditional chant) in a Cook Island language, through which he depicted his journey through the YJ system and acknowledged those who supported him. He later performed a Cook Island dance in front of the judge and all who were present. TT was given presents and words of affirmation from his Youth Advocate, Police, Lay advocate, s/w and all those who had supported him. That day was also very special for TT because his father attended. TT’s father had been very ashamed of his son’s offences which brought shame upon the family. TT’s father got to hear his son’s dream of joining the Army. TT’s father then witnessed his son sign the Tapa cloth in the Pasifika Youth Court, which symbolised TT’s achievement and the end of his time in the Court. TT has not re-offended.

Reflections
Approximately 20 people were involved in supporting TT’s journey and eventual success. This was the village that helped him overcome challenges, mature and nurture the more positive aspects of his life, and be clearer about his aspirations. TT received the opportunity to explore his cultural identity and heritage and gained a sense of connection and belonging to a wider Cook Islands community. Through this journey, TT realised what was important to him and had aspirations that he came to believe were achievable.

Using Cultural Insights to Establish a Home for Life placement (1)

Presenting Concern
Five-year-old Tupou had been in the Ministry’s custody with non-kin caregivers since the previous year, due to exposure to ongoing family violence between her mother and mother’s partner. Tupou was of Tongan descent and had younger siblings (who had a different father) who had already been placed with their paternal kaiinga. Tupou had been placed with non-kin because her mother refused to disclose details of the girl’s paternal family or her own family. The key s/w initiated a cultural consultation meeting with Tongan colleagues to seek advice on how to move Tupou’s case forward, and importantly, how to find a permanent home for her. Neither the key worker nor the case supervisor was Tongan.

Cultural Advice Applied
During the cultural consultation, the Tongan s/w told the caseworkers about traditions around naming rights in Tongan culture. The highest ranking paternal aunt (mehikitanga) usually holds this right (refer to Tongan Mo’ui Fakalata framework). If the person who named Tupou could be identified this would lead to the identity of her paternal family. The advice was taken up by the s/w and eventually led to the identification of Tupou’s paternal family and her father. Tupou’s father had been absent from her life, but he now expressed his wish to have contact with his daughter and if possible, to have her in his permanent care. The father’s wishes were conveyed to Tupou’s
mother who agreed. When the idea was introduced to Tupou, she appeared willing to get to know her father. Access was facilitated to help Tupou build a relationship with her father. Things progressed well and in 2012, after all the necessary checks on the father and his household were made, the process of transitioning Tupou into her father’s care began. The situation was monitored to ensure it was stable and secure and to make sure Tupou was happy. It was clear that Tupou was safe, wanted, loved, and thrived in her father’s care.

**Outcome**
The custody order in favour of the Ministry was eventually discharged in favour of Tupou’s father.

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**Using Cultural Insights to Establish a Home for Life Placement (2)**

**Presenting Concerns**
A school counsellor notified the Ministry that Sera (14 year old iTaukel, Fijian born) had alleged that her caregiver (maternal aunt) had beaten her. Sera and her adult sister were in the care of their aunt, who had no birth children of her own. The alleged assaults were serious, including assault to the head and being thrown down the stairs. The assaults also appeared to be frequent. Sera told the counsellor that she feared ending up dead and that she felt unsafe at home. Sera wanted the s/w to contact her mother in Fiji, and provided the contact details, as well as contact details of a family friend who witnessed the alleged beatings.

The s/ws talked with Sera to explore temporary placement options with extended family while the concerns for her safety and wellbeing were investigated. Sera identified an extended family member but expressed anxiety that this person might punish her for ‘telling on’ her aunt. Sera said she had gone to extended family before but they always returned her to her aunt. The Ministry tried to contact Sera’s caregiver/alleged perpetrator but she was not responsive. When Sera was told by the Ministry about what they had done, she immediately became fearful. A decision was then made by s/ws to seek an urgent safety warrant and placement for Sera.

**Cultural Lens Applied**
The s/ws learnt that when Sera was very young, her mother, who was living in Fiji, placed her in the care of her maternal aunt. Social workers know that such arrangements are common among Pacific families where an adult who does not have children is gifted a child by another member of the family (See Va’aifetu Part 1– Customary Care Arrangements). In line with tradition regaring customary arrangements, Sera’s birthmother continued to have a place in her daughter’s life despite the fact that the aunt had been Sera’s primary caregiver for years.

One of the s/ws contacted Sera’s mother in Fiji to explain the situation and to express Child, Youth and Family’s concern for Sera’s safety. The mother believed that a safe placement was necessary, rather than one with extended family. Sera’s mother said she had spoken with her daughter about the situation and they had decided that Sera would go back to Fiji with her mother. Sera remained in care with the expectation that her mother was coming to NZ for her.

The s/w got the mother’s verbal consent over the telephone to have Sera voluntarily placed under the temporary care of the state (Section 139 of Act 1989); an agreement that could be terminated at any time by the parent or the Ministry. A copy of the legal agreement was emailed to Sera’s mother which she signed and returned. Due to the aunt’s reluctance to engage, there was no-face-to-face discussion with her about the placement. The s/w managed to get the aunt on the phone once but the aunt hung up.

Five days after the mother was contacted by the Ministry, she arrived in Aotearoa. Before her arrival she emailed the Ministry to ask about Sera’s wellbeing. Sera’s mother told the s/w that she had spoken with her sister (alleged perpetrator) and they had agreed that Sera would return to Fiji. Sera’s mother terminated the temporary care agreement with the Ministry, and took her daughter back into her care. Sera’s mother also told Ministry s/ws that she had arranged a school for Sera to attend in Fiji.

**Outcome**
Twelve days after the notification was received, Sera and her mother returned to Fiji. The case was consequently closed.
Using Cultural Insights to Establish a Home for Life Placement (3)

Presenting Concerns
Pita was a healthy toddler of Samoan descent who had been placed voluntarily into care by his mother immediately after birth. Pita’s mother wanted to conceal him from her family because she got pregnant outside marriage and didn’t want to bring humiliation upon her family, especially her parents. Although the mother’s parents lived overseas and she was already a parent with another child in her care, the family’s reputation still took precedent over Pita. Pita’s birth father was not in a relationship with the mother, he did not know she was pregnant, and his details were not disclosed by Pita’s mother. The Ministry had no choice but to place Pita with non-kin caregivers.

Initially Pita’s mother considered adopting him out, but after discussion with social workers she changed her mind. Pita’s mother asked if the Ministry could take care of Pita until he turned three or four-years-old, at which time she would take him home and make up a story about his origins. Pita’s mother made it clear to s/w that she did not want to have her family contacted.

While Pita was in state care care, a Samoan s/w became involved with the case. This appeared to make a difference to the mother’s thinking and she became more forthcoming with information about her extended family. The mother also shared with the Samoan s/w that she had some personal matters she needed to attend to before she could take Pita into her care. She proposed her sister as a second option. Unfortunately, despite Pita’s mother’s intentions, she did not follow through on plans made to help develop a connection with her son. The aunt who was proposed as an alternative carer was later considered unsuitable. Meanwhile Pita was thriving and forming a strong attachment to his temporary caregivers. As Pita’s mother continued to be uncommitted to him, Pita could not be left in care indefinitely.

Cultural Lens Applied - Search for Home for Life Placement
From the limited knowledge of Pita’s family, the Samoan s/w scoped family connections. The first point of exploration was the origin of the family name and associated village connections, using genealogy literature and local knowledge. There is a traditional saying "O le tagata ma lona aiga, o le tagata ma lona fa'asinomaga" – each person belongs to a family, an identity with role and expectations set for him/her. Armed with this knowledge, the s/w held a firm belief that Pita’s extended aiga/family would be found.

The Samoan s/w networked after hours and during weekends pursuing leads. Most conversations with contacts were conducted in Samoan. Some of the information was private to families and not readily given to a non-Samoan or to someone who may misuse or misinterpret it. Through this process, the s/w found a male relative of Pita’s mother who knew of her but had grown up in a different village. This relative was noted to have similar facial features to Pita. He informed that he and his wife had been married for many years but could not have a child. They welcomed the possibility of meeting Pita. The s/w had difficulty engaging Pita’s mother about developments but was able to talk with the mother’s older sister. This aunt later told the s/w that Pita’s mother was supportive of the idea of placing him with the new found relative. It is common in Pacific cultures for older siblings to speak on behalf of younger siblings so the aunt’s information was in that light. Appropriate checks were done on the new ‘aunt’ and ‘uncle’ which were favourable. A plan was developed to introduce Pita to them.

This first meeting between Pita and his new relatives was supervised by a Ministry s/w. When Pita was handed over to his ‘aunt’ he remained very calm; he eventually fell asleep in her arms. The s/w said that ‘That was the point I knew this was right’. Further visits took place at Pita’s interim caregiver’s home. Despite living a long distance away from Ministry caregivers, the newfound relatives kept their commitment to Pita and always turned up. Eventually an overnight stay was trialled which was successful. It soon became clear that this could possibly be the new family for Pita. The Ministry caregivers said they saw how content and loved Pita was.

Handing over Pita to Home for Life Family
In the Samoan culture, the arrival of a newborn is a celebration. The Samoan s/w suggested to the key s/w (non-Pacific) that as this was a new beginning for Pita (now nine months old) and his new aiga, and it was appropriate to hold this celebration as aprt of handing him over to them. The

handover ceremony took place, and involved a traditional speech and blessing conducted by a Samoan s/w who was a matai (chief). The room was full of Pita’s new family, his interim caregiver family, and numerous Ministry staff. This gave the occasion significance, cultural status, and acknowledged the newly formed family. The traditional blessing also acknowledged and blessed Pita’s first family who cared for and protected him, and who were feeling a sense of loss at passing him to his new family.

The ceremony provided closure for everyone including Ministry workers who had worked for months to ensure the best result for Pita.

**Outcome**
Pita is thriving and loved by his new family. The Ministry continues to hold legal custody of Pita, but is supporting his new parents’ application for parenting orders.

### Who Matters to the Child Matters

**Importance of cultural connections between practitioners and families engaged**

When a Tokelauan social worker introduced herself to the Tokelauan kaiga/family of Tony (young person), Tony’s father linked her surname to one of their villages in Tokelau. The establishment of this connection had an immediate positive impact on the kaiga’s manner towards the social worker. The social worker was engage with the kaiga in the Tokelauan language to explain the youth justice and the Pacific Court processes. The kaiga’s response indicated that they had a Traditional cultural profile.

The social worker also noticed that Tony became more communicative with her as he was not known to be trusting of previous social workers. It became clear to the social worker that in order to gain Tony’s trust, it was important for him to see that his kaiga trusted her, so the successful establishment a good working relationship with the family was key to ultimately achieving the goals for Tony.

The relationship established with the kaiga that during a court hearing, Tony’s father proudly declared his village connection with the social worker to the judge, even though they had no prior relationship before contact for Tony. The judge who was of Pacific descent recognised the value of this connection in order for the system to best serve Tony’s interests.

**Outcome**

Tony successfully completed his plan and reported to court. At the Court hearing, Tony’s father expressed his gratitude to the social worker by bringing her a sack of potatoes and a box of apples. The social worker expressed her thanks the father, but explained to she could not accept his gifts. Tony’s father insisted that the gifts be accepted, and pleaded with the social worker to take the produce and share it with her colleagues as a sign of their gratitude. Being Tokelauan, the social worker understood the importance of honouring the kaiga’s dignity and request, and eventually accepted the gift and did as they asked of her.
Permanency with Non-Kin within Own Cultural Community

Presenting Concern

Tim and Alona were primary schoolers, both had special needs. Their parents were deported back to Tuvalu and they were left in the care of their maternal grandmother. The grandmother became unwell and was referred to mental health services for support. Both boys were not attending school, and despite the social worker’s encouragement to the grandmother to send the children to school she kept them at home.

A major incident occurred with the grandmother that put the boys at high risk, which led to them being taken from their grandmother’s care. The children’s paternal grandfather was approached as a possible carer; however he had a history with the Ministry and was not in a position to be a carer due to his own circumstances. Other relatives were also approached but were unable to care for them due to their own commitments. The children were placed with non-kin caregivers.

Cultural Advice Applied

The s/w make contact with the community and able to identify this non-kin kaiga who is willing to be assessed as caregivers for the boys. The social worker made contact with the Kaiga and meetings were arranged various time to discuss the process. A senior Tuvaluan Pacific staff who also spoke Tuvaluan, support the key social worker to explain to statutory processes and language to help the kaiga understand and engage. All the meetings and consultation were held in the Kaiga own language. The Kaiga is involved with “Te Kalaga Te Leo Alofa” service from their own community who are supporting the Kaiga with their Parenting Orders.

Whilst they were in the care of the non-kin caregiver, the Social worker continued to work with the parents in the island to identify safe family members here in New Zealand that would be able to care for them. Despite the social workers efforts of contacting their close and extended families there was no one suited or able to care for the boys.

The Social worker then started to explore the parents’ island community for suitable caregivers but unfortunately was unsuccessful. After exploring all these avenues, the social worker resorted to the Tuvaluan Community as a whole and found a suitable couple who were happy to be assessed as caregivers for Tim and Alona. The couple was assessed and were approved by the Ministry. Tim and Alona were moved into their care and have been striving since being placed with the couple. The boys have continued to have a strong connection to their culture and actively participate in activities. The couple have applied for a Parenting Order for the boys so they can remain in their care. Both caregivers are happy to take them to the island one day to meet their biological parents.

Outcome

The boys were settled permanently with their Tuvalu caregivers who they had a strong attachment with, attended school regularly and were well supported by the school. This also meant that the boys remained part of their cultural community and their spiritual/religious community. This strengthened the chidren’s links with their Pui Kaiga (extended family) Sologa (genealogy/whakapapa), lotu (religious community), and Atu fenua (whole community nationwide)

While with their new careers, the boys continued to have supervised contact with their maternal grandmother once a month. The children were also enabled to talk to their parents overseas through phone calls. The social worker maintained contact with the birthparents overseas to provide updates. The social worker believed that always she had kept the parents informed and and gained their cooperation from day one.

The children were visited by the s/w, and both expressed their views that they love their placement. They said they like to be with their Mum and Dad (caregivers).