



Kia Piki Te Ora

All ages suicide prevention for Māori

Aftercare considerations for Kaimahi supporting whānau who have been bereaved by suicide

Kōrari Māori Public Health Team
Ngā Kete Mātauranga Pounamu Charitable Trust

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“We need to
love our babies,
give them hope,
listen to them,
let them kōrero,
and be better
role models”
-Whānau voice



Ko wai a mātou?

WHO ARE WE & WHAT DO WE DO?



Ngā Kete Mātauranga Pounamu Charitable Trust (NKMP)

NKMP is a kaupapa Māori, not-for-profit charitable trust that delivers a range of health and social services at low or no cost across Murihiku and the lower South Island. The trust was established in 2000 with programmes that support the aspirations of our whakapapa ties to Ōraka-Aparima Rūnaka. NKMP has held the Kia Piki Te Ora (KPTO) contract for over 20 years and has a strong history of utilising Māori approaches to wellbeing through events, wānanga, initiatives and campaigns that enhance the mana of whānau and reduce the risk of suicide in our hāpori.

KPTO is delivered by **Kōrari the Māori Public Health** team at NKMP (established 2020). The name Kōrari is the name of the reed that is used to make a mōkihi - a traditional Ngāi Tahu vessel that our tūpuna used to transport people and supplies by water. The mōkihi represents a mātauranga māori strength, empowerment and resiliency. Kōrari responds to the needs of the māori community, collaborates with other hāpori groups and organisations and keeps whānau at the centre of all mahi to support an overarching vision to see that Māori in Murihiku are well.

This document has been prepared for you to support you in your mahi if the Māori whānau you are working with are bereaved by whakamōmori (suicide).



Kia Piki Te Ora

ALL AGES SUICIDE PREVENTION FOR MĀORI



Kia Piki Te Ora timeline

1998: The Government releases the New Zealand Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy. The Ministry of Health fund a programme called 'Kia Piki te Ora o Te Taitamariki' to reduce rates of rakatahi whakamōmori (youth suicides) in Māori communities.

2005: The programme changes to 'all ages' suicide prevention and is renamed Kia Piki Te Ora All Ages Suicide Prevention for Māori (KPTO). NKMP hold the contract for the Murihiku rohe only.

2016: Tūramarama Ki Te Ora a National Māori Strategy for addressing suicide is created and signed by the 9 KPTO sites within iwi Māori health and social service providers across Aotearoa.

2023: KPTO is relocated to Te Aka Whai Ora (Māori Health Authority) and expands to 26 Māori providers. Providers are supported to co-design a local and regional Māori Suicide Prevention service that is a voice for whānau with the lived experience, hapū and Iwi. The takiwā for NKMP expands and the team reach out to kaimahi in Murihiku, Ōtākou and Central Otago and Lakes to create relationships and gather insights through wānaka.

2024: Kōrari develops a work plan to support suicide prevention across the lower Te Waipounamu. The creation of an aftercare process is emphasised as a key outcome. Kōrari deliver monthly online hui for the KPTO collective, bi-annual hui and co-hosts Haere Tonu a suicide prevention symposium in Ōtautahi with the other Te Waipounamu sites.

Ngā Kahukura

ORGANISATION AND AGENCY CO-DESIGN WHĀNAU

NGĀ MIHI KI NGĀ KAIMAHI KATOA

MURHIKU

ŌTAKOU

CENTRAL

ADL (Waihōpai & Ōtepoti)

**Hato Hone
St John**

**Cromwell Youth
Trust**

**Awarua Whānau
Services**

Counsellors

**NZ Fire &
Emergency**

SIT

Hokonui Rūnanga

HIWA

**Eastern Southland
Postvention Group**

Life Matters Trust

Mīharo

Southern DHB

Whānau

Oranga Tamariki

Ohai hāpori

**Loss and Grief
Centre**

Kahu Youth Trust

**Kāti Huirapa ki
Rūnaka ki
Puketeraki**

Mana Tāhuna

A3K

Kaumātua

**Catholic Social
Services**

Ngā Mataawaka

NZ Police

**Uruuruwhenua
Health Services**

**Tū Mai Ora
Services**

Well South

Number10

Victim Support

Tumokomoko

Central Rōpū





Murihiku Rōpū



Ōtākou Rōpū



Whakamōmori

Background

This document is a direct result of the KPTO co-design process in 2023. It is a response to the most frequently asked question by Kaimahi who attended the wānaka:

“How do we best support whānau Māori when they are bereaved by suicide?”

This document has been prepared by Kōrari Māori Public Health in consultation with whānau, kaumātua and our KPTO collective. The intention of this document is to guide kaimahi who are unfamiliar with the tangihanga process, and to offer considerations for their practice when supporting whānau Māori who are bereaved by suicide.

Māori and whakamōmori

Māori have their own view of whakamōmori. Mōmori is often described as extreme despair, sadness and hopelessness, or an act of desperation (due to a lack of hope) *. Suicide causes a break in whakapapa and is a tragedy for the whānau left behind. While responses to suicide will vary from lwi to lwi, any engagement with whānau who are bereaved by suicide should be treated with aroha and with understanding.

A glimpse into suicide in Māori communities: Between 2009 and 2019, the suicide rate among Māori in Aotearoa was higher than that of non-Māori, affecting both tāne and wāhine. Tragically, our rangatahi are at a greater risk of taking their own lives. In 2021, Southern DHB experienced the second-highest suicide rates in over a decade. The ripple effect of suicide within our communities is far-reaching and profound.

**“Instill strong
whānau values,
aroha ki ngā
whānau,
know your
whakapapa, be
proud and true
to yourself”
-Whanau voice**





Whānau Māori

Understanding our worldview

Māori have a holistic view of the world; we are bound together by our whakapapa (genealogy) and have a deep connection to the whenua (land) and to te taiao (the natural environment). Māori were taught to understand that death is a part of the cycle of nature. Not all whānau will take their tūpāpaku (deceased whānau member) to the marae, they may choose to take their loved one to their whare. It is very important to understand our social structures, key words and the processes for tangihanga. In Te Waipounamu it is important to acknowledge the Mana Whenua of the land while honouring the diversity of Māori who live here.

Mana Whenua	Maataa Waka	Tikanga	Marae
Refers to Māori who whakapapa to the whenua. Local Iwi includes: Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe and Waitaha. There are 18 papatipu rūnanga located across Te Waipounamu. (See Connecting to Mana Whenua).	Māori who live on the land but who have whakapapa elsewhere. I.e. someone from Te Arawa (Rotorua area) living in Ōtepoti (Dunedin) is considered to be 'Maataa waka'. Tangata Whenua refers to all Māori.	Tikanga refers to our ancestral protocols and processes that keep everyone safe. Tikanga is involved with tapu and noa concepts (see Manaaki Whānau). All Iwi and Hapū will have a different way of doing things (kawa).	Marae are traditional meeting houses for Māori to gather for celebrations, hui, wānanga and tangi. Tangihanga will always take precedence on a marae. The kawa of the marae may change to reflect the Iwi of the deceased.

Tangihanga

Tangihanga is an expression of our culture

Tangi, meaning "to weep," is a key Māori mourning ritual that honors the **wairua** (spirit) of the deceased, their connection to **tūpuna** (ancestors) and the spiritual realm. It is the most important rite in Te Ao Māori as it allows the **whānau pani** (bereaved family) to mourn with the **tūpāpaku** (deceased) and for others to pay their respects. The coffin is often left open for mourners to touch, kiss, and cry over the body.

Tangihanga follows **tikanga** (customary practices), but the process can be adapted based on the whānau needs or the **kawa** (protocols) of the **Iwi** (tribe) or **Hapū** (sub-tribe). The tūpāpaku is typically never left alone, and tangihanga usually takes place at **marae** (meeting house), where it takes precedence over other events. Tangi can also occur at private homes or funeral homes and typically lasts for several days, continuing after burial.

Attendees, often traveling long distances, show respect and may offer a **koha** (donation). If the tūpāpaku is 'lying in state' at a marae then mourners are welcomed with a pōwhiri and speeches are made as if addressing the tūpāpaku, reflecting the belief that the spirit remains with the body until burial. In cases where the tūpāpaku is linked to multiple tribes, debates over burial location may occur, showing love and respect for the deceased. The term **nehu** refers to the burial.

When whakamōmori occurs, it's natural for the whānau pani and those close to the tūpāpaku to experience deep pain, grief, and a range of emotions. Historically, there has been some controversy around tūpāpaku who died by suicide not being accepted onto the marae. However, in recent times, there has been a shift towards a more empathetic and compassionate approach, with many now embracing a more inclusive response.

The best way to learn about tangihanga processes is through a direct experience. However, if you haven't attended a tangi before, the next page will outline some of the key practices and give you an idea of what to expect whether it is on a marae or at a whānau residence setting.

Matariki - Whangai i te Hau Tapu (Feeding the stars)

Matariki, the Māori New Year, is an important time for Māori. The rising of the Matariki star cluster marks a time for reflection and renewal. It is closely linked to the Hau Tapu ceremony, where the steam from cooking food is released to feed the waka that carries our loved ones into the afterlife. During this ceremony, the names of those who have passed away since the last Matariki are called out, and their spirits are honored by becoming stars in the sky, helping provide closure for whānau.

Manaaki Whānau

Considerations for kaimahi supporting bereaved whānau

Visiting the whānau pāni

Your role in supporting the whānau is to allow this essential part of tikanga and grieving to unfold. It is appropriate to visit the marae or whare (home) where the tūpāpaku is lying in state to pay your respects. If you're unsure about going alone, consider bringing someone with you, such as a colleague, cultural advisor, kaumātua, or a friend or family member. The guidelines below can help you prepare and understand what to expect.

Tikanga at the marae

- **Pōwhiri:** Typically, anyone who wishes to pay their respects to the whānau will have to be welcomed through the pōwhiri process. Each marae and lwi will have different tikanga for tangihanga. It is important to arrange a time to visit the marae. Contact the whānau directly or a marae spokesperson. If you do not have a Kaikaranga (someone to call) or Kaikōrero (someone to speak) let the whānau running the pōwhiri know so they can manage their tikanga. Remember to tangohia ōu hū (remove your shoes). Have a waiata ready to sing just in case.
- **Koha:** Giving a koha is encouraged to support the whānau pāni, this could be monetary, flowers or through kai donations. Note: Do not bring kai into the wharenuī, take it in to the kitchen before you leave.
- **Whānau pāni:** the whānau of the tūpāpaku will be present during the pōwhiri and will likely be seated around their loved one. It is customary after the pōwhiri is complete to approach and embrace the whānau pāni one by one to give your condolences, you should stop to observe the tūpāpaku.
- **Tapu and noa:** While you're in the wharenuī you are in a tapu (sacred) space. To complete the pōwhiri process you will need to go through to the wharekai for a drink and something to eat to make yourself noa (safe). There will be a bowl or bucket of water at the door of the wharenuī, as you exit splash your hands in the water and flick water over your head to cleanse yourself and remove the tapu. Note: this is not the kawa of all lwi.
- **Ask the whānau what they need:** If you offer support prepare what support you can give them: Can you provide advocacy support? Do you have resources they need? I.e. chairs, gazebos, printing. Do you have a budget or a fund you can access to support them with kai or vouchers? Let the whānau pāni or their representative know you will follow up with them to offer support once the tangi is over.

Tikanga in the whare

- **Visiting whānau at home:** Make contact with the whānau to arrange the best time to visit the whare. Organise who is going with you (for a whare visit a smaller group may be best). Invite a kaumātua or cultural advisor if you have one/know someone.
- **Koha:** If you have the ability to give a koha either monetary, flowers or a kai donation it is appropriate to take this to the whare. Note: do not take kai into the room where the tūpāpaku is, give it to a whānau member before you leave.
- **Tangohia ōu hū:** Take off your shoes when you enter the whare.
- **Whānau pāni:** Acknowledge the whānau pāni, embrace them if you feel comfortable. Sit with the whānau (they may have seating or a couch) and give your condolences. Prepare something to say in advance: read a whakatauki, share a story about the tūpāpaku, how you knew them, traits they had, offer your support, sing a waiata if you are confident to do this.
- **Tapu and noa:** While you're with the tūpāpaku you are in a tapu (sacred) space. There may be a water bowl or bucket at the door to the house or room, as you exit stop to splash your hands in the water and flick water over your head to cleanse yourself and remove the tapu. Note: not all whānau will do this.
- **Ask the whānau what they need:** If you offer support, know what support you can give them: Can you provide advocacy support? Do you have resources you can lend? I.e. chairs, gazebos, urns. Do you have a budget or a fund you can access to support them with kai or vouchers? Let the whānau pāni know you will follow up with offering support once the tangi is over.

Māori values

Understanding Māori values to guide your approach

While not all whānau who identify as Māori may live fully immersed in their culture, the philosophies passed down from our tūpuna (ancestors) can still guide how to best support our people. Māori values offer a holistic approach to grief, recognising its emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects, and provide a meaningful path for whānau to heal collectively. Your role as a kaimahi in supporting the whānau pani may include offering practical assistance and emotional support, while ensuring the cultural practices and values are respected during the grieving process.

Whakawhanaungatanga

This value emphasizes the importance of relationships, extending beyond whānau and whakapapa to include kinship and connections with others. Relationships are often formed through shared experiences or working together, which fosters a sense of belonging. These relationships can be strengthened through authentic reciprocity, spending time together, offering a listening ear, giving advice when asked, and simply being there for the whānau.

Aroha ki te tangata

Approach whānau with aroha, empathy, and understanding, especially during tangihanga, a time of heightened emotion. Treat the whānau pani with the same love and respect you would hope to receive in their position. Avoid engaging in unhelpful kōrero about whakamōmori and actively shut down any rumours within your hāpori.

Manaakitanga

Manaakitanga, or care, generosity, and hospitality, plays a central role in the tangihanga process. By manaaki-ing others, you uplift their mana. This can include offering kai, providing a koha, making tea, offering your time or services, and simply showing up. When asking whānau what they need, be ready to support them or provide options if they're unsure, helping them feel cared for during this challenging time

Rangatiratanga

This value is about self-determination and autonomy. Each whānau will approach tangihanga, including tikanga and kawa differently according to their lwi. It is important to recognise and respect that they may choose to do things their way. Providing whānau with the right information helps ensure their rangatiratanga remains intact - connect them with resources and information.

Aftercare

Supporting whānau and yourself

Support for Whānau

Once the tangihanga process is complete and whānau have returned home, it's important to stay in contact with the whānau. Ongoing support for them is essential to help them navigate their grief. If your service does not offer counselling support, there are specific services available for whānau bereaved by suicide, along with other counselling services Nationwide and throughout Te Waipounamu that whānau can access (see Resources).

If you were working directly with the whānau:

- Reach out to them by phone or by text to check in
- Organise a follow up home visit, in office appointment or activity
- Have a plan about what you will say and what you can offer
- Follow up and follow through with any information they need or referrals you make

The impact of whakamōmori is far-reaching, particularly for vulnerable tamariki and rangatahi, who may need extra care and attention. Consider reaching out to the wider whānau, including friends, where connections can be made.

Support for Kaimahi

Supporting whānau through whakamōmori can be emotionally challenging for you as a kaimahi. Regular supervision gives you space for reflection and support, while Employee Assistance (EA) services offer confidential counselling to help you manage the emotional demands of your work. It's also important to prioritise self-care, ensuring you take the time to recharge. Accessing these resources will support your well-being and resilience as you continue to care for whānau.

Cultural considerations: Your Pou Māori (Māori Advisor) or Kaumātua may be able to provide useful cultural guidance through this time. Utilise traditional Māori healing practices to support your own closure from the experience (see Rongoā Māori for more information).

Policy considerations: Your agency or organisation may need to develop your own Policy to best support and guide kaimahi through a suicide bereavement.

“Providing support there and then, knowing where to reach out for the support and teaching in the homes to talk about their emotions and how to deal with emotions”

-Whānau voice

Rongoā Māori

Utilising tikanga and mātauranga
Māori to support healing

Māori approaches to healing

Rongoā Māori is the name of traditional Māori healing practices. Rongoā can assist whānau Māori through their grief and loss as it helps to heal the mamae (emotional pain) and spirit. It is a holistic and culturally appropriate alternative to western talk therapies and other non-Māori modalities. Our indigenous healing knowledge and systems were traditionally passed down through generations and highlight the deep connection that Māori have with Te Taiao (the natural environment).

Rongoā Māori incorporates wairua (the spirit) as well as the physical body and may include:

- Ritenga (rituals)
- Karakia (prayer)
- Pure (cleansing with water)
- Rongoā (herbal remedies)
- Mirimiri and romiromi (massage and deep spiritual body work).

Rongoā is becoming more widely recognised as a therapeutic intervention. Find out who your local practitioners are to tautoko the whānau you work with. Be proactive and meet with local kaupapa Maori health and social services and build relationships so that you have access to rongoā if whānau need it.

“Following the traumatic experience I was lost, I tried counselling but it didn’t help me personally because the things she suggested wasn’t kaupapa Maori... some of her activities or suggestions I would break (my lwi) tikanga, so I decided it wasn’t for me.” -Whānau voice



Cultural Resources:

Karakia & Waiata

Karakia and waiata are important at a tangi as they offer spiritual guidance and help express grief, love, and respect for the tūpāpaku. They connect mourners to the spiritual realm and ancestors, offering comfort and unity within the whānau (family) and community.

The following karakia and waiata may be useful to you should whānau ask for a karakia or, if you need to sing a waiata tautoko for your Kaikōrero (speaker or spokes person) when you visit the whare or marae.

Karakia*

Manawa mai te mauri nuku
Manawa mai te mauri rangi
Kia mahara ki te whakaaro
Kia mahara ki te aroha
Kia mātau
Kia pakari
Kia aroha tētahi ki tētahi
Hei oranga wairua
Hei oranga hinengaro
Hei oranga tinana
Hei oranga whānau
kia mauri tū
kia mauri ora
Haumi e, hui e, taiki e

Embrace the life force of the earth
Embrace the life force of the sky
Reflect on the energy of thought
Reflect on the energy of compassion
To grow in knowledge
To build character
To have compassion for one another
For the wellbeing of the spirit
Mind
Body
And those we hold dearest
For the purpose of good health
and wellbeing
Join together, unite, let it be done

Waiata tautoko

Te aroha

Te aroha	The love
Te whakaponono	The faith
Me te rangimarie	And the peace
Tātou tātou e	Amongst us all

Purea nei**

Purea nei e te hau	Cleansed by the wind
Horoia e te ua	Washed by the rain
Whitiwhitia e te ra	And warmed by the sun
Mahea ake nga pōraruraru	All troubles are cleared away
Makere ana nga here	And all restraints got rid of
E rere wairua, e rere	Fly O free spirit
Ki nga ao o te rangi	Fly to the clouds in the heavens
Whitiwhitia e te ra	Warmed by the sun
Mahea ake nga pōraruraru	With all troubles cleared away
Makere ana nga here	All restraints got rid of
Makere ana nga here	All restrictions cast aside

*Karakia from the After Suicide website

** Purea Nei was written by Henare Mahanga (Ngāpuhi) and later adapted by Hirini Melbourne (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu) in remembrance of one of his students who suffered adversity (cpsle.org)

Connecting to Mana Whenua

Ngā Rūnaka o Te Waipounamu

Contact your local Rūnaka for support

Ngāi Tahu has 18 Papatipu Rūnanga across Te Waipounamu, responsible for their people, land, waterways, and resources. They maintain marae, welcome visitors, manage burials, support future generations, and preserve hapū traditions and stories. For local tikanga around tangihanga, contact your nearest Rūnanga (listed below, Moeraki south only).

RŪNAKA	REGION	CONTACT DETAILS	NAME OF MARAE
AWARUA	Bluff	12 Bradshaw St, Bluff 03 212 8652 office@awaruarunaka.iwi.nz	Te Rau Aroha
HOKONUI	Eastern Southland	140 Charlton Rd, RD 4, Gore 03 208 7954 hokonui.office@ngaitahu.iwi.nz	Ō Te Ika Rama
MOERAKI	Waitaki	43 Tenby St, RD2, Palmerston 03 439 4816 moeraki.runanga@ngaitahu.iwi.nz	Uenuku
ŌRAKA APARIMA	Western Southland	175 Palmerston Street, Riverton 03 234 8192 office@orakaaparima.org.nz	Takutai o te Tītī
ŌTĀKOU	Otago	45 Tamatea Road, Ōtākou, RD 2 Dunedin 03 478 0352 office@tro.org.nz	Ōtākou
PUKETERAKI	Waikouaiti	520 Apes Road, Karitane, Waikouaiti 03 465 7300 admin@puketeraki.nz	Puketeraki
WAIHŌPAI	Invercargill	408 Tramway Road, Invercargill 03 216 9074 info@waihopai.org.nz	Murihiku

*Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu website

The ties that bind us

“The good thing about all of us is cos we know where we come from, who we are and where we belong it doesn’t matter where we go in the world, we got this taura (rope) that is connected to our whakapapa at home. A lot of our young people, they don’t understand that wairua that’s pulling them down and how through knowledge about tīkanga and whakapapa they can get out of it. Because once they learn and become enlightened about it, it gives them strength to hold on to that taura.”

- Kaumātua voice



Useful websites

For more information and referrals to services

Connect your whānau to the right services

After the tangihanga process is complete and all the whānau have gone home, it is important to stay in contact, check in and offer support. If your service does not offer counselling support there are services specific for whānau bereaved by suicide and other counselling services in the south that are available for whānau to tap into.

KAUPAPA	DESCRIPTION	OTHER INFORMATION	REGION
AOKE TE RĀ	Free counselling service for individuals and whānau	Online agency or self referral www.aoketera.org.nz	Nationwide
AFTER A SUICIDE	Practical information after whakamōmori	www.afterasuicide.nz	Nationwide
MANAAKI TANGATA	Victim Support can provide emotional support and practical assistance for whānau after suicide.	www.victimsupport.org.nz	Nationwide
CASA CLINICAL ADVISORY SERVICES AOTAEROA	Works with agencies and communities to manage suicide risk	www.casa.org.nz	Nationwide
GRIEF & LOSS CENTRE (SOUTHLAND)	Supporting individuals and whānau through grief (drop ins, groups and discounted counselling)	www.griefandlosscentre.org.nz	Southland
NGĀ KETE MĀTAURANGA POUNAMU CHARITABLE TRUST	Mahana Southern Mental Health and Addictions service: Free counselling and groups	www.nkmp.maori.nz	Southland and Otago

Papakupu

Glossary of terms

Māori

English

Aroha	Love
Hapū	Sub-tribe
Iwi	Tribes, kinship group
Kai	Food
Kaikaranga	Female caller on the Marae
Kaikōrero	Male speaker on the Marae, spokesperson
Kaimahi	Staff member, worker
Kaumātua	Elder
Kaupapa	Purpose, intention, project etc
Kawa	Protocols (variations of tikanga according to Iwi or whānau)
Koha	Gift
Kōrero	Talk
Manaaki	Support, care for
Mana Whenua	People who have whakapapa to the land
Marae	Gathering place for Māori
Maataa Waka	Māori people who do not have whakapapa to the land
Matariki	Significant star cluster, Pleiades
Mātauranga	Knowledge
Noa	Safe
Pōwhiri	Marae welcoming ritual of encounter
Pou Māori	Māori Advisor
Rakatahi	Rakatahi
Rongoā	Traditional Māori healing practices
Rūnaka	Overseeing union of Mana Whenua specific to a region
Tamariki	Children
Tangi/tangihanga	To weep or funeral processes
Tangata Whenua	Māori people
Tapu	Restricted, sacred
Taiao	Natural environment
Tautoko	Help, support
Tikanga	Customary practices
Tūpāpaku	Deceased person
Tūpuna	Ancestors
Wānaka	Workshop, hui, event
Whakamōmori	Suicide
Whakapapa	Genealogy
Whānau	Family
Whānau Pani	Immediate whānau who have been bereaved

