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Āwhinatia tāu Whānau: Kua Wehea ai, Kua Ngaro ai. Māori Experiences of Reconnecting and Rebuilding Relationships with Kin-Based Systems of Whānau, Hapū and Iwi

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Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Heretaunga

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Clinical Psychology

at the University of Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand

2017
ABSTRACT

Meaningful connection is an important contributor to individual wellness and resilience. As an Indigenous people, Māori are often considered whānau orientated and shaped by a broad kin-based network of relationships with whānau, hapū and iwi. However, a number of Māori are not able to connect with these potential systems of support. The aim of this research was to explore the issues surrounding whānau, hapū and iwi disconnection and the way that individuals and whānau rebuild and reconnect following a period of disconnection. Utilising a Kaupapa Māori methodology and Whakapapa Framework, fifteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals who had experienced disconnection and subsequently begun a process of reconnection with whānau, hapū and iwi. Thematic analysis explored common patterns across all interviews and identified that the causes of disconnection are complex with historical, contemporary, and cross generational factors present. The experience of disconnection itself reflected alienation and longing for whakapapa characteristic of ngākau māmāe, a loss of culture and relationships. Nevertheless, a number of enduring threads of connection were present in the form of wairuatanga, whakapapa kōrero and whenua. Thus the reconnection process was identified as a dynamic and complex interaction of simultaneous disconnection and connection in areas that strengthen and weaken at various stages of life. An active point of turning toward reconnection was identified. This then paved the way for further connection with whānau, hapū and iwi. Dealing with difficult dynamics was identified as a challenging aspect of the reconnection process. However, an acceptance of such realities and contradictions facilitated alternative pathways to reconnect and alongside the re-establishment of whānau tikanga facilitated safe interaction. Overall, the experience of reconnection was identified by participants as transformative and valuable. Reconnection to whānau, hapū and iwi facilitated an increase in self-reported wellbeing, and a sense of tūrangawaewae or a place to stand within whānau, hapū and iwi and Māori identity in general. This study highlighted that whakapapa remains important to a number of Māori, and that creating connection within clinical practice supports Māori to articulate their experience and be supported in their identity as Māori. An increased awareness of the dynamics of disconnection and reconnection processes will likely facilitate a more robust cultural formulation, and consequently more culturally responsive intervention within psychological treatment for Māori, who present with issues that may involve a sense of disconnection from whānau, hapū and iwi.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ēhara tāku toa, he takitini, he toa takitini
My success and strength is not mine alone, but that of many

Reflected throughout this thesis are thoughts that are informed by the kōrero of participants who courageously took steps to rebuild relationships with their whānau, hapū and iwi, and Māori culture in general. We as psychologists and as whānau, hapū and iwi members can learn a lot from their journey. To the participants of this study, your stories and experiences were inspiring and I valued your kōrero, not just as a researcher but as a Māori. You each in your own kōrero have valuable knowledge to share, and it was a privilege to hear your journey. Ngā mihi nu nui ki a koutou katoa.

Ironically, in the writing of this thesis there have been times due to thesis deadlines and mahi that I have been absent from my own whānau, hapū and iwi. It has been a long journey. However, the strength of whakapapa has remained and the journey to complete this thesis has allowed me in the disconnected moments to also experience the value of connection, and the strength and support from both kaupapa and whakapapa whānau.

Ka mihi nu nui ki tōku whānau ō Tuaropaki Trust. You have inspired me to achieve high. Your commitment to excellence and your humility in your success, has led me to also value those same attributes, of being tika and pono ki ngā tikanga a tātou tipuna, and to the development of our people. The value that you place on whakapapa in its broadest sense: in the way that you honour past generations; actively seek out and care for current generations; and your vision and protection of the interests of future generations, has shown me the ability of a whānau trust to support whānau to remain connected. I am truly appreciative of your financial support throughout my education journey, and the opportunities for whanaungatanga and connection that you have provided through annual hui, pānui and student dinners. Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa mo tō mahi ki a tātou, so that we also can achieve high.

Similarly, I am also grateful to my whānau in Mokai Patea who keep the home fires burning tirelessly. In times of pain, tension and periods of disconnection and connection you move our whānau, hapū and iwi forward through the Waitangi Tribunal process. It has been a privilege to kōrero with those involved, to attend hui a hapū, read reports, and listen. We rebuild our future and identity by understanding our history in the context of the
Waitangi Tribunal. It is our history that has inspired this thesis, and kept me going. To my cousins and whanaunga in Mokai Patea, my aunts, uncles, kuia, koroua, ‘ahi kā’ thank you for the mahi seen and unseen that you have done.

I am also very appreciative of the scholarship and education grants provided by Te Atawhai o te Ao, Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated, Tuwharetoa Trust, Lake Taupō Forest Trust, Henry Rongomau Bennett, Hauora Māori, and Rose Hellaby Trust. Your financial support was a reminder to me of the responsibility that we have as Māori to advance Māori scholarship and ensure that our research contributes to improved outcomes and greater wellbeing for Māori. Thank you for your support.

To the team and fellow scholarship recipients at Te Atawhai o te Ao who supported me during the various stages of this thesis ngā mihi ki a koutou katoa. To Cheryl Smith and Paul Reynolds your encouragement at the early stages of this thesis inspired me to pursue this topic. While it has changed direction a few times, the scaffolding that your scholarship provided, and the commitment that you have to real Indigenous issues more specifically historical and intergenerational trauma helped me to develop and articulate the relationship of these issues with disconnection, and my mahi as a future clinical psychologist. Ngā mihi nui ki a korua.

Ka huri te mihi nei ki ōku whānau o kura pō Unitec. To Matua Joe Naden thank you for your encouragement and checking in “how’s that thesis?” For putting the pānui out for participants and your general support for the kaupapa. It was a privilege to have you as a kaiako. Your depth of knowledge and your passion for teaching te reo Māori will contribute to the reconnection of many generations of Māori with their whānau, hapū and iwi. Ngā mihi nui ki a koe e te rangatira. Otirā ki ngā tauira o te reo Māori. Thank you to all of you who shared an interest in this kaupapa and supported me. Kia kaha, kia maia, kia manawanui kia koutou e ako ana i te reo Māori.

He mihi nunui ki ōku tuakana hoki, ko Tania Cargo koutou ko Erana Cooper, ko Margaret Dudley, ko Helen Lenihan, ko Pikihuia Pomare, ko Sharon Rickard, ko Rebecca Wirihana. Thank you each of you for your guidance from the beginning of my journey into psychology and your contribution to my future as a psychologist. Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa e ngā tuakana, e ngā tōtara, e ngā mana wāhine. To the teams of He Kākano and Whītiki Maurea for the invaluable learning that I gained on placement and to Nan and Matua Piripī for your time and willingness to kōrero with me about this kaupapa. To Tania, Helen
and Pikihuia for your commitment to my ongoing development as a clinical psychologist, and your words of encouragement and inspiration. Your continued reminders to keep going when the task seemed never ending, your willingness to provide feedback and support in the midst of your busy schedules, and to Pikihuia mō tō tāua peer supervision me te hikoi ki te ngahere. He mauri tau kia whakamutu au i te mahi nei. Ka pai rawa atu ō koutou tautoko ki au. Thank you to each of you.

Ka mihi au ki ngā hoa mahi o Te Puna Waiora. Thank you to all my work colleagues at Te Puna Waiora, and to Danielle Bell for your continued encouragement to finish this thesis. To Willem and Katrina thank you for your continued patience, as finally I finish it. Thank you for your wisdom and guidance and the opportunity to work at Te Puna Waiora. It is a privilege to be part of such an important service, and wonderful team. Ki ngā hoa tauira o kaimātai hinengaro Māori, ko Gemma Trickelbank koutou ko Simon Waigth, ko Anna Walters. Thank you all for your tautoko, valuable kōrero and encouragement throughout this thesis journey and psychology in general. To Danielle and Jess your enthusiasm for this topic has reminded me of the importance of this kaupapa. In addition, it has been an awesome experience to be involved in the He Paiaka Tōtara/Tipu rōpū during the final stages of this thesis. Your formation at a key stage of my thesis has given me perseverance to complete, as I realise that we all share a similar vision within psychology for our people. I am encouraged to keep developing this mahi. It is an exciting time for Māori psychologists.

To the University of Auckland Māori and Pacific Research Group, Psychology Tuakana Programme and to Jade, Amelia and Afi thank you for your support and encouragement in the early stages of my study and thesis development. To MAI ki Tāmaki and the wonderful writing retreat tauira; your knowledge was invaluable and it helped me to orientate to Kaupapa Māori research which was an essential aspect of this thesis. To my supervisor Fred Seymour thank you for your continued patience and your willingness to allow me to develop my thoughts and ideas about this topic. You have been a steady presence through the ups and downs of writing a thesis.

Ka mihi nu nui au ki āku hoa from my previous work, student and personal life who have waited patiently for me to complete this thesis. A huge thanks to each of you for your encouragement, support and patience at the various stages of my study. To Darlene, John, Ruby, Maia and Grace, and Jacqui and David for the escapes from Auckland and the chance to recharge my batteries. Thanks e hoa mā.
Finally, last but most definitely not least to my whānau the essence of this thesis. To those who have passed, thank you for the lessons I learned from you about the importance of whānau. To my Dad who although not Māori chose to embrace things Māori. I noho ia i te wharetipuna o tōku whaea i tonu matenga. This was a catalyst to a much deeper connection to our taha Māori. To my grandmother who while in some ways distant from te ao Māori continued to embody the qualities of whanaungatanga of what it means to be Māori. Her journey as a young Māori growing up in difficult times has been an inspiration to this thesis. To Auntie Nita her sister who openly shared with me their childhood, whakapapa and the important things I needed to know to be confident to be Māori. Ngā kaiwhakaatu ō rātou wairua ki tēnei mahi rangahau. Moe mai koutou moe mai ra.

Ka huri te mihi nei ki nga hunga ora o tōku whānau, to Raewyn and Tonty, and Makere and Fritz thank you for your support from start to finish of this thesis. It has been wonderful to reconnect with you as whānau. My life has been enriched. To Auntie Ruth and Uncle Owen, Di and Kev thank you for your perseverance in keeping us connected to each other, and your support to Mum. To my beautiful sisters, you keep me real and continually remind me about the realities of being a whānau. I appreciate the times when we kōrero together and enjoy the relationships that we have now formed as adults. Thank you for your support. To James, Indie and Sol even though I have been attached to my computer for most of your lives, your hearts have always been close to me. I look forward to spending more time with you now that my study is completed, and to Marika and Amiria I look forward to meeting you when you return to NZ. This thesis is dedicated to a new generation of cousins Jackson, James, Indie, Sol, Marika and Amiria and the future generations of our uri. He kākano koe e kore koe e ngaro, wherever you go in life may you always know that you are linked to a rich whakapapa that links you to Rangiātea, and more importantly that you feel confident and supported within our whakapapa.

To my mum, my strength. You have quietly in your own way continually connected us to our whakapapa, to a shared sense of belonging and responsibility that transverses past, present, and future. I am eternally grateful that you took steps to keep us connected to all that incorporates our whakapapa. I have valued our trips home, the awa, the whenua, and the stories. It is the richness and depth of connection. Ka aroha kē ki a koe. Mauri tau, mauri ora koutou katoa.
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Themes and Subthemes .................................................. 55
Table 2: Reasons for Disconnection ............................................. 56
# GLOSSARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aotearoa</td>
<td>New Zealand (land of long white cloud)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aroha</td>
<td>To love, feel concern for, compassion, empathise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atua</td>
<td>Supernatural being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awa</td>
<td>River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Āwhinatia (Awhi)</td>
<td>The act of providing care, support, assistance, to embrace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hā a koro mā a kui ma</td>
<td>Breath of life of tīpuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haerenga</td>
<td>Journey, trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haka</td>
<td>Vigorous dance with actions and powerful rhythmic chant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hākari</td>
<td>Feast, celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hapū</td>
<td>Subtribe, to be pregnant, conceived in the womb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haputanga</td>
<td>Hapū specific knowledge, customs and practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hau kāinga</td>
<td>Home or home people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hauora</td>
<td>Health, fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haumai-tiketike</td>
<td>Atua and provider of wild food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He Kokonga Whare</td>
<td>Māori intergenerational trauma and healing programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hīkoi</td>
<td>To step, stride, walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinengaro</td>
<td>Mind, thought, intellect, consciousness, awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hohourongo</td>
<td>Reconciliation process to facilitate peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hui</td>
<td>Gathering, meeting, assembly, seminar, conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hea ō ratou</td>
<td>Where were they?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ihi</td>
<td>Essential force, excitement, power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ngā wa katoa</td>
<td>All the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iwi</td>
<td>Extended kinship group, tribe, nation, people, bone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iwitanga</td>
<td>Iwi specific knowledge, customs and practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kāhui Mana Ririki</td>
<td>A Māori led organisation focussed on reducing Māori child abuse (education, advocacy, research)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kaimoana</strong></td>
<td>Seafood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kāinga</strong></td>
<td>Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kaitiakitanga</strong></td>
<td>Guardianship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kākano</strong></td>
<td>Seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kanohi ki te kanoi (kitea)</strong></td>
<td>Face to face, to be seen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kapa haka</strong></td>
<td>Māori performing arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Karakia</strong></td>
<td>Prayer, chant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kaumātua</strong></td>
<td>Elder(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kaupapa</strong></td>
<td>Topic, policy, matter for discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kaupapa Māori</strong></td>
<td>An approach that privileges the perspectives and protocol of Māori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kia kaha</strong></td>
<td>Be strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Koha</strong></td>
<td>Gift, present, offering, donation, contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kohanga reo</strong></td>
<td>Māori language immersion for preschool children. Concerned primarily with the survival of te reo Māori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kōrero</strong></td>
<td>Narrative, speech, conversation, discourse (koreoreo-discussion, debate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Koroua (Koro)</strong></td>
<td>Elderly man, grandfather, grand uncle, papa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kua ngaro ai</strong></td>
<td>Still lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kua wehi ai</strong></td>
<td>Still separated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kuia</strong></td>
<td>Elderly woman, grandmother, grand aunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kūmara vine</strong></td>
<td>Colloquialism used to describe spreading news via word of mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kupu Māori</strong></td>
<td>Māori word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kura kaupapa</strong></td>
<td>Primary school operating under Māori custom and using Māori as the medium of instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mahinga kai</strong></td>
<td>Food gathering practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mana</strong></td>
<td>A supernatural force in a person, place or object, mana goes hand in hand with tapu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mannaki</td>
<td>To support, take care of, give hospitality to, protect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manaakitanga</td>
<td>Hospitality, kindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori</td>
<td>Indigenous New Zealander, natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māoritanga (Māoridom)</td>
<td>Māori culture, practices and beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marae</td>
<td>The complex were whānau, and hapū collectives or groups discuss political and social matters, and host tangi and important events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mātauranga Māori</td>
<td>Māori epistemology, traditional and contemporary Māori knowledge brought to Aotearoa by Polynesian ancestors of present day Māori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maunga</td>
<td>Mountain, peak (maunga tapu- sacred mountain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauri</td>
<td>Life principle, vitality, special nature, material symbol of a life principle, source of emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mana whenua</td>
<td>Māori who have customary authority over a particular land area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuhiri</td>
<td>Visitor, guest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mātāwaka</td>
<td>Māori who live in an area outside their hapū and iwi location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mihimihi (mihi)</td>
<td>Speech or greeting, structured communication, process of introduction and communication which establishes the unique Māori recognition of intimacy required to communicate effectively and appropriately (Matua Raki., 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirimiri</td>
<td>Soft tissue massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moana</td>
<td>Sea, ocean, large lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mokopuna</td>
<td>Grandchild, descendant-child or grandchild of a child, niece or nephew (moko-traditional tattoo, puna -spring reflection)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mōteatea</td>
<td>Chants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mokaitanga</td>
<td>Dependency/slave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noa</td>
<td>Neutral, common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noho marae</td>
<td>To stay at the marae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngahere</td>
<td>Bush, forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngākau</td>
<td>Heart, seat of affections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Meaning/Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oranga</td>
<td>Wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriori</td>
<td>Lullaby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pā</td>
<td>Fortified place informally used to describe marae complex and inclusive of papakāinga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paepae</td>
<td>Front row/seat of male speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pākehā</td>
<td>New Zealander of European descent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakeke</td>
<td>Adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papakāinga</td>
<td>Original home, home base, village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papatūanuku (Papa)</td>
<td>Earth/ mother of the earth, wife of Ranginui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parihaka</td>
<td>A town established in Taranaki by Māori prophets Erueti Te Whiti-o-Rongomau and Tohu Kākahi, passive resistance leaders and movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patu ngākau</td>
<td>To cause deep psychological shock (T. Smith, 2013). Patu- to strike, ngākau-heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepeha</td>
<td>A recitation of whakapapa and areas of significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pōhara</td>
<td>Poor, poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pono</td>
<td>To be true, valid, honest, genuine, sincere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pou</td>
<td>Post, upright, strong support, pole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pōuri (pōuritanga)</td>
<td>Sadness, sorrow, disheartened, remorseful (depression, unhappiness, despondency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pōwhiri</td>
<td>Invitation, rituals of encounter, welcome ceremony on a marae, transactional engagement that assists in the negotiation of a safe space for discussion to take place (Matua Raki, 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puna</td>
<td>Spring, well (water)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pūrakāu</td>
<td>Traditional narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangahau</td>
<td>To search out, research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangatahi</td>
<td>Youth, adolescent, teenager, younger generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangatira</td>
<td>Esteemed, revered person, chief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangatiratanga</td>
<td>Sovereignty, chieftainship, right to exercise authority, self-determination, self-management, ownership, leadership of a social group, domain of rangatira, noble birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rangiātea</strong></td>
<td>Ancient name strongly associated with Hawaiki, both a physical place and a spiritual realm, literally a clear sky, clear spiritual realm, state of enlightenment, the upmost heaven (Pomare, 2015)</td>
</tr>
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<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ranginui (Rangi)</strong></td>
<td>Atua of the sky, husband of Papatūānuku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Raruraru</strong></td>
<td>Difficulty, trouble, dispute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rohe</strong></td>
<td>Boundary, district, region, territory, area, border (of land)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rongoā</strong></td>
<td>To apply medicines, remedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Romiromi</strong></td>
<td>Deep tissue massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rōpū</strong></td>
<td>Group of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ruāmoko</strong></td>
<td>Atua of earthquakes and volcanoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rūnanga</strong></td>
<td>Tribal council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taha</strong></td>
<td>Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taiao</strong></td>
<td>Environment, natural world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tamariki</strong></td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tāne</strong></td>
<td>Men, males, husbands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tānemahuta</strong></td>
<td>Atua of the trees and birdlife also known as Tane-te-toko-o-te-rangi due to his ability to push his father Ranginui into the sky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tangaroa</strong></td>
<td>Atua of fish and reptiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tāngata</strong></td>
<td>People, persons, human beings (tangata singular)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tāngata whaiora</strong></td>
<td>Consumer of mental health services, a person following health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tāngata whenua</strong></td>
<td>Local people, hosts, Indigenous people of the land- people born of the whenua (of the placenta and the land)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tangihanga (Tangi)</strong></td>
<td>Weeping, crying, funeral, rites for the dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taonga</strong></td>
<td>Gift, something precious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taonga puoro</strong></td>
<td>Traditional Māori musical instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tapu</strong></td>
<td>The restricted and controlled access to other human beings (Tate, 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taunga hou</strong></td>
<td>Māori who do not live in their iwi area but do not affiliate with their hapū or iwi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taura here</td>
<td>Māori who do not live in their iwi area but still affiliate with their hapū or iwi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tāwhirimatea</td>
<td>Atua of the wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te ao hou</td>
<td>The contemporary world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te ao Māori</td>
<td>The Māori world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te ao mārarma</td>
<td>The world of light/understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te ao Pākehā</td>
<td>The western world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te ao tawhito</td>
<td>The ancient world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te ao wairua</td>
<td>The spiritual realm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te ao whakanekeke</td>
<td>The global world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tēina</td>
<td>Younger brother (of male), younger sister (of female), younger cousin of same generation and gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te Pae Mahutonga</td>
<td>Southern cross constellation of stars. A Māori model of healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te pō</td>
<td>The darkness, the night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te reo Māori</td>
<td>Māori language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te whai-ao ki te Ao</td>
<td>State between Te po and Te ao marama, unfolding toward light, transition toward healing (Piripi &amp; Body, 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marama</td>
<td>The four walls of a house, a Māori model of health care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te Whare Tapa Wha</td>
<td>The octopus, a Māori model of health care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te Wheke</td>
<td>The darkness, the night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tika</td>
<td>Correct, appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tikanga</td>
<td>Protocols, correct procedure, custom, manner and practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinana</td>
<td>Physical body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tino rangatiratanga</td>
<td>Self-determination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tīpuna/ tūpuna</td>
<td>Ancestors, grandparents (tipuna/tupuna singular)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tohunga</td>
<td>Skilled person, chosen expert, a person chosen by the agent of an atua and the tribe as a leader in a particular field because of signs indicating talent for a particular vocation (Pomare, 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toiora</td>
<td>Healthy lifestyles, protection from negative influences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tokotoko</strong></td>
<td>Walking stick, staff, pole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuakana</strong></td>
<td>Elder brother (of male), elder sister (of female), elder cousin of same gender and generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tukutuku</strong></td>
<td>Woven panels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tūpato</strong></td>
<td>Caution, to be careful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tūmatauenga</strong></td>
<td>Atua of war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tūrāngawaewae</strong></td>
<td>Place of belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tūturū</strong></td>
<td>Real, trustworthy, upright post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Utu</strong></td>
<td>Make response following a grievance, payment to restore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urupā</strong></td>
<td>Exclusive whānau or hapū cemetery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uri</strong></td>
<td>Descendant, offspring, relative, kin, progeny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wāhine</strong></td>
<td>Woman, (wahine singular)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wāhi tapu</strong></td>
<td>Sacred place, sacred site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Waiata</strong></td>
<td>Song, chant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Waiata tangi</strong></td>
<td>Song of lament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wairua</strong></td>
<td>Spirit, soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wairuatanga</strong></td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Waka</strong></td>
<td>Canoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wānanga</strong></td>
<td>Seminar, conference, forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wehi</strong></td>
<td>A response of awe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whaea</strong></td>
<td>Mother, aunt (whāea plural)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Waikōrero</strong></td>
<td>The art or practice of oratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whakairo</strong></td>
<td>Art of carving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whakamā</strong></td>
<td>Be ashamed, shy, embarrassed, to become pale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whakamutunga</strong></td>
<td>To bring something to an end, ending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whakanoa</strong></td>
<td>To neutralise the power of tapu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whakaoho</strong></td>
<td>To startle, awaken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whakapapa</td>
<td>Genealogy, lineage, descent, to layer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whakapapa kōrero</td>
<td>Tangata whenua discourses of identity (T. Smith, 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whakatau</td>
<td>To settle, prepare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whakataukī</td>
<td>Proverb, saying, aphorism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whakatupuranga</td>
<td>Generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whakawātea</td>
<td>To clear, free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whakawhānaungatanga</td>
<td>Process of establishing and maintaining links and relationships with others, relating well to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whānau</td>
<td>Family and extended family, to be born, to give birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whānaunga</td>
<td>Relative, relation, kin, blood relation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whānaungatanga</td>
<td>Relationship, kinship, sense of family connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whānau ora</td>
<td>Family wellbeing- a cross-government approach that places families at the center of service delivery, requiring the integration of health, education and social services (Ministry of Health, 2015).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whāngai</td>
<td>To raise, adopt, nurture (also means to feed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whare</td>
<td>House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wharepuni</td>
<td>Main meeting house of a marae (also known as whare tipuna, whare nui)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whatumanawa</td>
<td>The seat of emotions, deeper recess of consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whenua</td>
<td>Land, country, ground, placenta, afterbirth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PEPEHA

Ko Aorangi Ko Tongariro ōku maunga
Ko Rangitikei tōku awa
Ko Taupō-nui-a-tia tōku moana
Ko Ngāti Tūwharetoa ko Kahungunu ki Heretaunga ōku iwi
Ko Ngāti Hinemanu, Ngāti Paki, Ngāti Kurauria ōku hapū
Ko Winiata rātou ko Tokaanu, ko Mokai ōku marae
No uri o Tuaropaki hoki
Tihei mauri ora
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLOSSARY</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEPEHA</td>
<td>xvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>xvii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori Identities</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whakapapa</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whānau, hapū and iwi systems</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mātāwaka</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-Political Context of Indigenous Disconnection</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical trauma theory</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori experience of colonisation</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanisation</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-Relational Factors Associated with Disconnection</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estranged whānau relationships</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whānau violence</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental illness</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Models of Health and Wellbeing</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori Health Models</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Māori healing</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tikanga principles related to whānau wellbeing</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whānau ora initiatives</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY</strong></td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Research</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaupapa Māori Research</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whakapapa Research Framework</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher Reflexivity</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Schedule</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Procedure</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS

Theme 1: Causes of Disconnection: Historical Contemporary and Cross-generational...

- The experience of colonisation. A devalued Māori identity
- Urban opportunity and absent relationships
- Abusive relationships
- Adolescent transitions

Summary

Theme 2: Experience of Disconnection: Alienation and Longing for Whakapapa

- Ngākau mamae
- Loss of relationships
- Loss of culture

Summary

Theme 3: Enduring Threads of Connection

- Wairuatanga
- Whakapapa kōrero
- Whenua

Summary

Theme 4: Active Turning Toward Connection with Whānau, Hapū and Iwi

- Cautious entry and initial contact
- Re-establishing access to whānau, hapū and iwi systems of support
- Social media. An upgraded kūmara vine
- Rebuilding identity with whānau, hapū and iwi through broader Māori community

Summary

Theme 5: Dealing with Difficult Dynamics

- Acceptance of dilemmas and contradictory realities
- Re-establishing whānau tikanga and safe interaction

Summary

Theme 6: Tūrangawaewae: A Place to Stand

- Whakaoho mauri
- Whakamana, Whakakaha
- Te ara whakahonohono. A path for the next generation to follow

Summary

Theme 7: Creating Connection within Clinical Practice

- Cultural competency
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Until recent times Māori “philosophical thought, epistemological constructs, cultural codes, and worldviews” (Lee, 2009, p. 1) were transmitted to successive generations through a number of mediums. One of which was pūrākau, a traditional form of narrative. As a culturally validated system of knowledge pūrākau provide insight into the depth of te ao Māori or Māori worldview (T. Smith, 2013), behaviour and identity (Mead, 2003). The separation of Papatūānuku (earth mother) and Ranginui (sky father) is a pūrākau that is relevant to this study and provides insight into the human experience of disconnection:

_Papatūānuku (Papa) and Ranginui (Rangi) lived in darkness (Te Pō) embraced by each other. They had many children, some of their children: Tānemahuta (atua of the trees, birdlife), Tangaroa (atua of fish and reptiles), Tūmatauenga (atua of war), Haumia-tiketike (provider of wild foods), were restless and wanted to separate their parents so that they could experience light and understanding (Te ao Mārama). After much struggle Tānemahuta also known as Tāne-te-toko-o-te-rangi pushed Rangi upward away from Papa. This separation created much turmoil. Another child Tāwhirimātea (atua of the wind) objected to his parent’s separation. He remained with his father in the sky and created fierce winds of destruction toward his brothers. Tūmatauenga was left alone to fight against Tāwhirimātea. Angered by the lack of support from his brothers, Tūmatauenga sought utu (a process of rebalancing mana [power and dignity]). He utilised trees and vines to trap birds and spear fish. Thus he made the children of his brothers, Tāne and Tangaroa noa (removed the ir sanctity). Rangi wept deeply for Papa and great tears of sorrow flowed from the sky in the form of rain. Consequently, the children of Rangi and Papa turned their mother over, so Rangi could no longer see her face and be reminded of his loss. Papa drew Ruāmoko (atua of earthquakes and volcanos) close to her to keep her warm as he was still being nursed. Similarly, she drew Rongomātāne (atua of cultivated foods-kūmara) toward her to protect him from the turmoil. When the turmoil stopped, Rongomātāne (Rongo) then moved out from Papa into Te ao Mārama. Hence, Rongo is associated with peace and healing (O'Regan, 2016; Walker, 2004)._

While iwi differences related to the above interpretation exist, this pūrākau reinforces the principle of whakapapa (Jenkins, 2011; Wyse, 1992). The despair that Ranginui and Papatūānuku experienced following their separation highlighted the human desire for connection. As the rain falls we are reminded of Rangi’s sorrow and likewise the wind
Tāwhirimatea’s objection to his parent’s separation. The relationship that Ranginui and Papatūānuku shared prior to their separation did not return to its original state. They desired connection, but a number of their children did not. The conflicting desires of all created turmoil. Thus the separation of Ranginui and Papatūānuku brought about irreversible change with long reaching consequences.

Yet, despite the turmoil and separation, the whakapapa of Ranginui and Papatūānuku continue through their uri (descendants) into Te ao Mārama; and whilst their relationship now takes a different form, in some ways the connection of Ranginui and Papatūānuku to each other has been retained. As will be reflected in this study, despite the varied levels of separation that may occur within whakapapa, whakapapa remains the thread that has endured; and in the between spaces of disconnection and connection growth and development may occur.

My interest in this topic developed prior to my training as a psychologist, whilst I worked in the context of a non-government residential facility for women and children. The facility offered an intensive wrap around programme designed to address a range of issues related to care and protection, parenting, addiction and domestic violence. During the programme some women were able to be supported by their extended whānau. However, due to a number of issues ranging from low level disputes to extensive histories of early childhood abuse and distress, a number of women and their children did not have access to whānau support. Hāpū and iwi relationships were even more distant and out of reach. This reality meant that non-kin caregivers were often called upon to fill the gap when urgent respite was needed for children. These placements were identified as safe. However, given the centrality of kin based systems to provide support to our own people, I hea ō rātou whānau, hapū, iwi (Where were their family, subtribe and tribe)? I felt unsettled by the paradox that this situation posed and I questioned how do we as clinician’s and as Māori nurture whakapapa? Is it possible and is it sustainable given layer upon layer of disconnection, and in some cases multiple issues that may further compromise wellbeing.

My questions remained when I entered psychology training. In my Honours research I interviewed a small number of Māori non-offending caregivers about their experience of utilising a service designed specifically to care for children and teenagers who had experienced child abuse. In this study a number of caregivers voiced that they were reluctant to access their whānau for support due to shame, fear of judgement or misguided advice. Furthermore, key informants suggested that the broader cultural and spiritual needs of
whānau were often not met by the services who were all that remained to ensure safety and support. This again raised more questions than answers for me about the realities of whānau, hapū and iwi to provide support to their whānau in distress, and also the ability of support services to facilitate appropriate cultural healing beyond immediate safety.

Having lived in Canada for several years I was familiar with the First Nations experience of colonisation and while as a Māori I recognised that we had different experiences of colonisation there were overarching similarities. I was privileged to receive a scholarship through Te Atawhai o te Ao (Independent Māori Research Unit for Environment and Health), who through their ‘He Kokonga Whare’ project are exploring Māori historical and intergenerational trauma. Their knowledge and expertise regarding historical trauma and Indigenous scholarship provided me with a scaffold to locate both our experience as Māori, and also the whānau I had previously worked with, to that of Indigenous people across the world. In addition, it helped me to speak to the trauma of our tīpuna. The breakdown of whānau, hapū and iwi relationships is one of the many consequences of historical and intergenerational trauma. For some the journey back home to whānau, hapū and iwi is complex and layered with many possibilities and impossibilities. This thesis is an attempt to understand and articulate the possibilities.

The first chapter of this thesis locates this study within relevant literature and theory pertaining to the experience of Indigenous disconnection and reconnection. This chapter initially presents an overview of Māori traditional and contemporary identity. It then progresses to explain the socio-political context of disconnection followed by a brief review of the main areas of social disconnection identified within the literature. It concludes with a focus on the literature that outlines Indigenous models of health and wellbeing, traditional Māori approaches to healing and integrated whānau ora initiatives. Chapter Two provides an outline of Kaupapa Māori methodology and the principles of whakapapa as a research framework. It also outlines the method used to explore participant experiences of disconnection and reconnection with whānau, hapū and iwi and Chapter Three reports on the key thematic findings from analysis. Finally, Chapter Four reviews and discusses the key findings of this study, and its implications. These implications are primarily reviewed according to their relevance to clinical practice within psychology, but also to whānau, hapū and iwi development. Chapter Four will then conclude with strengths and limitations of this study and suggestions for future research.
The terms ‘connection’ and ‘reconnection’ are used interchangeably to refer to the relationship each participant has with their whānau, hapū and iwi, and their identity as Māori. In contrast, disconnection will describe a period of separation from meaningful connection with both their kin based group and Māori identity. With regard to the use of the Indigenous language of Aotearoa, New Zealand, Te Reo Māori will be interspersed within the text. To support the reader an English translation will follow the first use of kupu Māori (Māori words). In most instances this will be a literal translation in parentheses, but in some instances a contextual translation without parentheses will follow. This will be to retain the depth of meaning of some kupu and support the flow of reading. A glossary of kupu Māori is also provided.

**Māori Identities**

The notion of identity as a given description of personhood is often unquestioned within everyday life. Yet it is very much a socio-political concept reinforced by a socially constructed sense of self that is “established through public acts of self-representation, private accountings of oneself or through the experience of being named by others” (Y. Paradies, 2006a, p.356). As is reflected in the history of many Indigenous communities, early colonial authorities were of the belief that assimilation was necessary to establish an integrated society. At the core of assimilation policies was a deliberate attempt to erode indigenous identity, and ways of being. It was believed that Indigenous people would eventually cease to exist (Pool, 2015).

Prior to colonial settlement Māori did not define themselves as Māori per se, but by whakapapa, a common tipuna (ancestor), or whānau and hapū grouping (Ballara, 1998). The notion of a ‘Māori race’ is a comparatively more recent construct that developed in the early colonial period of New Zealand to differentiate Indigenous people from colonial settlers. Hence, Māori identity has at times been a contentious and politically driven construct that has had little to do with Māori epistemology, and more to do with conceptualising authenticity and entitlement to advance social and political agendas of the dominant group, namely Pākehā settlers (Kukutai & Taylor, 2013). For example, in comparison to non-Māori, early New Zealand archival records suggest an inconsistent and less comprehensive collection of Māori information across most areas of government information, for instance births, deaths, marriages, admission registers, electoral rolls, and census data (Pool, 2015); yet Māori land court records are extensive.
For statistical purposes Māori classification is now based on self-identification. Intermarriage across iwi and ethnicity mean that many Māori affiliate to more than one iwi and ethnic group, and likely identity (Poata-Smith, 2013). With greater mobility and greater societal tolerance for cross cultural relationships there is a likelihood that Māori with multiple ethnic identities will increase. The Growing up in New Zealand longitudinal study reported that 32% of babies in their study were identified by their mothers as being of multiple ethnicity, 26% with dual ethnicity and 5.8% with three or more ethnic affiliations (Morton et al., 2012). Furthermore, 76.8% of Australian born Māori reported multiple Māori ancestry with 44% reporting Australian ancestry (Kukutai & Pawar, 2013).

Within Māori identity literature, a number of profiles have been suggested as a way to acknowledge and understand the diversity of Māori identity (Durie, 2005). These include those of secure Māori identity who comfortably identify as Māori and who participate in a broad range of activities and relationships within te ao Māori (Māori worldview); positive Māori identity who identify with Māori identity but have more limited or infrequent access to te ao Māori than those of secure Māori identity; notional Māori who also identify as Māori but have no access to te ao Māori and finally compromised Māori who for a variety of reasons or choice do not identify as Māori despite ready access to te ao Māori (Cunningham, Stevenson & Tassell, 2005). The underlying premise of these notions of identity is that a level of access or desire to participate in te ao Māori equates with a level of Māori identity. However, to associate te ao Māori participation with Māori identity is problematic for a culture that has experienced colonisation, devaluation and identity trauma. In relationship to the concept of whakapapa and the essential belief that all Māori belong to a collective identity and social system, individual identity requires cautious interpretation. Identity is complex and fraught with confounding variables and as inferred at the beginning of this chapter it is linked to self-perception, social discourse, political and racist rhetoric, and a collective identity that has undergone massive devaluation and loss. Pākehā are not profiled in the same way as Māori. A notional or compromised Pākehā identity is unknown, likewise a part Pākehā, sole Pākehā, or urban Pākehā. Furthermore, within a number of Māori whānau it is likely that secure, notional, and compromised identities coexist. “The negotiation and renegotiation of contemporary Māori identities is a contested process in the sense that it involves claiming and resisting identities from within a set of prevailing discourses about the authenticity of particular Indigenous categories” (Poata-Smith, 2013, p. 34).
A tension does exist for those who acknowledge Māori descent but do not identify as Māori (Rootham, 2016). Accurate measures related to being Māori are necessary to address the social issues faced by Māori and the specific nuances and necessary resources to support better outcomes for Māori. However, whakapapa is a fundamental feature of being Māori and as a Māori epistemological construct requires prioritisation. Within the history of New Zealand, the successful assimilation of Māori was measured by the number of Māori considered ‘half caste’ those who had a Māori parent and a non-Māori usually white parent (Pool, 2015). As a prominent Māori lawyer Moana Jackson argues, Māori do not have half a mokopuna (Jackson, 2011). The term moko refers to the mark of whakapapa etched on the skin as ta moko or traditional tattoo. Puna refers to the concept of a spring of water, a reflection. Thus mokopuna are considered the reflection of their whakapapa their parents, grandparents and tīpuna.

As noted above Māori classification is based on self-identification, but this is qualified by Māori descent. While this approach is much more aligned with whakapapa than previous classification systems, it neglects to consider those who whakapapa Māori but do not identify as Māori. From a Māori worldview, statistical classification and “individual knowledge or willingness to identify as a group member is neither necessary nor sufficient for a whakapapa connection to exist” (Kukutai & Rarere, 2013, p. 6). McNeil (2009) describes Māori identity as incorporating many worlds: te ao whakanekeneke (global world), te ao hou (contemporary world), te ao Pākehā (western world), and te ao tawhito (ancestral world). In these worlds there are many variations of ‘being Māori’ but underlying each is whakapapa to te ao tawhito (a connection to the ancestral world). Whānau, hapū and iwi relationships exist with or without acknowledgement. The following whakataukī or proverb has relevance:

*He kākano ahau i ruia mai i Rangiātea, e kore ahau e ngaro.*

*I am a seed sown in Rangiātea, I will never be lost.*

From a Māori epistemological perspective, whakapapa is the core aspect of Māori identity. How Māori live and align with other Māori past and present is not the issue of whakapapa. Rather it is the issue of identity formation. They are related but not the same. As the above whakataukī alludes to, whakapapa is linked to an ancient people and history, Rangiātea. In the context of diverse Māori realities it is full of potential.
**Whakapapa.** In order to understand the depth of whakapapa it is essential to understand the kupu Māori itself. ‘Whaka’ implies to cause and ‘papa’ literally to layer, or ground. Hence whakapapa refers to the continual layering of connection between past, present and future generations. It is grounded in the depth of te ao Māori (Bidois, 2006) and reflects the richness of whānau, hapū and iwi narratives of identity (Swann, Swann & Crocket, 2013). From a Māori perspective “the primacy of whakapapa as an organising concept tells us that relationships are of paramount significance, whether between people or between people and the natural world” (Mikaere, 2012, p. 10). It is a reminder of responsibility and reciprocity to past, present and future generations of whānau, hapū and iwi. Many iwi and hapū vision statements reflect strong intergenerational responsibilities and priorities to whakapapa. For example, ‘Kia tū rangatira ai mātou mai i tetahi whakatupuranga ki tetahi mo ake tonu atu’, is a vision statement of the hapū of Ngāti Hinemanu, Ngāti Paki o Mokai Patea. Translated it reads, “we will stand as Rangatira (esteemed people) from one generation to another for ever”. This alludes to an ongoing strength of connection and responsibility held by generations of whakapapa. Whakapapa has traditionally been privileged and/or tapu (sacred) knowledge only passed on to those who could protect it from misuse, handle it correctly to avoid a state of whakanoa (negate sacredness) and maintain it for future generations (Carter, 2003).

Whakapapa is inextricably linked to whenua (land). Hence, the significant distress that occurred in response to land loss. In te reo Māori whenua also refers to placenta that sustains an unborn child in the womb. It is custom for some Māori whānau to return to the whenua (land) of their tīpuna and bury the whenua (placenta) of that child within the whenua (land) of their people. This practice is a way to link children spiritually to their whānau, hapū, and iwi (Mead, 2003).

Whakapapa may often be recalled to establish right of belonging and interconnection with others (Morris-Matthews & Jenkins, 1999). It is often asserted during formal and informal mihi (introductions) through pepeha (personal identity). Māori who have knowledge of their pepeha commonly start their pepeha with an acknowledgement of maunga tapu (sacred mountain), moana or awa (water ways), waka (original canoe) tīpuna, iwi, hapū, whānau and eventually the individual. While this process outlines a personal identity, it is a collective rather than individual identity, and reflects a Māori epistemological view of enduring connection to Rangiātea. While not without modern day contradictions whakapapa remains essential to identity and kin based relationships for many Māori (Mead, 2003).
“Reconnection with whānau is part of a process of reconnection with whakapapa” (L. Pihama, 2001, p. 276).

**Whānau, hapū and iwi systems.** Māori kin based systems are complex organisational structures that have adapted and changed according to the political and social needs of the time (Ballara, 1998; Poata-Smith, 2013). While diverse in structure they reflect a broad network of kin based relationships anchored in whakapapa.

**Whānau.** Following the 2013 New Zealand census, a Māori social survey Te Kupenga was conducted (Statistics New Zealand, 2009). In this study a model of whānau structure was articulated to acknowledge the different types of whānau formation applicable to Māori. In this model two broad categories of whānau were acknowledged: kaupapa whānau who are not biologically linked but function as a whānau grouping usually with a common purpose or bond; and whakapapa whānau, the focus of this thesis, which include nuclear and wider extended whānau who are linked by whakapapa. A high proportion of Māori within Te Kupenga study defined their whānau based on whakapapa or a biological link, with 40% being expressed through the nuclear whānau grouping. The structure of nuclear whānau was diverse but included parents (single or couple), partner, siblings, children and close in laws (Social Policy Research Unit., 2016). A very small proportion included close friends as part of their whānau. Māori living in Auckland reported slightly smaller whānau groupings compared to those living outside of Auckland but 39% were inclusive of grandparents and grandchildren, and 39% aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and in-laws (Rootham, 2016).

Recent health statistics indicate that the current Māori population in Auckland region is increasingly youthful. Furthermore, the Māori aged population is also increasing as Māori aged 65 and over live longer than previous generations (Robson et al., 2015). Although Māori are more likely than non-Māori to live in extended family and multi-generational households, the nuclear family composition has become more prominent than in previous generations, with an increase also in the number of single parent households (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Young Māori whānau are also more likely to be mobile and live in locations that provide employment and study opportunities. They are also likely to move according to the availability of financially sustainable accommodation, and at times to provide and receive support or care to and from other whānau members (Cunningham, Stevenson & Tassell, 2005; Statistics New Zealand, 2006b). Furthermore, while some whānau may not live together in the same household they may live within the same street or neighbourhood and
move between houses during the day (Gagne, 2013). At a structural level some whānau may present in a census count as a nuclear whānau, but what is not recorded is that at a functional level such families operate as an extended whānau.

Depending on need and circumstance the boundaries between extended and nuclear whānau may be more fluid than statistics are able to represent. Edwards, McCreanor and Moewaka-Barnes (2007) note the importance of extended whānau as contributors to Māori youth development, with aunties, uncles and grandparents often functioning as a safety net when the immediate whānau relationships become strained or unavailable. An important feature of extended whānau is that they are able to function in similar ways to nuclear whānau when necessary. For example, in the case of tangihanga (funeral) both extended and nuclear whānau work together to support each other as whānau. This is based on pre-established and often unspoken tikanga or set rules of engagement and being together. During these times extended whānau operate in much the same way as immediate whānau. In this situation the priority is collective wellbeing (Nikora, Masters-Awatere & Te Awekotuku, 2012). However, when these events end and whānau disperse to their respective homes, the needs of the nuclear whānau become more paramount, and the structural priorities change until the occurrence of the next whānau hui or gathering (Mead, 2003).

Another feature of extended whānau is the practice of whāngai (informal kin adoption); where a whānau choose to facilitate the care of children within the context of an extended whānau arrangement rather than with their birth parents. Grandparents may raise mokopuna because their own children have grown or to impart whānau knowledge and tradition. In some situations whānau members without children may raise a child from within the extended whānau (McRae & Nikora, 2006). Children may also be placed with extended whānau following care and protection concern (Davey & Smith, 2016). Thus, while nuclear whānau continue to be prioritised both nuclear and extended whānau systems may intersect depending on circumstance, and the kupu whānau may be used by whānau members to describe both nuclear and extended whānau at the same time. In some whānau great auntie or uncle might also be referred to as nanny or koro, and third or fourth cousins might be referred to simply as cousin. Relationship descriptions for Māori are more fluid than non-Māori but are still contained within the bounds of whakapapa. This reflects a lateral understanding of whānau interrelationships rather than just only an individual-linear relationship from grandparent to parent to child (Mikaere, 1994).
While contemporary Māori whānau are more diverse and varied than previous generations, traditional roles and responsibilities are still present for Māori whānau. Traditionally, these roles and responsibilities were shared between male and female and allocated according to seniority and ability (Mikaere, 2012). As with many cultures older members of whānau or kaumātua (elders) hold a place of respect within whānau. They often hold whānau knowledge and provide guidance to the less experienced members (Herbert, 2001). Thus their roles and responsibilities tend to increase with age (Dyall, Kerse, Hayman & Keeling, 2011), and irrespective of caring for whānai they may often provide care and nurture to mokopuna who do not live with them (Edwards et al., 2007). Traditionally, pakeke (adults) were responsible for the daily needs of whānau and hapū (Cargo, 2016). However, due to a greater number of conflicted priorities pakeke nowadays may experience increased pressure with the obvious demands of raising children, increased living costs, and employment expectations that are often mismatched with whānau expectations and responsibilities (Families Commission, 2016).

The concept of tuakana-tēina is another active process within Māori whānau. It involves tuakana or older members of a peer cohort supporting tēina, younger members. It is often a relationship observed between cousins and siblings. Edwards et al. (2007) found in their study that cousins were very important in the early adolescent years. Tuakana and tēina roles also function at a wider whānau and hapū level. For example, the tuakana line may refer to a whānau who descend from the eldest child of a shared tipuna, or the more experienced members of each generational level. Tuakana and tēina roles occur across many Māori contexts and are most noticeable in the areas of learning (Santamaria, 2016) and leadership (Ruru, 2016).

In summary, the current Māori whānau is an integration of traditional and contemporary agendas and responsibilities. Thus, there are different demographics affecting Māori whānau today and these influence how whānau form themselves. Māori are more likely than other populations in New Zealand to support wider whānau interests (Social Policy Research Unit, 2016). Individuals living in healthy extended family arrangements are more likely to have a range of role models and a wide range of support to draw on when in need (Gagne, 2013; Morehu, 2005). However, the reverse is also a reality. The high rate at which Māori feature in statistics related to violence, substance abuse, child abuse, mental illness, poverty and criminal offending suggest that whilst some Māori may belong to a wide
extended whānau, they are not exempt from experiencing difficulty and isolation (Cargo, 2016).

Hapū. During the pre and early colonisation period, hapū were the primary organising unit of whānau over and above identification with iwi. According to 1947 electoral roll data, 90% of Māori considered hapū “the unit of everyday reality; their tribe was a formal category they might or might not know, and might or might not make use of” (Ballara, 1998, p. 282). The hapū formation is made up of a number of whānau who are genealogically linked by a common ancestor, forming a sub tribe. The te reo Māori reference to hapū also refers to pregnancy referring to the extension of the womb. “The metaphor also conveys the idea of growth, indicating that a hapū is capable of containing many whānau” (Mead, 2003, p. 215). Internal conflicts within whānau groupings may have led some whānau to separate and form new hapū (Walker, 2004). Ties were often strengthened by overlapping rights to customary land and resources. Hence hapū were self-sustaining and independent units in their own right interdependent and aligned with neighbouring hapū (Ballara, 1998).

While each hapū occupied particular areas of customary land they often moved within these areas in accordance with seasonal availability of shelter and kai (food). As more fixed areas of residence became established, hapū developed marae or central places of meeting, to carry out hui (gathering), tangihanga, and events of significance. While there are regional differences many wharepuni or meeting houses were built to personify all aspects of whakapapa. They were often named after paramount tipuna and were places of healing and negotiation between te pō and te ao mārama (T. Smith, 2016). Today marae remain central to Māori social organisation and continue to function as in previous generations. The Te Kupenga study showed that 59% of Māori who knew their marae wanted to increase their visitation to their marae (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). The marae complex provides a tūrangawaewae (a place to stand) for many Māori. Each hapū will structure their marae complex according to their needs, aspirations and resources. Some marae have been left derelict and others are thriving with a range of hapū development projects from kohanga reo (Māori preschool focused on the revitalisation of te reo Māori) sustainable gardens and rongoā (medicinal plants), and in some cases kaumātua flats for the elderly that are open to all hapū members based on availability.

Often alongside or near the marae are areas of land known as papakāinga. Papa refers to Papatūānuku and kāinga the communal home. Within papakāinga a collection of private dwellings link whānau who descend from a common tipuna to each other (Hoskins, 2012).
These dwellings may commonly be referred to as “the homestead”. Although such homes may be occupied by one or two whānau they are known to be inclusive of all whānau who share the same line of descent. In some whānau, papakāinga have been areas of contention due to loss of land and unequal rights of access. However, a resurgence of papakāinga housing initiatives has started to occur in high density areas such as Tauranga Moana (Flavell, 2015) and Auckland-Tāmaki Makaurau (Hoskins, 2012). These projects have created a renewed energy toward papakāinga development.

An additional relevant feature of hapū are urupā or cemetery. Those buried in urupā are known to whakapapa to each other and the whenua in which they are buried. If they are not related by whakapapa, perhaps through marriage they may have been given permission by the whakapapa whānau to be buried amongst the hapū with their loved one. This also may be an area of contention between whānau members when agreed plans change or whānau members do not return to the whenua of their whānau, particularly if the whānau member is interned in a public cemetery. The tension that hapū and whānau grapple with when a death occurs is significant (Nikora et al., 2012). It may reflect the depth of connection to whakapapa and whenua or the distance that may have occurred when whānau are unaware of preferences prior to death.

Furthermore, hapū are also the holders of unique cultural traditions and practices that retain the unique aspect of haputanga (particular hapū traditions and practices). While these may transfer across to iwitanga (unique iwi traditions) they are particular to the individual history of hapū. They may include dialectical distinctions in te reo Māori, variation in mahinga kai (traditional food gathering) practices such as traditional areas of watercress or eeling and kaimoana (seafood). Traditional Titi (mutton bird) practices are a feature of some Ngāi Tahu hapū and support unique identity and whānaungatanga practice (Phillips, 2015). Geothermal puna (spring) within the regions of Tūwharetoa and Te Arawa may also hold significance to particular hapū for various purposes such as healing, cooking and geothermal energy supply (Dodd, 2002; Hikuroa, Slade & Gravley, 2011). Similarly, specific knowledge about rongoā (medicinal plants) are often found within each rohe (area) of each hapū (McGowan, 2000). These traditions are intrinsically bound by the whenua that each hapū have occupied for generations. In addition, hapū may also retain hapū specific waiata and mōteatea or songs, chants (Ngata & Te Hurinui, 2004), and karakia (prayer). These reflect the history and aspirations of each hapū; their links to other hapū, and the whenua and
environment that they have continued to remain linked to for generations, if not physically then spiritually. The cultural knowledge contained within hapū is endless.

Thus hapū remain a significant Māori social unit important both to relational and cultural wellbeing and connection. They interconnect closely with whānau and iwi sometimes with very little differentiation. To Māori who are connected such knowledge is common place, but to those who are disconnected from their hapū or in some cases their land, papakāinga or “homestead”, their loss is significant.

**Iwi.** Within English translation the word Iwi may refer to tribe and bone. Older Māori may use the term “my bones” as a way to identify a link to whānaunga (relatives). Similarly, a desire to be “buried where my bones are” refers to where their people are buried. “The important aspect of the word iwi is its function as a metaphor for whānaungatanga and the strength that arises from that fact” (Mead, 2003, p. 219). A change in socio-political and individual identification, and greater accessibility and visibility of iwi has led to a larger proportion of Māori being able to now identify with at least one iwi. In 1991, 76.5% of Māori were able to identify their iwi and in 2006 this figure was 83.4% with children, women and middle age members being the biggest increase (Kukutai & Rarere, 2013). Furthermore, Rootham (2016) note that the iwi affiliation of four out of five Māori tamariki 0-14 years is known to their parent living within Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland).

Iwi is a much larger configuration associated with the term tribe in which members are genealogically and politically connected by a more remote ancestor (Ballara, 1998). The formation of legal entities such as Iwi Trusts, Rūnanga (tribal council), Boards and Iwi governed political groups have advocated on behalf of large groups of their uri, and are responsible for large proportions of finance and economic development within iwi. During the 20th century, Iwi have become one of the most powerful Māori political entities. In 1840 representatives of the Queen of England and selected Māori Rangatira signed what is known as the Treaty of Waitangi. While there is discrepancy between Māori and English versions it has become New Zealand’s founding document. It is also the basis from which grievances have been filed with the Waitangi tribunal in response to crown failures to uphold the rights of Māori. Iwi have been one of the main bodies in which successive governments have negotiated Treaty of Waitangi grievances that led to the loss of land, dubious deals, and policies and practices that were detrimental to Māori wellbeing (Pool, 2015).
During her study of Ngāi Tai (East Coast Iwi), Porter (2012) identified a number of iwi vitality markers similar to, but to a larger extent, markers that are also identified as essential for Māori whānau wellbeing (Durie, 2006; Kingi et al., 2014). These included: secure iwi identity, intergenerational sustainability, collective cohesion, environmental kaitiakitanga (guardianship), self-determination, economic wealth, and the health and well-being of whānau (Porter & Ratima, 2014). Iwi are actively organising themselves to be self-determining and relevant to their people in many areas namely health and social services, sports, education, research, investment, and positive iwi identity and development (Kukutai & Rarere, 2013). Furthermore, in some cases, iwi have established urban based iwi rōpū (groups) to facilitate the retention and whānaungatanga (relating together) of their uri who live in urban areas (Nikora, Guerin, Rua, & Te Awekotuku, 2004). Iwi now administer databases to register the names and details of uri. These provide an account of the size of iwi for Tribunal records, but they also provide a place for uri to start to reconnect with their iwi, and in the case of those who have not succeeded to Māori land to connect with their whenua.

In summary, the systems of hapū and iwi are slightly removed from the common whānau unit, but as reflected in oral tradition and current literature they remain integral to Māori identity and structure. All layers are interlinked by whakapapa, and each of these systems is interdependent. The health of one system affects the health of another. Recently Statistics New Zealand (2015) found that Māori whānau connectedness or whānaungatanga was associated with increased life satisfaction when compared to other populations in New Zealand as summarised:

Whānaungatanga, as a fundamental element of Māori culture, places importance on collectivism and interdependence with others. The value of culture comes from the importance of cultural knowledge, values, and behaviours that allow individuals to connect with each other. (p. 17)

Alongside the transmission of culture and the development of secure identity, one of the most critical tasks of whānau, hapū and iwi, as a social system, is to contribute positively to the development of healthy functioning individuals who are then able to contribute to their whānau, hapū and iwi, and society at large (Durie, 2006).

Mātāwaka. While whakapapa remains important to Māori it does not assume that all Māori know their whakapapa or locate themselves within their home areas. It has been argued that traditional Māori social systems are an ideal rather than a reality suggesting that
these systems may no longer be relevant to contemporary Māori issues (Marie, 2010). Nevertheless, Auckland city is home to New Zealand’s largest Māori population. The urban environment is a complex mix of identities of mana whenua, mātāwaka, and likely a number who currently have no desire to be associated as Māori (Cunningham, Stevenson & Tassell, 2005; Gagne, 2016).

The term mana whenua refers to Māori who have tribal links or whakapapa to land in a specific rohe. They are in essence tāngata whenua, people of the land and their rights to that land are based on customary occupation. Thus, they have mana (authority) over that particular whenua. In the jurisdiction of Auckland City Council mana whenua include: Ngāti Whātua o Ōrākei, Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara, Te Uri o Hau, Te Kawerau-a-Maki, Ngāti Te Ata Waiohua, Ngāti Tamaoho, Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki, Te Ahiwaru, Te Akitai Waiohua, Ngāti Maru, Ngāti Tamaterā, Ngāti Paoa, Ngāti Whānaungā, Te Patukirikiri, Ngāti Wai, Ngāti Manuhiri, Ngāti Rehua, Waikato-Tainui (Auckland City Council, 2016a). Those who are urban Māori who whakapapa to these iwi and hapū have through their whakapapa been connected to the Auckland region long before the occurrence of urbanisation.

In contrast, the term mātāwaka arose out of a call by urban iwi authorities, urban iwi rōpū and local and regional government bodies to consider the needs of all Māori living in urban areas whilst still acknowledging and respecting the status and priorities of mana whenua (Barcham, 1998; Gagne, 2016; Maaka, 1994). Within the concept of mātāwaka, two distinct groups have been acknowledged. The first group, taura here, identify as Māori, retain their connection to their own hapū and iwi, but are not tribally linked to the area they currently reside. They are essentially ‘known’ to their own hapū and iwi or at least identify with tribal links outside the rohe, in the context of this study, Tāmaki Makaurau. The second group, taunga hou acknowledge their Māori descent, but for various reasons choose not to affiliate to their tribal or whakapapa based group (Ryks, Pearson & Waa, 2016). “Taunga hou may be considered a diverse population that is uniquely located within the urban environment and whose collective association does not primarily rely on kinship ties but also includes the ties of location, cultural association and socio economic status” (p. 4) that are found in the strata of a diverse urban environment. For example, Borell (2005) found that some rangatahi (youth) living in South Auckland identified more predominantly with the areas that they lived in such as ‘South Side’ (South Auckland), and ‘Rewas’ (Manurewa), yet still retained their own sense of being Māori that was not based on hapū and iwi affiliation.
In summary, while Māori identity and whakapapa are often linked there are distinctions between them. Māori identity is not static. It is a much more dialectic process that encompasses diverse realities occurring at the same time. Māori identity is shaped by a way of ‘being’ rather than ‘acting’ within the constraint of defined identity markers. “It connects to how people understand who they are and how they belong” (Reid, Varona, Fisher & Smith, 2016, p. 43). The manifestation of Māori identity will change with time, but like Ranginui and Papatūānuku, whakapapa is the enduring connection. It does not deny the diversity of Māori identity, nor is it dependent on knowledge and awareness. It is the thread that transcends time. Whakapapa helps to navigate the in between spaces when the ideal and lived experience of Māori collide. “Putting our names on iwi registers doesn’t make us Māori, our whakapapa connects us culturally and spiritually to whānau, hapū and iwi and to the whenua. Because we live in the city does not change that” (Pihama, 2001, p. 304). Whakapapa is uniquely Māori and has survived each generational experience of being Māori.

Social-Political Context of Indigenous Disconnection

The context of the following waiata tangi or song of lament is the death of a chief Te Wano of Ngāti Apakura in the tribal area of Waikato-Maniapoto. Following the confiscation of their land Ngāti Apakura were forced to take refuge in the tribal area of Tūwharetoa (a neighbouring iwi). Upon climbing Mt Titiraupenga (a mountain on the boundary of the two tribes) Te Wano looked back toward his land, and at that moment overcome by grief, he collapsed and died. It is said that his cousin Te Rangiamoa then composed a waiata tangi for him as follows:

*E pā tō hau he wini raro, He hōmai aroha, Kia tangi atu au i konei; He aroha ki te iwi. Ka momotu ki tawhiti ki Paerau. Ko wai e kite atu? Kei whea aku hoa i mua rā, I te tōnuitanga? Ka haramai tēnei ka tauwehe. Ka raungaiti au. E ua e te ua e tāheke koe i runga rā; Ko au ki raro nei riringi ai. Te ua i aku kamo. Moe mai, e Wano, i Tirau, te pae ki te whenua i te wā tūtaha ki te kāinga. Koua hurihia. Tēnei mātou kei runga kei te toka ki Taupō. Ka paea ki te one ki Waihi, ki tāku matua nui. Ki te whare kōiwi ki Tongariro. E moea iho nei. Hokī mai e roto ki te puia nui ki Tokaanu. Ki te wai tuku kiri o te iwi. E aroha nei au, ī. Gently blows the wind from the north, bringing loving memories. Which causes me here to weep: Tis sorrow for the tribe, departed afar off to Paerau [a place name associated with deceased spirits journey to Te Rerenga Wairua]. Who is it can see?*
Where are my friends of yesteryear, who all dwelt together? Comes now this parting and I am quite bereft. Come then, o rain, pour down, steadily from above; Whilst I here below pour forth. A deluge from mine eyes. Sleep on, o Wano, on Tirau [Mt Titiraupenga], the barrier to the land, stretching forth to that home which is now forsaken. Here we now are cast upon the rocky shores of Taupō. Stranded upon the sands at Waihi, where dwelt my noble sire, now placed in the charnel-house [reference to the place that Te Heuheu II, a chief of Tuwharetoa was buried] on Tongariro. Like unto the abode wherein sleep. Return, o my spirit to the thermal pool of renown, at Tokaanu, to the healing water of the tribe for whom I mourn. (Ngata, 1959, pp. 236-238)

This waiata tangi continues to be sung on a regular basis and is a reminder of the unspoken and painful history of Aotearoa/ New Zealand.

**Historical trauma theory.** The underlying premise of historical trauma theory is that experiences of colonisation have been traumatic, and the effects of such experiences have continued to impact on subsequent generations, long after the original injury (Desjarlais, 2012). The term historical trauma has been defined as the “cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences” (Brave Heart, 2003, p. 283). The conceptualisation of Indigenous historical events such as colonisation as traumatic has invited critique. The position of historical trauma within broader trauma theory is a contentious issue likely grounded by beliefs about what is a legitimate description of trauma (Kır, Fawazi & Fawazi, 2012). In order to understand this term within the context of this study it is important to briefly discuss the psychological and intergroup paradigms of trauma, each with their own merit and contribution to understanding the very real disruption to relationships that may occur as a result of trauma.

According to a psychiatric perspective trauma is conceptualised within a post-traumatic stress model and defined as “a person being a witness to, or experiencing an event that caused or threatened death or serious injury” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). A range of post trauma symptoms that have a neurobiological and psychological base such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) may occur. The focus is very often about individual and survivor traumas and relates to a range of symptoms that may interfere with daily functioning and ability to engage with others; for example, hypervigilance and reactivation of
intense distress in the form of fight, flight and freeze responses to internal and external cues of previous trauma (Kira et al., 2012).

Often overlapping a psychiatric perspective are psychoanalytical and developmental theories that understand the impact of trauma, particularly complex trauma within the context of relationships and interpersonal dynamics such as secure attachment, intimacy, formation of trust, socialised patterns of relationship (Courtois & Ford, 2013) and emotional regulation (Ford, Courtois, Steele, Vander Hart & Nijenhuis, 2005). These three theories dominate the field of trauma and provide and validate the individual responses and reactions that may occur as a result of trauma. These may include physiological changes, intense emotion, adaptive withdrawal, self-protection and destructive beliefs about self, in relationship with others, and the world in general. These may then interfere with the formation of meaningful relationship with others (Herman, 1997).

These approaches have been relevant to understanding the impact of distress at an individual and relational level. In contrast, a broader contextualisation of trauma includes consideration of culture, collective identity and social systems. People within Indigenous social systems share a common human need for connection as with those in other social systems. However, Indigenous cultures have a strong connection to tribal lands, the environment and spirituality. This connection is often intimately linked to the psyche and lived experience of Indigenous people. Separation from these wider features of identity can create distress for Indigenous people. For example, Vicary and Westerman (2004) describe a Australian Aboriginal reference to ‘longing for, crying for, or being sick for country’, which “has symptoms relatively congruent with depression but with an aetiology that involves the individual being removed from their spiritual country/place of dreaming for an extended duration” (Kelly, Dudgeon, Gee & Glaskin, 2009, p. 23). Similarly, many Indigenous people long for traditional ways and resources that are no more; powerlessness, and a loss for future generations perpetuate the pain of separation (Evans-Campbell, 2008). Until recently, trauma theory has neglected to capture the cultural identity, relational-spiritual, and contextual aspects of trauma for Indigenous and dislocated peoples (Wiechelt, Gryczynski, Johnson, & Caldwell, 2011).

Thus, Kira et al. (2014) propose a fourth intergroup perspective that is positioned alongside the previously mentioned psychological perspectives of trauma. This perspective conceptualises trauma within a context of collective identity experience. Within this paradigm trauma might include historical trauma, identity trauma, racism, discrimination and
political-ethnic conflict. It does not discount the physical, psychodynamic interpersonal and individual aspects of trauma, but rather it sits alongside them as a way to more adequately address the complexity of trauma treatment in cross-cultural contexts.

For indigenous peoples and likely all people, individual wellbeing is dependent on collective wellbeing. Both spheres are important to consider in the recovery from the relational disruption that results from trauma associated with cultural identity (Haskell & Randall, 2009). The principles identified that enhance Indigenous wellbeing include safety and security, attachment, social connectedness, social justice, intact personal roles and identities, and cultural coherence to facilitate existential meaning and purpose (Atkinson, Nelson, Brooks, Atkinson & Ryan, 2014; Silove, 2013). As mentioned earlier identity through whakapapa or descent is suffice to be considered Māori. Nevertheless, the way in which whakapapa and identity intersect is important to consider. According to Taylor and Usborne (2010) “collective identity is the template that allows a person to engage in the processes necessary to form a clear personal identity. It is a clearly defined personal identity that in turn, allows for personal (self-) esteem to develop” (p. 101). Collective identity is the template for living life. It guides the way that people understand the world, how they engage with others, the values and beliefs they hold important and how they carry out tasks such as raising children. Van der Kolk (1996) purports that if a culture continues to be exposed to chronic forms of trauma, loss and stress it is likely to destabilise. The protective factors of that system become undermined and it is difficult to regain equilibrium.

In the view of Indigenous researchers the high rates of Indigenous social disadvantage are in large part due to the experience of colonisation (Libesman, 2004). The process of colonisation included policies and practices that sought to apparently ‘better Indigenous people’, but instead resulted in severe trauma and loss, and consequently the intergenerational transmission of disconnection. For example, in Canada, many First Nations children were removed from their communities and placed in residential schools. In Australia, Aboriginal half caste children now termed the ‘stolen generation’ were also forcibly removed and displaced into institutional care or adopted by white families (Bowers, 2010). Aboriginal people were prevented from full participation in society, intimate relationships were restricted. Furthermore, colonising practices such as poisoning flour and deliberate exposure to introduced illness such as measles, influenza and small pox also occurred (Dudgeon, Wright, Paradies, Gravey & Walker, 2010).
Identity trauma in the form of racism and discrimination is categorised by Kira et al. (2014), as a cumulative trauma. It is often ongoing and repetitive with a very pervasive and subtle presence in everyday life. Individual personal attacks, sometimes in the form of humour lead to confusion and invalidation. Furthermore, continued devaluation of cultural practice, knowledge and ways of being and unfair distribution of opportunity in effect assault personal identity. A process of ‘othering’ is a common facet of racism, in that others are perceived to be inferior to a more superior group of people. Anxiety annihilation defined by Kira et al. (2012) as a “chronic terror of losing personal or social self or selves as a result of identity, personal or/and collective/group’s survival threats” (p 90) is not an uncommon experience within Indigenous or minority cultures.

It is argued that harm incurred by experiences of racism can be reduced if individuals are able to juxtapose an alternative positive self-concept or resilience (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005). However, racism often occurs in multiple forms of micro-aggression that are ongoing in nature and chronically undermine self-concept (Sue et al., 2007). Resilience is difficult in the face of chronic devaluation. The nature of micro aggressions is very insipid and silent, sometimes with unconscious intent, but nevertheless reflective of an attitude of indifference to the basic need to respect the unique identity of others who are different. Furthermore, imposed structural and institutional restrictions limit the ability of individuals to access cultural resource (Reid, Taylor-Moore & Varona, 2014). The ongoing nature of racism and subsequently marginalisation has individual psychic and social consequences (Eagle & Kaminer, 2013).

Experiences of racism and the internalisation of negative stereotypes has been associated with a wide range of health issues (Harris et al., 2012; Paradies 2006b; Soto, Baezconde-Garbanati, Schwartz & Unger, 2015). With regard to mental illness racism has been shown to contribute to depression (Becares & Atatoa-Carr, 2016) substance abuse, anxiety, self-harm and suicidal behaviour (Paradies et al., 2015). It is thought that these are in part driven by feelings of worthlessness, powerlessness, injustice and rage (Clark, Augoustinos, & Malin, 2016; Paradies & Cunningham, 2009). Furthermore, perpetuation of internalised racism in the form of lateral violence or the overt degradation of others within one’s own culture is particularly problematic (Clark & Augoustinos, 2015). It attempts to minimise the psychological impact of racism on individuals and perpetuates a “harden up” attitude which has harmful long-term effects on mental health. Lateral violence threatens the safety and security of relationships within ones cultural identity and perpetuates both in group
and out group racism. Furthermore, tamariki (children) have very limited options within their own culture to understand, articulate and develop less harmful strategies to cope with their own experiences of racism (Te Hiwi, 2008). It is also proposed that accumulated trauma associated with internalised racism can lead to individuals choosing to withdraw or distance themselves from negative stereotypes by restricting their own (Symanski & Lewis, 2016) and often their children’s identification (Katz, Joiner & Kwon, 2002) with their cultural identity as a way to protect themselves from ongoing personal denigration.

Researchers agree that the disruptions that occur as a result of intergroup trauma have had pervasive effects on successive generations (DeVries, 1996; Haskell, 2009; Hill, 2010; Kira, 2010; Marsella, 1996; Nickerson, 2011). The way in which historical trauma and loss is transmitted to successive generations is complex and multi-modal with both distal and proximal mechanisms present (Paradies, 2016; Reid, Taylor-Moore & Varona, 2014). Epigenetic studies have shown that biological changes can occur within DNA as a result of heightened levels of stress (Zannas, Provencal & Binder, 2015) which has an impact on the resilience of successive generations to respond to distress. Often the experience of marginalisation elicits multiple forms of trauma and accumulated stress (Gee, 2016; Walls, 2011). For example, Arizala (2011) found that parental historical trauma combined with experiences of discrimination were related to stressful family events which in turn were found to be related to youth depression rates. Gee (2016) reported that experiences of racism while not placed in the same category as whānau violence were nevertheless identified by participants in his study as traumatic. Furthermore, the chronic and ongoing nature of participant experiences of racism contributed to accumulated stress in the form of poverty, and limited resources. When combined with multiple forms of trauma and the dislocation of atleast two generations of children from their family the level of trauma symptom severity also increased (Gee, 2016). Progress and recovery may be limited if intergenerational experiences of racism and collective identity are not appropriately acknowledged and attended to within regular trauma treatment.

Rechtman (2000) propose that narratives of trauma are passed from one generation to another through the stories that families tell to each other, and like the opening waiata tangi of Te Wano, serve as reminders of the past; a warning to successive generations to make sense of the present; and to reiterate the ongoing responsibilities to the next generation. While these narratives may be situated in the past they may also be experienced as very present (Gee, 2016; Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt & Chen, 2004), albeit fragmented. Unlike the trauma
experienced by political refugees the experiences of Indigenous communities are often minimised. Duran and Duran (1995) suggest that this type of invalidation contributes to masked feelings, denial and a limited language to articulate the Indigenous experience of suffering. Trauma narratives unconsciously become the core framework that guides the past into the present. Feelings of anger, grief, loss, fear become normalised without a safe context to make sense of their origin, or to articulate, process and re narrate their impact (E. Duran, 2006).

In summary, the intergroup paradigm of trauma contributes greatly to understanding the disadvantage that is commonly observed within Indigenous communities. Indigenous people are often over represented in many known areas of risk (Economic and Social Affairs., 2009), and more often than not present complex trauma profiles indicative and inclusive of a collective experience of trauma (Walls & Whitbeck, 2011; Gee, 2016). Thus, historical trauma and collective identity trauma are relevant to Indigenous people who present to psychological services.

Furthermore, it has been argued that one of the important aspects of healing from historical trauma is for a culture to be able to reframe their collective identity (Walters & Simoni, 2002). In addition, Duran and Duran (1995) outline a response to collective trauma that is characteristic of trauma, loss and grief. It may include a process of initial impact and shock, survival that includes withdrawal and repression, romanticised thinking which may involve minimisation and incongruence with traditional values and beliefs, followed by a stage of reintegration and empowerment. However, at an institutional level discriminatory practices and policies continue to create structural and systemic conditions that work to perpetuate the initial historic trauma into future social structures (Helms, Nicolas & Green, 2012; Reid, Taylor-Moore & Varona, 2014). Thus, a reframing of identity and empowerment for Indigenous people, and in the case of Māori, rangatiratanga (power and authority over one’s own destiny), may be difficult to fully achieve within the present day context. As resources are often limited and a consequent layering of social issues are left to perpetuate further the intergenerational patterns of disadvantage. Historical and collective trauma cannot be separated from the current stress and trauma experienced in the everyday life of Indigenous people. They are interlinked.

**Māori experience of colonisation.** When considering the history of Aotearoa, New Zealand, the Treaty of Waitangi was a significant defining point in history. The principles reflected in the Treaty of Waitangi sought to affirm the right of all Māori to participate in
society as equals to non-Māori. For their unique cultural identity and knowledge systems to be protected, and for Māori to be legitimate partners in addressing the issues relevant to their wellbeing and development (Cooper, Rickard & Waitoki, 2011). However, what transpired following the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi fell short of achieving these objectives. An assimilation policy between 1847 and 1960 led to the establishment of legislation that privileged Eurocentric knowledge, values and needs, and led to the demoralisation of mana tāngata (high esteem of people), mana whenua (high esteem of land), mana tīpuna (high esteem of ancestors), and mana atua (high esteem of spirituality). For example, in 1862 the Native Lands Act led to large areas of land loss for Māori through dubious land sales and in some cases forced removal. Loss of land during this time period not only impacted the long-term economic sustainability of whānau, hapū and iwi it also undermined cultural, psychological and spiritual wellbeing (Reid, Varona, Fisher & Smith, 2016).

Similarly, like other Indigenous groups restrictions placed on cultural expression were also detrimental to the systems of whānau, hapū and iwi. The 1867 Native Schools Act and eventually the 1905 prohibition of the use of te reo Māori in schools resulted in a significant decrease in the use of te reo Māori within a generation of Māori children who are now kaumātua (Walker, 2004). While these Acts are no longer in force and education mediums such as kohanga reo and kura kaupapa (Māori language immersion primary school) are now acceptable, Māori still experience the effects of this generational loss of language (Selby, 2014). The absence of te reo Māori fluency within whānau is a continual reminder of the history of degradation of Māori culture in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

The 1907 Tohunga Suppression Act outlawed tohunga (priest, expert) and their related healing practices. This Act was introduced to curb the epidemic of illness such as influenza and tuberculosis that were contributing to the premature death of significant numbers of the Māori population. It was believed that tohunga were unfamiliar with these new illness and prevented Māori from timely health care that would prevent their death (Walker, 2004). Thus traditional Māori healing practices were forced underground. The transmission of Māori understandings of illness and wellness which was intimately connected with wairuatanga (spirituality), whenua and whakapapa was limited to only a few protégés. Thus, the tohunga suppression act meant that Māori were bereft of a traditional means to manage traditional illness that were often associated with wairuatanga and whakapapa (Ihimaera, 2004).
When considering an Indigenous understanding of trauma within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, T. Smith (2013) examined extensive whakapapa kōrero (frameworks of knowledge) and highlighted a traditional framework for understanding the impact of trauma on the Māori psyche. Similar to the work of other exponents of Māori lore such as Tate (2010) and Marsden (2003), T. Smith (2013) identified principles contained within te ao Māori that honour the tapu (sacredness); mauri (breathe of life); and mana (authority and worth) of people. The mechanisms that maintained these sources of wellness included the whenua, whakapapa and wairua (Marsden, 2003). Specific to the experience of trauma, T. Smith (2013) refers to a kupu Māori traditionally known as patu ngākau (patu referring to hit, strike and ngākau referring to heart) which is the act of causing deep psychological shock.

Arising from this experience a range of states are understood to lead to the experience of ngākau mamae (physical pain). For example, pōuritanga (pō meaning darkness and uri meaning generative energy). Common to the presentation of pōuritanga are low mood states with a range of intensity from disappointment and sadness to deep depression and anxiety. In addition, to pōuritanga states such as whakamā (whaka referring to cause and ma referring to pale) are also present. Whakamā is often translated to refer to shame, but also can refer to guilt and embarrassment, loss of power. At its core it refers to a loss of mauri, hence the cause of a loss of colour (T. Smith, 2013). “The process of undermining mana involved deep humiliation as well as personal, psychological, and spiritual denigration” (Reid, Taylor-Moore & Varona 2014, p. 523). Precolonial Māori were not immune to trauma and distress, they understood trauma and its impact and consequently they had ways of restoring balance and healing following such events. Similar to many Indigenous cultures throughout the world, colonisation not only inflicted a form of patu ngākau, it also removed and prevented access to traditional processes of restoration and healing particularly those that restored a balanced form of wellbeing.

Since the late 1970s many accounts of Māori experiences of historical trauma and distress have been presented to the Waitangi tribunal. For example, the following Ngāti Turangitukua kaumātua spoke to the Waitangi tribunal about the effects of the Tokaanu hydro development on his whānau:

Younger members of the whānau have been denied their land. Loss of land to us means a loss of dignity, pride, and a distancing of whānau members through alienation to a feeling of mokaitanga [dependency, like being slaves]. We have lost
our values, and our esteem, and a rift between families has developed. We fear our
cchildren will leave their tūrangawaewae. (Waitangi Tribunal, 1995, p. 213)

Similar to the whakapapa kōrero of Te Wano mentioned at the opening of this section,
witnessing the destruction of their whānau homes and wāhi tapu (sacred places) to make way
for the hydro dam was in itself a form of ngākau mamae. Likewise in a Waitangi Tribunal
report (1987) Ngāti Whatua o Orakei described the death of kuia and koroua within short
succession of each other after the burning of their homes, and wharepuni, and their relocation
to “Boot Hill” by Auckland City Council.

It can be argued that the experience of ngākau mamae is as relevant today as it was in
the past. For example, Bishop and Berryman (2006) described tamariki feeling stereotyped as
‘typical Māori’ who steal, fight, smoke, and cause trouble. Borell (2005) found that rangatahi
more readily associated their adversity to essentially ‘being Māori’, not to being poor.
Arlidge et al. (2009) reported that some Māori parents felt because they were Māori they
were misjudged by hospital staff as inflicting their child’s injuries. Māori alongside Asian
ethnicity are more likely to experience discrimination compared with other ethnicities in New
Zealand (Ministry of Social Development, 2016). This is particularly prevalent for Māori
when combined with socio economic deprivation (Harris et al., 2006). According to the Te
Kupenga study 27% of Māori living outside of Tāmaki Makaurau and 23% of Māori living
in Tāmaki Makaurau reported that they had experienced discrimination in the last 12 months.
In contrast 17% of all New Zealanders in the Ministry of Social Development Social Report
(2016) reported the experience of discrimination in the last 12 months. Silent and vocal
resistance to racism is a means by which Māori attempt to manage the occurrence of racism
in areas of everyday life such as education, employment, retail, finance/banking and
accommodation. Media portrayal of negative Māori stereotypes continues to contribute to
ongoing Māori devaluation (Pack, 2016).

At an institutional level in the late 1980s the Department of Social Welfare (DSW)
was widely criticised for what was termed ‘institutional racism’: practices that marginalised
and/or discriminated against Māori (Connolly, 2007; Duncan & Worrall 2000). In response
the government called for a taskforce to investigate the DSW care of Māori tamariki.
Consequently, the Puao-Te-Ata-Tu report (1986) confirmed that institutional racism was
evident at all levels of the service and that the cultural needs of Māori tamariki were often
disregarded. Yet, in a recent State of the Nation Report (2015) Child, Youth and Family (the
agency that replaced DSW) acknowledged that a number of the tamariki in their care, who
interviewed for their study, had raised concern that their connection to their culture of origin (not Māori specific) was often not recognised by non-kin adults responsible for their care. Furthermore, the 1955 Adoption Act led to the disconnection of a significant number of infants and tamariki from their Māori whakapapa. It was not until 1994 that it was a legal requirement to record biological details, consequently many adult Māori adoptees now have very little knowledge if any of their whānau, hapū and iwi (Collins, 2011; West, 2012). Lawson-Te Aho (2010) writes:

The loss of knowledge of identity as Māori, or challenges to a person’s right of belonging does not mean that the fact of kinship can be extinguished. The fact of kinship remains as a spiritual reality, continuous and permanent. However, the lived expression of it changes sometimes in a very negative direction. (p. 128)

Māori continue to experience discrimination and marginalisation, and often their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviours may be minimised in order to avoid judgements about being Māori. The experience of ngākau mamae of humiliation, anger, disempowerment and widespread loss of cultural and spiritual identity remain. Consequently, it is argued that the self-protective behaviours utilised to cope with such pain have turned inward, in the form of lateral violence, and become destructive from within whānau itself, as described by Pouesi (2012):

As I continue to learn about my Māoritanga, I am confident I will make more links and grow in my understanding of the spiritual experiences of my past and present. I often think of the brutalities and carnage that happened at Parihaka [nonviolent Māori community that was destroyed by colonial forces] and I can’t help but see how violence, although initially carried out against them, has been perpetuated from generation to generation down into my bloodline. My spirituality encompasses my past and my present; the foundations of who I am today. (p. 2)

In summary, the Māori experience, as in other Indigenous communities, is one of colonisation, trauma, grief and marginalisation. These factors impact on how Māori think about themselves and how they interact with others. From a Māori perspective this could be likened to a state of whakanoa in which the mana or spiritual power, authority, prestige, status and tapu of a person have been trampled, and the mauri and sacredness of people restricted from full potential. As Tate (2010) writes:
whakanoa can come to be seen as normal behaviour . . . if mana in the whānau is weak and impaired, the cycle of whakanoa will not be broken, nor will the state of noa be lifted . . . the effects of *te noho noa* [continued state of whakanoa] will pass on to diminish and weaken the next generation, even to succeeding generations. (p. 194)

Research on the impact of Māori historical trauma and loss within New Zealand is gaining prominence, but it is still in development (Pihama et al., 2014). Whilst some, including some who whakapapa Māori, may deny the traumatic nature of colonisation, the presence of Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal reports, alongside the disparity that continues to exist, as for many Indigenous people, tell a different story. Intuitively Māori communities understand that historical trauma in the form of colonisation has had a significant impact on the physical, psychological, social and spiritual wellbeing of their people.

**Urbanisation.** According to Statistics New Zealand (2006a) 84% of Māori live in urban areas. Movement toward urban centres occurred as early as the 1930s, but the most rapid increase occurred in the 1950s with post World War II industrialisation. Since this time an increased number of Māori whānau live away from their tribal areas, not only in large cities but also in smaller urban environments, and transitional areas of employment such as construction and mining. One in five Māori live overseas with a significant number residing in Australia (Kukutai & Pawar, 2013). The reasons that Māori move from their whānau, hapū and iwi areas continues to be, as with previous generations, for increased employment, education, and health opportunities, or simply for adventure and lifestyle (Carter, 2003).

As mentioned earlier, Māori living in non-tribal areas are rich in diversity and whakapapa connection. Williams (2010) in her thesis examining the movement of Māori whānau from Pangaru, a rural area in Northland, to the city of Auckland identified that Māori whānau often formed their own iwi-hapū-whānau networks within the city. Many urban Maori retain a sense of belonging and connectedness through strong networks and participation within their current communities particularly around kura, kohanga reo, and urban marae (McCreanor et al., 2006).

Nevertheless, the process of urbanisation did significantly impact the way that Māori organised systems of support. The geographic distance between whānau disrupted relationships and eventually relational distance developed in both nuclear and wider whānau context that for some led to a breakdown in relationships (Cunningham, Stevenson & Tassell, 2005). Housing was much smaller and isolated and not conducive to a collective support
structure. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, overt discriminatory practices and attitudes limited the options available to Māori to obtain accommodation and higher paying employment. In some areas Māori were restricted from entering particular cafes and even barber shops. Thus, while urbanisation provided for some, it did not for all. The trauma of continued devaluation of Māori identity, alongside the absence of traditional forms of wellbeing such as close whānau relationships led to significant social consequences. The loss of continued cultural transmission of values and tikanga led to further separation between successive generations of whānau living away from their hau kāinga or home area/people (Moeke-Pickering, 1996). Furthermore, with increased loss of land, the continued access to traditional kai, rongoā and healing practices sustained by tribal land and tohunga decreased. Urbanisation has been cited within the literature as a significant feature of Māori disconnection from culture and the traditional structures of hapū and iwi wellbeing (Walker, 2004).

During these early stages of urbanisation urban Māori organisations such as the National Māori Urban Authority, Māori Women’s Welfare League and various Māori mission groups developed their own structures to support the influx of Māori living in the city (Walker, 2004). These developed alongside urban iwi social structures in an attempt to meet the needs of their uri living in the city (Maaka, 1994). There is ongoing debate among urban Māori organisations for iwi to provide an active role, particularly financial, to support the urban organisations and mana whenua that continue to provide support to their uri living in the city. Hence the establishment of the previously mentioned mātāwaka board in Auckland (Auckland City Council., 2016b). It remains a challenge to meet the needs of all Māori living in urban areas and many fall through the gaps of support. With regard to the establishment of a Kahungunu based urban ropū in Christchurch, Maaka (1994) commented that, “without authority or resources, taura here ‘tribal groups affiliated to the homeland’ in an urban situation were unable to carry the social responsibility for all who claimed kinship links”(p. 325).

Social-Relational Factors Associated with Disconnection

The previous section focussed on disconnection occurring in the context of external socio-political events. However, while socio-political factors likely precipitate and perpetuate disconnection, the cycle of disconnection has also continued to be perpetuated within the social relationships of Māori kin based systems. It may be assumed that health and social issues that underlie the overrepresentation of Māori in an array of negative social and health
statistics has an impact on the formation of cohesive and well developed whānau, hapū and iwi relationships.

**Estranged whānau relationships.** While whānau, hapū and iwi relationships are not formal groups per se, they are a body of relationships with different personalities, strengths and weakness. Characteristic patterns of interaction exist within the life course of different types of groups from the initial forming stages, to phases of dissatisfaction, resolution and increased energy and vision. Conflict, lack of trust and disregard for the overall vision of the group can impact on group cohesion. Similarly, rigidity or “group think” can limit access to new members and create inflexibility to the changing needs of the group (Levine, 2013; Stacey, 2003). These relationships may contribute to the growth and development of its members or the breakdown of relationships with some members estranged or perceived to be outside the group.

Like in any social system abuses of power can occur and the principles of tikanga disregarded or misappropriated to suit particular agendas. Unprepared or unsupported leaders may abdicate responsibility, and disgruntled members and their immediate whānau discontinue contact, whilst complacent members maintain status quo but not development. Furthermore, C. Smith (2006) names a range of internal politics that may occur within whānau, hapū and iwi and contribute to the exclusion and marginalisation of whānau. These may include grievances related to different expectations about roles, responsibilities and access to marae, disputes over ‘stolen land’ and taonga, thoughtless remarks between those who live at home and those who don’t, or those who are fluent in cultural norms and those who are not. Tangihanga may also be particularly sensitive issues if not handled correctly. Grievances, disputes and divisions may occur for any number of reasons within whānau. However, “chronic, unresolved disconnection begets a perpetual, downward cycle wherein people disengage from relationships to prevent further trauma through ‘strategies of disconnection’ despite their desire for connection” (Brady, Gingras & Aphramor, 2013, p. 348).

In addition, conflicts may not only occur within group dynamics but may also be present in more intimate relationships. An issue which receives less attention, likely due to its sensitive nature, is the estrangement of Māori tamariki from their whānau, hapū and iwi due to parental conflicts and for some difficult circumstances surrounding their conception. These issues when combined with the external social-political issues mentioned in the previous section about what was best for Māori children have historically been problematic. Adoption
processes and practices are more open and flexible than previous years, and when settling custody disputes the Family Court now recognises the importance of maintaining the connection of tamariki to their whānau, hapū and iwi and recognised cultural group (Vulnerable Children Act, 2014). However, as referred to earlier Māori adoptees placed for adoption prior to the 1990s, now as adults have a more difficult task of knowing their whakapapa. Furthermore, the high number of women raising children on their own (Statistics New Zealand, 2013) suggests that the responsibility of nurturing whakapapa is often left to mothers. They may or may not know the whakapapa of their child, have ongoing contact with their child’s father, and/or have the personal resources to maintain a safe link for their child to their paternal whānau and whakapapa or a positive sense of being Māori. Whakapapa is the defining point of Māori identity. However, sadly a number of Māori do not know, and may never know their whakapapa, let alone have a connection to their whānau, hapū and iwi.

In summary, while many Māori whānau operate with a high level of authentic interaction based on the principles of whānaungatanga and tikanga with healthy participating members (Rootham, 2016), as C. Smith (2006) points out internal politics and conflicts can arise between whānau and threaten the cohesiveness of the broader group. Furthermore, conflicts and difficulties within intimate relationships can also lead tamariki to be separated from their whānau, hapū and iwi. If left unchecked or without pathways for resolution members of whānau both young and old may become estranged from each other, and perpetuate further disconnection.

**Whānau violence.** International literature indicates that while family violence and child abuse is a concern for many ethnicities, Indigenous people are often overrepresented (Burnette & Renner, 2016; Gillespie, Whitford & Abel, 2010). In regard to child abuse First Nation children in Canada account for 6% of the total child population but 40-80% of those children are cared for by the state (Gillespie et al., 2010). In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children account for over six times more child protection intervention than other Australian children (Moloney, 2005). Māori tamariki are four times more likely to receive medical attention due to non-accidental injuries associated with physical abuse and neglect (Family Violence Death Review Committee, 2010), and experience higher rates of exposure to whānau violence, sexual and physical abuse than non-Māori children (Fanslow, Robinson, Crengle & Perese, Fanslow, 2007; Marie, Fergusson & Boden, 2009). Child Youth and Family (CYF) New Zealand’s child protection service note that 6 out of 10 tamariki in CYF care are Māori (Child Youth and Family Expert Panel, 2015). In the year 2010, 51% of
notifications for infants under the age of 2 years old were identified as Māori (Cram, 2012) and account for a ¼ of all tamariki in care under the age of 5 years old (Rootham, 2016).

In Australia, Petchkovsky (2002) found that the participants they interviewed who had themselves been removed as children from their Aboriginal communities experienced symptoms of trauma that were pervasive in many areas of their life, consequently some struggled to know how to parent their own children. Often generations of unparented parents who are unfamiliar with traditional values and beliefs are doing their best to raise their own children, while simultaneously trying to cope with the trauma and grief of their own childhood experiences (Cram, 2012; Cripps, 2012). Prior to the 1960s Māori tamariki were the responsibility of whānau within the context of their wider whānau and hapū. With increased urbanisation and the centralisation of government services an increased number of Māori tamariki became involved with the state child protection service. When removed from their whānau tamariki were often placed in the care of non-Māori whānau or institutions with no relationship with whānau, hapū and iwi, and little negotiation for return. Gone (2009) writes “in addition to violence, widespread loss of Indigenous language, culture, and ceremony has combined with multigenerational disruptions in parenting practices to yield a harrowing legacy of distress” (p. 752).

It is argued that cumulative disadvantage alongside a combination of individual and systemic factors interact at various time periods to increase risk. These factors rather than ethnicity contribute to family violence (Burnette and Renner, 2016; Ferarri, 2002). With regard to child abuse these factors may include parent difficulties such as impaired mental health, alcohol and drug use, previous experiences of being parented, and child difficulties such as challenging behaviour, poor health and temperament. These difficulties then interact with more immediate factors such as family functioning, and much broader issues such as poverty and lack of community support (Garbarino, 1977; Hetherington, Parke, Gauvain & Locke, 2006; Kolko, 1996). These risk factors have been well studied and documented in international literature. However, the unique variables that contribute to the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in child abuse statistics are less well documented. Historical trauma theory suggests that it is the cumulative experience of both historical and present day trauma and distress that has contributed to the current situation. Particularly, on-going marginalisation and discrimination, loss of traditional support structures, secure cultural identity, and spiritual ‘woundness’ (Duran & Duran, 1995; Evans-Campbell, 2008).
The psychological impact of child abuse has been well documented in the child abuse literature and while many children are able to progress through such traumas (Lynskey & Fergusson, 1997; Pechtel, 2008; Ronan, Canoy & Burke, 2009) a number of studies suggest the psychological sequel of such trauma can be detrimental. Merry and Andrews (1994) found that many young people displayed clinical symptoms suggestive of a wide range of mental health difficulties twelve months following sexual abuse disclosure. Lynskey and Fergusson (1997) identified higher rates of attempted suicide and substance use among young people who had experienced sexual abuse. Child abuse may also be a contributing factor to adult psychiatric illness (Read, Hammersley & Rudegeair, 2007), victimisation in intimate relationships (Fanslow et al., 2007), and increased criminality or antisocial behaviours (Smith, Ireland, Thornberry & Elwyn, 2008). Webb and Jones (2007) report that many Māori inmates who had committed sexual crimes had experienced abuse themselves as tamariki. These reports suggest that child abuse may be associated with intergenerational patterns of abuse.

Family violence within Māori whānau dismantles the notion of safety within the whānau context. Furthermore, the silence that often surrounds whānau violence may limit the ability of whānau to experience a sense of safety in their identity as Māori (Thatcher, 2012). The power and control present within violent relationships isolates women, tamariki and in some contexts men (Shum-Pearce, 2016) from their whānau and community at large. Furthermore, feelings of shame, fear of judgement alongside the paradox that for some abuse occurred within the contexts of marae or tikanga based events reduces the desire for some Māori women to seek support from whānau, hapū and iwi (Hall, 2015). Similarly, Pousei (2012) found that many of the women in her study, who had experienced chronic sexual abuse within their whānau, had as adults disconnected themselves from wider whānau relationships. Furthermore, a number of Māori academics, and practitioners propose that within the context of abuse, a loss of whānaungatanga, as well as a sense of tapu and mana have significant spiritual and cultural consequences (Eketone, 2013; Hippolite-Wright, 1998; Kruger et al., 2004; Webb & Jones, 2007). Abuse is a complex issue with many interlinked factors and consequences. Very little research has focussed on the role of trauma, particularly complex trauma on cultural systems of kin interaction and identity.

**Mental illness.** As with other Indigenous peoples Māori experience high levels of mental illness and “are overrepresented in mental health service utilization statistics” (Kumar & Oakley-Browne, 2012, p. 439) compared with other populations in New Zealand. Anxiety,
PTSD, depression, psychotic disorders, and substance abuse are predominant illnesses experienced by Māori (Oakley-Browne, Wells & Scott, 2006). Like other Indigenous communities Māori suicide also occurs at alarmingly high rates (Lawson-Te Aho & Liu, 2010). Numerous studies support the usefulness of social support systems to buffer mental illness during times of distress. Structurally whānau, hapū and iwi systems have potential to offer a large supportive network for Māori who may become mentally unwell. However, fragmented social systems that are themselves under pressure often struggle to offer support (Kumaar & Oakley-Browne, 2012).

Acute episodes of mental illness may lead people experiencing mental illness to isolate from others or be isolated from others when unwell (Linklater, 2011). In a study exploring the experiences of Māori wāhine (women) who had experienced bipolar disorder, Harris (2014) found that unhealthy personal relationships and stress left wāhine feeling unsupported as mothers and in some cases led to losing the care of their tamariki to child protection services. In another study, that sought to understand the experiences of Māori Vietnam war veterans, C. Smith (2015) noted that untreated PTSD left veterans feeling unable to share their experiences with non-military others. They often lived away from their home areas and or limited their return to avoid questions by others. C. Smith (2015) comments “what Māori military veterans teach us about home is that whilst they may wish to return home, trauma can be a factor in keeping people away from home” (p.112). In contrast, Pere (2006) reported that many of the tāngata whaiora (mental health consumers), that she interviewed first experienced mental illness outside their rohe implying that Māori tāngata whaiora are vulnerable when living away from the support of their whakapapa based connection to land, people and spirituality.

Evidence suggests that personal relationships are vulnerable to disruption when people experiencing mental illness become unwell. In addition, whānau caregivers can become isolated from their wider whānau group as they try to manage the care for their whānau member on their own (Pere, 2006). When a tangata whaiora is unwell their ability to discern appropriate relational behaviour may be inhibited, consequently whānau may choose to limit their involvement with other whānau, as well as hapū and iwi events to prevent embarrassment or just manage exhaustion. Conversely, it may be unrealistic to expect that all whānau relationships will be in a place to support change (Huriwai, Robertson, Armstrong, Kingi & Huata, 2001). Non-responsiveness in relationships leads to relationships becoming immobilised and the social system within which they operate to be at an impasse and unable
to be reached when support is required (Jordan, Walker & Hartling, 2004). Furthermore, due to fractures in relationships that may have developed during periods of unwellness, whānau members who have recovered from mental illness may struggle to reconnect and restore relationships following a period of unwellness (Waitoki, Nikora, Harris, & Levy, 2015). One of the fundamental issues for Māori whānau today is meaningful connection both to each other and to traditional Māori culture. It is important to consider the impact of mental illness on whānau connectedness, self-identity as a whānau, hapū and iwi member, and altered roles within the whānau structure. Processes to reconnect tangata whaiora or help them remain connected during and following illness are important. Harris (2014) noted “strong whānau connections were associated with faster recovery and longer periods between relapse” (p. 97). Pomare (2015) also reported a similar finding for rangatahi Māori experiencing mental illness, in that strong whānau relationships were an important aspect of the recovery process for rangatahi. Furthermore, some whānau drew closer to each other in response to their young person’s illness. Hence the importance of resourcing and strengthening whānau, hapū and iwi to care for their own people when required.

In summary, whānau systems experience sometimes overwhelming challenges when faced with mental illness within their whānau. Consequently, this can lead whānau members to become isolated from each other. Chronic long term illness without knowledge about how to be supportive can compromise relationships within whānau, hapū and iwi. Nevertheless, whānau can be mobilised during illness and greater connection occur as a result of collective support and understanding (Pomare, 2015). For whānau Māori who are disconnected from these systems the potentiality for support is limited.

To conclude this section pertaining to disconnection, while statistics suggest that many Māori are becoming increasingly connected to their identity as Māori (Rootham, 2016), international studies have provided some insight into the way in which historical trauma and intergenerational trauma have disrupted the traditional structure and functioning of Indigenous families over multiple generations. Disconnection is a complex and multi-layered process with socio political and socio-relational factors present. The experience of historical trauma, colonisation, urbanisation and a range of relational factors such as whānau violence, estranged relationships and mental illness have had significant consequences on whānau, hapū and iwi cohesion. One of which is the entrenched cycle of disconnection that occurs as each successive generation becomes more distant from the original place of connection. Thus, the ability of whānau, hapū and iwi to support each other and for whakapapa itself to be a
lived reality, to be the pou (centre pole) for all generations is for some Māori whānau tenuous.

**Indigenous Models of Health and Wellbeing**

Numerous studies have advocated for interventions that assist Indigenous communities to reframe their experience of trauma, and reclaim cultural values, traditions, and practices. As Hall (2015) comments “[h]istorical trauma theory orientates Indigenous people toward cultural identity, cultural connectedness and the re-claiming of spiritual connectedness” (pp. 71-72). The healing properties of cultural connectedness (secure cultural identity, enculturation, spiritual coping, and traditional health practices) continue to be reinforced as a buffer to the ongoing experience of Indigenous marginalisation and trauma (Walters & Simoni, 2002).

There are a number of ways that Indigenous approaches have been shown to support wellbeing. Hill (2009) found that participation in traditional practices facilitated a sense of belonging and connectedness with a community, and consequently worked to reduce the occurrence of depressive symptoms, particularly suicidal ideation for American Native Indian. It is argued that for many Indigenous peoples the presence of strong and supportive relationships with elders, increased awareness of tribal history and identity, and spiritual practices contributes to wellness (Ramirez & Hammack, 2014). The development of skills to manage the experience of racism (Kira, Ashby & Omidy, 2015) and the experience of validation and space to be able to articulate these experiences (Beltran & Begun, 2014) empowers people to develop constructive strategies and move forward to find ways of being well, despite continued experiences of marginalisation.

In relation to Māori, a study examining the relationship between land and Ngāi Tahu cultural wellbeing, Reid et al. (2016) reported that a large proportion of participants in their study indicated that connection with whānau (82.5 %) and ancestral land (76.3 %) was essential to both their cultural and psychological wellbeing. Consistent with Phillips (2015), mahinga kai was also identified as a particularly important aspect of maintaining connection with whānau, their whenua and consequently iwi history. Similarly, ‘Kahui Mana Ririki’, a Māori organisation focussed on the prevention of child abuse utilise traditional parenting values and tikanga to reframe negative beliefs and discourse that have mistakenly become normalised for some as “a Māori way” of caring for tamariki. While the reintroduction of positive traditional concepts and ways of managing life are not considered the cure all
antidote for the depth of issues facing Māori today “cultural identity connections can offer a ‘way-in’ to positively influence attitude and behaviour, and to encourage pro-social lifestyles” (Mihaere, 2015, p. 161).

In contrast to numerous literature and research findings that recognise the importance of a secure Māori cultural identity as a protective factor for threats against mental, physical, spiritual and cultural wellbeing (Durie, 2005; Pere, 1982; Pomare, 2015; Tricklebank, 2017; Waigth, 2012; Walters, 2016), increased cultural efficacy may increase dissatisfaction with a western worldview (Houkamau & Sibley, 2011). Perhaps a gap in the current research regarding Indigenous models of wellbeing is an understanding of the additional unsettling that may occur during enculturation processes. As with other types of grief and trauma additional support may be required during stages of increased cultural awareness so that loss can be validated and re-integrated. Pitama, Huria and Lacey (2014) also note that mental health practitioners should be mindful of the presentation of internalised racism when working with Māori, for example “I’m not into that Māori stuff” or “just treat me like everyone else” (p. 113). Not all Māori are ready or want to be connected to their culture or whānau, hapū and iwi. Similarly, for some Māori the loss of cultural connection and whakapapa relationships cannot be changed. They require time to understand and digest this reality, and then on their own terms find a way to move forward (Cooper & Rickard, 2016). It is important to consider the implications of cultural alienation and the different way in which disconnection may manifest when clients present to mental health services.

Māori Health Models

Māori approaches to wellbeing are holistic in nature (Wirihana & Smith, 2014), and emphasise the interconnected nature of social, physical, spiritual and psychological processes to support health. During the 1970s an increased political consciousness in New Zealand led to a process of Māori cultural revitalisation particularly within education. In the years that followed, Kaupapa Māori health models were more readily asserted and utilised in policy to inform and guide the assessment and treatment of Māori illness (Durie, 1997).

The most common model to be applied is ‘Te Whare Tapa Wha’ (Durie, 1994) in which health and wellbeing is likened to a whare (house). The four walls include taha tinana (physical health), taha wairua (spiritual health), taha hinengaro (mental health) and taha whānau (family or social health). ‘Te Wheke’, a model utilising the metaphor of an octopus retains elements of all ‘Te Whare Tapu Wha’ with the addition of mauri, mana ake (unique
identity) hā a koro mā a kui mā (breath of life from tīpuna) and whatumanawa (healthy expression of emotion). Whānau is represented in the head and total wellbeing located in the eyes of te wheke (the octopus). Another model ‘Te Pae Mahutonga’ (Durie, 1999) illustrates the importance of te oranga (participation in society), toiora (healthy lifestyles and positive community norms), mauri ora (access to things Māori), and waiora (environmental protection and sustainability) in achieving positive Māori health outcomes. While there are other Māori health models that have been developed the underlying ethos is that cultural connection is important for health and wellbeing.

**Traditional Māori healing.** Within these models Māori healing practices focus on balance, restoration, reconciliation, alongside processes of accountability and responsibility. “Mana is intrinsic to the wholeness of social relationships, wellbeing and integrity, and is expected to be sustained across time and space” (Satterfield et al., 2005, p. 21). Within te ao Māori processes that attempt to restore ‘right relationships’ tangata ki te tangata (person to person) tangata ki te taiao (person to the environment) tangata ki te wairua (person to the spiritual world) are considered important.

Hohourongo is a process of reconciliation that was a traditional healing practice that occurred through processes such as utu, or restoration. It essentially is a process to remove the noa state that occurs when grievances have occurred (Tate, 2010). The process of hohourongo includes whāki (acknowledgment of grievance), pōuri (perpetrator regret) utu (appropriate righting of wrong), and whakawāteatanga (ritual to clear or settle such as karakia). When rongomau (a state of reconciliation or peace) is achieved a sharing of kai completes the process (McDermott, 2013). While it seems a simple process, as with all reconciliation processes, it is complex and requires careful negotiation and willingness from both parties to engage in a process that reflects a level of tika (right behaviour), pono (truth) and aroha (care). Following post-colonial contact the concepts underpinning hohourongo have been adapted and incorporated into Christian approaches to reconciliation (McDermott, 2013) and more recently aligned in principle to restorative justice processes.

Rongoā Māori is often understood to refer to the use of natural Māori medicines, but it is part of a larger healing tradition underpinned by a strong spiritual component, that holds a deep respect for the interconnectedness of whakapapa and the natural environment (Reinfeld & Pihama, 2010). Traditional healing processes involve the skills of tohunga or healers that are able to address spiritual aspects of the effects of hara (offence) and pain that may have been transmitted through the generations (Bryers-Brown, 2015). Healers may use a
range of approaches depending on the issue at hand such as mirimiri and romiromi (traditional massage), rongoā, kōrero tawhito (ancient understandings), taonga puoro or traditional musical instruments (Rollo, 2013). Karakia and wai (water) may also be utilised as a part of a process for initiating the restoration of a person’s tapu and their experienced sense of being tapu (Eketone, 2013). Such processes are identified as a valid process of healing for some Māori and require healers to be congruent with te ao wairua and hauora (health).

Wirihana and Smith (2014) identify a number of traditional methods of maintaining wellbeing. Narratives of identity and struggle as well as instructions for living, and development of aspirations and hopes for each generation are expressed and communicated through a range of art forms. For example, whakairo (carving), tukutuku (woven panels), waiata and mōteatea (traditional chant). Pūrākau and whakapapa kōrero support the transmission of beliefs and values that instil natural order and connection with the depth of meaning contained within whakapapa and tikanga Māori (T. Smith, 2013). Oriori (lullaby) teach tamariki “their mountains, rivers, seas as these are symbols of identity that enable them to stand confidently in the world, knowing how they are inextricably linked to their tribe” (Reedy, 2011, cited in Penehira & Doherty, 2013, p. 369). Knowledge of this kind is often localised to specific hapū and iwi and validated by whānau themselves as healing (Niania, Tere, Bush & Epston, 2013).

Alongside traditional healing, “the strengthening of family and kinship ties (i.e. whānaungatanga) is also seen as [a contributor] to the resilience of Indigenous communities” (Cram, 2012, p. 35). Many whānau, hapū and iwi are themselves taking ownership of the development of their whānau, hapū and iwi and identifying creative ways to build and strengthen relationships. Whānau, hapū and iwi based development programmes support individuals, particularly rangatahi, to strengthen their cultural identity and develop the skills necessary to achieve their full potential both as individuals and as members of a collective (Selby & Barnes, 2013). It has been suggested that strengthened cultural connections enhance attempts to strengthen whānau connection (Social Policy Research Unit, 2016). Statistics New Zealand (2014) data suggest that attendance at Māori medium education centres such as kohanga reo (preschool level), kura kaupapa (school age level) and wānana (adult and tertiary level), alongside knowledge of whakapapa and te reo Māori, and a place to stand or a tūrangawaewae were associated with increased access to ancestral marae (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). Thus increased cultural competency is likely to support greater connection with marae and consequently greater connection with wider whānau, hapū and iwi.
**Tikanga principles related to whānau wellbeing.** Whānaungatanga or the act of relating and continued connection to others is a principle that underlies many Māori social interactions. It is often an unspoken way of being and is expressed in spaces where Māori come together. This may occur within the context of formal mihimihi or informal conversation. The use of social media as a means for whānau groups to connect, is gaining strength as a way to bridge some of the barriers that prevent face to face interaction (Carlson, 2013; Lumby, 2010; O'Carroll, 2013; Sciascia, 2015). As mentioned earlier the sharing of pepeha is a form of whānaungatanga, of establishing connection that ultimately relates to the questions of who are your whānau? where are they from? and how do we connect? It is a way of linking and building relationship based on whakapapa connections. Hence the difficulty that some Māori encounter when they do not have this knowledge. This may be particularly difficult in an environment that presumes that all Māori understand and have knowledge of the tikanga of pepeha.

Within the concept of whānaungatanga is the principle of manakitanga or care and support and respect for the mana, or dignity and esteem, of others. It is an aspect of whānau wellbeing that seeks to maintain and care for the wairua and mana of its members. It is suggested that low levels of whānaungatanga or connectedness place whānau at risk of a variety of difficulties (Tate, 2010). The act of disowning a person and depriving them of their right to link with whānau may be considered an act of whakanoa, as the mana of tīpuna and whānau can be diminished by grievances perpetrated by other whānau members. Hence, the restorative aspect of reconnection when whānau links are re-established (Tate, 2010).

Underlying traditional Māori values of whānau, hapū and iwi and whakapapa is the principle of reciprocity and responsibility and of working together for a common good. (Cunningham, Stevenson & Tassell, 2005). However, in more contemporary times as reflected within earlier discussion of estranged relationships, value differences between generations can be a point of contention for a number of Māori whānau and compromise agreement around how collective good is defined. For example, the significance of retaining whakapapa connection to land (Morehu, 2005), tikanga practice and carrying out wishes for places of burial.

Dorie (2006) has proposed that the collective capacity of whānau to be wise guardians of resources, to empower its members to participate in society, to plan for future generations, to develop effective decision making processes consistent with tikanga, and to effectively transmit culture, and nurture its members in need of care are essential for optimal levels of
growth and wellbeing to occur within whānau. Furthermore, Kingi et al. (2014) in a model depicting ‘flourishing whānau’, reflect similar factors with the addition of access to whānau heritage through connection to the many unique aspects of whakapapa, such as te reo Māori, tikanga and iwitanga (specific tribal custom), access to urupā, and participation and access to marae and whānau trusts (Kingi et al., 2014). Such factors are considered the ideal environment for whānau development to occur.

However, while recent data suggests that connections to cultural identity, te reo Maori and spirituality remain important to Māori (Statistics New Zealand, 2014), the protective aspects of Māori culture are limited to those who have access to resources and a desire to connect with Māori society and culture (Cram, 2012). Relationships that exist within whānau are complex, relationships within hapū and iwi are even more complex. With the additional experience of colonisation which undermined many processes that enabled Māori to sustain these relationships the process of rebuilding these relationships to support the wellbeing of whakapapa and of those Māori who are in need of returning home requires careful attention.

**Whānau ora initiatives.** Systemic factors have the ability to either enhance or disrupt the development of its members (Dallos, 2006). As reflected earlier, Atkinson et al., (2014) comments:

> The establishment of security, maintenance and repair of family and social bonds, creation of effective systems of justice, re-establishment of social roles and identities and the building of institutions that create communal coherence and meaning (religious, spiritual, existential, political or cultural) may be necessary components of healing a community and consequently the individuals and families. (p. 297)

Recommendations from the Puao-Te-Ata-Tu report (1986) strongly influenced the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989, which required statutory social workers to partner with whānau, hapū and iwi when developing care and protection plans for tamariki. Consequently, family group conferences (FGC) became an integral part of child abuse intervention (Connolly, 2007; Duncan & Worrall, 2000; Libesman, 2004).

In 2010, the Whānau Ora initiative was introduced by Māori Party co-leader Dame Tariana Turia and the Ministry of Social Development to provide comprehensive and integrated services to assist whānau to ultimately achieve their goals for whānau ora (family wellness) as a collective rather than individuals alone (Taskforce, 2009). Whānau ora is developing momentum and meeting the needs of not only Māori but all New Zealanders.
Within the whānau ora model is an integration of a wide range of Māori and non-Māori interventions that have proven ability to support whānau aspirations for change, to reduce risk and increase protective factors (Durie, 2005). The focus being on what works for whānau and the goals that they set for themselves as a whānau unit to achieve.

There is a strong argument within the literature, that interventions that have a contextual child and family focus are more likely to have better outcomes than those that do not (Lynskey & Ferguson, 1997). Multi systemic and wrap around interventions have also shown some promise (Ronan et al., 2009; Shipman & Taussig, 2009). Interventions that are focussed on particular parent skill sets and strengthen interactions through in vivo rather than dialectic training have shown increased efficacy. For example Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) has been shown to significantly reduce aversive parenting interactions both during treatment and at follow up (Ronan et al., 2009). Other parent training programmes such as ‘Mellow parenting’, ‘Incredible years’ and ‘Triple P’ have also shown promise (Ronan et al., 2009; Shipman & Taussig, 2009). Furthermore, in relation to child abuse, timely therapeutic intervention; positive caregiver reaction to disclosure (Gries et al., 2000; Ronan et al., 2009; Wethington et al., 2008); positive peer relationships (Lynskey & Fergusson, 1997); family coping strategies and cohesion; maintenance of self-efficacy; and access to community support and resources (Kalil, 2003) are all ways that further psychological difficulties can be reduced.

Durie (2005) describes whānau healing as “primarily concerned with the resolution of whānau hurts and the restoration of healthy patterns of interaction” (p. 206). Interventions and processes that aim to facilitate safety, confront inappropriate behaviour, re-establish cultural and spiritual values, and increase access to greater opportunities, and connection with the networks of wider whānau, hapū and iwi are considered useful forms of intervention for relational disruption (Durie, 2005). Furthermore, when considering healing within mental health services Ihimaera (2004) recommends:

A cultural context that fits with service users (tangata whaiora) and their whānau, optimal clinical care, outcome measures that are patient focused and are understood easily by tangata whaiora and the intertwining of good mental health practice with other areas of Māori cultural development. (Wratten-Stone, 2016, p. 7)

A number of Māori clinicians have developed integrated Māori models of healing and intervention. Māori initiatives that address risk factors from substance use (Huriwai, 2002;
McLachlan, 2007) and domestic violence (Cargo et al., 2002; Cooper, 2007; Cram, 2012; Ruwhiu et al., 2009) to parent training (Glifford & Pirikahu, 2008) and mental illness (Wirihana, 2007) including depression (Bennett, Fleet & Babbage, 2014) have had positive outcomes for Māori whānau. Parenting programmes such as Hoki ki te Rito (Penehira & Doherty, 2013) and Whānau Whakapakiri (Herbert, 2001) suggest that an integration of standard parent training concepts alongside Māori cultural concepts and values improve whānau relationships and ultimately long term quality and cohesiveness.

Kaupapa Māori led health and social services that are holistic and aware of the issues impacting on Māori whānau wellbeing have been shown to be effective in the area of reducing intergenerational patterns of whānau violence (Cooper, 2012; Dobbs & Eruera, 2014). Furthermore, Walters (2016) identified that positive Māori identity, a strong sense of wairuatanga, and significant and supportive whānau members were important areas to consider when supporting Māori tamariki who have witnessed whānau violence. The inclusion of cultural interventions within clinical practice enhanced treatment and the resilience of tamariki who had witnessed violence.

In addition, in their evaluation of a whānau ora wellbeing service Te Whakaruruahau, Robertson et al. (2013) note that a whānau ora approach to domestic violence was effective in meeting the needs of women and children affected by domestic violence, and while the service focused on the safety and aspirations of women and their children, as a service they facilitated access to supports for fathers to address their own needs such as addiction, accommodation, and counselling. They also worked alongside Te Ao Mārama Māori focussed unit at Waikeria prison, as well as hapū and iwi to provide education, care and accountability (Robertson et al., 2013). Likewise, reconnection through mentoring relationships within hapū and iwi has been shown to reduce recidivism rates. This was particularly effective when intensive wrap around services such as social and health support were incorporated into the cultural reintegration process (Rattray, 2016).

Summary

In this chapter an overview of the literature pertaining to whānau, hapū and iwi disconnection was presented. There is very little research on the specifics of disconnection and reconnection with these kin-based systems for Māori. However, a number of Māori authors have reiterated the centrality of whakapapa to Māori identity. The lived reality of this whakapapa is complex, diverse and varied. Like many Indigenous people Māori have been
impacted by historical trauma, ongoing discrimination and racism, colonisation, and urbanisation. At an institutional level, this also includes marginalisation from adequate resources and full participation in society. Within Indigenous literature it has been argued that these social-political factors have undermined the social fabric of Indigenous kin based systems and culture, and consequently have been associated with the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in negative health and social statistics.

In response to these issues, a growing body of international and New Zealand literature has supported the development of Indigenous models of health to assess and restore wellbeing and the valued relationship Indigenous people have with their cultural identity; their links to their land, and environment and spirituality, traditional values, beliefs and practices. Furthermore, in response to the psychological issues that arise from social-relational factors such as estranged relationships, whānau violence, and mental illness, a range of Indigenous and non-Indigenous models have been identified. In New Zealand, the recent development of whānau ora and whānau initiative strategies offer an integrated system of care to meet the aspirations of whānau and likely hapū and iwi. However, a gap within the literature exists with regard to an understanding of processes involved in the restoration of contemporary Indigenous kin based relationships. For Māori these relationships are primarily with whānau, hapū and iwi and whakapapa.

**Aims of Thesis**

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the experiences of Māori who have attempted to reconnect and rebuild relationships with the kin based systems of whānau, hapū and iwi. This followed a prolonged period of disconnection. It specifically sought to identify the factors that contribute to intergenerational whānau-hapū and iwi disconnection; and to identify the processes and pathways that facilitate reconnection for Māori who have become separated from whānau, hapū and iwi. Of particular interest were factors that fostered and inhibited the development of meaningful connection. It is hoped that this research will advance understanding about these processes and support culturally relevant pathways that strengthen whānau-hapū relationships, and disrupt intergenerational cycles of disconnection. It is further hoped that these pathways will then contribute to improved understanding and support for Māori whānau when they present to psychological services with issues related to whānau, hapū and iwi disconnection.
CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an outline of the theory and applied practices that informed the way that this research was carried out, and the approach taken to ensure it was relevant. It is a qualitative study utilising whakapapa knowledge frameworks and Kaupapa Māori theory and principles.

Qualitative Research

The purpose of qualitative research is to bring about a rich understanding of the meaning and way that people make sense of particular experiences or phenomena, that other research methods are unable to provide to the same depth (Liamputtong, 2005). “Statistics are convenient summaries of behaviour, of changes, and of the relation between events. But there can be a big gap between them and the reality they represent” (M. Shipman, 2014, p. 110). Initially a mixed methods design was proposed for this research utilising both qualitative data in the form of interviews, and quantitative data in the form of questionnaires such as the Historical Trauma Scale (Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt & Chen, 2004) and Family Environment Scale (Moos & Moos, 1976). While international research and literature reflect a broad range of qualitative and quantitative studies that provide an understanding of the impact of cultural disconnection on individuals, there is no research at the writing of this thesis that provides an understanding of Māori experiences of kin based disconnection in the form of relationships with whānau, hapū and iwi. The incorporation of the aforementioned questionnaires may have provided a breadth of information comparable to other studies (Whitbeck, Adam, Hoyt & Chen, 2004). However, in consultation with my supervisors I decided that at this stage rather than breadth a greater emphasis was needed on understanding the experience of disconnection, and potential resiliencies and processes of reconnection. Consequently, this study used a qualitative interview design to illicit conversations that provided a depth and richness to understanding the experience of participants in the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Kaupapa Māori Research

The purpose of research is to advance knowledge and understanding, and in the context of a discipline such as clinical psychology, to improve clinical practice. However, it is the view of Māori academics that throughout history Māori have often been the subjects of research by non-Māori, in order to meet the agenda and curiosity of academia, with little benefit to Māori communities themselves (Forster, 2003). In contrast, Kaupapa Māori theory...
and practice reflects a Māori for Māori approach to research. It emerged as a space to reposition Māori voices within research, to reclaim greater agency, to discuss and explore areas that were of high interest and relevance to Māori (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2006a). Kaupapa Māori research supports the emancipation of Māori knowledge and aspirations, and the advancement of Māori solutions based on our own defined realities and epistemological foundations (Pihama, 2011). It requires “courage to question genuinely held but deeply colonised assumptions about what it means to be Māori; courage to determine whether dubious interpretations of tikanga serve us well or whether they further an agenda that puts our long-term survival at risk” (Mikaere, 2011, p. 37).

Kaupapa Māori methodology values tikanga Māori principles and practice and increases the responsibility of the researcher to uphold processes that align with tikanga or the right ways of doing things within a Māori research context. In more detail these include: aroha ki te tangata (to allow people to define their own space); he kanohi kītea (meeting face to face and fronting up); titiro-whakarongo-kōrero (watch, listen then speak); mānaki ki te tangata (collaborative sharing and giving back); kia tūpato (be cautious, safe and reflective); kāua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample on the mana or dignity of a person or their whānau, hapū and iwi); and finally kia māhaki (using knowledge wisely with humility not arrogance). These principles are not exhaustive but represent the key tenets of conducting Kaupapa Māori research (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2006b).

This research is a part of my own academic journey to be a clinical psychologist within a non-Māori university research environment. Thus, it is not wholly a Kaupapa Māori project directed from the Māori community per se. In this sense, this research may be considered a Māori centred approach rather than a Kaupapa Māori approach. However, underpinning this study are core features of Māori identity namely whakapapa, whānau, hapū and iwi. The strengthening and maintenance of these relationships is a Māori priority, albeit often one that is under threat. Thus to protect these concepts and the Māori participants who were involved in this study a Kaupapa Māori methodology was applied from inception to completion, through the exploration of relevant literature, the way in which the research was proposed and consulted, carried out and analysed, and eventually to report back to both the psychological and Māori communities through conference presentation and the dissemination of this written thesis.
Whakapapa Research Framework

Traditionally, whakapapa was a way to understand phenomena, their origins and interconnectedness, and ultimately their connection back to Papatūānuku and Ranginui. Whakapapa as a research methodology is concerned with the nature and origin of phenomena, connections and relationships to other phenomena, and in “describing trends in phenomena”, “locating phenomena”, and “extrapolating and predicting future phenomena” (Royal, 1998, p. 3). It is organic in nature.

It is commonly understood that social systems are constructed by layers of intersecting systems from individuals to wider social political and societal systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Indigenous people intersect with spaces of wider kin grouping, historical and political marginalisation, alongside land, environment and spirituality. As mentioned earlier whakapapa involves the layering of past, present and future. For Māori each of these layers provides knowledge about the relationships with whānau, hapū and iwi, of past, present and future (C. Smith, 2013). Due to the nature of the Māori experience of colonisation, disconnection and the multiplicity of interconnecting relationships it was anticipated that this research would naturally contain many complex issues and diverse realities and relationships.

The continual discussions that arose with and between Māori with regard to this research question affirmed that this research was and continues to be of high interest to Māori. It also confirmed the concern that many Māori have with regard to disconnection and their desire for either themselves or others to be connected with whānau, hapū and iwi. Kaupapa Māori is concerned with the emancipation of Māori knowledge, ways of being and understanding. It privileges and validates Māori epistemology. It is in a sense concerned with claiming space and asserting self-determination. A whakapapa research framework proposed by Royal (1998) and Graham (2005) compliments a Kaupapa Māori approach to research, but is concerned with the production of new Māori understandings and knowledge in the context of relationship and interconnected nature of phenomena. It was important for the researcher to hold the delicate tension between the realities of disconnection and the ideal sometimes romanticised notion of Māori reconnection. This was needed to reflect both the complexity of issues related to reconnection and the strengths within te ao Māori that provide real solutions and pathways so that the lived reality of whakapapa is not only protected, but enhanced for future generations. Thus a Kaupapa Māori approach and a whakapapa framework were utilised to hold in mind the many layers of relationship whilst delicately holding the
historical, current and future experiences of each participant and their represented whānau, hapū and iwi seen and unseen.

**Researcher Reflexivity**

An inductive approach was used during the analysis stage of this research. Hence the analysis was directed by the data itself, rather than a particular theoretical perspective. However, as Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest, qualitative research is not a passive process in which themes emerge. It is an active process whereby data interpretation is informed by taken for granted values, beliefs, and experiences of the researcher. Thus it is important to acknowledge that the researchers own framework to this research was informed by a number of theories, experiences, and aspirations for this research.

Māori researchers have roles, responsibilities and relationships within their own communities (C. Smith, 2013). It is inevitable that Māori researchers and their participants will at times share whakapapa, experiences of being Māori and other forms of connection within their Māori community. This interconnectedness generates a responsibility and an expectation on the part of the researcher to conduct research in line with Māori aspirations and with the best interests of Māori in mind. The conduct of a Māori researcher may often be scrutinized much more by their own community than their academic community (Pihama, 2011; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2006a). In qualitative research this position is referred to as “insider research” and is highly conducive to Māori research. At one level insider research is able to safeguard the research and ensure accountability and integrity, and at another level it may be considered to compromise research due to potential biases and an inability to articulate an objective view of the data to avoid critique or a desire to protect the Māori community (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2006b).

Reflexivity is a process whereby the researcher is transparent about both their insider and outsider positioning, so that the way in which interpretations are made can be visible and logical to others. As a researcher I am mindful that I occupy both an insider and outsider position within this research. These positions are intertwined intimately with whom I am, and the context within which I grew up. On my Māori side I affiliate to both Ngāti Tūwharetoa and Ngāti Kahungunu ki Heretaunga iwi and the hapū of Ngāti Kurauria, Mokai, Ngāti Hinemanu, and Ngāti Paki. On my non-Māori side I descend from Scottish, Irish, Yorkshire and Jewish background.
Early in my schooling, my parents chose to return to a small rural community in the Central North Island of New Zealand where both my Māori and Pākehā whānau had lived for several generations. I had the privilege of growing up with knowledge that I was deeply connected to this area, to the land, and to a community. I knew what it meant to be supported by a broad range of whānau and non-whānau relationships typical of rural New Zealand. These included immediate whānau but also a wide extended whānau of kuia and koroua and people who were simply known as auntie, uncle, and cousin no matter where they were on the whakapapa.

However, from a very early age, I also understood the injustice my hapū had experienced. Our wharepuni speaks to our history. Various kōrero related to the design of our whare, the arrest of my tipuna, the subsequent burning of whare and belongings, and the marching of women, tamariki and some men to a neighbouring hapū continues the kōrero of injustice. This grievance was retold at a recent hearing with a Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal panel at our marae. One of my whānau, a claimant, told the tribunal panel that the urupā at our whenua tūturu (customary land) had been hidden by previous generations to prevent future whānau members becoming pōrangi (unwell), as a result of the injustice and loss of our whenua that had occurred. This act in itself indicates the level of emotional turmoil that occurred at that time. The hara of that incident has had ongoing ramifications for my whānau, hapū and iwi, and the way that it was spoken about as a child was as if it had only just occurred. In today’s psychological world such experiences would be described as traumatic, but in those days land was taken, and injustices occurred without any apparent consideration of the distress that it caused. The Māori experience of pain was invalidated and in many ways this still occurs today in the politics that surround Māori requests for justice.

I have observed in my own whānau, hapū and iwi those who want to be connected and those who don’t. While I grew up within the rohe of my whānau, hapū and iwi my knowledge of te ao Māori came later in my adult life. There are many reasons for this, but partly because my grandmother’s experience of being Māori was not always happy. In her early years she was known to scrub her arms raw because she did not want to be Māori. Like many of her generation she retained her ngākau Māori for her whānau, but chose not to pass on her knowledge of te ao Māori to her children or grandchildren.

In response to employment, tertiary study, health needs, and sometimes just to be closer to other whānau who live away from the hau kāinga, our whānau has cycled back and forth between the generations to our hau kāinga. Reconnection for my whānau occurred as a
result of my parent’s return to our whenua when I was young, my father’s tangihanga which brought an influx of whānau and reconnection with te ao Māori, and my mum’s later return to live beside our marae and work in the community that she knew and enjoyed. Despite not having the characteristic markers of Māori identity, I have at different stages of my life always been within reach of my whakapapa, either through older whānau members who kōrero to me about whakapapa and history, or by being surrounded by the presence of my whenua, maunga, and awa on a regular basis. Ironically, even though I have lived in urban settings for over 15 years, I have never until this research thought of myself as an urban Māori. I have always orientated my identity to my whakapapa and the community that I grew up in. In many ways I have not been disconnected in the same way that my participants have been nor have I been without resources when I did want to connect.

As mentioned in the introduction, my work experience in a residential parent programme for women and their children led me to witness a specific type of whānau disconnection in the context of abuse and care and protection concern. In my current employment as an intern clinical psychologist I am witness to yet another type of disconnection that occurs as a result of mental illness. Therefore, it is from both an insider and an outsider position that I undertake this research. Hence there are many experiences, knowledge’s and understandings informing this research, and I am mindful that these experiences as both a disconnected and a connected Māori have informed the way I have carried out this research and made meaning of the kōrero shared to me by the participants of this study.

Method

This study used a qualitative interview design guided by the principles of kaupapa Māori theory and practice. It consisted of a mixture of closed and open-ended questions to invite discussion of particular topics, while leaving room for further questions to be asked as each participant spoke about their own unique experience. The main aim of this approach was to hear the participant’s unique perspectives on whānau-hapū and iwi relationships and connection. The interview was digitally recorded and then transcribed by the researcher and in some situations a professional transcriber who had signed a confidentiality agreement. The data was then analysed using thematic analysis.
Participants

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 participants. Initial recruitment occurred through email and posters (see Appendix A). However, face-to-face pānui at te reo Māori classes in two different locations in Auckland and snowballing were the most effective means of recruitment. In the later stages of recruitment, a number of additional people voiced their interest to participate, but due to time constraints and the richness of data already collected, the researcher and supervisor concluded that 15 participants were sufficient. However, this indicates that the research question is an issue of interest to many Māori, and there is scope for further research as will be discussed in the discussion section of this thesis.

The criteria for participation included Māori whakapapa, of age 18 years old and over, an experience of a prolonged period of disconnection from whānau, hapū or iwi, and an attempt to reconnect and rebuild those relationships. To protect the identity of participant’s minimal demographic information is presented. However, all participants at the time of interviews lived in the Auckland region and together represented 16 different iwi with some participants sharing iwi affiliation with each other. There were nine female and six male participants with an age range from 22 years to 55+ years. Five of whom were in the 35-45 year old age range with an even spread on either side of this age range. Participants reflected a broad range of socioeconomic backgrounds and education. Eight participants were first generation living in Auckland, five participants were second generation and two were more than three generations living in Auckland. Two participants had actively reconnected within 12 months prior to the interview, and 13 participants had made active attempts to reconnect with whānau, hapū and iwi for a period of more than 12 months.

Interview Schedule

A semi-structured interview schedule was designed as a guide to prompt discussion with whānau participants (see Appendix B). Questions were grouped into three key areas (1) questions about the process of whānau disconnection (2) questions about the process of whānau reconnection and (3) questions about the role of psychologists. Specific questions were also asked about the role of hapū and iwi in supporting reconnection. The interview schedule was piloted with the first three participants. Based on feedback from these participants, the interview schedule remained unchanged for ongoing interviews. However, as interviews progressed, the use of the term ‘historical trauma’ required further clarification and created confusion and potential for whakamā when participants did not know their history.
Hence, the question: “Is the term historical trauma a term you would use to describe what happened to your whānau? If not what would you call it?” was removed and replaced with “When you think of your whānau and hapū history (grandparent’s time and further back) were there events and difficulties that may have impacted on current relationships with each other. How does this affect your whānau now?” Many of the participant responses to this question strongly suggested that disconnection from relationships with any one of the systems of whānau, hapū and iwi also meant a disconnection from their history. Most participants experienced the impact of disconnection through loss of knowledge, cultural identity, belonging and relationships, thus many did not know the specific history of their hapū and iwi and for some the current organisational structure of their iwi initiatives.

**Interview Procedure**

All interviews were conducted at a location mutually suitable to both participant and researcher. In line with a kaupapa Māori approach to research, participants were given the opportunity to bring a support person with them. This information was included in the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix D). All participants choose to be interviewed without support, but some had mentioned that they had spoken to partners and whānau about their experience and had consulted with them in depth prior to their decision to participate in this research.

The interview structure was ordered in a way that allowed participants to feel comfortable with the interview process and questions. In the beginning of each interview a brief mihimihi occurred in the context of sharing kai, as some participants had come to interviews after a day at work. At this time consent forms were reviewed (see Appendix C). The purpose of the research was reiterated to participants alongside information about what will happen to the information they shared, preferences to review and edit transcripts and clarification of any further questions also occurred. A koha (donation offered as respect for participants and appreciation of their willingness to participate) of $40 petrol or grocery voucher were offered to participants. I then asked about demographic information as per the interview schedule (see Appendix B). Karakia was offered, prior to the interview proper, and reflected the diversity of Māori preferences for traditional processes with some participants comfortable to initiate karakia themselves, others wanted the researcher to do the karakia, and yet others were comfortable not to commence with karakia.
The overall questions were guided by the interview format (see Appendix B), and followed a pattern of structure that began with questions related to the experience of disconnection, the experience of reconnection and then hopes for the future and the role of psychologists to support reconnection. As mentioned earlier, a digital voice recorder was used to record interviews. To maintain consistency and focus each participant was asked similar questions as per the interview schedule. However, depending on the content of participant kōrero (conversation) a degree of flexibility occurred with regard to the flow of questions. Furthermore, some questions were answered naturally by participants and did not need to be specifically asked. At the end of the interview participants were asked if they had any further thoughts, questions or feedback. Following this discussion the interview was formally ended with karakia for those who had opened with karakia.

Data Analysis

The study used thematic analyses to interpret the interview text. Consistent with a critical realist approach, the language used by participants was taken to be a direct representation of their reality, and a critical interpretation was applied to the explicit rather than implicit meaning of the data (Leary, 2014; Silverman, 2005).

The analyses followed a six stage process of analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, a familiarisation to the data occurred whereby recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. Second, an initial 74 codes were generated in relation to the research questions and applied to discrete statements in text. Third, these statements were grouped into broad themes based on patterns, similarity, and relationship to the research questions to: (1) identify the factors that have contributed to intergenerational whānau-hapū and iwi disconnection (2) identify ways in which whānau attempt to reconnect with each other and (3) role of psychologists and implications for psychological practice. Fourth, themes were repeatedly reviewed and some themes were collapsed into one theme or related sub themes. A thematic map was formulated and broad themes identified. Fifth, the themes were then defined and further analysed according to the relationship they had with each other, and the research question. These themes were then discussed with my primary supervisor and cross validated with a cultural advisor to ensure that themes and codes were congruent from a Māori perspective. Some themes were revised and reassigned. Sixth, defined themes were then linked with current research and literature and formulated into a written analysis report.
Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study was granted by the University of Auckland Ethics Committee. In addition, while this thesis was an academic requirement for the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, it was important to the researcher and supervisors for the research to be of benefit to Māori. During the initial inception of this research the researcher worked alongside Dr Erana Cooper (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine) and Te Atawhai o te Ao, Independent Māori Institute for Environment and Health to ensure that the research was consistent with Māori aspirations for improved health.

In addition, during the initial stage of this research the researcher was a member of the Māori and Pacific Psychology Research Group at The University of Auckland. Furthermore, a rangahau whānau group developed with other Māori psychologists during the analysis and discussion stages of this research. These processes ensured that this thesis remained accountable and relevant to the needs of Māori and the principles of sound ethical practice highlighted by Māori researchers were applied.

It is acknowledged that due to the small number of participants generalisations cannot be made about Māori as a whole. Rather the participants provide a snapshot of their experiences. Thus caution must be used by the reader when generalising the findings of this research to all Māori. In addition, pseudo names were given to each participant to protect their anonymity. In the case of more sensitive quotes or an accumulation of quotes that form a potentially identifiable picture of a participant at least two names and in some cases more were utilised for the same participant. Similarly, some participants used dialectal differences in pronunciation of te reo Māori. I acknowledge these differences and do not wish to subsume all Māori into one group. However, I chose to utilise my own Tūwharetoa dialectal spelling (Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board, 2005) in the writing of this thesis to protect participants’ identity. The intention of making these changes explicit is because I recognise the importance of retaining the unique whānau, hapū and iwi characteristics, but due to the sensitive nature of some quotes the anonymity of participants and their whānau also requires care.
CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS

Within this study three domains of interest were explored: the experience of disconnection, the experience of reconnection, and implications for clinical practice. The identified themes and respective subthemes are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

*Themes and Subthemes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The causes of disconnection are historical, contemporary</td>
<td>The experience of colonisation: A devalued Māori identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and cross-generational</td>
<td>Urban opportunity and absent relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abusive relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescent transitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Experience of disconnection:</td>
<td>Ngākau māmae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alienation and longing for whakapapa</td>
<td>Loss of relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loss of culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Enduring threads of connection</td>
<td>Wairuatanga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whenua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whakapapa kōrero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Active turning toward connection with whānau, hapū and</td>
<td>Cautious entry and initial contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iwi</td>
<td>Re-establishing access to whānau, hapū and iwi systems of support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social media: An updated kumara vine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rebuilding identity with whānau, hapū and iwi through broader Māori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dealing with difficult dynamics</td>
<td>Acceptance of dilemmas and contradictory realities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Re-establishment of whānau tikanga and safe interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Tūrangawaewae: A place to stand</td>
<td>Whakaoho mauri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whakamana, whakakaha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Te ara whakahonohono (a pathway for future generations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Creating connection within clinical practice</td>
<td>Cultural competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Safe spaces to be Māori</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following section focussed on the participant experience of disconnection from relationships with whānau, hapū and iwi. Utilising thematic analysis three main themes were identified; the causes of disconnection are historical, contemporary and cross generational; the experience of disconnection alienation and longing for whakapapa, and enduring threads of connection. These themes and related subthemes are outlined in the following section.

**Theme 1: Causes of Disconnection are Historical, Contemporary and Cross-generational**

While the experience of disconnection varied between participants, most located their disconnection from whānau, hapū and iwi within previous generations of their whānau. As Chris commented, “my disconnection, is only one part; I believe that [my parents] were also well and truly disconnected in many ways before I came along”. Some participants were able to name discreet points of disconnection - for example, a death, separation, or a particular whānau argument - but most described a more subtle insidious process of disconnection that flowed back and forth between each generation; and was intertwined within the overall Māori experience of colonisation. Consequently, the majority of participants reflected a complex layer of historical, contemporary and cross generational disconnection. The mechanisms in which this occurred were described in subthemes of the experience of colonisation: A devalued sense of identity, urban opportunity, separation and absent relationships, abusive relationships and adolescent transition. For many participants more than one point of disconnection occurred. The causal variations of disconnection are outlined in Table 2.

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Disconnection Identified by Participants</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reason for disconnection unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant indicated disconnection due to devalued identity</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant indicated disconnection due to urban opportunity</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant indicated disconnection due to separation or absent relationships</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant indicated disconnection due to violence and alcohol abuse</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant indicated that disconnection due to adolescent transition</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The experience of colonisation. A devalued Māori identity. For most participants, a disconnection from relationships with whānau, hapū and iwi was inextricably linked to a loss of Māori cultural identity. A few participants familiar with concepts of colonisation and/or historical trauma directly associated their loss of identity to the process of colonisation. Others less familiar with these concepts spoke more indirectly about the relationship between colonisation and their disconnection. This was most noticeable in the way they spoke about widespread devaluation of Māori identity, matauranga and ways of being that had been experienced by previous generations of their whānau, as Dave articulated:

Back in those times my understanding is that Māori weren’t seen, Māori culture wasn’t seen as being able to contribute to survival or success in the future and so it wasn’t valued. So my Dad’s family weren’t allowed to engage with things Māori. They weren’t allowed to speak the language, they weren’t allowed to go to the marae and at school, Catholic schools, they were beaten . . . So they were a cheap workforce and as part of the education they were educated, they were taught that being Māori was a negative.

When discussing historical events there was a sense of treading carefully within the historical contexts of whānau. As Ema said “I don’t know their [tīpuna] story too well. My granddad probably wouldn’t talk about that stuff. You know he just likes to brush over that side of things”. However, either first hand, or vicariously through the narratives of previous generations participants were aware of experiences of racism and subjugation within their whānau. This was particularly salient for the generation who grew up in a period of time when children were beaten by teachers for speaking te reo Māori, as Ria described of her father “he said that if they spoke te reo they were beaten in front of everyone, like not just a whack, they were beaten”. This type of treatment had the effect of silencing an entire generation from speaking te reo Māori, and English became the language of survival, as Anahera described:

I don’t ever remember speaking English before I went to school because [my father] always spoke te reo and when he died that went with him. I hated school because I had to learn how to speak English before I could learn anything, so there was a disconnection there whether I liked it or not, but to survive I had to do something.
The presence of anxiety annihilation as referred to by Kira (2010) was evident in the narratives of some whānau. Hōhepa commented that his mother avoided walking home with his grandmother due to fear that she would speak te reo Māori to her:

My grandmother would always be at the gate to walk her home, and almost every day, my mother would cross the road and not walk home with my grandmother. Because she was too embarrassed in case her mother spoke Māori to her, around her friends.

Mere attributed her father’s experience of discrimination to a negative pathway that ultimately limited his opportunities to be a father to his children, as she described:

He had a criminal record and a mental health record. That’s why [non-Māori] were able to get a restraining order against him, so that we weren’t able to have any contact what so ever. . . Like, I suppose it goes way back to when he was at school and being punished for being Māori that led to him becoming a negative Māori statistic basically, and because he had that record on him he wasn’t able to be a father basically. According to the law and according to the Pākehā people that manipulate things in their favour. I think it’s definitely something that has impacted [us kids] I think if he wasn’t Māori that would have been different. I really do believe it is a combination of racism and colonisation that, you know, cut his opportunities really. That really hurt . . . without us really understanding or knowing it.

While participants were aware of the impact of previous generational experiences of racism and discrimination, many participants had also experienced first-hand racism because they were Māori. For example, Keisha was separated from her Māori whānau at an early age and grew up with her non-Māori family. She was frequently exposed to negative attitudes about her Māori identity, and was actively excluded by her non-Māori family from any involvement in things Māori, as she described:

Like we weren’t allowed to see them [Māori whānau], we weren’t allowed to be brought up Māori, speak Māori, look Māori . . . I actually remember when I was in primary school I was put into this class where the teacher was Māori and she taught in Māori, and my Mum deliberately took me out of the class because she didn’t want that.

Discrimination, racism and chronic devaluation at times were difficult for many of the Māori whānau represented in this study. The experience of belonging to a devalued culture and the
negative portrayal of Māori stereotypes led some participants to distance themselves from their Māori identity, or anything perceived to be Māori, as Leila described:

[T]o be fair, I would’ve had no respect for my Māori side at all, over the years . . . I would just have said, ‘oh those Māoris, no I’ve got nothing to do with them . . . Don’t care, not interested’. So a lack of respect, I’ve had, I guess due to a lack of understanding . . . I’ve got nothing to base a relationship on . . . So, you know, ignorance means that I’ve lacked respect for the, I’m loathe to say the culture . . . I would just think, those bloody Māoris, those Māoris, I’m nothing to do with that. Almost an uppity Māori, I would call it.

Hana equated the experience of discrimination and its subsequent devaluation of Māori identity as damaging the mana of her whānau. Consequently she said alcohol was used as a means to cope, as she explained:

I mean if you’re discriminated against, you know, it’s like your mana has been trampled on. So that automatically affects the wairua, the taha wairua, it automatically affects the tinana, the psychological side of things. So you know all those dynamics of being Māori have been trodden on. Yeah. So where do Māori go? What the hell, have a beer, get over it, and drown it. Drown it.

The use of alcohol as a means to cope stigmatised some participants and was experienced as further damage to identity. Nick tried to distance himself from his whānau to protect his own sense of mana and worth as a person, as he explained:

I used to once upon a time hate the thought of being connected. Yeah I never thought about that . . . because I suppose at the time when I was growing up the whānau name. I guess that’s what it was everybody from [town name] only knew the whānau name, family as being pissheads and I wasn’t one of those. Sure I like my drink when I first started, but not to the point where I earned the right to be called that.

The devaluation of Māori identity essentially compromised the formation of a secure and valued sense of self as being Māori and undermined the social fabric that nurtured meaningful relationships with others. For participants in the current generation and previous generation it meant not visiting marae unless for tangi, not speaking te reo Māori, looking at things Māori as less than things Pākehā, opting for “the Pākehā way” and choosing to not ascribe to principles of tikanga that held in place appropriate behaviour and safe ways of being together as whānau, hapū and iwi. The experience of colonisation had a pervasive and
insidious effect on the sustainability of a positive Māori identity and whānau processes that supported cohesion within extended whānau, hapū and iwi.

**Urban opportunity and absent relationships.** Many participants associated their disconnection to the process of urbanisation when Māori were shifting from the rural areas to urban areas for employment and perceived opportunity, as Alana described:

A lot of the meat works had closed down and a lot of them were of my mum’s extended whānau, were moving out of [rural town] and heading kind of north, to Australia, and so forth. So there kinda was this wave, and then when my grandparents passed away . . . that was the last of their generation. So I think in terms of disconnection, that’s when it started.

Movement to the city meant that whānau often left the hau kāinga and did not return. Consequently, there was a loss of opportunity to build relationships and develop successors to teach, learn and carry on the principles of tikanga on the marae and within the whānau group itself, as Kiri stated:

So they married in the city, they had their children in the city, so no one going home, they didn’t get to, to learn, the things around the tikanga, tikanga stuff, you know, the marae and the reo and all that . . . there was no knowledge of the reo, there was no knowledge of tikanga. Yes they knew a little bit, but to hand it down to the generation, to the kids there was nothing. Absolutely nothing. So my generation became very urbanised is the word, and that’s how we lived.

A few participants spoke about the absence of people living at home, and consequently they felt they had no reason to go home, as Kane described:

I stopped going home and that was the saddest thing for me because I felt there was nothing to go home to. Everybody had left [name of marae], mum had taken us out of [the marae], so that was the beginning of the disconnection from [name of marae], even though [the marae] was just down the road it wasn’t the same.

For participants who were second or third generation living away from their hau kāinga, connection with whānau, hapū and iwi was often much harder to develop and maintain, as Ema commented:

I think definitely moving away has been a big impact. Yeah, if I had grown up there, I would know all those people, and I’d be totally comfortable in those environments
and not just the immediate family would be closer, but the extended family. Mum’s sort of, has distanced herself from all that which has made it hard, because she is my connection to them.

Furthermore, limited contact with whānau, hapū and iwi also meant that it was much easier for whānau to avoid each other and walk away from the dynamics of conflict rather than be forced to work out their disagreements. Such dynamics included unresolved conflicts in relationships, whānau rejection of partners, differences of opinion over land and tangi decisions, and the enactment of previous generational conflict that “people [had] forgotten the reasons why”. Participant absence was also reported to be more pronounced when significant people, particularly grandparents died. These whānau members had maintained participant connection, knowledge of whakapapa relationships and Māoritanga. However, their death precipitated a much greater disconnection, as Pāora described:

Through my college years I stayed with her [Nan], she stayed on a [urban] marae; they had housing there for kuia and kaumātua. So she stayed there, you know, so that kept me connected throughout my schooling years until she passed away. Yeah that was, that was my Māori gone, you know, my connection to that. I guess that may have been a time also where it got disconnected; you know someone pulled the power plug when my Nan passed away.

Alana also reiterated a similar experience shared to her by her mother when her grandparents passed away:

My mum talks about it being really like, you know her upbringing in a small rural town, you know, everything was, they were pōhara [poor] as, but they were real close. But then after her grandmother and my grandfather passed away, it was kind of, you’re on your own. They were fluent speakers in te reo, but never passed it down to my mum so a lot of the disconnection started around that time when the elders started passing on.

Similar to the death of significant whānau member’s relational break up within the nuclear whānau amplified isolation and separation for some participants, as Tui explained: “I wasn’t allowed to contact my dad the whole time. That was kind of hard.” For another participant accumulated loss of connection and trust within whānau made accessing support during crisis difficult, as Irene described:
the breakdown of not being able to connect with your family can bring on stresses and strains with your children, you know, when I think back to even myself when my marriage broke up I was so disconnected of not just my marriage breaking up, but from my own family because all of a sudden you are woman on your own with children.

In addition to the absence of close whānau to return home to, many participants also referred to competing urban priorities that inhibited their return home. Geographic distance, financial limitation, stretched resources and transportation issues increased the difficulty for a number of participants to get home at short notice. Many of the participants and whānau members they spoke about were constrained by their own obligations and responsibilities. For example, meeting the daily needs of their tamariki, as Alana described of her mother:

I think for her, it was just life, you know. She came up here [Auckland], she has [a lot of] children, you know, life, and I think it wasn’t a priority for her to go home. We just, it’s not a good reason, but it’s the only reason.

Generally, work and education commitments were dominant priorities. For some participants attendance at whānau, hapū and iwi events was difficult due to not receiving timely notice and not being able to get adequate time off work to travel, as Hone described:

My marae has hui . . . there’ll be something on Facebook two days before they’re having it, what they’re gonna do, and I can’t, I have to like have a process to go, to drive . . . hours to get there.

Another consequence to a lack of kanohi ki te kanohi contact expressed by some participants was a felt sense of not belonging. They feared that being raised ‘urban’ would impact on their ability to be accepted by hau kāinga whānau as Moana described:

I think like living up there is a completely different lifestyle to living in Auckland. Most of the time that I meet people who are Ngāpuhi they are like Auckland Ngāpuhi, you know. Like it’s really cool they are connected, but not everyone is. I think it must be hard in some ways for the people who have like the responsibility and have stayed. Like done all the work, to kind of continue to be engaged with the more Auckland individualistic way of living, you know, so I don’t know, how they would perceive that? How they would perceive the difference? I guess like whenever I have had involvement with [urban marae] people are always interested in people making
reconnections, but I don’t know how that would be perceived by people who are still up there.

While urbanisation had a significant impact on Māori communities post World War II, many Māori still seek out urban living. Rural Māori still move to the city for work, education and healthcare. A few participants had hopes to at some stage return to live on their hau kāinga, but most were content living in the city for now. This did not deter their desire for connection with whānau, hapū and iwi or for them to refer to their hau kāinga as ‘home’. However, the issue for most participants, like that of previous generations, was that people not returning home to their hau kāinga limited their ability to form and build meaningful relationships with whānau, hapū and iwi. The lack of close trusting relationships, and in some instances key relationships to go home to, alongside practical issues such as work constraints, and time “to see each other, and know each other reasonably well” limited the opportunity for meaningful relationships to develop. These dynamics reported to often perpetuate further disconnection.

**Abusive relationships.** A number of participants had experienced abuse within their whānau. Irrespective of being raised urban or rural, the presence of abusive relationships in the widest sense from rejecting and bullying type behaviour to emotional, physical and sexual abuse was a noticeable contributor to ongoing disconnection. Several participants spoke about the way in which alcohol had compromised the ability of their whānau to protect and nurture its members, as Hana recalled:

> Time and time again . . . alcohol was a huge, well I have to call it a dysfunction. Yeah, it wasn’t good for some of my family . . . There was a lot of abuse; I saw abuse, so that’s another factor . . . It was even bigger when they came home. It was like a big celebration, alcohol and parties all the time. Yeah, those sorts of things, parties, fighting.

Furthermore, whānau roles and tuakana-tēina responsibilities became obscured in the context of alcohol abuse, and as Hemi recalled did not always facilitate strong whānau cohesion:

> It was even to the extent that the kids were looking after the kids. The kids became older very quickly to look after the kids, that sort of thing. So that was pretty common . . . Yeah, um, I would, if I was to remember my holidays, you know where I used to go for holidays, alcohol was, you know, was there. And it was nice; to be with my cousins, but it was always nice to get home.
In addition, Te kaha recognised that early experiences of alcohol abuse had not facilitated sound leadership and had compromised the connection of successive generations to each other, and their whenua as he described:

The lead should have been coming from our uncles and aunties, but it didn’t . . . they can talk quite freely about a gang and what they used to do. You talk alcohol, oh yes; you’ll get another one who’ll talk alcohol. Those stupid conversations, nothing about the whenua, nothing about the homestead. We lost the homestead. That was a huge thing. Simply because they chose alcohol over trying to put money into help pay for the rates.

Similar and often connected with alcohol abuse, a number of participants described whānau violence as an intergenerational contributor to disconnection, as Jarod described of his grandfather:

I’ve heard many stories from my aunties about some of the abuse that happened to them, and they ended up just ‘gapping it’. You know, and taking off because of all the stuff that had been going on. And they wanted to, you know, start a new life pretty much. So there was that complete separation again.

Many of the participants, who described whānau violence in their whānau history, also described a break in connection with whānau, hapū and iwi for a number of generations. As Jarod further reported “we’ve had no connection whatsoever, and you know, again, that was about that violence and lots of stuff going on there, that my dad just wanted to shut out”. For some participants moving away had stopped the cycle of violence, and they themselves and/or their children had been violence free. However, although violence had stopped, the impact of such trauma had for some contributed to disconnection in a different way. Dave’s loss of connection with his whānau was no longer a direct result of physical violence and separation, but from his anger at the lack of protection that occurred from his wider whānau, hapū and iwi, particularly the continued silence that he experienced when he raised the issue of abuse within his whānau:

I was subject to physical abuse over [many] years but no one, there was no one there to take me out of that situation. There was no one there to stop him . . . we lived [within my iwi rohe], yeah. It could almost have been just down the road where my whānau, [were living] yeah, and they knew that my dad was violent . . . When I was older certain social interactions with people . . . triggered things from my past. It took
me a little while to realise that I wasn’t angry with people in the present, I was angry with people from my past . . . So I don’t want to be putting myself in a context where I am silencing myself, because I feel like I am putting myself back into that scene that caused me to, in a sense, begin to have this emotion, unprocessed thoughts.

Consequently, there were times when he had chosen to completely disconnect himself from all contact with his whānau, and consequently his hapū and iwi. In many of the situations where abuse was a key precipitant to disconnection the absence of safe processes to facilitate restoration of those relationships was noticeable, and often left unresolved for the next generation.

**Adolescent transitions.** Another disconnection point for some participants was adolescent transitions, through childhood and into young adulthood. According to developmental theory, autonomy, identity formation and peer acceptance are key tensions within adolescence (Erikson, 1950). Similar to Borell’s (2005) findings with rangatahi Māori living in South Auckland, some participants recognised in retrospect that their identity as Māori was for a period of time shaped by their peers and the communities that they lived in, rather than traditional whānau, hapū and iwi systems, as Alana described:

> I think, also another thought I had, was that, you know, how I became so, felt so different from probably whānau, hapū and iwi, was that growing up it was never a priority. And I think being raised in a neighbourhood, I guess, in a community which was predominantly Pacific Island. It’s not about being ashamed to be Māori; it was just there was no reason to kinda connect cos you weren’t the majority.

Pāora recognised that when he left school he was less interested in his Māori culture and more attracted to the cultural interests of his peer group:

> I wasn’t connected to Māori; I was connected to the American culture. So everything was girls, and money, and partying, and that lifestyle, so that was the culture that I knew very well, you know along with everyone else that was my age.

Despite his efforts to keep his own teenagers connected to their whakapapa identity, he recognised that they too were influenced by the world that their peers were immersed in “their connection is internet, that’s the culture; they live in the technology culture, that’s their culture for my kids at least, and for many other people as well.”

Participants who grew up in urban areas away from the protection of their whakapapa links and who had less identifiable Māori markers, such as fair skin or inability to understand
te reo Māori, were particularly vulnerable to the influence of their peer group and social environment. Peer rejection during adolescent years, combined with a devaluation of themselves as Māori and the absence of supportive whakapapa relationships perpetuated a lack of secure Māori identity, as Moana described of her father as a young person:

I know like growing up there [urban area] like his family was one of the few Pākehā looking families and, he talks about a time when he went to kapa haka, but got told to, like he wasn’t Māori . . . I think coz his experiences have been like, feeling quite early on in his life, that he wasn’t accepted as being Māori. I think that has made him quite negative.

In contrast, while living away from her hau kāinga, Ema retained knowledge of her iwi identity and whānau connection, but her sense of permission to live out her whakapapa identity was compromised by fear of peer rejection based on acceptance within a wider Māori identity, as she explained:

At school if I was like really keen to be involved with kapa haka but nobody knew my whānau, and looking really Pākehā, I didn’t feel comfortable being in that environment, you know, that’s probably just me, I don’t know, but at the same time kids can be a bit funny about that sort of stuff. You know, “like who is this Pākehā girl coming into the kapa haka” . . . I mean ideally as a kid, just gotten over that fear of not being accepted because what do you do when you are a kid when all you want to be is accepted. Yeah, you are much more influenced by that when you are a kid.

Hone grew up overseas and consequently being Māori was different to the experience of his peers. His parent’s attempts to keep him connected to his Māori identity only intensified his desire for disconnection:

I grew up [overseas], not around being Māori, even though my parents, sort of tried to implement it at home. But because it was different to what was going on in my normal world at school and all that sort of stuff, I didn’t really wanna know . . . I think my mum tried to take me to some kapa haka group . . . I felt really out of place because I couldn’t speak anything, you know, and all the other kids that were there, sort of had an understanding of what was going on.

In contrast, to Alana, Pāora, Moana, Ema and Hone, Jarod grew up within the rohe of some of his whānau, hapū and iwi. He described early connectedness as a whānau, but as he got older he drifted away from his whānau and began to spend more time with his friends:
I guess, culturally Māori background, both mum and dad were brought up Māori. And growing up, you know, we often did a lot of things together as a whānau . . . and after, well gosh, I think in my teenage years, kind of myself, personally, I was a bit of a loner, and drifted away a bit, you know, hung out with friends, and I guess that’s what kind of got me away from doing things with my family. . . And I’m not quite sure why it happened, just the fact that friends at the time, I seemed to have more value on my friends than I did on my family.

The overall theme of adolescent transition was for the most part motivated by developmental needs and priorities. Many of the adolescent tensions described by participants reflected transitional age and stage conflict, peer influence and development. However, nestled within this subtheme was for some a more prolonged disconnection brought about by an increased ability to assert independence and leave difficult circumstances, as Tama described:

I rarely, rarely saw my parents back then . . . coz I felt, even back then, that, having an education was important . . . I wanted to continue at school. And they [parents] decided that for the money that they could receive from the unemployment benefit that I would get it was better for the family if we had that extra money. . . I guess that was also part of the reason why I didn’t want to be around.

In some situations leaving home and separating themselves from whānau, hapū and iwi did result in greater opportunity, but for others this was not the case, as Hira described of her father:

It was getting abusive [at home] and he had to leave so he moved to Auckland and pretty much he faced the worst things that Māori, you know all the negative statistics: going to jail; being in a gang; living on the streets; living rough and all that kind of stuff.

Adolescence can be a turbulent time but for most teens this turbulence is temporary. However, adolescent transition can take on a trajectory of its own when combined with any number of the previously mentioned causes to disconnection. For some participants their withdrawal from whānau, hapū and iwi extended well into adulthood.

Summary

Participant disconnection did not occur in a vacuum. The causes of disconnection varied between and for participants, but most reflected a combination of historical and contemporary experiences that flowed between generations. Furthermore, participants
described a variety of points of disconnection often intertwined with each other. These included the devaluation of Māori identity which was closely associated with experiences of colonisation and discrimination; movement away from tribal areas for employment and education and general opportunity for themselves and their whānau meant that whānau did not return home. The absence of whānau kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) limited the opportunity for meaningful relationships to develop within immediate whānau but also wider whānau, hapū and iwi. In addition to these factors, abusive relationships particularly alcohol abuse and whānau violence undermined the safety and stability of whānau systems to nurture its members, and compounded the intergenerational cycle of disconnection. Adolescent transition into young adulthood with the influence of peer acceptance appeared to be a point of disconnection for some participants. However, for others the increased independence of adolescence offered an opportunity to leave difficult circumstances. With limited opportunity or desire to return, disconnection perpetuated to the next generation.

Theme 2: Experience of Disconnection: Alienation and Longing for Whakapapa

The second theme presented in the domain of disconnection was “alienation and longing for whakapapa”. In contrast to the previous theme which focused on causes, this second theme is related to the affective experience of disconnection. In relation to this theme, subthemes of ngākau mamae, and consequent loss of relationships, and loss of culture were identified.

Ngākau mamae. Takirirangi Smith’s (2013) description of ngākau mamae encapsulates many participant descriptions of the emotional, physical, spiritual and social experience of disconnection. Unlike other terms ascribed to the experience of disconnection, for example loss or grief, ngākau mamae also incorporates the injury to wairua, ihi (pride) wehi (awe) and mauri that occurs within the experience of disconnection. At its core it reflects the depth and breadth of cultural loss, trauma and disruption. It is expressed in a much more fluid and circular process, reflective of the pain and struggle of previous generations and located in a simultaneous loss of individual and collective identity, as Ria aptly described:

It feels like a grief and sadness because, and I think it’s mainly to do with that lack of understanding. Like reaching for something you can see but you can’t go any further, you're being pulled back. So yeah, just general confusion; like I don’t understand how the world can work like that, and why, why something like that could happen
[rejection of a Māori baby born to a Pākehā woman]. What good that possibly could have done for my grandfather who grew up without a dad and then it affected how he raised his children and how his children raised their children . . . what’s bad about it [having a Māori baby] you know? . . . I mean like my sadness happens, is really for my granddad who didn’t have a dad, whoever he was. Whether he was [non-Māori name] or [Māori name] from up the road, we don’t know his last name, and sad for those people too because they didn’t get to know their papa. Yeah that’s where; I think that’s where my sadness is.

Incorporated within the concept of ngākau mamae was the experience of pōuritanga and for many participants a feeling of whakamā or shame and fear that they would be considered inauthentic or not “good enough” to be Māori. Mere reported “I almost feel in some respects a bit of a fraud because I didn’t have any reo Māori, I didn’t really have the kind of connections with whānau that would be expected of a ‘real proper Māori.’” Alana also had similar thoughts, as she described her thoughts and fears about meeting members of her whānau, hapū and iwi as she reported:

Not being Māori enough, being too Pākehā-fied. Not being taken seriously. Not having that knowledge to connect me. Not having command of te reo. Just not being, yeah, I think, the hardest thing for me is feeling as though I’m not good enough to be in that world. It’s not being good enough, or, it’s not knowing enough and feeling like a try-hard.

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis whakapapa is identified as core to Māori identity. However, for some participants knowledge of their whakapapa was not available. Ria felt a strong connection to her Māori identity, but due to a closed arrangement surrounding the birth of one of her grandparents, she had almost no knowledge of the specifics of her Māori whakapapa. The reality of her loss when combined with the politics associated with being identified as Māori magnified her experience of feeling inauthentic, as she expressed:

It also feels very false to say oh I’m Māori, do you know what I mean? Like I feel very, but I would love to be able to say that, do you know what I mean, so it’s a weird, it’s a weird situation to be in? The same thing, I can like easily say oh I’ve got really, I’ve got a lot of [Yugoslavian] blood, and do you speak in [Yugoslavian], no?
And they go oh; okay well you're [Yugoslav]. But with Māoridom I feel, like I feel like such a fraud, yeah it’s quite yuck.

Similarly, Ariana and her siblings had been separated from their father’s whakapapa, the loss of relationship and consequently knowledge led to further feelings of shame and whakamā, as Ariana described of her sister:

She was brought up away from my Dad, but she had more contact than I did and she didn’t know anything about her whakapapa or anything. Yeah, she definitely said she felt ashamed, like stink about being Māori because she knew nothing about it, and she looks more Māori than I do.

Many participants expressed a loss of secure sense of identity as Māori, and in some instances a loss of perceived value as members of their hapū and iwi as Ema described:

A sense of identity in [myself], and also a sense of where [I] fit in the whānau and within the iwi . . . being able to give something back to the iwi I think, but you have to feel comfortable in that environment first. You have got to feel comfortable in your Māori identity to be involved in anything Māori, and I am not really any use to anyone until I can connect with that.

A sense of inauthenticity and displacement led some to subscribe to a “plastic Māori” identity, as Pāora explained:

I've been told that I'm a plastic Māori, I've been told I'm a plastic Māori and I own it, you know I don’t let it offend me. Yeah I am plastic, a plastic Māori in my opinion is someone who’s Māori but doesn’t live in te ao Māori i ngā wa katoa, all the time. So yeah that’s the definition of a plastic Māori, but I have Māori mannerisms, I have Māori characteristics, I have Māori features, I have Māori pronunciations, but I just can’t speak the language, so I'm neither here nor there, but I'm not the only one.

Closely aligned to shame and embarrassment, feelings of guilt were expressed in a loss of mana, particularly in relation to their whānau absence from whānau, hapū and iwi, as Hira described of her father:

I still think he has a profound sense of shame that he left, you know, and made some bad choices in life, and ended up with all these kids that he didn’t raise. I think it is really hard for him to reconnect, but yeah, it is really complicated.
Pāora also described a mixture of excitement, and happiness about a new opportunity to reconnect with his whānau, but his excitement was also tinged with what he described as a “flashback of disconnection” in that the whānau helping him had in a sense “kept the fires burning” (term used to refer to ahi kā who have maintained connection to their land), but his own immediate whānau had moved away and never gone back, as he explained:

> They said that they have wānanga and that his sons, which are my age; they're engaged with the marae. So they said plan it, go down and, you know go down for a weekend or something and get some schooling there, get schooled up on it, yeah. So basically the . . . family that still live there, are there, they're there, you know, they're still there. And there’s this guy from Auckland rocking down, plastic as, you know, that’s like me, yeah I still feel plastic. But then I also, at the same time I felt the disconnection as well, coz I got told, yeah, they all moved away from home, uncles and aunties, and my mum and that, and my Nan. So they moved away from home, and they never went back, and they only went back for those tangis, so that’s, at the same time I got a flashback of the disconnection, you know . . . Yeah they talked about it, oh no, yeah they all moved away.

In summary, incorporated within the experience of ngākau mamae were a number of emotions such as a deep sense of pōuritanga, whakamā, shame, confusion, guilt, regret and a sense of inauthenticity which could be likened to a perceived loss of mana to stand within their respective whānau, hapū and iwi. These feelings were expressed in a range of ways by participants, and experienced in the individual, collective and intergenerational lives of participant whānau, hapū and iwi. Overall the experience of ngākau mamae restricted the ability of participants to fully embrace their Māori identity and restore ihi, wehi, mauri and a sense of mana in who they are as Māori. From a Māori perspective this is a devastating place to be positioned, particularly if there is no or limited opportunity for restoration (Reidy, 2014).

**Loss of relationships.** The consequences and mechanisms of ngākau mamae are closely intertwined, and at times difficult to differentiate. Loss of relationships was experienced by participants as both a cause and consequence of disconnection, transferring from one generation to the next generation, as Hana illustrated:

> Yeah, the disconnection was my generation and all of us cousins. Yeah, not knowing or hadn’t seen each other for years and not knowing all the siblings that are younger
than us. You know, and then there was the disconnection of our kids. It’s filtered through.

While some participants were comfortable with a superficial relationship with their whānau, hapū and iwi, other participants expressed a deeper longing for themselves and their children to be connected to wider whānau relationships, as Alana described:

I wish I could take my little one back home, like so she can play with them, you know, play with cousins. I have no cousins that’s the sad thing. I have no cousins that are my age, that I know . . . and I think it would’ve been nice to have had cousins to grow up with, you know, to go on holidays back home. That’s what I would’ve liked, you know, to spend time at the marae. To learn about my history, not have to find out about my history through a book that actually is not written properly . . . I wish I could give that to my girl, but because we don’t have anywhere to go, even now. So, no we didn’t get to go back home. It sucks.

Other participants experienced a loss of ‘being known’ to their wider whānau, hapū and iwi as Tane recalled:

Everybody that was there was whānau, you know. But because I had been disconnected for so long, nobody knew me. I walked in there and they didn’t have any idea who I was. And vice versa. I knew a few familiar faces, but I didn’t know their names, you know, it’s been a long time since I saw them.

Many participants identified that disconnection had disrupted their relationships and relational loss was a consequence to disconnection. It was a key feature to their disconnection and limited their ability to rebuild meaningful relationships with wider whānau, hapū and iwi, as Donte explained:

Yeah it makes it difficult, even for me, and I'm pretty outgoing, and pretty used to stepping out of my comfort zone in cultural situations. It makes it a bit challenging for myself because when I go back to my marae I don’t have any close whānaunga, like first cousins, or aunties, or uncles who are, have been living at our papakāinga, or who are immediately related to someone living at our papakāinga. So because I don’t have that level of connection, it’s a little bit more difficult to go and just meet people and kōrero with members of my hapū . . . Yeah it has made it difficult to reconnect.

In an ideal situation, when one person in a whānau is struggling, other whānau members may be able to fill the gaps and offer support. A number of participants recalled that their
grandparents or parents had at times supported other whānau members in crisis. This commonly occurred in the form of whāngai arrangements which had facilitated ongoing connection of tamariki whāngai to their iwitanga. However, for a number of participants who were now separated from wider whānau, hapū and iwi the absence of strong relationships meant that it was unlikely that such systems of support would now be accessed in times of crisis, as Alana reiterated:

Just say if it was having my children uplifted, and then the rōpū kinda came in, the iwi came in, nah. It wouldn’t feel right, unless I had that connection with them, you know.
It would just be like handing over, handing over my babies to a stranger.

In summary, for many participants irrespective of cause, the experiences of disconnection led to a loss of relationships with wider whānau, hapū and iwi, as well as whakapapa and broader cultural identity. Without opportunity to form and develop relationships, or allow for the natural mending of relationship ruptures, participants spoke of being “lost” and “unknown” to each other. With each successive generation relationships with wider whānau, hapū and iwi appeared to become less supportive and more superficial.

**Loss of culture.** As described earlier the experience of disconnection was inextricably linked to a loss of hapū and iwitanga, alongside a much broader Māori culture. Furthermore, some participants were unfamiliar with the initiatives found within hapū and iwi systems. With regard to questions about hapū and iwi leadership, as Leila commented “I wouldn’t have a clue, yeah, I really don’t know”. This is likely reflective of the unfamiliarity some participants had with how to navigate the wider systems of hapū and iwi leadership structure, but also a loss of participation in hapū and iwi affairs and culture. The ability to speak and understand te reo Māori was an area of loss for all participants including those who were not participants from te reo Māori classes. This loss made it difficult for some whānau members to participate in their whānau, hapū and iwi environments, as Ema spoke of her mother’s experience:

She will go to the marae and there will be a whaikōrero happening and she will be like “well I don’t understand any of this”. She doesn’t speak any Māori and she feels completely left out.

Alongside the loss of te reo Māori many participants spoke of a loss of tikanga knowledge, as Donte commented “I feel sad that [tikanga] was lost for a while, and I suppose I wonder
whether, you know, I would have less adjustment to make to te ao Māori if that had been maintained more throughout the generations. This loss of knowledge was echoed by Moana:

[It] just feels like a lot of loss of knowledge. I think you know when I do go to things that are like Māori, it’s like I feel like there is a huge gap not only not knowing where I am from, but to actually go there and feel like I can, yeah, have those connections. It’s just not knowing stuff not knowing tikanga Māori.

Many participants grappled with sudden gaps in information often in the space of one generation. Losses included the absence of whakapapa kōrero about whānau, hapū and iwi history and whenua; the transmission of te reo Māori within whānau, and tikanga practices. For some participants these unique characteristics of their whānau appeared to be present in one generation and then abruptly gone in the next. This left many participants confused about what had happened to their whānau as Pāora described:

I’ve seen it on paper, our lineage, you know, where our first tīpuna came off the [iwi waka]. And that’s where everyone comes underneath. Some here, and then boom, there’s my Koro’s parents. And then there’s my Koro . . . out of a chain full of tīpuna, and then there’s my family, and that’s the disconnection, there’s no page. Like it’s almost yeah that’s where the branch has snapped from the tree kind of thing.

A number of participants were also cautious about reconnection and the gaps in knowledge that they had. This led them to quietly find out information about themselves before fully engaging with whānau members, as Chris described:

I had a lot of fears of judgement about not knowing, and those were sort of validated, that they get validated by people. You know, when you run into them, ‘oh you don’t even know where you’re from’, yeah? And that sort of puts you off a bit . . . So then I start doing my secret, like looking for things on my own, and not asking out loud . . . I guess it isolates you a bit from asking others, yeah.

As a consequence of parental experiences of disconnection, a number of participants were unable to access cultural guidance from their parents, as Keita described:

I’m so excited, and then I think, oh my god, they’re not gonna like ask me stuff or talk to me in Māori and I’m not gonna have a clue. I’m gonna look at my mother and as much as she likes to make out that she is Māori and she’ll say the odd word, it’s all pretence, you know. So she, again, just because she was I guess separated from her whānau from an early age, it’s yeah, she doesn’t know a great deal.
Underlying gaps in knowledge was also a loss of lived values and principles aligned to tikanga Māori. As discussed earlier processes to restore relationships were not present in whānau systems disconnected as a result of abusive relationships. As Dave commented:

But for Māori one talks and everyone listens and you thoroughly get it out and then you sit down and someone else gets up and talks it’s a very slow process, but everyone gets heard. That wouldn’t happen in our family because it is not part of our upbringing . . . in Māori whānau I have seen individuals; there are senior individuals that mediate in these sort of situations. We don’t have that we won’t have that, there won’t be that . . . It maybe could be better and if we were connected to extended whānau, there might potentially be elders who could mediate that, but there is not.

A loss of Māori cultural values, lived tikanga and leadership within whānau was reported often by participants. Pāora associated this to a loss of direction and meaning as he reported:

It is actually because I see a lot of whānau and friends that have gone the wrong way, have lost themselves without even actually knowing themselves. You know without even knowing who they are, but they're lost, and I can say that from just recent, you know catch ups with family members, that they’ve told me that, you know other family members are lost, drugs, alcohol, mental issues . . . They have to, and I think that if they were connected they'd get that strength, they'd find strength, yeah. Coz that’s, you know I speak from experience and I've actually seen it a lot, it’s happening everywhere, to a lot of people, a lot of good people as well. So not just people that are bad to the bone, people that were once good, but now are lost . . . plastic Māori, they're all plastic Māori, yeah.

Loss of cultural knowledge often left participants uncertain about their right to identify as Māori or as mentioned earlier too whakamā to walk in Māori circles. A number of unhelpful binaries related to identity were present and highlighted a struggle between authentic and inauthentic. For example, “real Māori or plastic Māori”, “urban Māori or rural Māori”, and in some ways “disconnected or connected Māori”. As Pāora explains: “it’s a, you know two sides to the coin and, you know you can be put in a place where you feel like you're connected, but you're not, you're not, you know”. Participant descriptions of themselves as inauthentic often lead to a struggle to find a place to belong and be accepted for who they were as individuals. For example, Alana reported feeling caught between worlds and not belonging in either:
I’ve always felt like, you know, walking in between two worlds. So from that disconnection to that, you know, trying to reconnect, and I felt that like I don’t fit in either . . . I’ve always been that one that kinda sits on the fence; I’m not sure which way I should go. There are some things in te ao Māori that I, you know, that I don’t agree with. Well actually, it’s not so much the Māori world; it’s more with, yeah, with probably hapū and iwi. And that I don’t agree with them. There’s the other side where I’m like, I don’t wanna be a part of that other world. So I’ve kinda always felt like I just kinda sit on the fence.

Summary

The loss of a lived experience of whakapapa for many participants was deeply personal, and best described through a Māori epistemology such as ngākau mamae. At a surface level participant experiences of disconnection may be described as grief and loss. However, their descriptions of their experiences flowed between that of their own and the experiences of previous generations. It reflected the depth of spiritual, relational and cultural loss associated with a loss of whakapapa and all that it encompasses past and present. This loss transcended generations and left in some cases a sense of alienation and longing for whakapapa. For some this was expressed in a state of pōuritanga and a deep sense of whakamā and inadequacy or loss of mana as Māori. This experience left a number of participants feeling on the outside, or superficially connected to their whakapapa and potential whānau, hapū and iwi systems of support.

Theme 3: Enduring Threads of Connection

As discussed in the previous theme, the experience of ngākau mamae, loss of relationships and loss of culture was a significant aspect of the experience of disconnection. However, for some participants even when disconnection was the dominant experience, enduring threads of connection were also present. Irrespective of participant knowledge about these connections, they often referred to these threads as “always been there”, and for many had withstood the loss and breakdown of relationships. In respect to this theme, subthemes of wairuatanga (spirituality) whakapapa kōrero (unique whānau knowledge and practices) and whenua were present.

Wairuatanga. Akin to a Māori understanding of wairuatanga, a number of participants recognised that despite not having full knowledge of Māori spirituality, they
were connected and had always been connected to the wider spiritual world of their tīpuna, as Anahera described:

> When it comes to our wairua our spiritual being even though we don’t always understand what it’s all about, it’s there . . . in the long run when I thought I was disconnected from my Māori side I wasn’t.

While this type of connection was not present for all participants, many did acknowledge a strong sense of the presence of wairua in their journey of reconnection. This connection to wairua appeared to transcend the many causes of disconnection. For example, Ria did not know her whakapapa, and due to unknown parentage, the task of reconnection to a specific whānau, hapū and iwi would be difficult. However, Ria described a spiritual connection to te ao Māori which was beyond her experience of disconnection and different to her experience of reconnection with her non-Māori whānau, as she shared:

> I think also when you go to certain places that have that, are tapu, or have strength to them. It’s like the first time I went up to Cape Reinga [Māori understand this to be the place where the wairua of a person departs at death), you just feel all encompassed by this sense of like things have really happened here . . . There’s a drawing within it for me to understand more about the culture and learn the language. I have a sense of guilt that I don’t know more, because . . . there’s a, like there’s like a magnet. And it’s funny one’s going one way and one’s going over here, coz like my non-Māori side on my mum’s side is really, really messed up and interesting as well. But it’s not as much of a spiritual thing; it’s more of a head thing.

As alluded to in the above quote one of the aspects of wairuatanga was a sense of being drawn toward an intentional point of connection, as Donte described:

> It’s always been there, and I might not have recognised it as wairuatanga as such. But always felt that connection, and I guess that’s wairua. I felt a yearning to know more, to learn more, to meet people, yeah.

Intertwined within wairua, a number of participants spoke about being connected and guided by tīpuna and deceased whānau. These whānau helped them to make decisions and provided strength and facilitated greater understanding and direction during various stages of reconnection. For example, Mere spoke often about receiving guidance from her Nan; Anahera spoke about how her parents appeared to her to console her when she felt disconnected; Wiremu also described being guided by his deceased whānau, as he illustrated:
I do believe in life after death, I do believe our whānau are always with me. I believe in kehua, ghosts, you know, cos certain things happen for me. And for things to be happening, all the good things to be happening, yeah, I know that I’ve had a number of bad things. But for all the good things to be happening with me, that tells me that obviously my kaumātua, my whaea, my mother and father are actually looking after me. They pointed me in the right direction.

Participants who connected with wairua spoke of these experiences relatively openly; possibly due to unspoken cues and interactions as a Māori researcher that indicated a shared understanding of wairuatanga. However, reflected in their conversations were also words that indicated some hesitancy, for example, opening with statements such as “this’ll sound funny” and ending with comments such as “I don’t know if that makes any sense” or “do you know what I mean?” These comments may suggest that participants were cautious about how they described their experiences of wairua, and raised a question about how comfortable they would be if they were to articulate to others less familiar with the nuances of wairuatanga. These points will be raised further in the discussion section of this thesis.

While wairua connection was important to those who described them, not all participants were familiar with the concept of wairua. For some the recognition that wairua was part of their reconnection process came later in their journey, and for some were ‘sparked’ by particular experiences within te ao Māori that were spiritual in nature. For example, Te Kaha visited his marae for the first time to attend his mother’s tangi. In contrast to other participants who had become further disconnected as a result of the death of senior whānau members, Te Kaha regarded wairua as having played a role in his reconnection, as he described:

They had the tokotoko [carved stick passed to each speaker signalling it is their turn to speak], and they talk about, they tell the stories about mum. I could hear them telling stories about school and things that they got up to. I found that really, you know, and having all the ancestors around you, as well, I found that really spiritual, at least for me. There was something about it. This is where I am supposed to be sort of thing. It was great learning for me. Yeah and I think that is one of the reasons I wanted to learn more about te reo, so I can understand what everyone is saying, except ‘kia ora’. Yeah, even digging the hole [grave]; there was something around that as well. We were taken away from the family and the rest of the process and we went up there [to dig grave] . . . I guess being in the urupā as well, a lot of people
around you. The process there is we go back and we get fed first before everyone else. That’s when we see everyone again, like before we become noa. I guess we were tapu for a while after that and washing in our awa after all that stuff. Quite liberating spiritually, you know, for me.

In addition, to tangi a number of participants spoke of visits to urupā and for many participants urupā were places of connection with whānau, hapū and iwi, despite relational and physical disconnection. Keisha visited her whānau urupā before she started to rebuild relationships with living whānau, as she described:

I just went mainly to visit, because my grandmother had been buried up in the urupā. I kind of got a little bit of information from going up there visiting the gravesite and the whānau buried around her . . . yeah, just having, I don’t know, just connecting with the land and understanding that this is where I am from. That was important for me first and foremost, and I guess making connections with the people will be the next step.

Alana also identified her urupā as a place for connection and support for non-living whānau, as she explained:

I had this conversation with my mum when we were down there at the tangi. And it was about where do you wanna be buried when you die. And she said, “I don’t wanna be buried in the urupā”. And I said, “Why? That’s where everyone”. She said “because you guys would never come and see me”. That hurt, cos I was like, well I don’t want you lying at the cemetery with like thousands of other people who you don’t know. Rather, even in death, I’d rather have you surrounded by whānau.

Wairuatanga was expressed by participants in varying ways. For some it was a sense of being guided by deceased tīpuna, for others it was a sense of “being drawn”, and for yet others it was a deeper level of connection found in urupā and an ongoing sense of whānau connection with those who had died. It was often beyond the words, and descriptions of participants, but experienced as liberating. No matter the type of wairua experience, wairua appeared to anchor participants to a sense of ongoing connection despite their disconnection.

**Whakapapa kōrero.** Despite loss of knowledge, for some participants whakapapa kōrero or whānau discourses of identity (T. Smith, 2000) had endured disconnection. This was evident as participants began to reconnect and rebuild relationships with their whānau, hapū and iwi based on a shared whakapapa. An aspect of the reconnection process that was
pleasantly surprising and reassuring for some participants was knowledge that they had not been forgotten, despite their absence through the generations, as Keisha described:

I went to a hui and learnt so much there. I didn’t even know any of these people and they all knew who I was somehow. They were like there are lots of people wondering what happened to [us]. That was really overwhelming to find out . . . Well, I guess because we were brought up separate I kind of thought they didn’t know we existed or if they did, why didn’t they try and find out where we were or whatever, but now that I am older I understand that that would have been really hard, but yeah it was quite overwhelming to see this really amazing group of people, my own whānau really. They just knew, they could count me back generations, and I was like I didn’t know any of this stuff. It was so cool, thank you. Like kind of placed me right back to the marae, the whānau I am from.

For some participants, depending on when disconnection had occurred, the memory of deceased whānau members had also been kept alive. Wiremu recalled the time he first visited one of his marae:

One of the old Koroua knew who I was, and I stopped and I turned around. Oh okay, then I thought, wow. And I’d just got out of the car, someone knows who I am. And then she gave me a hug, and she looked at my eyes, as the old Koroua do . . . and before we went back to the marae, we ended up having, as you do in our Māori world, whakawhānaungatanga, got to know her a bit. And then I heard a few stories about my mum and dad, how dad used to come to the area . . . And after, when we were having something to eat, and the old Koro said, I went to school with your dad. I remember your dad. And a guy said, oh yes, I remember your mum, and you know, and your uncles and aunties, you know. And it was just nice to hear those stories and think about them.

In addition to whakapapa relationships, the retention of enduring whakapapa kōrero and tikanga enabled some participants to anchor themselves in the history of their unique whakapapa. Ema’s whānau had maintained an iwi specific practice (not named due to being identifiable). It had provided opportunity for her to maintain her whakapapa identity in relationship to her iwitanga and wider Māori identity when all other practices had been lost, as she alluded to in the following quote:
I don’t know if even, you know, at this point if we would have even recognised ourselves as Māori, you know, I think it would have been to that extent. I mean the language is lost, the traditions are lost, and you don’t look Māori.

Huriana had identified her connection to her iwi through an iwi specific whakataukī [proverb] that connected her spiritually and innately to her tribal river, as she described:

I can still feel it [depth of connection] when they say ‘ko au te awa, ko awa te au’ [I am the river, the river is me]. It’s right, because I am the river while you are there and the river is me and when we got flipped out of the bloody waka it was hello tīpuna want to meet you in person.

Keisha also described connection to her iwi history through iwi specific pūrākau that she found in her school library. This occurred long before she was able to form relationships with her whānau, hapū and iwi:

When I found that story I didn’t know anything about anything, but just being able to connect with that one story, that one person, that one ancestor from ages ago, she became like my idol and inspiration really. So I think there is some benefit from just exploring Māori stories . . . I think they can be really powerful . . . Yeah, powerful representations of those of who we are. I think I just appreciated her mana, and she was respected for just stepping up. Yeah, and I guess it became an inspiration I can see now how I have stepped up to do things and that kind of resonates with my life.

Anahera spoke of the importance of waiata and mōteatea to keep alive the stories of the past, and keep whānau connected to their history, as she explained:

Regardless what the history was. It may not have been a nice one, you know, whether it was through European fighting, or the fights of the wars, but then there were the fights of the tribes, so again, you still need that whakapapa there, you still need that kōrero there to say well this is how it happened. Otherwise you would never be able to pass it on. There would be nothing to talk about and the best example, is when you hear something like ‘Te Wano’ [referring to a mōteatea that laments the death of Te Wano a Waikato-Tainui chief following the loss of his whenua] you know, looking back you know where did they come from really? If it wasn’t for that [mōteatea] those people wouldn’t be able to say these are what our tipuna did, and this is where he died and this is what it meant to him.
In summary, in contrast to the experience of feeling unknown to whānau, hapū and iwi, some participants recognised that they had not been forgotten. They had been remembered in whakapapa kōrero about their parents, grandparents and tīpuna many generations back. Despite disconnection, some participants also described connection to particular tikanga practices, and to iwi specific whakataukī, pūrākau, and waiata. One participant was fortunate to have had a grandparent who recognised the importance of retaining particular traditions to ensure its survival, not just for her whānau, but the iwi as a whole. This had maintained threads of whānau connection despite widespread loss of other aspects of their iwi identity.

**Whenua.** For many participants, building relationships with whānaungā also meant building relationships with the whenua, as Hana commented “the reconnect is to get us back to our whenua that was the key”. Despite the absence of relationships, and for some the absence of land holdings, many participants expressed a desire to connect with geographic aspects of their whakapapa. As mentioned earlier Tane did not feel ‘known’ by his whānaunga, but he did feel connected to his whenua. Similar to wairua many indicated a sense of belonging to a particular area that had endured disconnection. This occurred in the recognition of whānau names on streets, haerenga (journey) by waka (canoe) on their awa and for some walking the whenua itself. Alana described the significance of being able to finally walk on her whenua:

> I have always felt like, even when I was growing up, I felt this connection to the land and stuff. Understanding my ancestors are part of who I am. I always thought that, but I didn’t know how to express it because I didn’t know about the culture, and um and that, yeah it was really cool to be able do that.

Similarly, Donte also experienced the strength of connection to his whenua, as he described:

> Walking along the . . . river and looking up at all the maunga, the soaring peaks around me and going wow this is where my ancestors walked and, you know. Feel like I'm not only walking amongst maunga, walking amongst my ancestors, these maunga . . . And so there’s a sense of that real history there and a connectedness to it. Being a person that feels a strong connection with the natural world going to a wilderness area that my ancestors had walked through was a really powerful thing for me.
Geographic locations and environments that reflected a deep connection of generations of participants whānau, hapū and iwi to their whenua supported some participants to reconnect not just physically but spiritually to the history of their people.

**Summary**

While disconnection was a dominant experience some participants recognised in retrospect that they had always been connected to whānau, hapū and iwi, despite their feeling of disconnection. This was evident by their reference to wairuatanga, whakapapa kōrero, and whenua. Those that spoke of wairua expressed a genuine connection to the spiritual aspect of their identity that had in a sense guided and drawn them toward reconnection. Whakapapa kōrero linked some participants to a specific group of people across time, and to unique whakapapa kōrero and practices that had intentionally been kept alive to maintain a form of connection. The importance of whenua was also evident and this anchored participants to particular environmental points of connection. All these threads of connection had in a sense endured separation and they had been remembered and maintained by the collective, while participants had been absent.

**Theme 4: Active Turning Toward Connection with Whānau, Hapū and Iwi**

In this next section, the theme focus changes to the process of reconnection. In this section three themes are presented: active turning toward connection with whānau, hapū and iwi, dealing with difficult dynamics, and tūrangawaewae: a place to stand. All participants had experienced disconnection but had since actively reconnected with whānau, hapū and iwi. Reconnection for most participants was not a linear pathway, but rather a fluid process with periods of disconnection and periods of connection. These occurred in their relationships with whānau, hapū, and iwi, and for some Māori culture in general. Many participants described periods of high motivation and eagerness to engage, and periods of disinterest and reluctance to be contacted by whānau, hapū and iwi members. Consequently, participants described times in their life when they were ready to connect and times when they were not ready to connect, as Jarod summarised:

> People are at different places in their life. Some people are ready for it, some people aren’t. And I believe that, you know, two years, three years ago, I was ready to start, because before that I didn’t want to know anything about Māori. I didn’t know anything about speaking Māori. And growing up, you know, Māori, were a bit shocked as to why I didn’t want to learn, but because I’d been separated I guess, for
such a long time, and I’d created this whole world around me, I’m not really surprised. Taking a while, to connect, yeah, but you know. I guess my advice is just that people are where they are at the moment, and some may never want to change, but every now and then you’ll get someone who will.

In this first theme active turning toward connection with whānau, hapū and iwi, four subthemes were identified: cautious entry and initial contact, re-establishing access to whānau, hapū, iwi systems of support, social media termed an upgraded kumara vine, and the final subtheme rebuilding identity with whānau, hapū, and iwi through broader Māori community. These subthemes appeared to influence when a participant decided to connect, and the level of connection they desired, and for some when they pulled back from connection.

**Cautious entry and initial contact.** As mentioned earlier the analyses showed that loss of information, knowledge and relationships were part of the experience of disconnection. Many participants spoke of “not knowing where to start”, and when combined with a range of conflicted thoughts and emotions first encounters were somewhat fragile for some participants. Several participants made their first contact with their whānau, hapū and iwi through administrative people such as Facebook administrators, or rūnanga receptionists. The conversations they had with these people were pivotal in either an ongoing reconnection process, or a break in that process. Donte described the importance of his first phone interaction with his rūnanga:

> I think there’s been a level of encouragement of everyone that I've spoken to. And as Māori we value our whakapapa and I think one of the first times was talking to someone on the phone. And who would have thought that talking to someone you hadn’t met, or you might not have met on the phone, could be such a powerful thing. But cos I was ringing up to ask for my pepeha and she understood why and that’s whakapapa, so it’s a powerful thing. And so when I learnt that, and I was really, really grateful for it and I think she understood how grateful I was.

A common factor for participants who wanted to rebuild relationships with whānau, hapū and iwi was the degree of time and energy that they had to negotiate “the minefield” of relationships, and the first step toward reconnection required significant courage in the face of uncertain relational dynamics, as Ariana described:
I suppose what made it hard for me and sometimes it still does make it hard to go back to [marae name] is the fact that not knowing, not knowing I know it is my whānau there, but it is not knowing the full outcome of [treatment by whānau] you know. I know if they have a wānanga, if it is done right where I can understand and take it in; with the understanding that these are some of the things that happened and why they happened, I’ll be happy. It’s just making that first step in getting there feeling my way through.

For some participants, their decision to reconnect had potential relational risk, as one participant described:

It was really affecting my mental health, not knowing . . . so that was pretty rough having to face that, being quite scared, whether she would cut me off or something, just for going out there and exploring it. It is still a point of conflict, but she is pretty accepting of it these days.

In the broad range of experiences, many participants reported a number of dialectical tensions that created unsettledness. For example, Leila experienced both excitement and unsettledness, and thoughts of not needing acceptance and wanting acceptance, as she described:

That kind of surprises me a little bit, because to somebody like me who’s really independent, I kind of have been bought up on, ‘I don’t need acceptance from other people’. But this really is quite a journey in that, you know, it’s something that I just don’t know anything about, and it is important that I get accepted. Which goes against the grain for me? Yes it is, it is kind of unsettling, and wow.

For some a desire for connection and at the same time a desire for disconnection was a common experience. At times this led to both ambivalence and avoidance. For example, Sophia desired meaningful connection, but previous unsuccessful attempts to reconnect had led her to feel ambivalent about reconnecting again as she painfully described:

I’m not too sure if I want to have a relationship with that side. I did. . . when they got back in touch, cos my dad’s always been off and on, like with contact . . . I was having a relationship more with my grandparents, and I wanted that. And at the time, my grandparents, you know, same thing. They just, all talk, you know, say oh we’re gonna do this differently, my mokopuna . . . [they] took us for a walk around the land up by the marae and stuff. And it just felt right, it felt right, like I was home . . . and then that was just over and done with . . . I think there was also, my father and his
broken promises that hurt too much. And I just thought, well if you can’t be bothered, then why should I? That was really sad . . . you want us to be a whānau, you want us to reconnect, and you can’t follow through, you know. So that’s an obstacle in itself, is my relationship with my father, because ultimately at the end of the day, me reconnecting with my tribe is going to have to involve my father being a part of that process.

In addition, some participants felt pulled between their own needs and that of their whānau, with some perceiving that the decisions they had made might not be understood, as Ema communicated:

I want to make it a priority to get back in touch with the family here, but do they see it as well, why weren’t you here before? Why is it important to you now?

Mere had been given a tipuna name, and she felt pressure to live up to the expectations that she would carry the same attributes as her tipuna, as she communicated “I guess I felt a certain pressure by that, I couldn’t live up to that pressure”. Consequently she didn’t enjoy whānau events and limited her contact with that side of her whānau.

When considering the rebuilding of relationship in the context of ongoing negative whānau dynamics, some participants were also fearful that they would be “drawn away” from things that had supported them to be well. They did not want to be entangled in previously harmful patterns of whānau interaction, but at the same time they wanted to pursue connection for their children. This was particularly salient for those who had been disconnected as a result of abusive whānau relationships, as one participant explained:

I guess my fears would be that, this is just for me, would be that I would be drawn away from the things and the people that matter to me now. . . And if I reconnect to that side, being my past family life, cousins, relatives, aunts, uncles, hapū, iwi, that might drag me down [violence, drug and alcohol use]. . . But in saying that, that’s me, and not my kids. I would love them to be able to connect in some way, there is hope for them, and I’m just not quite sure about me.

In addition, to a desire for both connection and disconnection, “fitting in” with their respective whānau groups was sometimes a barrier. As mentioned earlier a perceived sense of difference limited some participants from feeling accepted within their whānau group. However, these differences were not exclusive to urban living. They commonly occurred
with regard to a perceived lack of cultural knowledge and competence, and socioeconomic, lifestyle, and education differences, as Wiremu described:

Cos we were always, because we had, we had our own food and work on the farm, and dad had a really nice car, we were sort of looked at as as the upper class, you know. And I always took cut lunch to school . . . I stopped that, what’s the word I’m looking for, that, I’m better than you sort of attitude. You know, cos truth be known, I thought I was, you know. Because I didn’t, I had more than what they had. And you know, I still had my mum and dad, I still had everything, and I could do things they couldn’t do. But, when dad passed away, it sort of really changed my whole, I had a paradigm shift.

In summary, for many participants, the initial hurdle was making contact with whānau, hapū and iwi and navigating their way through gaps in information. Initial contact people were critically important in facilitating connection to whānaunga and a pathway forward. Furthermore, encouragement from other whānau fuelled increased enthusiasm and excitement during the initial stages of reconnection. Individual adjustments, tensions between desires for connection and disconnection required a high level of psychological processing. This required energy, time and a willingness to be open to relationship, alongside a tolerance for moments of unsettledness and uncertainty. While whakapapa was the base from which participants formed new relationships, many participants entered these relationships cautiously in the initial stages of reconnection. Some indicated that they were at a time in their life when they were ready for connection and some were not. This occurred irrespective of the length of the time they had started to actively reconnect, and more related to the number of interactional dilemmas they had to negotiate. For participants where abuse was part of their whānau experience this process was more complex.

Re-establishing access to whānau, hapū and iwi systems of support. The process of reconnecting with whānau, hapū and iwi involved many layers. The different aspects of these systems were more accessible to some participants than other aspects. As participants spoke about their initial process of rebuilding relationships with whānau, hapū and iwi a number spoke about individual whānau members who were considered natural resources within their whānau, as Wiremu described:

The first thing I did, because one of my nieces when mum was alive, she stayed with mum all the time. And mum used to tell her all the stories. And so, a natural resource
was my niece. And she’d actually given me contact people to contact, and she’d actually given me this book . . . She just studied our family tree and that’s all she did. And some of the connections were just unbelievable. But it wasn’t until then that I discovered who I was, where I’d come from.

Similarly, Ema was able to access key people within her whānau who helped to bridge her connection, as she described:

I am at the beginning of my journey. Yeah, trying to get back in touch. I think a lot of that has been through my cousin because he knows all the whakapapa and family history and he has documented it and everything and is really involved in that . . . Yeah so I went down, like I have been there seen it all and heard a couple of the stories and not been that interested to know about it until I went down, and I told my granddad “show me” “show me how I fit in here and who all these people are”. You know who is? He was obviously super stoked that I was interested and gave me all these books to read, and stuff. So it is a nice feeling to go back down and feel like I could connect with it again.

Many participants began their initial process of reconnection on their own with one or two key contact people. Hone spoke about an auntie who “hung around at the marae and told [him] who everyone was on the wall” in the wharepuni. In contrast, Hana’s process of reconnection began with a number of her whānau. They were very purposeful about their process; they planned wānanga, surveyed their whānau reconnection needs, raised funds and developed their own resources and support. The success of their reconnection process was because as a whānau they shared a common kaupapa and purpose - with clear objectives, as she explained:

But in terms of us reconnecting together, my cousins, it was about seeing who the key person is within that family. Now, yeah, it’s seeing who the key person is, and whether we have them buying in, and we did. We did with; there were six lines at the first wānanga. And they were key people. So our job from the first wānanga was to connect with each other, build that rapport, get tight, and get really, I mean really, really tight, and then we go out and we feed out. Facebook was really good, because all that was wānanga, wānanga, wānanga. And multiple generations coming up now, um, we have a whakapapa book, which can be handed down, to the next generation.
Yeah. And everybody has got one. So now they know who they are and where they come from, and karakia, waiata and yeah. And a bit of history, of our iwi. Naturally for many participants whānau relationships required more emotional energy and negotiation, but at another level many participants also made attempts to reconnect with the broader systems of much wider whānau, hapū and iwi, and te ao Māori in general. Many participants interchangeably used the term whānau to refer to immediate family and wider whānau, alongside hapū and iwi whānau who were connected through a shared whakapapa. Many valued a connection with “actual whānau” members (in the broadest sense) who were further removed from their immediate whānau, as Leila commented:

It was positive response, oh that’s great, yeah come on down, we’ll help you with this journey and kia kaha, all of that kind of thing. I was like, yay, and that’s what excites me. Yeah, being helped along the journey by actual whānau.

The process of whakawhānaungatanga extended the network of relationships for many participants. While it was acknowledged that learning pepeha was not always easy, a number of participants recommended that others begin their reconnection journey by learning their pepeha “know your waka, your maunga, your awa, and the rest will follow”. The sharing of pepeha through mihimihi in different contexts such as te reo Māori classes facilitated connection to other whānaunga that a few participants had not met, and in wider whānau contexts it facilitated a much deeper level of whānaungatanga or connection with whānau, hapū and iwi than they had previously had, as Donte described:

When I'm with my whānaunga and when I'm with, you know at a hui, a wānanga or something. And you can just feel the manaakitanga, and you can feel that people value and respect each other, and that whole process of standing up and doing your mihimihi. And acknowledging each other, and also sharing your own pepeha. There’s real, there’s something that’s really hard to describe that’s in that whole process that I connect to and I feel a strong, a strong connection with. And that’s that sense of being connected to each other through whakapapa, whether it’s more immediate, or whether it’s wider, more historical connection. But it’s also a connection of whakawhānaungatanga where you're developing relationships with people as a whānau group at a wānanga, at a noho or whatever.

Specific reconnection with their iwi identity was important to many participants, as Pāora articulated:
You can go up North and you see Māori carvings and what not, there’s an instant connection with things like that even if we’re not from the same iwi. Just being Māori is another connection, but when you go back home to where your family are from, and where your family still are, that’s, oh that’s, you know, it’s amazing.

This differentiation also reflected the strong sense of attachment that participants felt toward their own whānau, hapū and iwi rohe, as Ema described:

I suppose if you grow up there that is built in every time you go, you know . . . So it can be slightly uncomfortable in that sense and feeling a little bit, it’s nicer to go down there, than a marae up here, because I know people know who I am and that is where I come from even though I have never lived there it’s still home. Yeah it is awesome to go.

A number of participants took the opportunity to connect kanohi ki te kanohi and participate in whānau, hapū activities, for example, marae based courses, working bees at their marae, and pā wars (inter marae sports days). Participants who had reasonably well structured hapū and iwi organisational structures had more opportunity for kanohi ki te kanohi engagement, and their reconnection process appeared to be a smoother transition. Donte was fortunate to be able to attend a development programme run by his iwi. This enabled him to connect directly with his iwitanga, build relationships and awareness of his history while developing pride and confidence in his own sense of identity, as he described:

The philosophy of [iwi rūnanga] and [programme] in particular is that, you know, it’s important to know your culture as much as you can and to learn about it. But then it’s also important to share it because it’s through sharing it that you’re able to be proud of it . . . And to share that with a bunch of like-minded people who awhi each other, who share and support each other in different challenging circumstances, just makes it such an amazing experience. You know there’s times where you'll be feeling a bit down and someone else will bring you up and have a bit of a laugh . . . and all those opportunities to kōrerorero [discussions] with each other, and just to experience and challenge yourselves together, is a really awesome thing . . . since doing that I developed heaps more confidence to stand and speak on the marae, to mihi, yeah, a sense of belonging and connectedness, acceptance of myself as Māori learning to value those things more.
Donte’s process of reconnection continued when he started to participate in an iwi specific urban rōpū. This rōpū then provided a network of people that were able to support and nurture his ongoing connection to his iwitanga, as he commented:

You get to know people better and better over time and, you know, that develops a familiarity in the sense of a system of support that you can fall back on if you need to . . . The benefits are knowing who you are and that sense of identity. And a sense of collective strength in times where aspects of your life might not be going so well, you know that there’s, not only are there other rōpū members in your same town who you might, you know, can talk to about things. You know often it’s about iwi related stuff, but it doesn’t have to be just that, coz we, because we meet every month they’re like my, almost like my immediate family in a way.

While dropping in on the only marae he knew, Pāora was fortunate enough to be directed by a hapū member to his iwi office. The people he engaged with at the office were then able to link him with a cousin who was able to link him even further, as he described:

All we did was drop some names and yeah sure enough we’re whānau, so yeah that was the reconnection there that just happened this year, yeah. Yeah I'm really glad, and I'm looking forward to going back to learn some more about the marae inside, the carvings, and the stories that go along with each one, you know. Yeah I'm looking forward to doing that.

Two participants spoke about the benefits of iwi roadshows (series of hui informing iwi whānau living outside the rohe of iwi affairs). Keisha and Donte made initial contact with their whānaunga through road shows. Donte who now has a leadership role within his rōpū spoke of the benefits of road shows, as he explained:

The benefits of roadshows are really good, where people have an opportunity to share their concerns, or questions, or whatever. I think more things like that. Where there’s a forum for people to meet iwi leaders and to be able to be in that space on the marae with them. And I think there needs to be, I think every iwi should have funding for something like that to happen at least once or twice a year . . . That way people are engaged, they get to share their feedback, it makes them want to be more involved. Coz the last thing we wanna do is, which, yeah which there’s always a risk, is that people feel disengaged and they don’t wanna contribute for whatever reason. Whether something happened, and, or they took it the wrong way, or whether something
wasn’t handled correctly. But I think those are few and far between, those incidences, and on the whole, if I speak for my iwi I'm just really grateful to be part of an iwi that does reach out to people and helps people reconnect. And has helped change my life for the better, you know, so yeah I've got a lot of respect for our iwi leaders, and aroha and gratitude for the opportunities that I've had, and yeah.

Within the systems of whānau, hapū and iwi some participants were able to access kaumātua for support. For some participants, kaumātua provided the guidance they required to navigate their way through te ao Māori, as Donte further described:

And yeah when I'm unsure about a tikanga, or I want to learn more about an aspect of te ao Māori, so I feel more comfortable within it and I feel like I'm respecting that more, then I'll give [another kaumātua] a call and he’ll share his insights.

Te kaha was also able to connect with kaumātua who were able to orientate him toward his whakapapa kōrero, as he recalled following a visit with his kuia:

She took me to the river again and we walked around it looking for pounamu, and I just stayed with her for a few days, her and her husband. And just having that opportunity to, and that time, and that space to kōrero about the things I was interested in and yeah. And just to share that time, you know I wasn’t there to look for pounamu; I wasn’t there to take pounamu home. I just wanted to be in that space and learn.

Rawiri also appreciated the role of a kuia who was able to offer him guidance when he experienced his own difficulties within his whānau. His experience emphasised the unique role that kaumātua have in the reconnection process as he described:

I was really lost . . . we went to a marae . . . and then it wasn’t until I was sitting down talking to this old kaumātua that I realised . . . she said carry on boy, you carry on. I just needed that bit of guidance, you know, cos I was at the end of my tether. And I was doing counselling, talking to friends and even talking to my [siblings]. But them being so judgemental . . . It’s just, I suppose, the wise words of someone older that I was looking for.

However, not all kaumātua were identified as able to support their reconnection journey, as Keita described:
Your kaumātua, some of them are in their generation, but there are skilled kaumātua, who know everything. And he knew who they were within the iwi, yeah. And he would go to them. I wouldn’t send him to those [uncles and aunties] they’d feed him the wrong information and get him into trouble. I’m quite open to tell him that, too.

In cases where kaumātua were not available some participants accessed tohunga or cultural advisers who were able to respond to their wairua and provide appropriate advice during times of uncertainty or tension, as Huriana went on to describe:

He got hit many times [prevented from connecting] . . . from the older generation. And he had a tohunga himself, and the tohunga said “keep going.” “Just shut down the walls humbly”. Um, “if you come to a gate where you can’t get through it means you just have to step back.”

Dave who experienced significant abuse within his whānau had accessed kaumātua and tohunga outside his iwi, in lieu of connection with his own kaumātua whom he did not trust, as he described:

My process of healing was through tikanga Māori essentially. I spent time with strong kaumātua and the principles they laid down i.e. be responsible for myself first heal thy self. These sorts of ideas, but notions of empathy, the notions of being able to state one’s own vulnerabilities, the principles of interdependence, whānau, that all came from te ao Māori. So that whole process of engaging not necessarily my hapū, not necessarily my iwi, but Māori, I had healing. Yeah, so the benefit is, it is beyond measure when I think of [name of kaumātua] my appreciation is beyond measure. So the benefit can’t be stated. Yeah, and you know, also there were other kaumātua as well, and these kaumātua who were in the past, different iwi. Yeah, and yet they were open and they would say things that would be cultivating and nurturing.

The kaumātua that participants chose to access were those who were able to facilitate a space to learn and quietly make connections with their whakapapa and iwitanga, as Hana spoke of her son:

He came back to our iwi, and he stayed there for a while. He was doing some research and he realised there’s a few older whānau, they’re . . . not well. And um, he realised that the family was so disconnected. He had to bring it back together somehow. So he did a few years research and went to the iwi, worked on the marae. He just went in there, kept himself quiet, and just told them who he was, because that’s what you do.
And um, just told certain people who his name was, not because he was welcomed in. So he went straight to the back, never went to the front. And talked to the oldies and the kaumātua, did that on all marae.

Whether participants sought guidance from kaumātua, or tohunga within their whānau, hapū or iwi or outside these networks, the overall sense from those who accessed kaumātua was that they chose people who offered a sense of safety, reassurance and authenticity, as Donte illustrated:

they [kaumātua] have kōrero that help me to either feel good about what I'm doing in my path with te ao Māori and [my iwitanga]. Or they can help me move more into a path that I'm more comfortable with. So, you know the spiritual dimension, the wairuatanga, I may not have the same depth of relationship with our rōpū, including our kaumātua if they weren’t so spiritually inclined perhaps. And I don’t know that we’re especially so compared to other rōpū, but it feels good, and it feels safe, and it’s like a strong rōpū, you know, spiritually, practically.

In summary, access to the systems of whānau, hapū and iwi were important to most participants. Well organised and inclusive urban iwi rōpū, and strategies like roadshows provided a bridge for participants to connect with their hau kāinga and vice versa. At various stages a number of participants were able to access key people who held whakapapa within their whānau, as well as kaumātua, kuia and tohunga within these systems. Such people were able to provide advice and guidance about whakapapa and tikanga, and facilitate a safe process of learning in order to help participants to reconnect and rebuild their connection with their whānau, hapū and iwi. In the absence of such people, some participants sought assistance outside their immediate whānau as will be further discussed in the later subtheme of rebuilding identity with hapū, iwi and broader Māori community.

Social media. An upgraded kūmara vine\(^1\). Many participants at some stage particularly in the initial stages of their journey had utilised the internet and social media as a way to research their marae and gain a range of whakapapa information from direct pepeha to iwi structures and resources. Participants who benefited the most from social media were those familiar with the internet, whose iwi websites were easy to access, and who almost

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\(^1\) Kumara vine refers to an informal Māori description of spreading news via word of mouth
immediately were able to gain access to a secure chat group with whānau. Huia was fortunate enough to access her marae online. Her access to a website, that linked her to a secure whānau group, then facilitated an invitation to attend a whānau hui with her mother. According to Huia easy access to the information that she required and the encouragement of her online whānau supported her to continue the journey of reconnection with her whānau, as she described:

She [mother] knew the name of the marae, so as soon as she said it, the first thing I did was Google search it. And that’s when the Facebook page popped up, cos I just scrolled it a little bit, and said oh, there’s a Facebook page. Hang on a minute, went in and had a look, and hello, here I am. So, yeah, without that, I think I would’ve been stuck for quite some time . . . Yeah, it would’ve stalled, yeah definitely, it would’ve stalled. But because its public knowledge via the internet, it kind of kept the excitement going, you know, and still even now. I can’t believe how easy it was, and still I get really excited about it.

For participants who were hesitant to make connection, Facebook provided a place to get to know and be supported by other whānau members, before exposing themselves to face to face situations, with people they did not know, as Hōhepa explained:

I didn’t know how to contact any of them to start with. And I met most of them through my mum dying, and I guess if it wasn’t for Facebook, I probably wouldn’t have, like Facebook has a lot of things that it’s got bad media for, but there’s other things that connect them with some things, yeah, I guess my own, what’s the word, being whakamā about making the first move, even when I do know that they’re related and things like that. A cousin added me on Facebook, I didn’t know who he was, I just accepted him and then he wrote me all these messages about how we’re all related and good on you, and all that sort of stuff.

Facebook was also identified by other participants as a useful means to maintain ongoing relationships, and rebuild a whānau support system. Hana described how Facebook had supported her whānau to reconnect after many years of widespread whānau separation:

Is just to make sure we are supporting each other in whatever. Letting each other know that we’re there where the need is, and just calling each other. And reconnecting, keep connecting through the Facebook page and that sort of thing. So the joys of technology has been a blessing for us, in many ways. And we’re just
finding out some of our family, that even my uncle, some of my uncles didn’t know they existed. They, you know, ‘who’s this, blah, blah,’ and of course, one of the nieces would say, ‘we only just found who he is, he belongs to blah, blah, but he was adopted out and he’s reconnected with the page’. So we’re finding out a few whānau like that. It’s all about that Facebook really, using technology to stay connected and in touch with each other, even if it’s just to say, ‘hello, kia ora,’ it’s all about, coz there’s things happening on the page and people are reading it all the time, yeah.

Social media was actively used by most participants to initiate contact, negotiate trust in early relationships and maintain contact once relationships had developed. While Māori are reported to have a slightly lower rate of connection to internet than other New Zealanders, the use of internet as a form of social connectedness is increasing (Ministry of Social Development, 2016). In this study all participants of all ages were engaging with a variety of internet mediums from social media, email, or websites in an attempt to facilitate greater reconnection with whānau, hapū and iwi.

Rebuilding identity with whānau, hapū and iwi through broader Māori community. All participants irrespective of their levels of connection had engaged in some form of Māori learning environment to reclaim aspects of their identity that had become lost as a result of disconnection. Reconnection with Māori identity was interlinked with reconnection with whānau, hapū and iwi. Kane connected with tikanga Māori and himself as Māori before connecting with whānau, hapū and iwi, as he explained:

I came [to rehab] from prison. And I started connecting with; I guess some of the practices of tikanga and waiata. And I think the haka was the good thing for me here, you know, and understanding and the meanings behind a lot of things. Didn’t really connect with whānau until, I don’t even know, it was quite late; it might have been a few years ago.

Ema was semi connected to her whānau, hapū and iwi, but due to now living in Auckland she recognised that she needed to connect with a much broader Māori identity in the interim, while she lived away from her home whenua, as she commented:

Well I think that is a core part of it being in touch with them and being in touch with our iwi traditions as well is a big thing, but at this point this is where I am, and I just can’t rely on when I go down there to be the only time I connect so that’s why looking at courses here, and doing things like getting Māori language apps on my phone and
all that sort of stuff. Trying to make it more practical I think because I can’t just go
down there and spend a year on the marae. I need to find things that I can do here and
whether that is . . . or being involved in the different networks up here or just doing
my own learning and research about my whakapapa and also about te reo and learning
the language and things.

One of the sad realities for a few participants was that their whānau, hapū and iwi systems
were not in the space to support their connection. In the absence of secure relationships
within the context of whānau, hapū and iwi, some participants started their initial journey of
reconnection by connecting with a broader Māori identity, as Dave explained:

Regards to reconnection with hapū and iwi, what drives me to want to, I don’t
necessarily have a desire to, but I supplement. So the elders that have been present in
my life were elders from other tribes, but also tribes that had you might say overlap
with my own tribe, so they have historical and genealogical understanding of some of
the history and the social dynamics of my iwi, but my desire to connect might be
better encapsulated as to connect with things Māori. Yeah, because I definitely,
without a doubt see a value in tikanga Māori and by that a Māori worldview . . . My
attraction to my own culture, in a sense, and subsumed in that I guess is my own iwi
and hapū . . . So it is not so much that I want to connect with my iwi or hapū but I
want to connect with people who I have identified as encapsulating the essence of the
Māori mind-set.

Mere had separated herself from being identified as Māori because she was treated differently
at school, and due to her whānau situation, she felt she did not belong within her immediate
whānau group. Her reconnection began as she started to “own up” to the fact that she was
Māori, as she described:

So the start of that conscious journey, you know, having decided I didn’t want to be in
the Māori world because I was treated, you know, I was treated differently and not in
a nice way, but it really started when I enrolled at university and ticked that box
owning up to the fact that I was Māori, so that was the start of the journey, and I
didn’t realise that it was the start of the journey.

Te Kaha was drawn to a general Māori identity by participating in a Māori specific unit
within his school (without parental support). This environment provided respite from his
home environment and connected him to his Māoritanga through a range of activities that he identified supported his wellbeing, as he described:

I'd always been a strong individual; I'd always been a positive type person. I like sport and I like music, I like dancing and all those kinds of things, so those are the things that, that’s the path I went down . . . so when I got to college, the Māori class had all of those elements, the waiata, the haka, you know, the boys were playing sport. So all of those kind of things, so I went down a semi-positive path, but surrounded by negativity everywhere I went [home environment where abuse, alcohol and poverty were predominant]. So being positive helps you overcome the negatives, even though the negatives outweigh the positives.

All participants identified that te reo Māori classes were an extremely important aspect of their reconnection process and indirectly provided a link to their iwitanga. Similarly, a few participants also spoke of attending whare wānanga [Māori led tertiary] programmes in Auckland which helped to initiate a deeper connection and curiosity. One particular programme provided the scaffold for Jake to start to put the pieces of the puzzle together and reclaim some of what had been lost to his whānau, as he described:

I’m slowly clawing back at what’s been lost. A big part of what my journey has shown me, with [wānanga], this year, is having that reconnection. We did an assignment on, or had to do a speech on our marae, so we had to choose a marae and you know, talk about it. I chose the marae that I grew up visiting when I was little [in the process he found out that his marae had an event on]. So I picked up my son, and we shot down and worked on that marae for three days. And that was a great experience, you know, that was amazing. The thing I really enjoyed the most was that I’d already done all this research around it, so I found out about the buildings, why they were named what they were named, and the whenua around it, and it was great. It was a really cool experience.

Reconnection with whānau relationships and cultural reconnection appeared to be a parallel process for the majority of participants. The two processes went hand in hand for many participants. These processes strengthen identity as a hapū and iwi member and rebuilding of a broader Māori identity. Participants found a range of ways to reconnect with these identities while living away from the hau kāinga.
Summary

In summary, intertwined with rebuilding connection with the systems of whānau, hapū and iwi, was reconnection with unique hapū and iwitanga identity as well as Māori culture in general. The broad layering of possible relationships within each of these systems was a strength, as it allowed participants to enter at any level that was accessible, for example, if they were not able to engage with the immediate whānau system, they were able to engage with a rūnanga or urban iwi rōpū, or a broader Māori identity through te reo Māori classes, wānanga or Māori focussed groups, or simply watching Māori television. Participants had varied levels of cultural engagement. For most participants, rebuilding connection was not just about one off whānau, hapū and iwi reunions. It was a much deeper journey of connection that for many meant a re-establishment of relationships and knowledge pertaining to their own iwi and haputanga and for many a broader Māori identity. Initial contact people, social media, and timely communication about a range of opportunities to participate in iwi and hapū events supported participant connection despite living away from their hau kāinga.

Theme 5: Dealing with Difficult Dynamics

In the theme of dealing with difficult dynamics two subthemes were identified: acceptance of dilemmas and contradictory realities and re-establishing whānau tikanga and safe interaction. Dealing with difficult dynamics is slightly different to cautious entry in that it required more time, energy and emotional resource and risk to negotiate.

Acceptance of dilemmas and contradictory realities. As discussed previously, a number of participants wrestled with more complex dialectical dilemmas that restricted or slowed progress toward connection. Nevertheless, many of the participants who experienced such dilemmas were able to negotiate a way through these dilemmas by accepting the reality of their whānau situation and finding a middle ground in which to progress their reconnection journey. For example, Rawiri accepted that some aspects of his reconnection were beyond his control and that he may have to limit the involvement he had with some whānau and the contexts of their lives. However, he also recognised that there were aspects of reconnection that were still within his control, and he orientated his and his children’s reconnection within these areas. For example, he sought out “like-minded others” in his wider whānau to build relationships with, as he illustrated:

There have been times like that [whānau violence] and you know, times where I’d rather forget. And there are times where I wouldn’t want to be there, and I wouldn’t
feel safe . . . I guess, [my children] could reconnect more if I allowed them to spend time with other family members . . . I hate to sound horrible, but I just know, because I’ve seen it, I’ve been there. . . There’s the connection to the family, but there’s also other things that those family members are involved in that I don’t want my family to be a part of . . . it’s hard to exclude because you’re all of the same family. You might have different values on things, but you know, their grandparents were my grandparents. Or my parents were their parents . . . I just don’t want my kids seeing that side of that, well that side of things. Coz there are a lot of really positive things that I’d like for them to see, that I’d like to introduce them to, and that’s kind of what I try and do, you know. Like we’ll go to things that are happy occasions, you know, like if somebody is having a reunion or a birthday or a wedding, and you know, it’s a family member. Those are the occasions that I like to bring them to. To show them that this is what being family is about, coming together.

With regard to irretrievable loss, Ria acknowledged that due to the secrecy that had surrounded her grandfather’s whānau there were aspects of her identity that she was unable to restore. However, despite her frustration and sadness she accepted this reality and sought to connect with her Māori identity in ways that she was able to access, as she explained:

I hate that I feel shame, on not knowing, you know; I don’t need to feel that way. I need to find a way to repair that back and I guess that’s why I’m searching . . . If I had any leads whatsoever I would totally chase them because I’d be so into it, like you know. But as I don’t, and we don’t, I’m just like well the only thing I can really do is try and kind of upskill myself and understand it all a bit better so I can sort of speak to this weird feeling around it. It’s really hard to explain, I don’t want to sound like a dick, well it’s like really wanting to be part of something and not being part of it . . . I think at this point if I could get some specifics it would be amazing, but I’m quite okay, well I have to be okay with it being not. And just going okay well what I can do is go to the free classes [te reo Māori], you know, like that’s something that I can do. So I can just keep piecing together the puzzle for myself, coz I think it’s within myself, my Māoridom or whatever it is, this unease . . . I have the suspicion that I’m never gonna fully know, but what I do know is I have a strong, strong spiritual connection to that. And that’s something that’s my responsibility, no one else’s, I have to hold that, and carry that, and do something with that, so I really have to get on with it.
Dave’s difficult whānau environment meant that sometimes he had to choose to prioritise his own need for safety above the desire for connection with his whānau, hapū and iwi, as he commented:

My priority is my peace, and not because of a self-centred orientation, but because I just need to. It seems that I am happier and healthier. I am contradicting myself when I say that, but I need to be in a peaceful place first. Um reconnection, the thing is I feel compelled to be reconnected.

Many participants’ remained open to changes within their relationships despite the challenges. This was a testament to the importance of whakapapa knowledge to participants, as Hōhepa commented:

Well she told me in no uncertain terms; leave it alone, you know? You don’t need to go there . . . It does seem like there’s big secrets or something. But I don’t know what they are. To tell you the truth, I don’t really care, I just want to learn about ‘who I am’, that’s the main thing for me these days . . . I’d like to know them all, cos I’ve got lots of cousins and that there. You know first cousins and stuff that I don’t know. I just, yeah, I’d like to know them. Yeah, but some of them are just so standoffish. It doesn’t make it any easier for you, when they don’t really want to engage. I’ve got one aunty up there that wants to engage, so yeah, the relationship with her could be quite easy to build. And I want to do that, getting to know them other bastards that give you grief. I’m still open to getting to know them, so yeah, building on it definitely important, you know.

The majority of participants valued the importance of connecting with whakapapa and rebuilding meaningful relationships with whānau, hapū and iwi. They held their whakapapa in high regard, but for some the realities of their relational and cultural loss compromised their ability to access meaningful relationships. However, their desire for connection and experience of loss often motivated participants and anchored them to their reconnection process despite obstacles and uncertainties. All participants in their own way were determined in their search to reconnect, and many were able to find a level of connection or a middle path that was comfortable for them. For some participants, an acceptance of the dual realities of their situation for example positive and negative, retrievable and irretrievable knowledge facilitated an ongoing process of reconnection despite some difficult realities and obstacles.
Re-establishing whānau tikanga and safe interaction. Participants often described their relationships as ‘complicated’ with mixed agendas, hurts, needs and desires. In this subtheme, two participants, Wiremu and Hana are frequently quoted. This does not suggest that other participants did not refer to the reestablishment of whānau tikanga. However, Wiremu and Hana’s journey involved the intentional regrouping of a large number of their whānau. Thus the size of their group and the specific agenda that they had to reconnect with each other required clear rules and boundaries or tikanga to ensure it was a safe process for everyone. Hana’s whānau took back control by ensuring that their whakapapa wānanga were “drug and alcohol free”, “violence free” and “smoke free” for their mokopuna.

And nothing is going to hurt us anymore. Our mokopuna are not going to get hurt . . . We set the safety right from the beginning. And the rule was that, the rule was if you’re any of those [violent, substance use] stay off the marae, because it’s about the safety of our mokopuna. And the safety of our wāhine us as women . . . to be able to go back to [our] marae, run around, watch where the dangers are, coz you’re still going to get some silly people on your marae, how to recognise the dangers, how to be safe on the marae. You know, learning all those safety practices and being strong.

Wiremu spoke about the importance of first setting the tone and establishing clear tikanga around relationships. For example, he recalled a restorative hui facilitated by two kaumātua to address issues that had developed as a result of youth offending in his whānau, as he recalled:

Right from the start, even before anything started, the kaumātua came to both sides, right this is gonna be, this is a sacred place and laid the law out. This is a sacred place, if you’re not feeling safe, if you want to get angry, go outside, you know, cos we’re here, we’re here for a reason. We’re here to get everyone back together again. But if you feel you can’t be together, then just go outside. When you’re ready, come back in. So, and that’s what actually happened.

Unhealthy whānau dynamics and/or the absence of processes to regulate behaviour were mentioned as disruptive to participant engagement, particularly when more intense ‘power over’ dynamics were present. Thus the reestablishment of whānau tikanga was essential to rebalance the power and develop new and safe ways of being together, as Wiremu described:

I can see how certain people are just there to stick the knife in. And I can see how, see that certain people make it work. And then we could also see the people that just don’t
give a rats. Someone has to try and knit them together, get them back together, and just you know, while it might not be the perfect situation, at least they’ll get their voice across and get heard. One of the big things we have . . . I put out the rules . . . everyone respected that . . . just that real whole protocol of a whānau hui, you know, karakia, waiata, and even a good waiata will actually bring the tension down. And then slowly but surely, the tension starts to dissipate, and then the hui can go on at a really good vibe throughout the hui, and especially at the end ākari . . . It’s that start from where the roots are . . . The thing that I really loved at the end is that everyone was really together and they handed plates out to everyone else . . . everyone just cleaned up. Whereas before, everyone was going nah, I’m not staying for a feed; shoot off . . . People wouldn’t contribute. Whereas, that’s gone off really, really well. Yeah, one of my nieces said the best thing about it was the fact that we got to have our say . . . Cos, you know, even in the old Māori wars, when they used to get together and the conflict needed an end, you know, the chiefs had to come together and acknowledge that, you know, we want this to stop. And then the same thing, you know, they came together and slowly but surely, they got a bit closer.

Interestingly, some participants had developed a facilitative role within their whānau and their journey led others to also take similar steps. Wiremu and Hana had re-established safe and respectful processes within their whānau, which in effect had re-established appropriate tikanga roles of tuakana-teina, and pakeke-kaumātua leadership. These roles in themselves accorded safety as Hana illustrated:

It wasn’t about that [previous raruraru/problem] for us, for our generation. It was about our, us cousins getting back together, with or without them . . . And we’ve, my generation have stopped the old generation from putting negatives in place, blocks in place, have said no, enough’s enough. You should be doing your job and guiding us but you’re not, you’re too busy putting up walls. And we’re going to pull down those walls so, no more. . . . All the whānau, all my cousins that are connected with this [new whānau] wānanga, they protect [name of facilitator] to the hilt. So for them to do that, we all feel protected within ourselves. We’ve made it that way, you know, this is, we are whānau.

Abusive relationships often compromised the ability of some whānau to nurture its members. Consequently, some participants expressed a distrust of whānau processes. However, despite these feelings some participants found a middle path by entering the reconnection process on
their “own terms”, and at a level of engagement that they were comfortable with, as Pāora described:

You know like I said I was only young, a little boy, we went to our first tangi, and then a few years in between for the next tangi, and a few more years until the next tangi. And each time I was only a kid, so I didn’t know when you went there, sleep in the marae, and play outside with the other kids. And my parents went drinking, I guess up there at the tangi, so that’s what I was used to and, you know reconnected not so long ago. It was on my terms, you know I was in control of what I did, and I decided yeah we’re going down, booked the room [motel] and went straight to the marae, that’s the only place I know. And there were a few people there, and I just asked, you know I just told them who my Koro was. And they suggested I go see someone, [an iwi agency] just down the road.

Similarly, another participant readily recognised the silencing effect that historical sexual abuse had on some members of their whānau and the destructiveness of the power and control dynamics that were still being utilised by previous perpetrators of abuse within their whānau. Consequently, this participant sought to restore safe whānau processes for all whānau members, as was described in the following quote:

Yeah, because a lot of them said, well if he’s coming, I’m not going, you know, and it wasn’t until one of the meetings that I facilitated that, you know, I mentioned safety, and she said, well if he comes again, I’m not coming. That’s okay, we can work that out, you know. And then we started laying out the platform of how we were gonna move forward . . . It’s just about the communication, getting back together and build rapport again [with all whanau including those without perceived power].

While much of the focus around re-establishing tikanga was about person-person interactions; many participants also acknowledged the spiritual component of reconnection, and re-established traditional ways of dealing with the spiritual aspects of conflict, as Hana described:

And I always said to him [son], you know; if something happens just go to the water. Nan, always went to the water and had karakia, and just wash yourself, keep yourself safe. And then talk to your kaumātua.

Furthermore, when Wiremu’s whānau returned to their marae for the first time, while not conventional they chose to enter their marae through a formal powhiri process so that they
could acknowledge their whare ōtipuna and those who had died prior to their return, as he described:

We’ve never visited before, so you know, we’re going through the right protocol as tangata whenua, but really, manuhiri, and go through that . . . It was really, really different, and we felt like we were doing something so terribly wrong. But as a first timer, that’s what we had to do. You know we couldn’t just sneak around the back and sneak in the back door, cos that was actually worse than actually coming on as manuhiri . . . Cos by doing that, you’re not actually acknowledging the marae, so yeah. And then we all just said, oh okay then. And then, once we’d gone through all the protocol, then we became tangata whenua, then it was fine after that.

In summary, participants indicated that the integration of common process based on the principles of tikanga Māori, were relevant for their contemporary situation. They appeared to re-establish new whānau ways of being together that facilitated cohesive and safe processes of connection; as Donte commented “a shared sense of being able to engage with each other builds on itself” and supports more meaningful and positive relationships and connection. This process was as much spiritual as it was relational.

Summary

The less superficial relationships participants had or wanted with whānau, hapū and iwi, the more psychological energy and readiness was required. For various reasons participants reported times when they were ready for reconnection and times when they were not ready. The reconnection process, particularly the rebuilding of relationships was for some participants unsettling and raised a number of tensions and dilemmas. Reestablishment of tikanga within whānau facilitated processes of interaction that led to safe interaction. In the absence of ideal relationships the acceptance of realities and contradictions created space to be in relationship on their own terms. The availability of time and energy determined “the right time” for reconnection to occur.

Theme 6: Tūrangawaewae: A Place to Stand

The following section focusses on participant experience of reconnection. The majority of participants spoke favourably about their desire for reconnection and the journey that they had embarked on. Participants spoke about the importance of reconnection within their whānau, hapū and iwi system, and the positive and life changing journey they had taken to restore those things that had been lost through disconnection, as Donte commented:
It was a symptom of societal changes and changes that were happening through a number of generations that made it difficult for people to maintain that identity. And the more that I learn about my history and my reo and my identity, the more I value it. And, you know that's a positive thing.

For most participants, the journey to reconnect had led to a deep sense of belonging to a larger whānau, hapū, iwi and a place to stand within te ao Māori. Consistent with literature regarding the value of cultural reconnection (Haskell & Randall, 2009; Wendt & Gone, 2012) a greater sense of self-reported wellbeing was expressed by participants. Subthemes of whakaoho te mauri (restoration of mauri), whakamana, whakakaha (increased esteem and empowerment), and te ara whakahonohono (a path for the next generation to follow) were identified.

Whakaoho mauri. Whakaoho mauri may be likened to increased vitality and energy. The term mauri is associated with wellbeing and life energy (Marsden, 2003). Participants were passionate about their reconnection with whakapapa and consequently whānau, hapū and iwi. Most displayed a level of energy that reflected excitement, enthusiasm and joy in their Māori identity. For some participants this energy also extended to their whānau, and in some situations whānau members who had previously been reluctant to engage with things Māori. The reconnection journey was for many participants a “deep and meaningful” process that was restorative, as Moerangi described:

I felt so frustrated growing up not understanding why I was mad at myself and why people treated me the way they did. I didn’t get like why my ethnicity mattered like I didn’t understand my culture. As cliché as it sounds I had an empty sort of void that I did not understand how to fill . . . I was quite angry at myself for things that were completely and utterly beyond my control . . . So I think in learning about my Māori side just appreciating that I am Māori that my identity is valued and there are lots of other people like me who really struggle. Yeah, I think it definitely helped me with valuing myself just being able to take care and be kind to myself. I think that is really important. If I can do it then I represent a whole generation or generations like me.

A number of participants described a sense of being connected to their tīpuna, and a restored pride and a value in things Māori. This was in stark contrast to their descriptions of devaluation that occurred in the early process of disconnection, as Anahera described:
If I could put it into a movie of my thoughts and my feelings and make it so that it is obvious to other people, to pick it up and grasp it would be awesome, because only you can feel those feelings, but it is nice to be able to share it with somebody else and say this is how I feel, you know, even just looking at that photo of them sitting on the paepae at one of the marae’s it’s like being back in time again you can feel like your tipuna did with pride.

A few participants expressed a much deeper understanding of the value of reconnection than they had previously understood or experienced, as Donte commented:

If I’d asked someone the same question a few years ago and they’d said well the benefits are knowing where I come from, you'd be oh yeah that’s cool, what does that really mean? Now I feel like I really know what it means a lot more. I mean because we’ve talked about the healing power of your identity, and knowing where you whakapapa to, and your mountain, your river, your marae. And I think you just have to feel that through the experience of reconnecting, however you go about that. And for me I really feel that now

At face value the experience of reconnection may be aligned to psychological terms such as increased self-esteem and worth, but for many participants it was much more meaningful. The term whakaoho mauri indicates a restored sense of being which was evident in the energy and passion that a number of participants expressed when they described their renewed sense of connection with their Māori identity. The experience of reconnection was in many ways restorative.

Whakamana, Whakakaha. Through reconnection a number of participants developed a greater awareness of the context of their lives and that of their parents, as Anahera described:

For me it was learning to understand why things happened the way they did whether it be on my mother’s side or otherwise. It also gave me an insight that now I could really understand who I am as a person why I am the way I am why things happened the way they did. So it was to me a connecting. A connection in that form because it opened my eyes to a lot of things . . . I am me because I wouldn’t be this way if I didn’t have a connection to my parents, to my mother to her whānau. Whatever happened in her upbringing it became part of me. It is like watching something grow out of nothing.
Reconnection had supported Keisha to find closure to unanswered questions that had previously been detrimental to her mental health, as she spoke about in the following quote:

I just didn’t think that my life made sense without, like, knowing my other half, and I disagreed with a lot of what I was brought up to think and believe. Like it just didn’t feel right, so I went looking for answers. I didn’t really care that I hadn’t seen my Dad in that long. I just wanted to know, and then I could understand his side of the story and why.

As mentioned earlier, only a few participants knew about specific historical trauma events, aside from colonisation in their whānau, hapū, and iwi. Nevertheless, for those that did have an understanding of traumatic events in the context of their collective hapū and iwi history, the shared understanding of what happened helped them to gain strength and make sense of their past in context to wider issues, as Tui commented:

They talked a lot about that [historical event] at that hui and when you go down there it’s very obvious that that is something that they are still recovering from. So that’s a unifying trauma I guess that all of us can relate to, because it’s our common ancestor and it is something very wrong historically that happened. I guess it makes us aware of our history and how that is one of the many issues that we have to acknowledge and remember in being a colonised people. Yeah, I think a lot of people relate to his story because I think his famous speech before Pākehā people, the police hung him, was something like “ok have it your way” like “I know I am innocent”. I think a lot of people relate to that, even in today’s world because there’s still institutionalised racism and stuff like that . . . And I guess “I’m standing my ground” as traumatic as it is to remember even just to know about, um I think it unifies our iwi something that we all know happened.

Some participants recognised that while historically traumatic events had occurred in the past, they still had an impact on the present, as Dave mentioned “it was a moment in time that has lasted 200 years” and the effects were still being experienced by the current generation as Anahera described:

When you go back into history it had a major impact on our people, so major that it still comes through the lines of the generations whether we like it or not. How to fix it well it is trying to be fixed now . . . I think that’s what makes us cautious of people, other people that we don’t know. How to fix is it can only take time. Like I said if we
bring our children up and our moko’s learn to forgive, not so much forget, but to forgive those wrongs that have been done and try to avoid going in that same direction.

For some participants, understanding their history in the context of historical trauma, colonisation and collective devaluation enabled them to more assertively respond to racism, as Anahera described her son’s ability to response to racist comments after he attended a marae based holiday programme:

[Sons name] brought this up many years ago. He got into a confrontation with his European mates and they happened to be grizzling about these bloody Māoris and their hu ha, you know, and he says “you know mum I told them you tell me your history and I will tell you mine”.

However, for some participants their increased assertion of their identity also increased their vulnerability to further conflict. For example, Pāora started to integrate basic te reo Māori into his everyday life and with his colleagues at work. However, his new found identity was not welcomed by all of his work colleagues, as Pāora explained:

It takes a lot for me to get really angry, you know I keep my cool, and you know the positive vibe. But this really got me on a negative, took me from 1 to 100 within seconds by her just saying that, that ignorance of her to say that [racist remark]. . . it really rocked me as a person trying to connect with my Māori . . . And that’s when I sort of like, wow, this is, it's a bigger problem than what I . . . They think it’s just, oh we don’t, we don’t need to know, but there are hints of hatred in there, you know underlying hatred, hidden hatred, you know, hidden racism.

However, although Pāora was shocked and angered by the racism he received at work, his renewed sense of worth and connection with his Māori identity enabled him to take up a more constructive and assertive response to the racism he experienced in his workplace, as he recalled:

I said look, you know that’s not going to happen anymore, you can't just. You know we can’t just throw that stuff, you know, this has changed everything, this is where I've got to stand up for my culture and use my time, how long I've been there [he was a senior employee] to say look I'm being serious. I'm not just a newbie and I think I've put in a lot of time and hours into the company as well, like everyone else. And now that’s got to stop [racist humour] . . . Someone that thought they could just talk to
people the way they could, we live in that world, but that’s, you know it doesn’t have to be. We’ve tolerated it for so long and we don’t have to anymore.

Hana’s increased awareness of her own experience of racism and renewed identity also supported her to reclaim a valued position within her whānau, as she described:

Yeah, I think by that point it made me more determined, because I could kind of see it for what it was. When I was younger in high school I had a very narrow sheltered kind of view of the world and I thought they were right. Making fun of me half caste or even the word mongrel . . . Yeah, I thought that was normal, like until I . . . realised that there were other people experiencing the same stuff as me.

Increased awareness of individual and collective histories provided a context in which some participants were able to make sense of their past, and the complexity of issues that had compromised the cohesion of whānau, hapū and iwi relationships. Dave spoke about “reconnection with the past. I know you are saying a reconnection with me with whānau but there also needs to be I am thinking a reconnection with events” in order to move forward. Reconnection with history enabled some participants to gain strength and find closure. A place to restore mana and move forward in relation to their own whānau histories and their collective history as Māori. While for some a reclaimed sense of secure identity increased their vulnerability, this was short lived and they were able to reclaim a more valued and agentic position within their lived environments than they had previously experienced.

**Te ara whakahonohono. A path for the next generation to follow.** In the analysis of the experience of disconnection the significant impact that colonisation had on whānau, hapū and iwi was highlighted. At its core it devalued Māori ways of being and doing life, and resulted in a widespread loss of culture, and relationships with society, others, and self. Many participants used words like “lost” or finding their “roots”. Pāora spoke about reconnection to his taha Māori as being able to find “a path to walk by”, as he described:

Now looking back it was immense, it was huge, it is huge, you know knowing who you are and where you come from is a powerful thing. Knowing who you are and where you come from, I guess gives you a better path to sort of walk by . . . if I knew what I know now, I think I’d know what path that I would have needed to walk, you know, to be a better person than what I am now.

Unlike previous generations, all participants wanted future generations of their whānau to have a smoother transition toward connection with whānau hapū and iwi than they had. Most
participants wanted the tamariki in their whānau to be comfortable in their identity and uninhibited by the politics that surround being Māori. Motivated to provide connection for their tamariki and mokopuna many participants were driven to overcome obstacles and tolerate the unsettledness that sometimes accompanied the reconnection process, as Anahera commented: “if I do stay the way I am it means disconnecting my moko’s from who they are, and where they come from, and I don’t want to do that and I didn’t want to do that”. Similarly, Ema hoped her children would participate in the Māori world “because that’s their identity rather than feeling like do I really fit in here”. Donte recognised that his process of reconnection had inspired others, as he commented:

There have been times that I've wanted to cry because it’s been so hard, but you know it’s just part of the journey. And, you know, although it's really hard, it’s really rewarding too because one of the things that you realise is that you can do stuff you didn’t think you could do. And you're realising that without even knowing it you're inspiring the next generation.

Many participants had started to reclaim and redevelop what had been lost. To re-narrate or reframe being Māori not as a negative, but a positive, as Jarod explained:

And you know, after hearing that story [of grandmother] in particular, that was one of the stories that kind of really got to me, and I thought, wow, I would hate for my daughter to feel that way about being Māori, or speaking Māori. So kind of that was really one of the things that really drove me to want to be able to make sure that being Māori wasn’t any different to any other person who lives here in this country. And if they were different, then they would feel better about it, than feel miserable . . . I loved hearing stories about my parents, too. Although some of them were quite sad, but I wanted to make a difference for others who might have felt the same way, as my parents did. And I wanted people to not look at being Māori as being different. I wanted Māori to be normal, being a Māori person was as normal as being Pākehā, or being Chinese these days, or, you know, there was nothing wrong with it.

Similarly, Anahera hoped that the following generations of her whānau would be proud to be Māori and that their mana would remain strong despite the reality of changing whakapapa, as she commented:

Yeah so it’s a question of how our children and our next generations are going to be brought up in this world. Hopefully it will still be strong enough for us to carry it
through and our generations and the generations after us to carry it through to stand proud to have both bloods because whatever you have got in you it will never take away even if it is the tiniest drop of Māori that’s left in you it’s enough to say I have my mana.

**Summary**

Participants were at different stages of the connection process, and some had encountered obstacles, but many spoke about their experience of reconnection as positive. The way in which each participant went about rebuilding connections was unique to each person, but most reported a greater sense of perceived wellbeing. One participant had surveyed her whānau health needs, and as a whānau they supported each other to make health changes and reclaim their identity irrespective of the geographic distance that separated some of them. Overall participants hoped that efforts to reconnect had changed the pathway of disconnection for the next generation. In contrast to many of the previous generations of whānau they wanted their tamariki and mokopuna to be confident, proud and connected to their Maoritanga. All participants experienced a greater sense of value in being Māori anchored in a developing experience of whānaungatanga, hapūtanga and īwitanga, and for some a broader Māori identity. In some ways this may also align with Māori descriptions of Te whei-ao ki Te Ao Marama or a place of transition or movement toward Te Ao Marama (Piripi & Body, 2010).

**Theme 7: Creating Connection within Clinical Practice**

The following section moves away from first hand experiences of disconnection and reconnection to consider the place that psychology has in supporting the process of reconnection for Māori. This section was based around the question: What do you think psychologists need to know about Māori whānau and their connections to hapū and iwi? The theme creating connection within clinical practice was identified, with subthemes of cultural competency and safe spaces to be Māori present.

Participants had a range of responses to being interviewed: some were excited and proud to share their story. Some were inspired and encouraged to keep on their journey. Yet others were slightly hesitant about their journey, but spoke of courage to try different pathways of reconnection. Many recognised that other Māori had similar difficulties and they were not alone in the task of trying to reconnect. What was very clear from participant interviews was that being able to talk about their experiences was important and for some a
new experience. As Pāora commented, “it felt good just talking to you about it, you know, I haven't really been able to talk to anyone about how I'm actually feeling”. Such responses highlighted the importance for participants to have a space to articulate the impact of their disconnection and reconnection on their lives. This may be a potential area overlooked within psychology in clinical assessment, formulation and treatment.

**Cultural competency.** Psychologists practising in New Zealand are informed by cultural competency guidelines outlined by the New Zealand Psychologist Board (2011). Cultural competency is considered a continual learning process and involves the ongoing development of cultural knowledge, skill and personal awareness (New Zealand Psychologist Board, 2011). This is just as applicable to Māori as it is to non-Māori albeit with likely differing developmental needs (Levy, 2007). The participants in this study had varied experiences with psychologists, from very little knowledge of psychologists to direct contact with psychologists through their personal experience of mental illness. Nevertheless, consistent with the areas of cultural development outlined by the New Zealand Psychologist Board (NZPB) participants thought that psychologists did need to be “open and pro Māori” within their teams and to develop the skill to discern the different layers of disconnection and connection and the complexity of being Māori. Alana thought that psychologists needed to spend time getting to know the person they were working with and putting assumptions aside as she commented:

There needs to be this real holistic kinda view of the person. And every layer that makes them into who they are, and you know, how you undress that layer. I think, yeah, just for any professional, psychologist, you know, is having an understanding of that, being able to take that time to kinda get to know your whānau . . . because, you know, disconnection is so big. We know that it happens. It happens more and more as people tend to move quite a lot. I feel like you need to kind of be up with it. You have to be able to understand their experiences. Well, and just those links, you know, just those important links, and is there something that you can use within that kind of, you know, that connection to help them get to a better place . . . I think with anything you have to find what ignites that Māori. What is it that makes it burn? And I think for me in terms of my journey . . . it all started from my search for, you know, of that reconnecting with te reo Māori. Reconnecting with that world that I had been so kinda sorely hurt by . . . So I think psychologists do need to know all of that . . . I guess how it shapes, divides you into two, and the importance of that.
While the experience of being colonised adds an additional layer to the Indigenous experience, the experience of disconnection is not a unique Māori or Indigenous experience. Many people are likely to identify in some way to being separated from their culture of origin. Within NZPB cultural competencies, awareness of one’s own culture is of importance when working with other cultures. Hana reinforced this process when she described what she thought psychologists needed to know about reconnection:

> Know who you are as a person, first and foremost. Know where you come from. Know your own history. The basics of knowing who you are, and where you come from, if you don’t know, go look for it. And then you’ll know, then you can say you can walk beside Māori. And then go and talk to the elders of Māori, talk to Māori people, if you’re non-Māori . . . For Māori ones, go back to your marae, start reconnecting from a psychologists point of view to do that. Then you become a better person and a stronger person. Then you’ll know what you’re talking about. Listen to all the old people, listen to their stories. Coz there’s some hard ones in there.

In summary, participants suggested a number of ways that psychologists could support Māori who enter psychological services. Namely through increased openness, understanding and greater cultural skill. To take the time to get to know the many layers of disconnection that may be present for their clients and strengthen the areas of connection. These suggestions align closely with NZPB expectations for cultural competency, safety and ethical practice (New Zealand Psychologist Board., 2009, 2012).

**Safe spaces to be Māori.** Māori are not a homogenous group and this was clear in the variability contained within participant interviews. Participants reflected a range of iwi histories, desires and levels of connection, socio economic backgrounds, education, age, gender, and upbringing. Some had had experience with social welfare and mental health systems others did not; some had clear Māori identity markers and others did not; some had tamariki, and mokopuna others were without tamariki. Furthermore, both sole Māori whakapapa was present alongside others with multiple iwi and ethnic affiliations. Each participant had their own reconnection journey there were many similarities but there were also many differences.

Thus as Wratten-Stone (2016) notes “caution should be taken not to make assumptions about every Māori, it is important not to stereotype every Māori as having certain backgrounds or worldviews and instead to treat each patient as an individual” (p 13).
Māori who present to psychological services are often distressed and very reliant on the professionals who engage with them to be sensitive to their cultural needs. They are not likely to have energy or emotional resources to correct the assumptions of professionals nor should it be their responsibility. Disregard of their identity as Māori is likely to hinder recovery. Ocean provided a poignant description of what it was like for her to not have her experience of disconnection recognised and the impact this then had to her mental wellbeing, as she described:

It was really confusing as a young person. I was very frustrated and it is no wonder that it impacted on my health . . . I think also when I was going through that kind of stage, um health professionals were also treating me as Pākehā. Like they would fill the form in Pākehā and I would be like I am not. It wasn’t until I was taken seriously on that side as well that it kind of got better . . . until then I didn’t really take it seriously and I didn’t really care. I didn’t really value my life very much. Yeah, obviously they do a good job in their work, but I think the practice definitely needs to be improved.

With insight Ocean then described the change that occurred when the importance of her Māori identity was acknowledged:

I think their approach to therapy was. They used Māori words and concepts and explained them to me without assuming I knew already, and, you know, talk about how important being Māori is, and like the positive differences. Like we have this rich whakapapa, like our ancestors are with us like that. That was so different to what I had been told in the past, yeah and it felt more like it was a more open and caring environment. It wasn’t so detached and like they would use ‘we’, and ‘our’ instead of ‘you’ or ‘them’. So yeah it might be subtle, but it made a huge difference to me . . . Yeah definitely felt more authentic.

Ocean also commented that it was important for psychologists to genuinely understand the complexity and struggle for many Māori:

Well it’s the persons choice to identify like say as a Māori, but I think just anybody recognising that or just asking the question are you Māori and listening? I think that is like the first point, like being able to identify because that part is actually probably the hardest for people to be. Like you say in Māori, taking ownership of that identity, rather than being ashamed of it because you don’t have this or that. There are so many
myths about “oh you need to be this Māori for this” or you need to know your iwi to do this. They are just colonial fantasies . . . Blood quantum, percentages and stuff like it’s not a Māori thing. Yeah more opportunity to identify as Māori safely and positively and understanding that you don’t have to be anything in particular.

Acknowledging Māori identity was identified as important by participants. However, recognition of unique iwi identity was also considered of equal importance by participants. As Ema mentioned “there is [a] risk of revitalising Māori but missing the specifics of each iwi”, and what that means for the people that they interact with. As Donte mentioned “I think there’s a real power in it being with your own people that help you. So if we can help people to connect with their own hapū, and their iwi” the more positive their experience will be. As Ocean commented “they're just going this is the process, this is the way that we’re gonna do things, rather than what’s right for you as your individual and your background”. As Donte commented:

It’s important to have the opportunity to be able to connect with who you are. Oh, I just think it's extremely important that they acknowledge that they are able to acknowledge the importance for Māori and who they are. And where they're from and how they can benefit them when they are in, if they are living in a life of distress.

Alongside the unique ways that participants identified with being Māori and their desire for this to be recognised, some participants recognised that at different stages of their life they were not ready for particular types of connection. In times of crisis the reality of disconnection meant that some people sought help outside their whānau, hapū and iwi systems, as Keita courageously recalled:

It is not easy, it is bloody hard and sometimes, and being a Māori for me, my pride was so strong that in the end the only way I could go and get help was not to my own because I didn’t know who to go to, but in the end I had to divert off and go the Pākehā way to get the help. If I hadn’t of done I could have done damage real bad damage to my children. It meant that I ended up in [psychiatric ward].

When asked if she would have considered accessing whānau support during her time in hospital she commented:

Most probably not, not to that point, it would have taken the pressure off a little bit, but in the end I think, still in the end you would end up going in the other direction, because whānau is just too close, and quite often you do need the outside strangers to
guide you because when you are too closely knitted you’re all falling into the same line, whereas somebody else’s ideas, they have just got a different way of putting it into its perspective to connect with you . . . Maybe it is the European side of things I was brought up going to school, they taught you too, some of those things sort of rubbed off on you without you even realising it, and yeah I’d rather look at, you know, with some things I’d rather go and ask somebody else for their ideas, you know, and then take it from there or just sit back and listen and some of their kōrero is a hell of a lot more helpful than what it would have been, and yet you damn well know, that they just had a different way of putting it across to you, for it to sink in.

Keita’s reluctance to engage with whānau during her crisis did not stop her later reconnecting with her whānau, hapū and iwi or from drawing a great deal of strength from her Māoritanga, particularly wairuatanga. Given the complexity of relationships and the multiple dilemmas occurring during reconnection, acute stages of illness or risk may not be the appropriate time for cultural reconnection to occur, but psychologists do need to be acutely aware of the interplay of Māori identity, the experience of disconnection, and mental illness.

Ocean’s recovery from mental illness was supported by engagement with a Māori psychologist. This psychologist normalised her experience, and with a genuine belief in the value of her Māori identity paced her reconnection to her Māoritanga in a way that was manageable and that she could understand. On reflection, a Māori psychologist was a benefit for this participant but perhaps not necessarily a criterion to work with her or other Māori. As Dudley, Wilson and Barker-Collo (2014) point out cultural visibility and the ability of psychologists to appropriately engage with Māori in assessment and treatment is likely to improve treatment outcome. Donte had not engaged with mental health services but he did describe a number of ways that he thought psychologists may be able to contribute to Māori healing and recovery:

There may be ways of asking the person questions that help them feel strong about their identity. It may bring out difficult things as well; yeah I dunno . . . If I was a psychologist working with a Māori client, I might ask them something like how do you feel about being Māori? It seems to me that, you know through your whakapapa you have this connection to a lot of really strong influential successful people, leaders of your hapū, and your iwi, and their mana has come through to you. You might not say that in particular, but you might give them an opportunity to acknowledge their connection to, which is a really significant thing in itself, it’s just that whakapapa
connection. And that system of support that’s there, and yeah, there’s probably a better way of putting all that into words, but just giving the person the opportunity to acknowledge their whakapapa and the spiritual strength that can offer . . . If we can learn to value a kaupapa, tikanga Māori, and to build a support system that honours people within their whānau, their hapū, their iwi, within a support system that’s based on Kaupapa Māori philosophy . . . it gives people a lot better chance to recover.

However, it was also recognised by others that not all Māori are at the same stage of connection, and psychologists should be mindful of the dynamics of disconnection and how this may play out in resistance within a therapeutic setting, as Pāora explained:

I think that, like a lot, they don’t know where they’re from, and you can get, when I asked them, they’re going, oh so where are you from? “I don’t really know”, you know . . . I try that’s okay. You know, try and make it okay for them, otherwise they can, I guess go in their shell, yeah, go in their shell a bit.

As has been previously mentioned within the literature the relevant and meaningful integration of te ao Māori principles, practices and concepts enhance treatment outcomes for Māori (Huriwai, 2002; Bennett, 2008; Cargo, 2007). Māori focussed groups and therapeutic engagement form a catalyst for some Māori to gain a sense of strength, worth, belonging, purpose and meaning, as Kane described:

I think when I went to rehab, and then they had a cultural part of the programme which I was really standoffish about. I thought I had to join it cos I was Māori. I thought that, but someone told me that I didn’t have to. But just going in there and learning waiata, karakia, and learning a haka that they do for recovery stuff, started to get my interest. Yeah, get my interest and wanting to know about where I was from. So there was some specific people, like the culture advisor . . . You know, he took us to marae, we went on marae trips and learnt, some of the protocols that went with being on a marae. And going into whare and seeing tīpuna and all that sort of stuff and really getting a spiritual connection, or something that, I just got a, I guess a glimpse of while I was there. But that’s what started me wanting to know more.

Whilst, Kane recognised the significance of his exposure to this particular group, particularly the wairua in which it was delivered. He also acknowledged that he had participated in other Māori focused groups in prison with less success:
And they did have cultural groups, even ones where they learned haka and stuff. And I went and had a look once, but I refused to be a part of it. And that’s only because of lack of knowledge, I think, and none of my friends were into it, yeah.

He commented on the importance of accepting Māori where they are at along the Māori identity continuum, and offer a place for them to talk about the meanings they associate with being Māori:

Yeah, and to talk about it, cos they don’t have an option whether they come into the group or not. If you whakapapa Māori, you come into the group, and then they get to talk about not wanting to be in there, you know, cos some of them don’t want to be in there. But it just gives them that opportunity, I haven’t grown up like this, this is foreign to me, and you know. And we just try and work with it . . . Yeah, and they talk about what they feel, isolated from, where they're from and all that sort of stuff, sometimes they get an opportunity to reconnect in there too which is great. Like myself, yeah . . . it gives them; oh I guess a purpose and understanding. And a spiritual connection which is what Māori is about. Yeah, just knowing who they are and where they’re from. And also being okay that they don’t know.

Similarly, although karakia and mihimihi were common forums where connection was facilitated, not all participants understood such processes in the same way, and were cautious about potential recolonisation and oversimplification, as Pāora described:

I don’t believe, you know, I don’t know who we’re praying to. So even when we did karakia, or even when we do karakia’s I'm not there. I'm not there because I don’t believe in that, yeah I don’t know, I don’t believe in that atua, te atua. I believe there is something, or someone, yeah there’s definitely an energy that helps you. I feel it that’s what I mean, that strengthens, yeah you feel empowered, so yeah it’s definitely wairua

In addition, while participants identified that reconnection had numerous benefits, it is not without risk particularly when negative whānau dynamics were present. Dave (who had grown up in a volatile home) recommended that the process of reconnection require a level of preparation and social support which psychologists may assist with, as he illustrated:

I think there definitely needs to be a lot of work with maybe just the particular individual, just with them first. Yeah and then engaging the others . . . Well for example, for me I have a good social network now. I have friends that I can talk to. I
have resources psychological, social, spiritual resources that I can access. I don’t need my whānau, you know, yeah . . . I think you need to have a sense of that on a social level, for example, but you also need a sense of what you have on a very individual level as well. At least for me in the individual world I need to know that I can handle whatever happens . . . Those things are necessary and you need to know that you have them in place, because you might be sadly disappointed by whatever you encounter and you need to know that you can deal with that . . . I would have spent more time with my friends, talking about it before I engaged my family. It couldn’t be helped, but I would have had a much stronger social environment.

Consistent with recent literature regarding the relationship between trauma (Kira, Lewanowski, Chiodo & Ibrahim, 2014), resilience (Gee, 2016; Walters, 2016) and culture, strengthening protective factors at an individual psychological and cultural level are important facets of the reconnection process, particularly if whānau violence has been a precipitant to disconnection. An integration of evidence based treatment alongside indigenous ways of working is a necessary component of psychological practice when clinicians face complex cultural realities and distress.

Summary

Not all participants had experience utilising psychologists but those who did had generally entered through a non-Māori pathway. Thus this raises the issue of the importance of all psychologists to be continuing to develop their skill to work with Māori. Suggestions offered by participants aligned with NZPB expectations for all psychologists to develop knowledge, skill and self-awareness of issues pertaining to cultures other than their own and in this study Māori. Access to responsive intervention that recognises the complexity, contradictions, and strength of being Māori supported recovery. Participants who had engaged with psychological services acknowledged the importance of psychologists to be able to recognise the diversity of Māori identity and the impact of being a colonised people. To be aware of those who may desire connection, but when mentally unwell may be unable to articulate their need and loss as Māori. A safe space to talk about these issues and to re narrate an experience of disconnection to one of connection was a valued, but rare experience for many participants in this study. It highlighted the potential need for much more robust cultural formulation and treatment in the context of psychology within Aotearoa New Zealand.
CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

Overview

Meaningful connection with others is an important contributor to individual wellness and resilience (Jordan, Walker & Hartling, 2004). As an Indigenous people, Māori are often considered whānau orientated and shaped by a broad network of whānau, hapū and iwi relationships. According to Rootham (2016) many Auckland Māori are increasingly more connected to their Māori identity, ancestral marae and iwi. However, a number are also disconnected from these systems. Furthermore, the support that these relationships may offer is often beyond reach for a number of Māori who access psychological services. The aim of this research was to explore the factors surrounding whānau, hapū and iwi disconnection and the way that individuals and whānau rebuild and reconnect with these relationships following a period of disconnection. Fifteen semi structured interviews were conducted with individuals who had experienced disconnection and subsequently begun a process of reconnection with whānau, hapū and iwi. Participants were asked about their own experience of disconnection and reconnection and their recommendations about how they thought psychologists may be able to support a process of reconnection. A thematic analysis of transcripts was completed. Findings highlighted that the causes of disconnection are complex with historical, contemporary, and cross generational factors present, alongside a loss of culture and relationships. The reconnection process was identified as a dynamic and complex interaction of simultaneous disconnection and connection in areas which strengthen and weaken at various stages of life. An active point of turning toward reconnection was identified, and a number of positive and challenging pathways to reconnection identified. Overall, the experience of reconnection was identified by participants as transformative and valuable both for themselves and their whānau.

This chapter will provide a summary of findings and the implications such findings have for the practice of clinical psychology and for whānau, hapū and iwi development. It will conclude with a presentation of the strengths and limitations of this study and future research considerations.

Summary of Key Findings

Key findings will be discussed in relation to previous literature and within the themes related to: the causes of disconnection, the experience of disconnection, enduring threads of connection; active turning toward reconnection with whānau, hapū and iwi, and dealing with
difficult dynamics; tūrangawaewae, a place to stand, and creating connection in clinical practice.

**Causes of disconnection.** This study highlighted the multifaceted nature of disconnection for Māori. A complex layer of historical, contemporary, and cross generational factors were present. Participants identified a range of discreet points of disconnection for example, whānau conflicts, stages of being disinterested in things Māori, adolescent transitions, geographic distance, separation and absence from whānau, alongside unknown birth details, violence and alcohol abuse. At a surface level these points of disconnection had understandable consequences for relational disruption. However, the experience of disconnection for participants was much more complex and multifaceted than this. Thematic analysis of the causes of disconnection reflected multiple points of disconnection and disruption in the current and previous generation namely parents and grandparents, and was situated within a collective experience of being Māori. This aligns with historical trauma theory and the experiences of many Indigenous people.

As a researcher colonisation and historical trauma are terms that may help to explain this casual layer to disconnection, but these were not terms readily used by all participants. This is not to say that colonisation was not a causal factor to participant disconnection - it was, but instead participants described their experience of colonisation rather than labelled it as colonisation or historical trauma per se. This is important to recognise. The reality of disconnection is that people are often unaware of their history. Whilst it is useful to be able to name the Indigenous experience there is also a need to tread with care so as to not alienate people further with terms that move quickly away from the very real lived experience of Indigenous people, in this case Māori. Descriptive terms and labels come after the stories have been heard. Thus, it was important for a moment to step aside from the political rhetoric and hear the stories of the participants.

All participants associated their disconnection to the experience of previous generations. Participants described a range of limitations placed on previous generations that essentially led to them being perceived as less than others who were from the dominant usually white group. Internalised racism was also present in negative beliefs about self, others and society at large; and for many, attempts to distance themselves and their children from being associated with negative aspects of being Māori. A devalued sense of identity as Māori, sat alongside narratives of injustice, disadvantage and limited opportunity, loss of cultural heritage, and in particular, loss of fluency in te reo Māori. The demarcation between previous
generational devaluation and current experiences of devaluation was difficult to untangle and reflected a flow of values, beliefs and experiences between generations. Consistent with the Clark et al. (2016) description of lateral violence, infighting was also present for some participants in the form of behaviour that affirmed negative stereotypes or led to other whānau members attempting to increase their worth with a false sense of mana that belittled others who lacked cultural knowledge or were different to what was perceived to be an authentic Māori way of being.

While not the experience of all participants, a large number of participants reported the presence of alcohol abuse and whānau violence as a contributor to their own disconnection, and a maintenance factor to ongoing disconnection. This is consistent with recent studies by Māori describing the experience of Māori who had experienced domestic violence and childhood abuse (Hall, 2015; Pouesi, 2012; Thatcher, 2012) and the breakdown within whānau relationships and roles that can occur as a consequence of substance abuse (Adams, 2008; Waigth, 2012). Family violence, rejection and alcohol abuse were experienced within some whānau as a form of lateral violence.

Urbanisation was reported by many participants as a contributor to whānau not returning home, and hence not building or developing meaningful relationships with whānau, hapū and iwi, and not returning to be versed in tikanga and hapūtanga. Consequently, subsequent generations were unknown to each other making it more difficult with each generation to find a pathway to reconnect. For those living away from hau kāinga the nuclear whānau was often the main whānau formation that took priority above wider whānau, hapū and iwi. Similarly, competing work, education and nuclear whānau needs for time, energy and financial resources made going home difficult for many participants.

Adolescent transitions were a particular unique point of disconnection for some participants. In this critical stage of development peer acceptance was salient, and opportunities or desire to connect with whānau, hapū and iwi were not a priority. This was made more complicated for participants whose home environments were difficult. The independence afforded by adolescence provided a way to leave difficult situations. Thus, alongside adolescent transitions was often a chain of events that led to separation not just being a transitional phase but a much longer period of disconnection that moved past adolescence into adulthood. The attraction of urban environments is that they provide greater opportunity for employment, education, or in the case of young people, developmental exploration beyond the confines of whānau, hapū and iwi. These factors still exist today and
are the reasons that participants in this research live in a city like Auckland. With regard to disconnection the issue is not the urban environment per se, rather it is the doors that close for whānau, hapū and iwi to meaningfully connect with each other.

The processes captured by the terms historical trauma and colonisation, and the processes of urbanisation and for many, adolescent transitions, can be understood as competing factors to whānau, hapū and iwi connection. A number of contemporary whānau dynamics were also present in the form of whānau violence, alcohol abuse and infighting that maintained the breakdown of relationships and disconnection.

**The experience of disconnection: Alienation, longing for whakapapa and enduring threads of connection.** Irrespective of the politics that surround the validity of terms such as historical trauma, identity trauma, or colonisation, disconnection for Māori was for these participants a painful place to be, and the process of disconnection from whānau, hapū and iwi appeared to parallel a process of disconnection from cultural identity. This is in line with the notion that cultural transmission is a function of family and communities of origin.

When considering this study in the context of historical trauma theory, it was very clear that the experience of colonisation disrupted the transference of a secure Māori identity in all generations. It had spiritual and psychological implications. It also had the effect of creating gaps in the transmission of knowledge about both culture and Māori identity. This was particularly evident in the loss of te reo Māori and whakapapa knowledge. The loss of te reo Māori represented a loss of connection with cultural heritage, valuable knowledge and meaning systems and the tikanga contained within the semantics of te reo Māori. Furthermore, limited understanding of te reo Māori created barriers between participants and whānau, hapū and iwi, a loss of ability to fulfil traditional roles, to support children in their culture, as well as a limited ability to participate in Māori community life. The loss of relationships and culture that occurred as a result of disconnection was significant for these participants. Consistent with Kira et al.’s (2012) conceptualisation of identity trauma and T. Smith’s (2013) description of ngākau māe, participants described a range of feelings related to loss of cultural knowledge and relationship. These were expressed in terms such as whakamā, embarrassment, loss of mana, hurt, isolation and not belonging, difference, distrust, pōuritanga, guilt and regret. The way in which participants described their experience of disconnection itself reflected a less energetic description of events. This was in contrast to a more vibrant telling of their reconnection.
One of the critiques of historical trauma theory is its propensity to focus on the harm and overlook accounts of resilience within a history of colonisation (Waldram, 2014). Not every whānau, hapū and iwi has been affected in the same way, similarly not all participants were affected in the same way, nor was disconnection a complete absence of connection. Many participants spoke of unique points of connection that had endured separation. While not the experience of all participants, many referred to wairuatanga as an aspect of their connection with whānau, hapū, iwi and broader Māori identity that had endured. Many were tentative in their descriptions of wairua but it was expressed in seeking guidance or being visited by tīpuna, being in the right place at the right time, and just a general knowing that they were being led in a particular way. Urupā and the processes of tangi were places that some participants were able to connect with their tīpuna, whenua and history. Closely associated with wairuatanga was an enduring connection to their whenua to key sights of significance such as maunga, awa, ngahere (forest) and tribal lands that connected them to their own people and history. Unique whakapapa kōrero also had the same effect and were expressed through iwi specific pūrākau, waiata, mahinga kai, and kōrero about their whānau that had continued despite their absence.

The contrast of the presence of enduring threads of connection alongside historical, contemporary and cross-generational causes of disconnection and the experience of ngākau māmae, loss of culture and relationships suggests that the experience of disconnection is not an all or nothing process; nor is it a linear process toward reconnection. Rather it is a process of both connection and disconnection held together by enduring threads of whakapapa that strengthen and weaken at various stages of life.

Active turning toward connection with whānau, hapū and iwi. In this study, nuclear whānau relationships were in many ways the gate keepers to connection with the broader systems of whānau, hapū and iwi. Participants often spoke about initial reconnection occurring with close whānau or in consultation with close whānau. This may be for the obvious reasons that close whānau were generally more known. Broader whānau, hapū and iwi relationships were less certain and predictable. This uncertainty did create some unsettledness, dialectic tensions with a mixture of excitement and apprehension, and in some cases ambivalence with periods of high motivation and periods of low motivation to engage with wider whānau.

As to be expected entering a group either as a new member or returning member brought about a measure of unsettledness for participants. These tensions appeared to be part
of the process of entering new territory and typical of normal group processes (Levine, 2013). Some participants spoke of periods of being ready for connection and times when they were not ready. Initial reconnection required energy and time. However, despite this unsettledness many participants were motivated by a desire to understand who they were, to know their whakapapa and to pass that on to their children. This enabled them to lean into uncertain relationships and find a middle point to sit with their position as a ‘new person on the scene’ despite any dialectic tensions and ambivalence that arose.

For a number of participants the first step of reconnection involved making contact and finding out who to talk to and where to go for information. Participants highly valued the time they had with people who were willing to help them make connections with their whakapapa. For some participants there were people within their whānau who were identified as proponents of whakapapa. They were able to link participants relatively quickly to others. In some ways such people had a special skill to pace the appropriate amount of knowledge at the right time; for example, quietly pointing out whānau land, or tipuna within whare tipuna, or presenting photos and sharing whakapapa kōrero. While there were some who were described as initially reserved, perhaps checking out the intentions of participants first, most participants described these people as open and willing to share as well as encouraging. They also were reported to be knowledgeable and passionate about the participant’s journey to reconnect. This enthusiasm and passion appeared to override whānau conflicts or lapses in connection that may have occurred. These initial contacts were critical to maintaining the momentum and enthusiasm of participant reconnection. Those who were unable to access close whānau members did turn to wider networks and re-established connection through conversations with much wider whānaunga through rūnanga, iwi social services, and as will be mentioned later, social media.

Participants who had well-structured hapū and iwi processes were more readily able to engage with their whānau, hapū and iwi systems for support, and provide functional support. As identified by Selby and Barnes (2013) the provision of iwi-hapū-whānau specific development programmes provided opportunity for participants to engage at a more meaningful level, to gain cultural competence and a greater sense of connection with their hapū, iwi and wider identity as Māori. Furthermore, urban iwi rōpū or informal wider whānau hui within Auckland were naturally easier to access than hau kāinga events, especially when participants who had to plan travel or apply for leave to attend events that were located outside of Auckland. Nevertheless, hau kāinga events were valued and participants were
more orientated to know their own hapū and iwitanga over broader Māori identity. Overall a range of opportunities to connect with whānau, hapū and iwi were useful first steps for participants as they started to develop relationships and navigate their way to feeling comfortable within their wider whānau, hapū and iwi.

Consistent with studies exploring the use of social media to build whānaungatanga (O’Carroll, 2013; Sciascia, 2015) social media and marae websites were particularly helpful for participants. They provided non-threatening forums to explore their whānau connections, to experience encouragement and support from like-minded others. The negative aspects of social media in this context are less understood, but participants spoke positively about social media and used the internet to search for a wide range of information such as iwi history, iwi pānui, marae locations, pepeha, and waiata or simply contact details of people who could help them to link with their whakapapa. It is likely that the formation of new relationships is much easier to manage online in the initial stages of relationship. Participants were able to withdraw and engage on their own terms. If offenses occurred they were more easily recovered and kept in check by social media etiquette, and the collective rather individuals. The risks of longer breaks in relationship due to unbeknown offences that occur within face to face interaction were likely reduced. Hence social media may mediate between rebuilding cultural connection and rebuilding relationships.

Dealing with difficult dynamics. Relationships naturally follow a path of connection and disconnection, and can involve unsettledness, inconsistency, and contradictions (Montgomery, 1993). “The reconnection to family and community often generates rippling effects that strengthens the family system” (Linklater, 2011, p. 176). However, if the system is not ready or willing to be in relationship, difficulties in the reconnection process are likely to arise. A number of participants were still negotiating difficult dilemmas. However, many found a way to be connected to whānau, hapū and iwi despite unsettledness, uncertainty and knock backs. For participants where abuse had been part of their history their relationships were particular fraught with disappointment and potential risk. The presence of contradictory experiences created dialectic tensions for participants. They wanted change in their relationships with whānau but accepted that change may not happen as some whānau members preferred to maintain the status quo and not accept responsibility for change. Thus some participants had the difficult task of navigating between a desire for connection and a desire for disconnection. As Baxter (1990) commented, the issue is not whether such
dilemmas are negative or not but how people reframe and “cope with contradictions than in their presence or absence per se” (p 74).

Acceptance of these realities enabled some participants to enter reconnection on their own terms, and/or focus their energy in other areas such as building relationships with likeminded whānau within the wider whānau system and or connection with a broader Māori identity, for example, te reo Māori classes. These in effect filled the void that whānau were not able to fill at that time. This is consistent with the idea that kaupapa whānau or non kin whānau are a potential support system for some Māori living away from whānau, hapū and iwi (McCreanor et al., 2006; Social Policy Research Unit., 2016).

The experience of reconnection: Tūrangawaewae a place to stand. The thematic analysis showed that alongside the process of rebuilding relationships with members of the systems of whānau, hapū and iwi a co-occurring process of reconnection with cultural identity also occurred. For participants of this study this occurred in relation to their own hapū and iwitanga, but also broader Māori identity in relation to learning te reo Māori and a range of Māori focussed learning opportunities; for example, wānanga, tamariki homework projects, training programmes with a focus on cultural awareness, Māori music, and for some, watching Māori television. For participants these types of everyday experiences supported them to reconnect to cultural beliefs and practices that essentially had the effect of facilitating a re-narration of their story of personal and collective devaluation (Barron & Abdallah, 2015) and ngākau mamae (Lawson-TeAho, 2014) to a story of mana, value, and worth.

Similar to Lawson-TeAho (2014) some participants were able to contextualise their experience of disconnection and loss of cultural knowledge within the history of their whānau, hapū and iwi. This normalised their experience of being Māori. It also supported as with many Indigenous people a re-narration of collective identity rather than a personal failure to live up to the ideal of being a “real Māori”. For some participants, the process of being interviewed and telling their story for this study had the effect of facilitating a re-story of their own experience of being Māori. This was noticeable in comments such as “now that I think about it, that was another time of disconnection” or “it’s good to talk about this with someone”. The overall response of participants was that they appreciated being allowed to share their experience with others, and they hoped that other Māori in similar situations would benefit. This aligns with the notion that understanding the impact of disconnection within the context of historical trauma, can lead to a re-narration of personal devaluation to
the broader shared experience as a collective. This has potential to not only be restorative but also transformative (Lawson-Te Aho, 2014).

Increased awareness of their history also led some participants to an increased awareness that their experiences of racism were not normal. These participants were more able to assertively claim their identity as Māori. For some participants, particularly male participants, the experience of everyday racism, for example, jokes that reinforced negative stereotypes, objections to the use of te reo Māori, or innuendos that they had no money or job, appeared to be more acutely experienced but also, it seemed, were less internalised. While beyond the scope of this study it would be useful to explore the benefits of reconnection with history or decolonisation to support people to more effectively respond to racism and daily micro-aggressions. Participants appeared to be more able to respond with greater assertiveness and clear communication that devaluation and disrespect of their culture would not be tolerated. Their Māori identity was vehemently protected and held close which is in contrast to previous generations who had begun to distance themselves from their identity as Māori.

Creating connection in clinical practice. International literature has argued for increased attention to the experience of social-cultural disconnection, and to adequately formulate the difficulties that present within psychological assessment and treatment. “[W]e need a deeper understanding of the culture and its relationship to identity development as well as to identity and non-identity traumas” (Kira, 2010, p. 1). It requires an engagement with clients that focuses on the development of growth-fostering relationships within the social networks available to them (Comstock et al., 2008), and the assessment of the relational connectedness of clients to their world, and the way in which disconnection serves to be self-protective not only in close relationships but society at large (Brady, Gingras & Aphramor, 2013). Participants recommended that psychologists take time to consider the whole person and understand the many layers and complexity of disconnection that may occur for clients, and more so their desires, hopes and areas of cultural connection that may not be clearly articulated. In line with their own experiences of the strength that they had gained from reconnection with whānau, hapū and iwi and Māori identity most participants proposed that psychologists seek to support clients by making visible their identity and drawing on the strengths within their whakapapa to support recovery. This is consistent with numerous reports by Māori psychologists regarding the use and integration of tikanga Māori and mātauranga Māori to create safe places for Māori to reconnect and be strengthened by
their identity whilst engaging with a range of treatment modalities (Bennett, Fleet & Babbage, 2016; Cargo et al., 2002; Cherrington, 2016; Herbert, 2001; Huriwai, 2002; Pomare, 2015; Waigth, 2012; Waitoki & Levy, 2016; Walters, 2016; Wharewera-Mika, 2012).

However, at the same time it was also acknowledged by some participants that use of tikanga practices in treatment may further alienate some Māori who are disconnected and those practices may intensify their experience of whakamā and thereby be counter therapeutic. Therefore it was recommended by participants that psychologists respect the fragile nature of disconnection and reconnection. A willingness to discuss these tensions with their clients particularly reluctance and resistance to things Māori was considered a safe therapeutic approach by some participants. It was also considered normalising for Māori who had been disconnected.

Thus creating connection in clinical practice is a complex process that requires skill, knowledge and understanding about the diversity of Māori experience and the impact of colonisation. Furthermore, increased awareness of the impact of general disconnection processes and the possibilities for connection were highlighted as important. However, it was also acknowledged that psychologists need to be mindful of the dialectic tension that may be present when clients present to mental health services and the potential for further loss, hurt and disappointment and what this may mean in relation to their desire to rebuild their relationships with whānau, hapū and iwi. It was thought by one participant that a focus on broader social networks may be necessary if whānau relationships were irreconcilable. This is in line with recent Māori literature. For example, Tricklebank (2017) identified that Kaupapa Māori services were perceived by the participants of her study as a form of support during their experience of mental illness. Waigth (2012) had a similar finding in his study of a drug and alcohol treatment programme. Participants in his study highlighted the importance of the “whānau group” [Māori focussed group] within the treatment setting, and in their ongoing care during the follow-up stage of their addiction recovery. Thus safe spaces for Māori to be Māori and connect with other Māori when experiencing distress is important to consider when relationships with kin based systems are fragile.

Clinical Implications

As psychologists committed to the principles of partnership, participation and protection contained with the Treaty of Waitangi how do we move beyond the uncritical
rhetoric that “whānau, hapū, iwi are important to Māori”? How do we respond with active processes that acknowledge the past and move our waka forward in a way that upholds the kin based systems of whānau, hapū and iwi that are uniquely Māori? To support Māori who desire to reconnect and rebuild their relationships in the widest sense to their whanaunga.

**Cultural-clinical competence.** As proposed by relational-cultural theory psychological intervention requires much more than increasing self-awareness, cultural knowledge and cultural responsiveness. When considering the work of Miller and Jordan (2008), “the way we work with disconnections, ruptures, and empathic failures may be the most crucial factor to consider in understanding how change and healing happens in therapy” (p. 245) to create new relational ways of being in connection.

In this study, whilst participants now valued their connection with whānau, hapū and iwi, they also acknowledged that there were times in their lives when they were not interested in their identity as Māori. They were not ready. Thus there may be times when psychologists need to maintain a framework of connection in the midst of the complexity of disconnection. Dialectic, intra-individual, relational and intergroup processes (Altman, 1993) are relevant when supporting clients to navigate between the ideals of reconnection and the realities of disconnection. To name and validate the unspoken desire to connect with who they are as Māori, not who they should be as Māori, and to empower and support clients to connect with a culture that is rich in value and strength.

There is a risk when attempting to bridge between Māori and psychological knowledge systems of just ‘browning’ psychological knowledge and losing the depth of understanding of issues that mātauranga Māori can offer psychology to meet the needs of Māori who enter mental health services. As reflected in this study, for Māori who are disconnected from whānau, hapū and iwi that knowledge is as much out of their reach as it is for the psychologist who sits opposite them. The language that some participants used to describe wairua was particularly hesitant, but their energy when discussing these issues and the importance of wairuatanga to their journey was noticeable. It is likely that they may not openly talk about these issues to a psychologist unfamiliar with the nuances of wairua. This would be a significant loss to effective therapeutic process for a number of Māori. The importance and activity of wairuatanga in both disconnection and reconnection experiences for Māori was evident in this study. This further supports the view held by Valentine (2016) and many Māori psychologists that wairuatanga is an essential feature of healing. It is not the role of clients to educate their psychologists about the basics and diversity of being Māori.
The onus should rightly be with psychologists to continue to upskill their knowledge themselves of issues relevant to Māori: to do as participants do in this study, search out whakapapa knowledge, understand the complexity of relationships, grapple with contradictions whilst holding tight to the principle of whakapapa, re-narrate personal limitations with the experience of a colonised society and connect with what it is to be Māori.

With this level of connection it is possible for a psychologist to open pathways for their clients to navigate toward reconnection at the level of motivation they encompass at that time. An authentic cultural formulation requires a level of higher sophistication than naively connecting Māori with a cultural group or kaumātua, or long lost whānau member who will magically circumvent deep and meaningful connection. It is also much more than saying that a particular Māori client has no interest in things Māori. Authentic cultural formulation means having an understanding of the way in which the complexity of being Māori contributes to the current presenting problem, a genuine belief that Māori knowledge is of benefit to the recovery process, and the willingness to let go of assumptions of what is to be Māori and ask the question “what does this mean for you as a Māori?” This level of clinical and cultural competence is an achievable goal for all psychologists, Māori and non-Māori, but only if they are active in their ongoing development and reflection as psychologists.

**Trauma and disconnection.** Highlighted by a number of participants within this research was the disruption that occurred within whānau, hapū and iwi relationships, and Māori identity in general as a result of whānau violence and alcohol abuse. Recent statistics suggest that half the tamariki within CYF care are Māori (Ministry of Social Development, 2016; Rootham, 2016). This should be of concern to Māori and non-Māori alike. Disconnection in these contexts is protective, but it is also destructive, particularly if it leads to the long-term alienation of relationships with whakapapa, and when combined with being a colonised people adds greater complexity to treatment. There is a dearth of literature and research within the trauma field regarding the impact of abuse or patu ngākau on secure cultural identity. However, the work of Kira et al. (2010) provides fresh understanding of the complexity of trauma and the importance of considering the symptoms of intergroup, collective identity trauma and addressing these within trauma treatment, alongside the already established treatment targets related to interpersonal, physiological and existential symptoms that are typical of the experience of complex trauma. From a Māori perspective the additional understanding of ngākau māmāe and the social and spiritual injuries that occur as a result of abuse are also important to consider, and have implications for clinical psychology.
**Whānau, Hapū and Iwi Development Implications**

Knowledge of whakapapa and ones place of belonging are important for a secure sense of identity. Some individuals are satisfied with this level of knowledge, but the principle of whakapapa also includes responsibility and reciprocity. It is essentially about relationship. As Jordan, Walker and Hartling (2004) write:

In order to transform a culture of disconnection into a culture of connection we need to develop new images of strength in which vulnerability, connection building, serving others, seeking justice, and being encouraged and emboldened by community, as we build community at the core. (p. 25)

Greater opportunity for connection is vitally important if whakapapa relationships are to be more than a superficial understanding of whakapapa. This requires a commitment by all to facilitate steps toward greater connection within the systems of whānau, hapū and iwi (Cherrington, 2009). Participants in this study were still navigating the processes and politics of accessing their hapū and iwi structures. Many participants were overwhelmingly appreciative of the interactions that they had had with hapū and iwi representatives. However, these were participants who were at a stage of life when they wanted to reconnect with these systems. It can be disheartening for hapū and iwi when whānau are not responsive and even with their best efforts whānau do not show up for organised hui. However, connection is a complex process and will not happen on its own; it requires active and strategic opportunities for connection. It requires leadership that demonstrates relational awareness and a critical understanding of the psychological and systemic factors as to why whānau are not only not returning home, but not building meaningful relationships with each other. We acknowledge that colonisation had an impact on the dislocation of our whānau, hapū and iwi from their whenua; we also need to acknowledge that colonisation significantly disrupted whānau, hapū and iwi relationships and now take individual and collective steps to perpetuate connection rather than disconnection.

At a practical level, participants utilised rūnanga offices to make connection, they searched the internet and engaged with social media. They sought out opportunities to learn te reo Māori and engage with a range of Māori learning opportunities. They valued whānau, hapū and iwi wānanga and road shows. They wanted to learn their own iwi and haputanga, their own waiata, haka, tikanga and history, and to connect with their whānaunga through urban iwi based rōpū and development programmes. They were eager and enthusiastic for
these opportunities, but for some, opportunities were not always easy to find nor communicated in a timely way so that they had opportunity to attend. With the advent of Treaty settlements, strategies that support iwi vitality are required. The investment in an updated ‘kūmara vine’ through hapū and iwi based websites may be required so that a range of access points can be identified for whānau who desire to reconnect.

Participants also valued opportunity to return home and to connect with their whānaunga in a positive way through wānanga that increased their knowledge of who they were as Māori, sporting events such as pa wars, marae working bees, reunions and celebrations that were positive, opportunities to access kaumātua or people who could guide and whakatau te mauri (settle their spirit), te reo weekend noho, hīkoi on their whenua, their awa and maunga, as well as camping holidays with other whānau on their whenua. A number of participants returned to urupā. While this raises some issues about spiritual safety without knowledge of processes to be safe, it is nevertheless a place where Māori reconnect. This is something for hau kāinga to be aware of and put in place measures to facilitate safe access to urupā for whānau who are less familiar with tapu and noa practices.

The opportunities that can be created by hapū and iwi are endless. Whānau ora initiatives can be inclusive of hapū and iwi, and many iwi and hapū are developing ways to support their people to reconnect (Flavell, 2015). One of the participants in this study had utilised whānau initiative funding and included whānau initiated pre and post surveys to direct their own whānau health and identity goals. However, it does require investment and consistent reliable processes that are intentional and strategic. It likely also requires investment, as with other whānau ora services, in the development of the role of a navigator whose sole task is to facilitate access for whānau to their hapū and iwi to achieve their goals and needs for connection as a whānau (Office of the Auditor-General, 2015). As Cooper and Rickard (2016) remind us:

We cannot row our waka back against the rapids, to the beginning and change the way the journey has been so far. We can only continue forward, with our new knowledge on board, using that to assist us perhaps to navigate our journey in a way that will be better for us; where we will be in control. Even if it is only to know where the rocks and danger zones are so we can avoid them on our way. (p. 106)

It is hoped that this study will be an encouragement to hapū and iwi leadership that their people do want to reconnect. They just do not always know how to do that safely. The
participants within this study are an asset to their respective whānau, hapū and iwi. The loss of their participation in the systems of whānau, hapū and iwi is a loss to whānau, hapū and iwi development. Thus, we need to take back control of the cycle of disconnection and redirect the waka toward connection, bearing in mind that there are many human dynamics and complexities that require careful management as well as knowledge and skill to negotiate and adapt when required.

**Strengths and Limitations**

The qualitative nature of this research provided rich information about the meaning that participants made of their experiences and to more intimately gain understanding of the many layers to their experiences past, present and future. Their subjective experience their hopes, desires, disappointments and fears, and the complexity of their experience. The position of the researcher as a Māori as both an insider and an outsider to their experience may have supported participants to share more sensitive aspects of their experience. This would not have been achieved to the same level with quantitative methods, or even, perhaps, if initiated from within their own whānau, hapū and iwi.

The participants within this study represent only a small snapshot of individuals who have begun the process of reconnection. They represented diverse educational, socio-economic and early life experiences; the majority were recruited from within a te reo Māori learning environment, and a few from other education and community settings. In a sense all participants had taken active steps to re-engage with their identity as Māori, they were not currently in vulnerable contexts, and they were motivated toward te ao Māori and passionate about sharing their experience of re-connection so as to benefit others on a similar journey. This was a strength of the study, but it may have also been a limitation for some participants may have selected and emphasised the positive aspects of their experience, downplaying the challenges to their journey. Transcripts were edited by participants who chose to review their interview. Time limits both for myself and participants restricted cross-validation to my supervisor and selected Māori psychologists. However, it would have been useful to have had a second feedback from participants regarding the findings of analyses to increase the validity of the interpretation of the findings of this study.

Similarly, participants represented a diverse range of iwi histories. Due to the sensitivity of information shared, and the need to protect the anonymity of participants and their represented whānau, hapū and iwi, participant details were not disclosed within this
research as per the University of Auckland approved ethics provisions. However, some participants did share similar iwi histories and an analysis of these more specific nuances of their own iwi history would have provided an interesting aspect to understanding the dynamics of disconnection and reconnection, as particular iwi tikanga also supported the ongoing connection of their descendants, alongside historical iwi experiences that perpetuated disconnection.

Furthermore, the process of reconnection is interactional with a range of systems. This study represents the voice of adult Māori who have been disconnected and reconnected with whānau, hapū and iwi. Absent from this analyses is the voice of the ahi kaa and those who receive their whānau when they return home. In order for a more fuller picture of the process of particularly reconnection, it would have been useful to have had the voice of hau kāinga people, and leaders within whānau, hapū and iwi who have attempted to reach out to their whānau who are disconnected. Similarly, kaumātua, cultural advisors, clinicians, and psychologists who support or witness their whaiora reconnect with whānau, hapū and iwi.

**Future Research**

As mentioned in the limitations section, particular iwi histories and experiences were present in both disconnection and reconnection processes. While beyond the scope of this research, future research that is initiated and directed from within the context of particular hapū and iwi with their own people will support an increased awareness of the needs of their own people, and consequently structures and initiatives that are tailored to their own whānau, hapū and iwi needs. Furthermore, the experience of reconnection for people who return to specifically live at the hau kāinga may be different to those who do not.

With regard to clinical psychology this research is a stepping stone to multiple areas for research in the future. As with iwi specific research it may also be useful to consider the reconnection process for specific clinical populations that are more sensitive, for example, mental illness, adult children who were fostered out of whānau care as children, and for those who have experienced whānau violence and child abuse. These specific circumstances of disconnection may require different pathways for both treatment and the rebuilding of connection. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the reconnection process strengthened the social, spiritual, and psychological aspects of participant lives which ultimately have an impact on physical wellbeing. It would be useful to further explore the strengths and difficulties that arise as a result of an increased awareness of the relationship of colonisation.
and historical trauma to cultural disconnection, and the role of this awareness to support people to respond to ongoing micro aggression and racism in a way that does not undermine Māori identity. In addition, differences between developmental and more prolonged adolescent disconnection may also be an area for further research.

In conclusion, this study reflected the very complex issue of Māori disconnection and reconnection within the kin based systems of whānau, hapū and iwi. It is an important discussion for us all to have in order that whakapapa continue to be protected and nurtured within the diversity of being Māori. As the following quote from a participant reflects reconnection is an important process:

Sometimes it’s easier to focus on the barriers that prevent us from doing something like reconnecting. And sometimes it takes a bit of courage too . . . it’s important for us as Māori to encourage each other to continue with that reconnection process. Coz it can be really hard sometimes, so yeah it’s just keeping on, keeping on with that process and trusting in that process. It’s a beautiful journey, and I think it’s important to celebrate each step that you take along the way too. Be prepared to have some fun with it, it doesn’t have to be all super serious. It’s a significant and a deep journey too. 

It is hoped that from this study more robust discussion has been opened up to facilitate more culturally responsive intervention in psychological services, and for hapū and iwi to also engage with this dialogue and further consider creative initiatives to support their uri who have become disconnected and desire reconnection.
APPENDICIES

Appendix A

Research Pānui (advertisement)
Have you or your whānau experienced separation from whānau whānui, hapū and iwi, and now started a process to reconnect with those relationships?

You are invited to share your thoughts about disconnection and the process that you and your whānau took to rebuild relationships with whānau, hapū and iwi. It is hoped that this study will provide understanding that will help to reduce the ongoing occurrence of whānau disconnection and support future generations to remain connected to whānau, hapū and iwi in a way that supports their wellbeing.

What does the study involve?

A one to one and a half hour conversation style interview. Note: Your participation will be kept private. Whānau and hapū information will be protected by changing names and any identifying information.

If you wish to volunteer to participate in this study or you require more information please contact Tania (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Heretaunga, Pākehā) at XXXXX@aucklanduni.ac.nz or text XXXXX

Kāua e whakamā. E kore au e ngaro, he kākano i ruia mai i Rangiātea.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 9TH OCTOBER 2013 FOR A PERIOD OF 3 YEARS. REFERENCE NUMBER 2013/010477
Appendix B

Interview Schedule
Interview Schedule

Mihi whakawātea

2. Male/ Female (circle one)
3. Ethnicity:

4. Iwi:

5. Hapū:

6. How many years has it been since you started to reconnect with whānau, hapū, iwi?

Semi Structured Questions. These are a guide to prompt discussion with regard to:

(1) Whānau Process of Disconnection

- If it is okay to talk about first, at what point of your whānau history did disconnection from each other occur?
- What happened to your whānau relationships when this occurred?
- How many generations have been disconnected?
- As the years went on what made it harder to reconnect?
- When you think of your whānau and hapū history (grandparent’s time and further back) were there events and difficulties that may have impacted on current relationships with each other. How does this affect your whānau now?
- Do you think this was transferred to each generation? If so how do you think it was transferred?
- What level of contact do you currently have with whānau, hapū and iwi? What would you like?

(2) Whānau Process of Reconnection

- What led you to want to reconnect with your whānau, hapū and iwi?
- What hopes and fears did you have for this process?
- How did you go about initiating reconnection?
• How long ago did this process start?

• What was hard about starting to reconnect with people you did not know?

• What obstacles did you have from other whānau members?

• What were the challenges?

• How did you overcome these?

• Is there anything you would do differently?

• What has been the benefit to rebuilding your relationship with whānau, hapū and or iwi?

(3) Pathways Forward for Whānau

• What impact do you think cultural disconnection has on Māori whānau?

• What do you think psychologists need to know about Māori whānau and their connections to hapū and iwi?

• If you were to imagine an ideal process of reconnection for Māori whānau who are struggling on their own what would it look like?

• What types of leadership initiatives would you like to see from your whānau, from your hapū, from your iwi to reconnect with whānau who you don’t know and are struggling?

• What do you think hapū and iwi leaders need to know about the needs of whānau living away from home

• Once reconnection has occurred how do you think those relationships are nurtured, strengthened and protected?

• If you were to have difficulties, and iwi and hapū support was an option for you would you want it? If yes what makes it something you would want? If no, what stops you from going to them for support?

• Looking forward to the future what are your hopes and dreams for your children and their children with regard to knowing and being meaningfully connected to their whānau, hapū and iwi? What would you like their relationship with these groups to be like?

Whakamutunga (end of interview process)

Karakia whakmutunga
Appendix C

Participant Information Sheet
**WHAT DOES THE STUDY INVOLVE?**

I will be conducting confidential interviews with people who volunteer to participate. The interviews will include talking about your whānau experience of disconnection and subsequent reconnection. Interviews may take from one hour to possibly one and a half hours at the most. If you choose to participate, the interview will take place in a setting that is convenient to you. For example, we can meet and talk at a private office at the School of Psychology at The University of Auckland, at a community space that is more convenient to you, or in your home. The interview will be set at a time that is most convenient to you. You can say as much or as little as you like. At any time during the interview you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to. You also can decide to change your mind about participating and end the interview at any time, without any questions being asked. The interview will be recorded with a digital voice recorder and then transcribed by myself or a professional transcriber who has signed a confidentiality contract. You can ask for the recorder to be turned off (and turned back on) at any time during the interview. You will be able to look at the transcript of your interview and offer suggestions for changes if you think they are needed, up to one month after the transcript is given to you. You will be able to withdraw parts or all of your information up to a month after your interview.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE INFORMATION I SHARE?**

All identifiable information that is provided by you, such as your name and address, will not be seen by anyone, for any reason, other than the researcher Tania Gilchrist, and Professor Fred Seymour. Extracts from the information you provide may be quoted in my doctoral thesis, and in possible publications or presentations about the research. This will always be done in a way which preserves your anonymity (no one will be able to identify you, your whānau members or hapū). This is usually done by assigning pseudonyms (different names) or coding your interview with a number, and excluding any other possible identifiable information such as where you come from, your job and identifiable
circumstances in the final report. A summary of the final research report will be available for you if you wish. Your interview data and consent forms will be stored securely and separately at The University of Auckland, and destroyed six years after the research is finished.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS INVOLVED?

Thinking about and recalling whānau experiences, especially if they have been difficult, may possibly be upsetting. Even if you have successfully dealt with these difficulties, there may still be a risk of becoming upset when talking about them. If you think the risk of becoming upset during this research may be a problem for you, it may be better that you do not take part in this study. Alternatively, we can begin and then stop if you feel uncomfortable. You can have a break and then continue, or stop altogether.

Should any issue arise during your interview that suggests your safety or someone else’s safety may be at risk, I will need to talk about this with my supervisor Professor Fred Seymour who is a Registered Clinical Psychologist. He will then be able to advise on the best action to take in regards to this, for example, to provide assistance with a referral to an external supporting agency. This is considered very unlikely for this particular research, however it is important to note so that you are aware that this type of support is available to you should it be necessary during your involvement in this research. Furthermore, you may also bring along a support person with you to the interviews if you wish to do so. It is expected that this person will be expected to keep your information confidential.

Should you have any concerns about any aspect of this research, but do not wish to talk with me about this, you may contact my supervisor Professor Fred Seymour or Associate Professor William Hayward, Head of School, or the Chair of the Ethics Committee at The University of Auckland, at the addresses supplied below.

WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS STUDY?

I am hoping that this study will provide a better understanding of the impact of historical and intergenerational disconnection on Māori whānau and subsequently how whānau rebuild and strengthen their relationships following a period of separation. It is my hope that the insights shared by whānau members who have begun the journey of reconnection will help prevent the cycle of whānau disconnection in the future.

Thank you very much for taking the time to consider being involved in this research. Any assistance is appreciated. Nga mihi nui ki a koutou

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS STUDY?

If you have any queries or wish to know more, please contact me

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The Chair, The University of Auckland Human
Participants Ethics Committee
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Private Bag 92019 Auckland

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON OCTOBER 9TH 2013 FOR 3 YEARS, REFERENCE NUMBER 2013/010477.
Appendix D

Consent Form
CONSENT FORM

Participant

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Project title: Āwhinatia Tāu Whānau Kua Wehea Ai, Kua Ngaro Ai: Supporting Future Generations to Remain Connected

Researcher(s): Tania Gilchrist and Professor Fred Seymour

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and I have understood the nature of the research and that my participation is voluntary. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I understand the interview will take from one to one and half hours of my time.
- I understand that I will be audio recorded. I understand that this will be transcribed (typed word for word).
- I understand that Tania Gilchrist will transcribe the recording of our interview, but that a third party who has signed a confidentiality agreement may also assist to transcribe the recording.
- I understand that my anonymity will be ensured and I will be given opportunity to edit the transcripts of my interview within one month of my interview.
- I wish / do not wish to receive my transcript for correction.
- I understand that my participation in this study is confidential and that no material which could identify me will be used in any reports on this study.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, and to withdraw my information within a month after being interviewed without reason.
- I understand that information will be kept for 6 years, in a locked cabinet at the University of Auckland, after which time it will be destroyed.
- I understand that if I indicate that harm is occurring to myself or another person, the researcher will talk with me first, but she will then need to talk with her research...
supervisor Professor Fred Seymour so that the risk of harm can be reduced and ensure that I receive further support.

- I wish / do not wish to receive the summary of the final research report of this study (expected to be 2016). If yes please provide either email or postal details below for this summary to be sent to you when it is completed.

_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

Name ___________________________

Signature _________________________ Date _________________

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON OCTOBER 9TH FOR (3) YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER 2013/010477
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