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“Sowing the Seeds for Change”

**A process evaluation of Te Kakano, the SAFE Programme for Maori men
who have sexually offended against children**

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Abstract

In the field of sexual offender treatment, there is limited literature on cultural influences and processes in therapy. Conventional treatment approaches for minority groups, including Maori in Aotearoa/ New Zealand, may be less effective if interventions are not culturally responsive. This thesis presents the findings of a process evaluation of Te Kakano, the SAFE Network Incorporated programme implemented by Maori clinicians and offered to Maori men who have committed sexual offences against children. The evaluation aimed to describe the programme with a focus on cultural concepts and practices, to identify the programme's strengths and weaknesses, and to make recommendations for improving programme content and delivery.

Qualitative methods including interviews with service users and observations of group therapy sessions were carried out over a 15-month period. Twelve Tane (men), four whanau (family) members and three Kaimahi Maori (staff) participated in the research. The central finding was that Tikanga processes and values encompassed all aspects of the programme and were highly valued by men and their whanau despite differing levels of cultural knowledge amongst the group. A Maori-centred approach has a number of potential benefits: 1) it allows for participation in activities that can strengthen cultural identity and knowledge; 2) the approach recognises the importance of relationships as a context for change; 3) Te Kakano provides a programme that addresses sexually abusive behaviour and is culturally responsive to Maori offenders; 4) the involvement of Maori amongst therapy staff and management is a step towards ensuring that Maori values and perspectives are represented within the organisation.

The results indicate that therapeutic initiatives for Maori offenders that utilise Tikanga Maori beliefs and practices may help to reduce offending by improving engagement in treatment, providing a rationale for prosocial behaviours, and assisting healing and reparation processes for individuals, whanau and the wider community.

The results are discussed in terms of specific recommendations for programme improvement as well as theoretical and clinical implications. This study makes a unique contribution to the literature by exploring the value of indigenous approaches to treating sexual offending with the aim of protecting tamariki (children) in our communities.

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Preface

Translations of all Maori words are provided when they first appear in each chapter. A glossary of Maori words and their meanings has been included for reference at the end of this thesis. All translations have been taken from Ryan, P.M. (2008) *The Raupo Dictionary of Modern Maori* (2nd edition). Rosedale: Penguin Group.