



Responsiveness to Maori Victimisation

*Marama Royal, District Manager
New Zealand Council of Victim Support Groups*

E tu ake ana ahau ki te tautoko i nga mihi ki te kaihanga
I stand here to support the greetings to our creator

E mihi ana ki nga maunga, nga awa me nga wahi tapu o tenei rohe
I also acknowledge the mountains, rivers and sacred areas of this district

Ki te iwi kainga, tena koutou e whakahonore ana i a matou te ropu whakeke
To the people of this land, thank you for honoring us, the visiting group

E koa ana te ngakau kua tae mai matou ki waenganui i a koutou i tenei ra
My heart is glad that we have arrived safely amongst all of you

Tenei te mihi ki a tatou katoa e hui tahi nei
I acknowledge all of us here together

Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa
Greetings, greetings, I greet you all

Thank you again to the conference organisers for inviting me here today to present my paper on the 'Responsiveness to Maori Victimisation' and how Victim Support services in New Zealand have been developed to reduce this victimisation and provide services to meet the needs of Maori victims.

Just to give a brief background of where I come from.....

My Maori tribal links are to Ngati Whatua ki Orakei which is based in the heart of Auckland City and Te Arawa which is based in the Bay of Plenty District.

My lineage or whakapapa is;

Ko Maungakiekie toku maunga
Maungakiekie is my mountain

Ko Waitemata te moana

Waitemata is my river

Ko Mahuhu-o-te rangi toku waka
Mahuhu-o-te-rangi is my canoe

Ko Orakei toku marae
Orakei is my marae

Ko Ngati Whatua ki Orakei toku iwi
Ngati Whatua ki Orakei are my people

As said in the introduction, I have worked for Victim Support in New Zealand for the past 6 years and I am currently the District Manager for the Bay of Plenty District which sits on the east side of New Zealand.

Maori people make up 27.9% of the Bay of Plenty district's population with a high % living in the rural and coastal communities. There are also a significant number of marae and tribal settlements around the Bay of Plenty District.

You all maybe are thinking 'what prompted Victim Support in New Zealand to address their services being delivered to Maori and how responsive would these services be to the needs of Maori?' The answer to that question was the New Zealand National Survey of Crime Victims completed in 2001.

Some of the key findings of that Survey identified that;

1. The ethnic group of people most at risk of victimisation were Maori, especially Maori Women
2. The ethnic group of people most likely to be repeat victims was Maori.
3. The ethnic group of people most likely to be repeat victims of violent victimisation was Maori.
4. The ethnic group of people most likely to be repeat victims of assault were Maori and,
5. The ethnic group of people most likely to be repeat victims of threat were Maori

The survey also identified that victimisation against Maori were significantly less likely to come to Police notice and in meeting the needs of victim some Maori who were surveyed mentioned the need for a more culturally-responsive service.

Victim Support New Zealand took these key findings and began to develop strategies and processes to address the need to be responsive to Maori victims and to address the issues facing Maori.

The first step was to look at developing a policy around Biculturalism and to also include the Treaty of Waitangi and the key principles of this document.

I will give a brief overview of the Treaty of Waitangi and how it fits into Victim Support's beliefs and values.

The Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 and it formed an agreement or covenant between Maori and the British Crown. The Treaty was to be seen;

- As a formal recognition of indigenous Maori rights, including proclamation that these rights would be enhanced and protected.
- It enabled peaceful acquisition of land and ensured that immigrants could settle in peace and;
- It allowed the crown to set up government and establish laws in return they were to protect Maori tribal authority over their lands, fisheries, forests, villages, treasures and cultures and extend to Maori the status and rights of British citizens.

The Treaty contains four articles which articulate the agreement between Maori and the Crown. The articles place duties on the Crown and its agencies in relation to Maori.

These are;

Partnership:

This gave the Crown the authority to govern and to make laws for the benefit of all New Zealand citizens. This includes the provision of Kawanatanga (Governorship), to govern in fairness and good faith. This provision applies to all agencies that receive authority from the Crown to act on their behalf.

Participation:

This guaranteed Maori the control of resources and Taonga (treasures) which they already have under their control. This includes fisheries, forests, land, waterways and coastlines. It is this article that ensured Maori would retain control over their resources and authority to determine their own destiny (tino rangatiratanga)

Equity:

This guaranteed legal equity for Maori. It gave assurance that Maori have the same right to services as all other New Zealanders.

Protection:

This guaranteed due respect and protection of cultural practices and spiritual beliefs that are at the centre of being Maori.

Victim Support New Zealand has stated its intention of fulfilling its obligations in accordance with the Treaty of Waitangi in its Responsiveness to the Treaty policy. This policy reflects the underlying principles of the Treaty.

Furthermore, Victim Support New Zealand has developed and introduced a very comprehensive Cultural Awareness Training module that is part of the Introductory Training for new Volunteer Support Workers and staff induction training. It is also used as an ongoing training resource for volunteers and staff

Because Maori people identify with their Marae, it is encouraged that the Cultural Awareness training is delivered on the Marae. This enables Volunteer Support Workers and staff to interact with those connected to the Marae, hapu or Iwi and it also gives volunteers and staff an opportunity to participate in a powhiri (welcome) to that marae. Using this strategy has given Victim Support the opportunity to recruit Maori Volunteer Support Workers.

We have had many successful recruitment drives for Volunteers using this strategy and a key factor in addressing needs of Maori victims is to have Maori Volunteer Support Workers available to offer emotional support and practical information in their time of need.

Another strategy is to encourage kaumatua (elders) of the hapu or Iwi to volunteer their services in an advisory role. Each Victim Support area has a local group committee operating and a key role for them is to identify needs of its community and to ensure that this happens; community minded people are encouraged to join these committees.

Having kaumatua (elders) on the Local Group Committee in an advisory capacity brings to the table local knowledge of the area in particular tribal links and Marae, an ability to speak on behalf of the group about Maori issues, assist with resolutions to address these issues and to assist with training and give support to Volunteer Support Workers especially when supporting Maori families dealing with a death.

Knowing local tribal tikanga (customs) is very important and believe it or not, there are many variances in tribal tikanga (customs) even within one Iwi. Having ready access to kaumatua (elders) for guidance and advice is important for the services we provide as Victim Support and it also provides a safety factor for volunteer support workers who are supporting Maori families.

An example of how effective this strategy is;

A fatal motor vehicle accident occurs and Victim Support is called in to support victims of the accident, witnesses and first on the scene. It is known that those killed are of Maori descent. Notification by Police to whanau (family) members with the assistance of Victim Support Volunteer Support Workers is done. At this point a kaumatua (elder) is contacted to assist Victim Support with the notification process and also to do a blessing of the accident site. This is a practise that ensures a culturally appropriate response to the needs of the victim/s and their families. The kaumatua (elder) will also assist the whanau (family) with the identification of those killed. This is done with karakia (prayer) and manaakitanga (full support) to the whanau (family).

Victim Support New Zealand has a Memorandum of Understanding with the New Zealand Police and part of this agreement is to ensure that a relationship exists between each area Service Coordinator and Police Iwi Liaison Officers. The Iwi Liaison Officers are specifically appointed to each Police area.

These Police Officers have a wealth of knowledge about their communities especially Maori and more often than not have access to kaumatua (elders) from each marae who will assist them when dealing with Maori issues. This is another strategy Victim Support New Zealand uses to ensure that issues for Maori are identified; victimisation of Maori is reduced and referrals by Maori to Victim Support continues to happen.

A strong relationship with Maori agencies working within each community is another strategy that Victim Support will utilise to ensure Maori victims are being supported appropriately. Building these relationships can also be a key source for inter agency referrals and in some cases recruitment of Maori volunteer support workers.

The strategies I have spoken about have been very successful and have opened a number of doors for Victim Support services to be accepted by Maori.

In my district, I can confidently state that there has been an increase in Maori Volunteer Support Workers; there is an increase in self referrals by Maori to Victim Support and the establishment and building of relationships between Maori agencies and Victim Support has increased. This can only improve our services to Maori and encourage greater interaction with Maori.

I am a Maori woman and very proud of my heritage and culture. I get great satisfaction working for Victim Support New Zealand and more so being able to work with my people. Being able to work with Maori to identify issues and having the resources available to resolve these issues is very important.

Being able to build trust and confidence in our services for Maori is paramount and having trained Volunteer Support Workers and staff who can advocate for Maori and their rights is of high priority.

I don't have all the answers for these issues but I do know that keeping things simple by;

- Recruiting and training Maori Volunteer Support Workers
- Encouraging kaumatua (elders) to be advisors for Maori tikanga (customs) on Local Group Committees
- Interaction with Maori agencies and building strong relationships to encourage referrals
- Advocating for Maori victims on their rights
- Acknowledging the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi

These strategies have been tested and there is evidence to show that there is now a difference in the way that Maori see Victim Support services in New Zealand.

I believe that we need to embrace our cultural heritage and by having awareness and even a good understanding of Maori and their tikanga (customs), we will truly appreciate the beauty of the culture of the Maori people of Aotearoa (New Zealand).

I would like to finish with a whakatauki (proverb) that will appropriately wrap up my presentation.

*‘Ko te manu e kai ana i te miro, nona te ngahere
Ko te manu e kai ana i te matauranga, nona te Ao’*

*‘The bird that partakes of the miro berry, theirs is the forest
The bird that partakes of learning, theirs is the world’*

No reira, huri noa i to tatou marae, tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.