

Kā mihi / Acknowledgements

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Publications from research:

Meredith, C., McKerchar, C., & Lacey, C. (2023). Indigenous approaches to perinatal mental health: a systematic review with critical interpretive synthesis. *Archives of women's mental health*, 26(3), 275-293.

Meredith, C., McKerchar, C., Haitana, T., & Pitama, S. (2024). Whāia Te Iti kahurangi: seeking perinatal mental health equity. Māori offer solutions for the health system. *Mental health & prevention*, 36, 200362.

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Meredith, C., Haitana, T., McKerchar, C., & Pitama, S. (2025). Kota-hitanga—connection, unity, and belonging: perspectives of Māori mothers on a kaupapa Māori group intervention for perinatal mental health. *AlterNative: an international journal of indigenous peoples*, 11771801251334500.

Meredith, C., Haitana, T., McKerchar, C., & Pitama, S. (2025). "They were my anchors" Māori with perinatal mental illness identify culturally safe and clinically excellent health care. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 24(1), 1-12.

Meredith, C. *Tau mai te mana, te tapu, te ihi: Arohia te reo o ō tātou whaea*: Listening to the expertise of Māori mothers on perinatal mental health care (Doctoral dissertation, University of Otago).



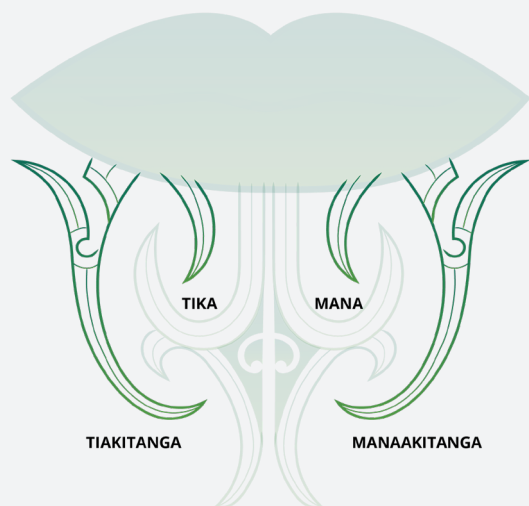
This brochure summarises the results of Cara Meredith's PhD research exploring Māori māmā's experiences of perinatal mental health.

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**Tau mai te mana, te tapu, te ihi:
Arohia te reo o ō tātou whaea**

Recommendations for perinatal mental health care informed by the expertise of Māori and birthing parents.



The knowledge and expertise shared by Māori mothers and birthing parents has been gathered and woven together and depicted within a moko kauae – a symbol of mana wāhine.

Four common threads or **pou within the kauae** depict four guiding principles for the perinatal mental health system:

Tiakitanga is the concept of protection, of guardianship. Describes how clinicians and Kaupapa Māori approaches work within the perinatal health system to protect and advocate for Māori whānau.

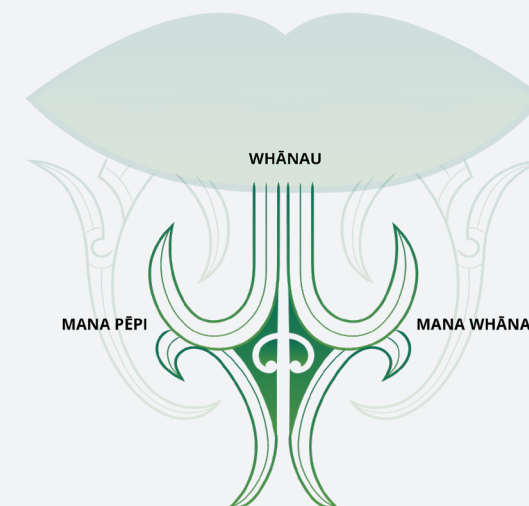
Manaakitanga is a concept of care and outlines how the health system needs to offer manaakitanga through supporting the workforce via levers such as increased investment, resourcing, provision of more Kaupapa Māori services, and cultural safety education. With this manaakitanga in place the workforce would then be supported to in turn, offer manaakitanga to birthing parents.

Tika embodies doing things that are right, in the right way and in the right order, recognising that when things are done right/are tika, the pathway is clear for wellness.

Mana alludes to prioritising perinatal mental health within the health system, thus elevating the mana of Māori mothers and birthing parents.

Whānau

Embedded throughout the moko kauae are the dimensions of whānau, articulated as mana pēpi, mana wāhine, and mana whānau. Facets of whānau embedded throughout the moko kauae illustrate the importance of ensuring perinatal services are truly whānau centred.



Recommendations for a whānau centred perinatal mental health system:

Whānau centred approaches require the health system to work across sectors, avoiding a siloed approach to health. Whānau-centred also means that priorities around health and well-being are defined by whānau themselves.

This dimension of the kauae illustrates how if the health system listens to the expertise of Māori and ensures that the four pou of tiakitanga, tika, mana, and manaakitanga are in place, then positive impacts will be evident for:

Mana Pēpi: Infant mental health outcomes and well-being across the life course

Mana Wāhine: Perinatal mental health outcomes for Māori mothers with positive impacts on wider health outcomes, well-being, and parenting

Mana Whānau: The well-being of the whole whānau - whānau stability, inclusive and equitable health access for all whānau

Tiakitanga

Urgently address inequity for whānau Māori in perinatal mental health by:

- Expanding care options for all
- Ensuring universal screening and assessment
- Extending support from conception to five years
- Monitoring equity of access for whānau Māori
- Researching long-term economic benefits in Aotearoa

Mana

Increase investment to rebalance perinatal health so it no longer privileges non-Māori by:

- Expanding the perinatal workforce, especially Māori
- Building workforce capacity and capability through education
- Targeting and supporting Kaupapa Māori services to provide whānau-centred care

Tika

End perinatal mental health inequity by ensuring respectful, trauma-informed, culturally responsive care through:

- Equitable access to community and specialist services
- Māori leadership and partnership across the health system
- Workforce accountability to cultural safety with mandatory training and audits
- Active Te Tiriti o Waitangi accountability through equity monitoring

Manaakitanga

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