

Mental Health  
Awareness Week  
21-27 September

mhaw.nz  
#MHAWNZ

## Maea Te Toi Ora: Māori Health Transformations

Kingi, T.K., Durie, M., & Elder, H., et al. (2018). HUIA.

This publication comes at a time when there is considerable public and political concern regarding the quality and effectiveness of mental health and related services in New Zealand. Each day it seems that in the national media there is concern about the rate of youth suicide in Aotearoa, the abuse of children in the community and in state care, the rising rate and cost of imprisonment and criminal reoffending, the need for legal and justice reform, the inadequacies of meeting the needs of clients through the Family Court, abuse of mental health patients and prisoners' rights and torture of people under state care and protection, and the abuse of people in dementia care units, many who are there without the person's concerned informed consent.

These matters disproportionately affect Māori, and it is important for all of us to understand the issues that currently face many government and non-government agencies involved in developing and leading policy and funding decisions, legislative reform, and monitoring the adequacy and effectiveness of service delivery. We also need to understand how a healthy mental health service should look and engage with clients and families, especially Māori.

Māori are global citizens connected through digital communication and involvement in global matters, especially since the development of the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples Rights, which the New Zealand government has signed. Māori are also now active travellers across the world establishing their own relationships with whānau and significant others wherever they live, work or socialise.

This publication documents the developments that have occurred in the development of Māori models of mental health practice and delivery and mental health research since the 1980s and also looks back on the historical engagement of Māori in mental health services either as patients or as members of the mental health workforce.



This publication would be of interest to those involved in the study and practice of mental health but there are areas where a wider perspective could have been given. I believe knowledge of mental health and the detection and triage of mild to severe mental illnesses should be part of the skill set of any well-trained professional person working in any health, justice, social service, employment, recreational and sport group, or charitable or church organisation. It's expected that both mental distress and mental illness, mild to severe, will increase in the coming years, becoming a major public health issue due to rapid social, economic, cultural and political transformational changes in the years ahead.

An opportunity was missed with this publication in leading the direction for the future, even if only a broad picture was painted, so that some sort of map could be seen. This picture or image could then have provided a focal point of discussion and reference, and then people who have experienced the use of mental health and related services could contribute, and their families, significant others and workmates, friends and different communities could contribute, so that the ownership of mental health and wellbeing is a community and societal responsibility, not just the domain of those who are masters and mistresses of their craft. Transformational change occurs by interaction, reaction, dialogue and a commitment by way of action for change.

This book should be available to be read and used in any health, justice and social service agency in New Zealand, especially for non-Māori working and engaging with tangata whenua.



#### **Reviewed by Dr Lorna Dyll, QSM**

The Mental Health Foundation's Information Service brings you reviews as part of the Good Reads feature for Mental Health Awareness Week. To view more go to <https://mhaw.nz/>

