

**Recognising
and
Responding
to *Stalking*
and *Coercive
Control*:**

*A Kaupapa Māori
Resource Guide
For Whānau Māori
Experiencing
Stalking &
*Coercive Control**

This guide is informed by the lived experiences of **whānau Māori affected by stalking**.

It is designed to reflect Te Ao Māori understandings and increase knowledge and awareness for improved safety and wellbeing

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What is Stalking?

Stalking is repeated, intentional, unwanted behaviour that is designed to cause distress, harm or fear for a person's safety or the safety of others they care about.

These behaviours can be ongoing or sporadic and may involve someone known to the person (e.g. a current or ex-partner) or someone unknown (stranger).

When the person is known, the stalking can often intersect with other forms of relational violence and coercive control behaviours, all of which **impact wāhine Māori at disproportionate rates.**

Research suggests that **Māori, LGBTQIA+**, and **neurodiverse individuals** are more likely to become victims of online harm, including digital stalking; and wāhine Māori experience higher rates of intimate partner violence (IPV) and stalking compared to other ethnic groups.



Recognising the signs of Stalking and Coercive Control:

Stalking behaviours can often be categorised into four main areas. These behaviours can be varied, seemingly small, subtle, covert or overt and take different forms across cultures and communities.



Surveillance

1

Following, watching or monitoring the victim (in-person, online, via social media, GPS tracking etc).

2

Getting others (friends, family members, strangers etc) **to watch and monitor** the victim.

3

Loitering or appearing in places the victim is known to frequent (home, workplace, schools etc)

4

Checking phone, bank, online activities.

5

Utilising Apps and spyware to locate and monitor.

Intimidation *And* Violence

1

Physical attacks

on victim and/or family member, friend, pet.

Damaging property.

2

3

Breaking in or trespassing on property.

Threats to harm

victim and/or loved ones, pets.

4

5

Threats to harm themselves.

Blackmail threats to spread rumours.

6

7

Threats to interfere with custody, employment, finances.

Harassment *And* Life Invasion

1

Unwanted phone calls, texts, online messaging, posting.

2

Showing up uninvited or where victim may be.

3

Leaving notes, gifts.

4

Hacking into victim's accounts.

5

Harassment lawsuits or using statutory agencies against the victim

(e.g. making false reports of concern to Ministry for Children or Police).

6

'Doxing' – they post your personal information publicly.

Reputational Damage

1 Spreading rumours about the victim.

2 Impersonating victim online.

3

Ruining reputation, publicly shaming, humiliating or objectifying victim.

4

‘Revenge porn’ – image-based abuse: sharing private or intimate photos or videos.

5

Sabotaging financial security, incurring debt in victim’s name.

6

Sabotaging access to housing, schooling, medical, spiritual supports.

Stalking includes a wide range of threatening and disturbing behaviours...

with many stalkers utilising a combination of behaviours that may be crimes themselves (i.e. damaging property, witness intimidation) whilst also engaging in other tactics that in isolation would not be considered crimes (i.e. leaving gifts and messaging friends on social media).

Because of the many and varied ways stalking can occur, **often whānau may not use the word “stalking” or recognise that what they may be experiencing** are forms of stalking and coercive control.

Stalking Within Māori Culture:

Stalking was not a normalised or accepted part of traditional Māori culture, and it shouldn't now ever be tolerated, dismissed or minimised.

Tikanga Māori, and in-particular the practice of **Āta**,ⁱⁱ gives us many examples of how to grow and maintain respectful relationships.

Āta is a cultural tool shaped to inform and guide understandings of relational ways of being, negotiating boundaries, and creating and holding safe space.

Where stalking and coercive violence are occurring, it is important to understand that a significant and dangerous imbalance in relationship is present.

Understanding that what is occurring, that the stalking behaviour, is not normal or ok is a significant first step. The second step is working out what to do about it.

Using Āta as a guide, below are some ideas that may assist with improving safety:

Āta Rongo

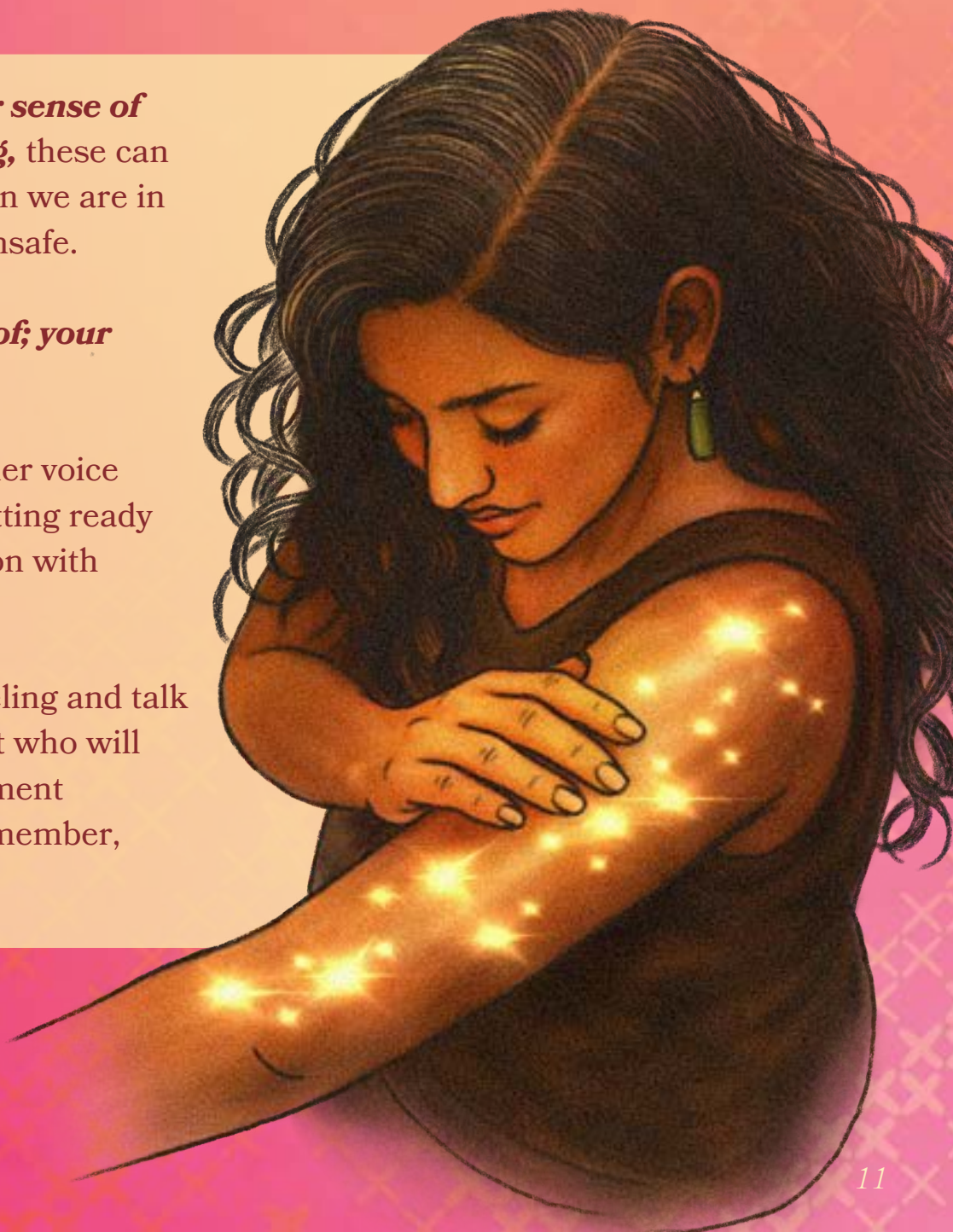
*Trust yourself,
never blame
yourself*

Listen to your inner sense of feeling and knowing, these can help to guide us when we are in situations that are unsafe.

You don't need proof; your instinct is valid.

Listening to your inner voice is the first step in getting ready to start a conversation with someone else.

Acknowledge the feeling and talk to someone you trust who will listen without judgement (i.e. friend, whānau member, school counsellor)





Finding the words to describe what is going on can be hard – ***you don't need to have it all figured out before you reach out.***

Safe and trusted people to talk to might include a whānau member, kaumātua, team mate, Kaupapa Māori provider.

If speaking feels too hard, try writing it down first.

This way you can practice what you might want to say.

You could start with just a text to someone you trust.

Āta Kōrero

*Speak up, don't
keep secrets,
because violence
loves silence*



Āta Haere

Strategize and plan

The first step in making a plan is knowing yourself first. Know the schedules and networks, routines and activities for you and your whānau, to identify and anticipate vulnerabilities.

Think about who has access to your location, who knows your passwords to your accounts, what routines need to vary.

What whānau or community activities do you have planned? What might you need to adapt or change?

A safety plan doesn't have to be perfect – small steps matter. start with one thing you can action today. A safety provider can assist with safety planning support; you don't need to be in immediate danger to get help.

It is helpful to keep a log and ask a trusted person to keep one for you as well.

This can be useful when applying for a **Protection Order** or pursuing legal pathways.

A log might include key details such as dates, times, what happened, any witnesses, photos of items left or screenshots of messages.

Phone call logs and voicemails recorded.

You don't need 'enough' incidents before it matters.

Patterns matter, even small ones.

They may seem infrequent or insignificant incidents in isolation, but a record log helps tell the story.

Āta Tuhi

*Get organised,
record what's
happened*



Āta Tohutohu

Know your Rights



It is easier to recognise the signs that something is not right, that the advice, entitlement or service you are being offered is correct or incorrect if you have an awareness of your own rights first.

Some of your key rights include:

- To be safe in your own home
- To apply for Protection Order

- To have culturally appropriate support
- To have a support person with you in any meeting with Police or services.

If possible, always take a support person, accountability is more likely when there are others to witness and hold people to account.

Āta Whakaako

Make safety conversations a normal part of whānau life



This is especially important with tamariki and mokopuna.

Get them thinking about who are the safe people and where are the safe places in their community.

Ask ‘what if’ questions.

E.g. ‘What if someone tries to give you a cool gift?’ or ‘What if someone messages you on a game app?’

Keep the language calm and matter-of-fact, you’re building their safety knowledge, not their fear.

For older tamariki and rangatahi, talk specifically about online safety, who can see their location, who they accept requests from or if someone direct messages them.

Āta Titiro

*Look into all
your options*

Spend regular time looking around where you live, work and play.

It is important to remain observant and take note of different faces, sounds and the feelings of a place.

Look into and explore your options. You can talk confidentially with a safety provider who can help walk you through the steps of getting a ***Protection Order***.

You do not need a lawyer to apply for a Protection Order, though one can help.

Community Law Centres across Aotearoa provide free advice.



Tikanga and how it is applied through all that we do, keeps us thinking about the right ways to do something.

Remember Tikanga is here to help us not hinder us.

If you are unsure about what tikanga can be applied, talk to your **local Kaupapa Māori safety provider.**

They should assist you to explore **mahi haumaruru** (safety ideas) **rāhui** (protective restrictions) and **whakarauora** (healing activities).

To find a Kaupapa Māori safety provider near you search **'Kaupapa Māori family violence support [your region]'**.

Āta Mahi
Tikanga can be your best friend

Āta Whakaae

Empower yourself and your whānau to make decisions that are right for you

Stalking and coercive control are designed to make you feel like you have no choices.

That is not true, and it is not your fault.

At its core, intentional harm through stalking and coercive control is about power and control of others.

Don't underestimate your ability to empower yourself and your whānau with the authority to consent and make decisions for your own wellbeing and healing.

If decision-making feels impossible right now, that is a sign of how effective the coercive control has been — not a sign of weakness.

Start small, one decision a day that is yours alone, no matter how minor.



It is not your responsibility to make others change their behaviour.

The responsibility is ***theirs*** and of those around that person to tell them to stop, that their behaviour is not Tika or acceptable.

Safety is a collective community responsibility.

If you are a whānau member, friend, or a community member who suspects someone is experiencing stalking or coercive control — ***say something.***

You don't need proof.

Reach out to them privately, believe them, and help connect them to support.

Collective safety means our marae, our schools, our workplaces all taking responsibility — not leaving it to individuals to manage alone.

Check in regularly.

Sometimes just knowing someone is aware and cares can make the difference.

Āta Hoki Māriri

*You and your
whānau have
a right to live
a good life*



How To Get Help



There are Kaupapa Māori safety services throughout Aotearoa that can help you work through this, to find a directory of services in your area visit -

<https://www.justice.govt.nz/family/family-violence/services-for-family-violence/safety-and-wellbeing-for-you-and-your-children/find-a-safety-service-or-safety-programme/>

Or search

‘Kaupapa Māori family violence support [your region]’

There are also national support services such as:

Women's Refuge

(free, 24/7)



0800 733 843

1737 Need To Talk



Free call or text 1737
24 hours a day

Are You OK?

(family violence helpline)



Call 0800 456 450

Shine

(family violence helpline)



Call 0508 744 6332



or chat online
www.2shine.org.nz



24/7 support,
information and
support for safety
and wellbeing.

Shakti Aotearoa



Call 0800 SHAKTI
(0800 742 584)



or email
crisisline@shakti.org.nz



24/7 multilingual helpline
for migrant and refugee
women facing violence.

For Online Abuse

NETSAFE



0508 638 723



or text 4282

For Legal Advice

Community Law



communitylaw.org.nz

If you do decide to seek help, it's important to explain whether the stalker is part of your whānau/relationship (Family Violence context) or outside of it (Harassment Act context).

Family Violence Act: You can apply for a [Protection Order](#) if you have experienced relational violence and need ongoing protection.

Harassment Act: You can apply for a [Restraining Order](#) if stalking is not part of family violence.

Kia kaha rā, any of these pathways can be difficult, time-consuming, and stressful but making a decision to take the first step is a significant achievement – whaia te ara ora.

A hand is shown holding the top edge of a laptop. The laptop screen displays text in a dark red, serif font. The text is arranged in a blocky, slightly curved layout. Below the main heading, there is a line of text and a URL. The laptop keyboard is visible at the bottom of the frame.

For more information
and national support
organisations,

See the Auckland Women's Centre's
stalking-response guide:

[awc.org.nz/stalking-response-support-
services/](http://awc.org.nz/stalking-response-support-services/)

For Whānau, Community Members and Practitioners:

Recognise that stalking and coercive control are dangerous, can take many forms, and can escalate quickly.

Wāhine experiencing these forms of violence can feel overwhelmed and exhausted, and they have often already taken many steps to de-escalate, minimize and eliminate this behaviour from their whānau lives.

So, if they are voicing concern to you, take it seriously and recognise that they are help-seeking.

Life-long impacts of structural and societal violence have produced experiences of systemic failure across sectors leaving whānau Māori marginalised and at risk.

Current research emphasises the extra challenges for wāhine Māori with regards to stalking, these include being believed and receiving meaningful help that fits their needs. As a result, wāhine Māori may present and respond to violence and trauma differently.

They may present as distrusting, angry, frustrated, or appear apathetic or use humour to distract and minimise the situation to not appear fearful.

Recognise that they are the experts of their own lives and that each whānau member may be at various stages of understanding, survival, recovery, healing and development. Before action and safety planning begins, it is important to understand 3 central elements of a Kaupapa Māori approach to trauma and healing.
(next page)

Kāti te Patu Ngākau:

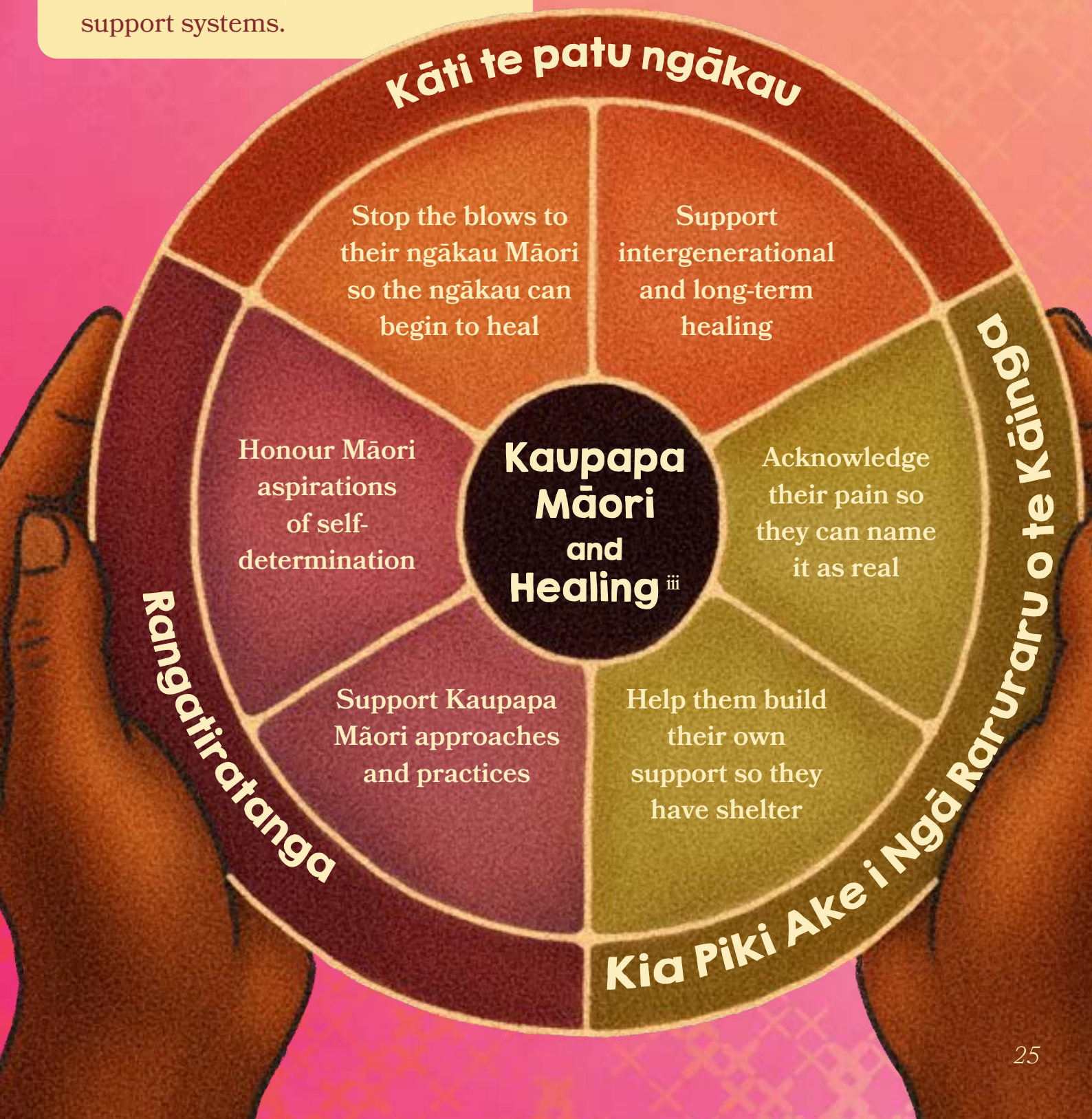
It is critical that there be a focus on stopping the violence and behaviour associated with that.

Kia Piki Ake i Ngā Raruraru o te Kāinga:

Ensuring that there is an acknowledgement of the pain and impact. Supporting whānau to rebuild their whare (household) as a safe space and to have support.

Rangatiratanga:

Honour the self-determination of the whānau to make decisions and to access Kaupapa Māori support systems.



Tikanga Māori, cultural teachings and practices can be protective factors which support strength-based interventions and healing.

So it is vital to understand local community contexts, whānau dynamics and to leverage and utilise cultural and community strengths.

Recognise that for wāhine Māori the level of fear, the type of assistance and the need for resource may vary over time based on the stalking behaviour. The dynamics can be complex and sometimes out of their control.

Some wāhine may be required to maintain contact e.g. if they have shared custody or they may not be easily able to disengage from the stalker as they may have roles in maintaining tikanga or activities on the marae.

Whether by choice, circumstance or institutional entrapment, their decisions should be respected. Acknowledge the significant step they have taken in seeking help and recognise that you as the ‘helper’ may also need to seek help yourself.

Addressing these forms of violent behaviours and creating long-term safety can often require the input of multiple individuals and organisations that specialise in safety planning.

References

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- iii. *Pihama et al. (2020). He Oranga Ngākau: Māori Approaches to Trauma Informed Care.*



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