Mental Health and Addictions
Pacific Cultural Practice Framework for the Auckland Region

A report for the Moana Pasefika Working Group and the Northern District Support Agency
Acknowledgements

The Moana Pasefika Working Group, Northern District Health Board Support Agency (NDSA) and the authors of the Report wish to acknowledge:

Siosinita Alofi, whose 2007 report “The Role of Pacific Island Community Support Workers in Mental Health Services (ADHB)” provided an important reference document for this project.

Natalie Keger, Counties Manukau DHB who provided invaluable support to get the project started.

This report was prepared by Paula Parsonage, Health & Safety Developments and Lealofi Siu, Counties Manukau District Health Board in 2008 on behalf of the Northern District Support Agency.
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Introduction

Pacific Mental Health and Addictions services in the Waitemata, Auckland and Counties Manukau District Health Boards’ catchment areas employ staff in a range of Pacific cultural roles. These roles have emerged over time in response to local community needs and the titles, nature and function of the roles vary. A practice framework for these roles has not previously been defined and the scope of the roles is not easily communicated to consumers, families, other professionals and the general public.

The Northern District Health Board Support Agency (NDSA), on behalf of the Auckland metropolitan DHBs and in collaboration with Moana Pasifika, initiated a project to define a practice framework for Pacific cultural roles within the mental health and addictions sector.

Paula Parsonage, Health & Safety Developments, was contracted to undertake the project in partnership with Counties Manukau DHB project managers Lealofi Siö and Natalie Leger.

This report provides a full account of the project goal, objectives, processes and findings. It includes a mental health and addictions Pacific cultural practice framework for the Auckland metropolitan region that is supported by stakeholders. Recommendations are provided in relation to this framework.
The Project

Project goal

The overall goal of the project was to develop a Pacific Cultural worker practice framework for the Pacific Mental Health and Addictions Sector in the Auckland Metropolitan region.

Project objectives

- To identify relevant Pacific cultural roles existing in the DHB and Non-Government Organisations (NGO) Mental Health and Addictions sector within Waitemata, Auckland and Counties Manukau DHBs and their contracted NGO services
- To identify and consult key stakeholders of Waitemata, Auckland and Counties Manukau DHBs and their contracted NGO services in further defining the Pacific Cultural Worker role and the elements of a practice framework
- To develop and consult with stakeholders on a discussion document which:
  - further defines the Pacific Cultural Worker role, establishing key areas of agreement regarding the body of knowledge and range of practice activities covered by the role
  - presents a framework for practice, and
  - recommends further actions as appropriate
- To present a final report including consultation feedback and recommendations for a way forward for Pacific Cultural Workers working within Pacific mental health and addictions services within Waitemata, Auckland and Counties Manukau DHBs and their contracted NGO services

Project processes

The following processes were undertaken in order to achieve the project aim and objectives:

- A project steering group was formed to guide and monitor the project. Members of the Moana Pasifika working group acted in the capacity of a Project Steering Group. Members are listed in Appendix 1
- Key stakeholders were invited to participate in the project. Stakeholders included representatives of all Pacific mental health and addictions services in the Auckland metropolitan region. Participating organisations and groups are listed in Appendix 2
- Review of selected literature and documentation was undertaken. This included recently published review material, web-based documentation, relevant key documents such as position and service descriptions and related data as available
Focus groups and interviews (six in total) were undertaken to identify issues relevant to role definition and elements of a practice framework. Participants included representatives of the following Pacific mental health and addictions stakeholder groups: consumers, Matua, Peer-support workers, Cultural assessor/advisors, Cultural workers, Community support workers, Youth workers, Community living services workers, Service managers and Team leaders.

A discussion document was developed, based on the findings of 3 and 4 above and disseminated in June 2008 for consultation to all those who had participated in the development of the paper and others who had expressed interest. Selected extracts from this document are provided in Appendix 3. Feedback was invited via email, telephone and in person (by arrangement).

Feedback was gathered at five further meetings: a project feedback meeting advertised in the discussion document; Matua advisory council; CMDHB Pacific stakeholder meeting; meeting with Le Va team; Regional Pacific forum. Feedback was provided via email by two people and one provided feedback in person.

The Framework

The framework has been revised on the basis of feedback and is outlined in summary form as shown in Table 1 followed by a description outlining scope of the role, qualification and authority.

The framework is underpinned by the following:

- Polutu-Endemann et al., (2007). Seitapu Pacific Mental Health and Addiction Cultural & Clinical Competencies Framework (Seitapu), and
- Ministry of Health, (2007). Let’s get real: Real Skills for Real People Working in Mental Health and Addictions (Let’s get real)

The practice framework incorporates the three key roles: Matua (working in mental health and addictions services); Specialist Pacific Cultural Worker and Pacific Cultural Worker.

Seitapu outlines four key dimensions of Pacific cultural competence for mental health and addictions workers: language, family; tapu relationships and organisational policy. Three levels of competence are described for each dimension: basic, advanced and specialist. Let’s get real outlines competencies expected of every mental health and addictions professional. Each of the seven competencies has three sets of performance indicators: essential, practitioner and leader.

In combination, these documents outline the knowledge and skill base for Pacific cultural practice in mental health and addictions.[2]

[1] Note: the framework will be updated to reflect the final version of Let’s get real when this is available.

[2] Details regarding the nature and purpose of a practice framework are outlined in the Discussion document in Appendix 3, along with a number of issues and considerations relevant to the framework. These details are not repeated in the body of this report.
Table 1: THE MENTAL HEALTH and ADDICTIONS, PACIFIC CULTURAL PRACTICE ROLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLE</th>
<th>BODY OF KNOWLEDGE</th>
<th>QUALIFICATIONS</th>
<th>AUTHORISED BY</th>
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| Matua                       | • Pacific cultural values knowledge and skills - language, family; tapu relationships and organisational policy (Seitapu)  
                            | • Mental health and addictions core skills (Let’s get real)                       | • Seitapu: Specialist level; extensive experience in one/more Pacific cultures; recognition by community  
                            |                                                                               | • Let’s get real: Essential or Leader level                                      | Panel: Representatives of the Pacific community including Matua, consumer, family member |
| Specialist Pacific Cultural Worker | • Pacific cultural values, knowledge and skills - language, family; tapu relationships and organisational policy (Seitapu)  
                                       | • Mental health and addictions core skills (Let’s get real)                       | • Seitapu: Specialist level; experience of one/more Pacific cultures               |                                                                                   | Panel: Matua, consumer, family member, Specialist Pacific Cultural Worker |
| Pacific Cultural Worker     | • Pacific cultural values, knowledge and skills - language, family; tapu relationships and organisational policy (Seitapu)  
                            | • Mental health and addictions core skills (Let’s get real)                       | • Seitapu: Advanced level; experience of one or more Pacific cultures             |                                                                                   | Panel: Matua, consumer, family member, Specialist Pacific Cultural worker |
                                                                 |                                                                                  | • Let’s get real: Essential level                                                |                                                                                  |                                                                                  |
Matua

Scope of the role

Matua utilise wisdom and extensive ethnocultural knowledge along with an understanding of mental health and addictions services to ensure service responsiveness and accountability to Pacific peoples. The involvement of Matua is essential if excellence is to be achieved in any Pacific initiative. The status of Matua enables them to advocate for Pacific peoples and challenge practices that are inappropriate for Pacific peoples.

Matua provide a vital link between services and Pacific families demonstrating strong cultural identity and cultural fluency (including language fluency) in one or more Pacific cultures.

Matua contribute to mental health and addictions services within the following key dimensions:

• Assisting to engage and retain Pacific consumers and families within treatment processes to support recovery
• Leading formal occasions within services
• Guiding, advising and supporting service development in all matters relating to Pacific values, processes, traditions and protocols and cultural safety
• Developing and supporting the Pacific mental health and addictions workforce, contributing to a supportive environment for practice

Matua attain their cultural knowledge, skills and wisdom through Pacific experience and have earned the acknowledgement and respect of Pacific communities. Key areas of the knowledge and skills required by Matua working in mental health and addictions services are outlined in Seitapu and Let’s get real.

Qualifications

Matua are qualified for working within the context of mental health and addictions services via their extensive experience of one or more Pacific cultures and recognition by their community i.e. as expressed in the position they hold in the community such as Justice of the Peace, or minister. Matua demonstrate specialist competencies as defined within the Seitapu and essential or leader competencies outlined in Let’s get real.

Authority

Competency to fulfil a Matua role within the context of mental health and addictions services is determined by the Pacific community including, but not limited to, consumer and family representatives and other Matua.

Matua advice on policy and practices concerning:

• Cultural protocols and processes
• Cultural support for Pacific people and their families
• Cultural assessment
• Community engagement
• Intersectoral relationships
Specialist Pacific Cultural Worker

Scope of the role

Specialist Pacific Cultural Workers utilise ethnocultural knowledge and judgment along with an understanding of mental health and addictions treatment to assess cultural needs and provide effective cultural interventions and/or advice to assist Pacific consumers and families to manage recovery from mental illness and/or addiction.

Cultural practice by Specialist Pacific Cultural Workers is undertaken with the guidance of Matua, in accordance with Pacific values, adopting a holistic treatment approach. Comprehensive cultural assessments are undertaken to provide a basis for developing, implementing and evaluating effective cultural intervention plans, in the context of mental health and addictions treatment.

Specialist Pacific Cultural Workers practice in collaboration with other health and cultural professionals and community members, in a range of settings in partnership with families, individuals and communities.

The knowledge and skills utilised by Specialist Pacific Cultural Workers are detailed in Seitapu and Let’s get real.

Qualifications

Specialist Pacific Cultural Workers must demonstrate specialist competencies as defined within the Seitapu and essential competencies outlined in Let’s get real.

The typical minimum qualification set of a Specialist Pacific Cultural Worker will include extensive experience of one or more Pacific cultures and a National Certificate in Mental Health (either completed or in progress) or a certificate in AOD Studies at a minimum level 5 on the New Zealand Qualification Authority – National Qualifications Framework.

Authority

The competency of a Specialist Pacific Cultural Worker must be assessed by a panel consisting of a Matua (from the same ethnic community), a Pacific consumer, a Pacific family member and a competent Specialist Pacific Cultural Worker.
Pacific Cultural Worker

**Scope of the role**

Pacific Cultural workers utilise ethno-cultural knowledge and judgment and understanding of mental health and addictions treatment to assess cultural needs and provide effective cultural interventions and/or advice to assist Pacific consumers and families to manage recovery from mental illness and/or addictions.

Cultural practice by Pacific Cultural workers is undertaken with the guidance of Matua, in accordance with Pacific values, adopting a holistic treatment approach. Comprehensive cultural assessments are undertaken to provide a basis for developing, implementing and evaluating effective cultural intervention plans, in the context of mental health and addictions treatment.

Pacific Cultural workers practice in collaboration with other health and cultural professionals and community members, in a range of settings in partnership with families, individuals and communities.

The knowledge and skills utilised by Pacific Cultural Workers are detailed in Seitapu and Let’s get real.

**Qualifications**

Pacific Cultural Workers must demonstrate advanced competencies within the Seitapu framework and essential competencies outlined in Let’s get real.

The typical minimum qualification set of a Specialist Pacific Worker will include experience of one or more Pacific cultures and a National Certificate in Mental Health (either completed or in progress) or a certificate (diploma) in AOD Studies at a minimum level 5 on the New Zealand Qualification Authority – National Qualifications Framework.

**Authority**

At a minimum the competency of a Pacific Cultural Worker must be assessed by a panel consisting of a Matua (from the same ethnic community), a Pacific consumer, a Pacific family member and a competent Specialist Pacific Cultural Worker.
The Feedback

Feedback has been collated and analysed to determine key themes. These are discussed below.

Support for development of a framework

Overall, there is strong support for development of a Pacific mental health and addictions cultural practice framework for the Auckland region. Stakeholders were almost unanimous in supporting a more formalised approach to defining Pacific cultural roles and specifying the body of knowledge and the qualifications relevant to the roles.

“I support the framework; I think it is a positive step forward. When I first started I had to make up the job myself. I am always explaining my role to our families.” [3]

Stakeholders highlighted the following key benefits of a practice framework:

• Supports understanding of the Pacific cultural roles for consumers and families, the Cultural workers themselves and other professionals
• Acknowledges the knowledge and skills of Pacific Cultural workers.
• Provides a clear statement of tasks/responsibilities relevant to the roles
• Provides a way forward to ensure that Pacific Cultural roles are visible, validated and accounted for in the National Services Framework
• Promotes professional accountability
• Supports consistency within the profession and across services
• Assists with protecting workers against role creep i.e. helps workers to practice within the scope of their designated roles
• May assist with defining parity in relation to other professions
• Could address structural barriers that keep cultural roles from being recognised
• Begins to address issues for the non-regulated workforce

It was noted that while the framework captures many of the relevant elements of a Pacific cultural practice framework it could benefit from being reviewed in detail with a view to bringing more of a Pacific flavour to the framework.

[3] Identities of those quoted have been withheld for privacy reasons
Mixed views on inclusion of Matua role in framework

Feedback indicates that there are different views regarding whether or not the Matua role should be included in a Pacific cultural practice framework.

A majority of stakeholders expressed strong support the inclusion of Matua in the framework and this view was endorsed by Matua themselves. Most stakeholders acknowledged the essential value that Matua add to Pacific service delivery and wish to ensure that the role is legitimised within the service delivery context.

“There is a need to value our Matua the same way in which they are valued in the islands. In New Zealand we need to work together with palagi therefore there is strong support for the framework as this demonstrates how Matua fit into the structure and design of services.”

Stakeholders noted the following key reasons for supporting the inclusion of Matua:

“It recognizes and acknowledges the Matua role as a required part of the team in Pacific mental health and addictions services. Matua are sometimes employed under other designations. Including Matua in a practice framework supports the legitimacy of the roles in their own right.”

“It will assist in improving the understanding of the Matua role in Pacific services. There is a need to develop a shared understanding of the Matua roles as they are applied within services. Currently Matua frequently have to explain and justify why they are part of Pacific service provision.”

“Matua need to be recognised in the way that Kaumatua are recognised as essential in services for Maori.”

“Inclusion of Matua in the framework is important for the current Cultural workers, as in 20-30 years many of these people could fulfil Matua roles. Future Matua will be different to current Matua as they will have formal professional qualifications, and will need to have learnt the cultural experience required for fulfilling the Matua role. It is important that the current workforce can see a future role as Matua if appropriate.”

“At present Matua roles, similar to consumer roles, are not necessarily recognised for the experience that they bring to services and the immeasurable value that they add to services.”

“Articulating the Matua role as distinct from other cultural roles is appropriate and necessary. The inclusion of Matua in the authority for the cultural worker roles means that Matua have already been recognized in the framework. Therefore they need to be recognized as a role as well.”
A smaller group of stakeholders expressed uncertainty regarding the inclusion of Matua in the framework.

“Are we trying to fit what doesn’t fit? Are we fitting moulds rather than developing moulds?”

Those who expressed this viewpoint appeared to be ambivalent about including Matua in the framework, i.e. they could see some merit in legitimising the role and in this way safeguarding the role within services, but they could also see that Matua roles are much broader than professional constructs and were concerned about demeaning the roles by inappropriately defining them as part of a professional practice framework.

“The role of Matua is much wider than just a profession or professional designation. Matua have status which is earned and they are appointed by their communities.”

A third viewpoint questioned the relevance of including Matua within services, especially when considering the service user population in 5-10 years time. The inclusion of Matua and some of the language in the framework particularly around “lived experience” was seen as failing to recognise the growing population of young New Zealand-born Pacific people who are the service users of the future.

“What will ‘lived experience’ of Pacific culture mean in 5-10 years? There is an implication that Matua are older. This could be seen as human rights discrimination. There could be dangers in heading down this track.”

Overall there is more support for including the Matua role within the framework therefore; this approach has been retained.

Diversity can be acknowledged within the framework

The issue of diversity cannot be overlooked in relation to Pacific consumers, families and the Pacific workforce and this issue was noted repeatedly by many stakeholders.

“It is not acceptable to lump us together in one Pacific word.”

Notwithstanding this there appears to be a level of consensus that shared Pacific values, beliefs, philosophies and connectedness form the basis on which it is possible to provide Pacific services. This is reflected in SeitaPu and carried through into the practice framework.

“You have to have strength in your culture and respect for the other ethnic groups. This is what it means to be culturally competent with other ethnic groups.”
More thinking required regarding qualifications

There was limited feedback regarding the proposed qualifications for each of the three roles.

Lived experience

The term “lived experience” was acceptable to some and unacceptable to others.

“Matua could achieve required qualifications, however this won’t have the necessary affiliations needed within their community. Emphasis needs to be on the lived experience rather than the qualifications.”

“Lived experience sounds so marginalised. It makes our culture sound like a disease.”

Some suggested that it was a necessary term as “lived experience” of a Pacific culture is a key factor in cultural competence. The opposing view is that “lived experience” usually relates to a disorder and is most often linked to consumer or peer workforce. In this way it is confusing and unhelpful.

It is of note that “lived experience” or “Pacific experience” is used to define levels of cultural competence in Seitapu. It is understood that at the time of writing this report the Seitapu competency framework is being aligned to Let’s get real. It appears that this alignment process will change the structure of the framework rather than the content; however it will be useful to align the language and terms in this framework with Seitapu. Meanwhile the term “lived-experience” has been replaced with “experience” in the framework.

Qualifications and authorisation of the framework for cultural worker roles

Some stakeholders were supportive of the inclusion of mental health and addictions certificates as recognised qualifications to underpin the framework, but overall there appears to be a need for further investigation of this. One suggestion was that there needs to be an audit of the curricula for existing mental health and addictions certificates and diplomas to determine whether they are sufficiently relevant to Pacific cultural workers. For the moment these qualifications have been retained in the framework.

A further suggestion is to incorporate more work-based assessment which would allow Pacific services to better determine appropriate knowledge and skills for Pacific cultural roles and the qualifying benchmarks associated with these. This would also allow for more consumer, family and peer participation in the assessment process.

Several stakeholders, including Matua noted that consumers need to be included in the authorising panel for the Matua role. This process has been actioned.
Qualifications and Matua

There is no consensus regarding qualifications for the Matua role. It was noted by some stakeholders that Matua are chosen by their communities and this endorsement from the community is the qualification for Matua.

“Matua could achieve required qualifications, however this won’t have the necessary affiliations needed within their community. Emphasis needs to be on the lived experience rather than the qualifications.”

“I don’t want to see us forcing Matua to get through qualifications.”

“Being a church minister should be added as a possible qualification for Matua.”

Some noted that stipulating formal qualifications for Matua may create a barrier for recruiting Matua. This was seen as undesirable given that it is already difficult to find Matua to support services.

“It isn’t easy for services to find Matua. These roles need to have earned the respect of their communities, understand genealogy, able to facilitate differences, spiritual knowledge and understanding is central to Matua role.”

Lived experience was seen as a key qualification for Matua. It was noted that there is an expectation that Matua will demonstrate knowledge and skills based more on lived experience than other cultural workers.

In consideration of the feedback, reference to mental health and addictions certificates has been removed from the specified qualifications for Matua in the framework.

No consensus regarding inclusion of Community Support Worker role

There is no current consensus regarding whether or not Community Support workers (CSWs) employed in Pacific specific services ought to be recognised as Pacific cultural roles.

“There are levels of cultural competency among CSWs but this is not really explicit at all.”

Some CSWs argue that they are doing the same job as cultural workers or advisors and that there is a need to recognise cultural skills over and above the CSW role. Those in this group are very keen to see Pacific CSW included as a role within this framework.

However, others argue that CSWs are an existing professional group nationally, and CSWs already operate within a practice framework which includes a clearly defined qualification pathway.
It was also suggested that adding further competency requirements to already complex and not well-remunerated roles would place an unfair burden on the Pacific CSW workforce.

At this point there is no clarity as to the inclusion of the CSW role in the practice framework. A fundamental issue is whether or not the roles of Pacific Cultural worker and CSW can be properly distinguished or whether they are largely the same roles with different titles. This issue requires further investigation. The implications of including CSW as an additional role in the framework need to be more fully determined.

**Discussion and Recommendations**

Overall there is a high level of support for the Auckland Pacific mental health and addictions practice framework. There appears to be support for utilising Seitapu and Let’s get real as underpinning documents for the practice framework.

Most stakeholders support the inclusion of Matua in the framework and Matua consulted during the course of this project welcome further definition and recognition of their roles.

While there is some debate about the relevance of the framework for future Pacific services at this stage, the practice framework is underpinned by an accepted cultural competency framework i.e., Seitapu. In the absence of other widely accepted formulations of Pacific cultural competence this appears to be an acceptable way forward.

There is further work to be done in making the framework more Pacific in its flavour. There is also further work to be done regarding the CSW role and in examining and further specifying the qualifications relevant to the three roles currently included in the practice framework.

**Recommendations**

In consideration of all of the contributions to this project the following recommendations are made:

1. That in principle, the mental health and addictions Pacific cultural practice framework is accepted by stakeholders within the Auckland region as an interim benchmark for competent Pacific cultural practice
2. That an implementation plan for the Pacific cultural practice framework is developed by stakeholders, led by Moana Pasefika
3. That planning, funding and contracting processes for Pacific mental health and addiction services reflect the mental health and addictions Pacific cultural practice framework
4. That the existing Pacific cultural workforce is actively supported where necessary to obtain the qualifications to meet the requirements of the mental health and addictions Pacific cultural practice framework

5. That there is further discussion with Pacific CSWs and those organisations employing CSWs to determine the implications of including the Pacific CSW role within this framework

6. That remuneration for Pacific Cultural roles is reviewed to ensure parity with other comparable roles

7. That the mental health and addictions Pacific cultural practice framework is:
   - Reviewed by a Pacific workforce development specialist with a view to providing a more Pacific flavour to the framework
   - Reviewed to align with the revised Seitapu framework when this becomes available
   - Further developed to include a workplace-based competency assessment process
   - Regularly reviewed to keep pace with the requirements of Pacific consumers and families over time

8. That the scope and function of Matua roles within mental health and addictions services are further defined
## Appendices

### Appendix 1

**Steering group members**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manu Fotu</td>
<td>Vaka Tautua Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johnny Siosi</td>
<td>Waitemata District Health Board</td>
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<td>Bruce Levi</td>
<td>Waitemata District Health Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lita Foliaki</td>
<td>Waitemata District Health Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Siale Foliaki</td>
<td>Counties Manukau District Health Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kirk Mariner</td>
<td>Counties Manukau District Health Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Francis Agnew</td>
<td>Auckland District Health Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Siobahn Mattich</td>
<td>TaPasefika PHO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emma Wood</td>
<td>Northern District Health Board Support Agency</td>
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# Appendix 2

## Participating groups and organisations

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<th>District Health Board</th>
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<tr>
<td>Consumers</td>
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<td>Regional</td>
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<td>Le Va Pacific Research, Information and Workforce Development</td>
<td>National</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matua Advisory Council</td>
<td>Waitemata DHB</td>
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What is a practice framework?

As used in this paper, a practice framework defines the various duties that may be provided by a professional and the limits of services/tasks the professional performs.

A practice framework begins to formally define a response to questions like:

- “Is the professional legitimately allowed to do [a professional task]?” and
- “Is the professional adequately prepared [educated/trained/experienced] to do it?”

A practice framework spells out: the nature of the role; the body of knowledge and core skills utilised to perform the role; the qualifications required for the role and the authority that endorses the role and framework.

A practice framework does not stand alone but must be located within a broader system which aims to improve consumer care and safety e.g., agency accreditation, sector standards, clinical guidelines, organisational policy, procedures and protocols etc. It also links to and raises other issues in relation to funding, workforce development, supervision and education.

Why develop a practice framework?

A practice framework would assist to make explicit what Pacific cultural workers do in their work so that consumers, families, employers, funders and cultural workers themselves more clearly understand the roles. It would support the fundamental responsibility of the professional community to protect the public, so the public know what to expect from those in the role and have some assurance that the professional is competent and suitably qualified to perform the role.

The Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (2003) provides for the regulation of some health practitioners in order to protect the public and has created some pressure to define the place of those health practitioners who currently do not fit within its auspices. Pacific cultural work practice in mental health and addictions is not governed by the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act.

[5] In this project a practice framework is best described as a “close cousin” of a scope of practice. The term scope of practice has not been used because it implies legal and professional requirements which are beyond the scope of a regional project such as this.
Key benefits of a practice framework can include:

- Provides a clear statement of tasks/responsibilities that a professional is properly qualified and skilled to perform thus supporting public understanding and accountability
- Supports consistency within a profession and across service provision
- Establishes a benchmark of knowledge and skills for entry level into a profession
- Assists with protecting professionals against “role creep” i.e. helps professionals not to work outside the scope of their practice
- May enable differentiation between the different levels of practice
- May assist with improving recognition of a profession and defining parity in relation to other professions.

A draft Pacific Cultural Practice Framework

A DRAFT Pacific Cultural Practice Framework for mental health and addictions services is outlined below for consideration and comment. It incorporates three key roles: Matua (working in mental health and addictions services); Specialist Pacific Cultural Worker; Pacific Cultural Worker. This framework is intended to be forward looking and clearly the implications require wide discussion and debate.

Discussion: issues for consideration in development of a practice framework

There are a range of issues and opinions regarding the merits and possibilities for developing a Pacific Cultural Practice Framework for mental health and addictions services. Key issues are outlined below.

Pacific cultural roles – what’s in a title?

“Cultural workers (whatever the title) belong to a community and must have the respect of the community.”

“The title is important.”

“There can be situations where there is a Pacific CSW and a Pacific Cultural Advisor in the same meeting – the role differences are not clear.”

The overlap between Pacific “cultural” roles (other than Matua) and their various titles was the subject of much discussion and debate in the development of this document. The roles identified include: Pacific Cultural Assessor Advisor, Pacific Cultural Advisor, Pacific Cultural Worker, and also (in designated Pacific services) Community Support Worker, Community Living Service Worker, Family Support Worker and Youth Worker. Many have noted that the body of knowledge and the core skills used in these roles is similar. There may be merit in finding a way to include all of these roles within one framework. This could make the roles easier for the community (including other professionals) to understand.
At this point there appears to be a level of consensus among participants that the following roles are “Pacific cultural roles”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLE TITLE</th>
<th>WHERE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matua</td>
<td>NGO Pacific services WDHB Pacific services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Cultural Assessor Advisor</td>
<td>WDHB Pacific services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Cultural Worker</td>
<td>ADHB child and youth services CMDHB child and youth services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While there is some consensus about the importance of Matua roles within mental health and addictions services there is debate as to whether or not Matua should be included within a Pacific Cultural Practice Framework.

“The role of Matua is much wider than just a profession or professional designation. Matua have status which is earned and they are appointed by their communities. There is an expectation that Matua have wisdom and experience that comes with age.”

“As a Matua the person can perform certain roles and advise as he sees fit. It is not up to the employer or team leader to cut across that and say – “no you are a CSW you are not an advisor, that is not part of your role.”

Some argue that it is vital to clearly define the breadth and depth of Matua positions when these are located within health services. Others argue that the role of Matua is already clearly understood in Pacific communities and attempting to define the role within a practice framework is demeaning and inappropriate. Status is given by the community, the community is the authority. This is particularly pertinent for Matua who are not necessarily employed as Matua.

The Moana Pasifika Working Group has considered these views and has determined that there is merit in further debate. The Working Group agrees that Matua roles within Pacific communities are well understood however, the group questions that this is also the case for Matua roles within health services. Additionally this practice framework attempts to promote expertise that is visible, valued and understood and this is important in relation to Matua roles within health services. For these reasons the draft framework includes Matua roles. This provides an opportunity for further consideration and feedback.

“There are levels of cultural competency among CSWs but this is not really explicit at all.”

A further area of debate relates to whether Community Support Workers (CSW) employed in Pacific specific services ought to be recognised as Pacific cultural roles. Some argue that cultural expertise should be formally recognised and that there is a need to recognise specialist skills over and above the CSW role. For example, language and understanding of cultural beliefs and practices.

However, it is also argued that CSWs are a professional group and already operate within a practice framework which includes a clearly defined qualification pathway. At this point the CSW role has not been included in the practice framework and this is an area for further consideration and feedback.
Diversity

“We are not in a position like Maori who despite their differences can call the cultural worker role by a Maori title – they can give it one Maori name and this is a good start to defining the role and making it understood. We can’t do that in Pacific – we would use different names, different titles. However, we can work from and emphasise our collective Pacific values.”

Diversity refers to ethnic differences and also to the lived experience of culture which can differ between Island born people and New Zealand born people etc.

Most of those who participated in the development of this document noted that the diversity within the Pacific community and the Pacific workforce impedes consensus on defining cultural competence and defining who is “legitimately allowed” to do which tasks. The question was frequently posed: “How can you measure competency in a culture that is different from your own?”

Some suggested that despite the diversity it is important to work from and emphasise a shared basis of Pacific cultural values.

The Seitapu framework offers a means to define competency even within the diversity that exists and provides the basis for a framework.

Those familiar with Seitapu were supportive of it being used as a basis for a practice framework. However, at this time Seitapu does not appear to be widely read by the Pacific workforce.

Cultural knowledge in the context of mental health and addictions work

“Culture is starting from self. Do I know me as a Tongan. Who named me and what is the meaning of my name. Where I come from in Tonga. Do I know my genealogy and so on. As a support worker or cultural worker when we approach family this is what they ask: where do you come from in Tonga, who are your parents and where do they come from and so on.

So the framework should be able to identify those and put that in the cultural competencies. I might know my culture well but I don’t know how to apply that to my work.”

There was general agreement that to be a Pacific Cultural Worker requires both knowledge of culture and knowledge of the technical content within the work context. A combination of the Seitapu competencies and the competencies outlined in Let’s Get Real: Real Skills for Real People Working in Mental Health and Addictions potentially define the knowledge and skill set required.

Qualifications

“We support each from our common base, our mental health experiences and issues. It is something that cannot be learnt from a textbook. By the same token, qualifications have their place. A degree, gives us some leverage and hopefully respect in the area we are going to work.”

The quote above captures the dilemma in relation to how best to approach the issue of qualifications that should underpin a Pacific Cultural Practice Framework. Some believe that it is impossible to define the qualifications; others see it as an essential step.
The crux of the matter is that part of what qualifies a Pacific Cultural Worker is their lived experience of their culture and this is not something for which you attend a university and obtain a degree. However, Seitapu offers a way of measuring competence and this provides one way of approaching the issue i.e., if you can demonstrate competence then you are qualified.

Many participants identified the need for and value of training. Key themes in discussion are outlined below:

- Training usually occurs in the mainstream context and there is little or no cultural training. In a way “we get trained out of our culture”
- If cultural competency is more explicitly recognised, then this may have an influence on training.
- There is not sufficient understanding of Pacific culture within mainstream services.

**Support for developing a framework**

There is a level of consensus among those who participated in the development of this paper regarding the following:

- Designated cultural roles make an important contribution to mental health and addictions treatment and should be valued.

> “Having someone of your own culture, even another Pacific culture, makes a big difference in a client’s treatment and recovery.”

- There are specific skills and a specific body of “knowledge” that Pacific cultural workers apply that are currently not always visible, valued and understood and there is considerable support within the workforce for this to be made more explicit.
- Seitapu provides a basis for defining the body of cultural knowledge and competencies. Lets get real defines the contextual competencies that cultural workers need for working in the mental health and addictions context.
- Regardless of the title of the role there is consensus on the need to recognise the roles with dedicated funding and there is a suggestion that including “Pacific Cultural” in the role title is essential.
- The roles should be formalised and the training/experience required for the roles should be formalised. Those working in cultural roles need a baseline of clinical knowledge and skills. They require training in this. This will be good for consumers and workers alike.
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