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# Chapter 11 He korero korari

Moana Eruera

## Learning outcomes

- To explore a tangata whenua philosophy for supervision
- To discuss the relevance and application of a tangata whenua philosophy for supervision into the functional supervision process
- To assist understanding of the practical integration of the above principles with the provision of an exemplar

## Key terms

- Kaupapa Maori supervision
- Kaiarahi
- Kaitiaki
- Matauranga
- Whakapapa
- Tikanga
- Tangata whenua
- Mohiotanga
- Nga Uaratanga
- Pukenga

*A weaving together of traditional Maori knowledge and processes from the past with our current supervision realities of the present as a guide for the provision of tangata whenua supervision for the future.*

Korari as it is known by iwi in Te Taitokerau is a plant indigenous to Aotearoa. It is also called harakeke, flax, and is scientifically known as *phormium tenax*. It is an important natural resource to Maori which our tupuna used for a broad range of purposes. One of the important uses of korari, both traditionally and in the contemporary context is weaving kete. Traditionally the kete is symbolic in Maori creation stories about the pursuit of knowledge and is important in the retention of information, protocols and metaphorical messages to guide future generations. This writing draws parallels from the knowledge, customs, skills and connections used in the kete-weaving process as a guide for an indigenous supervision framework.

## **Tangata whenua and supervision**

When examining supervision theory and knowledge, literature on Maori supervision demonstrates clearly that experiences of supervision and supervision training in Aotearoa have been grounded in a western monocultural framework (Bradley, Jacob & Bradley, 1999; Mataira, 1985; Ohia, 1986; Webber-Dreadon, 1999). While these models provide important knowledge for the development of supervision processes and skills, they are void of some of the key principles for the self-determination and development of tangata whenua practice and best practice outcomes. Over the years both internationally and within Aotearoa, supervision has progressed through many stages of development. There is however a dearth of literature from indigenous or cultural perspectives. 'The notion of culture as the major context for supervision has not received the attention it deserves...although there has been a dramatic increase in the literature on cross-cultural social work practice the important question of how to practise supervision in a specific culture or in a multi-cultural setting has not been addressed in any of the published empirical literature' (Tsui, 2004: 47).

## **He korero korari framework**

He korero korari is the name of a tangata whenua supervision research project completed in Te Taitokerau, 2005, which responds and contributes to the development of tangata whenua supervision and literature for Aotearoa. It draws together key themes from traditional supervision perspectives, the experiences of Maori supervisors and supervisees with literature to weave a framework for tangata whenua supervision. He korero korari is guided by the raranga weaving process and uses the analogy of weaving a flax kete as a guide for developing responsive indigenous supervision.

Carroll (2000: 12) draws the distinction between 'functional supervision', which he describes as applied techniques, strategies and methods, and a 'philosophy of supervision', which focuses on the 'being of people' and the meaning supervision has for us as an ongoing extension of our lives. The 'he korero korari' framework relates directly to this and contains:

1. Te Ao Maori – a tangata whenua 'philosophy for supervision', and
2. Te Whiriwhiringa – tangata whenua 'functional supervision' processes.

This chapter describes the constructs which contribute to the developing body of knowledge for a tangata whenua philosophy for supervision. The application of this philosophy and constructs will be applied to functional supervision by way of exemplars. The viewpoints discussed in this chapter are not intended to be prescriptive or definitive and aim to provide a guide for kaiarahi in their development of their own supervision processes. It is important for kaupapa Maori supervision practitioners to begin to define their own philosophy for supervision

(such as those cultural constructs that guide their work) and name it using their own terminology from their respective rohe and whakapapa. This chapter acknowledges the contributions of Te Taitokerau elders, kaiarahi and kaitiaki (He Korero Korari Kaupapa Maori Supervision research, 2005).

### **From theory to practice**

In order for supervision to move forward into the twenty-first century, the theory to practice gap associated with integrating Te Ao Maori principles into supervision practice needs to be demystified. The following processes and constructs are the first step towards providing edification on this topic.

### **Te Ao Maori – Te Ao Hurihuri – Traditional, contemporary and international contexts**

Social work supervision in Aotearoa as a recognised construct has come to this country as an import from overseas. The development of supervision in Aotearoa has been influenced predominantly by international trends in social work theory and practice and western models of supervision. More recently, the importance of cultural and tangata whenua models of supervision within Aotearoa has been recognised and acknowledged as being unique with specific obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Social work and supervision existed in Aotearoa before the activities were named, so this country's story of social work and supervision starts in the Maori world (O'Donoghue, 2003: 52). It is evident that tangata whenua supervision is occurring and Maori are beginning to develop written resources, research and training to support this development.

The social work context in Aotearoa is constantly changing and there are many influences which impact on the development of tangata whenua supervision in Aotearoa including social work registration, iwi Maori provider development and models of practice, organisational contexts, the political and economic environments and many others. Figure 11.1 depicts some of these influences.

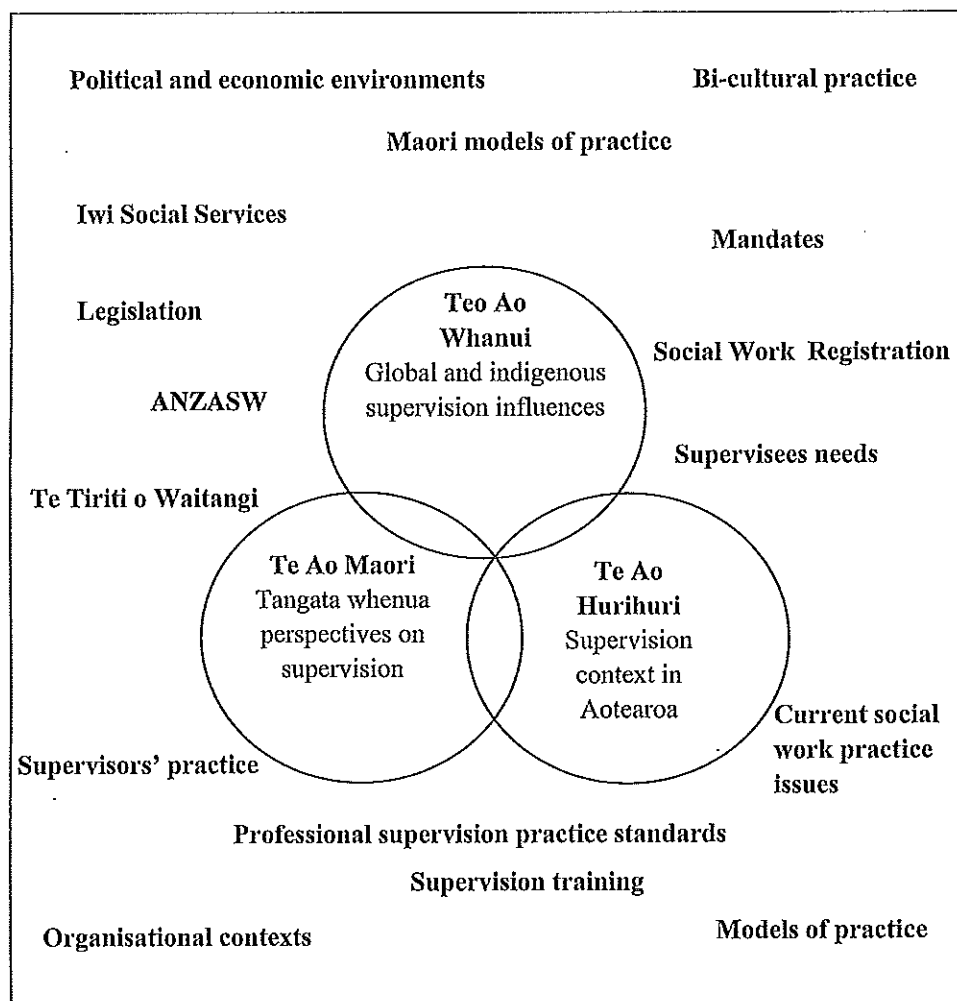


Figure 11.1 Influences on the development of tangata whenua supervision in Aotearoa

### Kaupapa Maori supervision

Kaupapa Maori supervision, also known as tangata whenua supervision, is defined in many different ways and the formation of definitions is part of the development of tangata whenua supervision practice, models and approaches. It is important to encourage tangata whenua practitioners to define Kaupapa Maori supervision for themselves in the context of their practice. For the purposes of this writing Kaupapa Maori supervision will be defined as 'an agreed supervision relationship by Maori for Maori with the purpose of enabling the supervisee to achieve safe and accountable professional practice, cultural development and self-care according to the philosophy, principles and practices derived from a Maori worldview' (Eruera, 2005: 64). Kaupapa Maori supervision claims an indigenous

position within Aotearoa and therefore differentiates itself from cultural supervision (see Figure 11.2).

Cultural supervision has been defined in various ways but can refer to supervision between people of the same culture. This definition recognises the importance of culture within the supervision relationship however unlike Kaupapa Maori supervision is not specific about the indigenous position of Maori within Aotearoa as being unique with obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

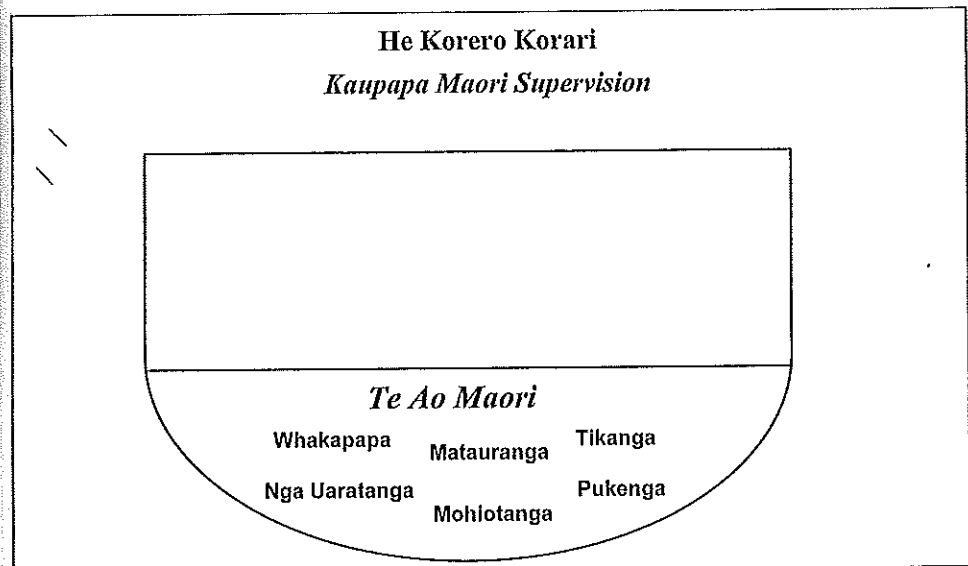


Figure 11.2 He Korero Korari – Kaupapa Maori Supervision Framework

*He Korero Korari - Weaving is an art form used in many cultures, however raranga is the weaving art form which belongs to Maori. Raranga has history and customs of its own, uses Maori knowledge and skills and has been passed down through the generations in ways which ensure preservation of the art form within the culture. The raranga art form has developed over time and although traditional beliefs and customary practices are maintained, some new processes have been introduced; for example, the use of a range of different dyes, colours and materials to assist with the process and to meet the needs of contemporary society.*

I liken this process to Kaupapa Maori supervision. Supervision is a process used throughout the world as a social work imperative for best practice, however kaupapa Maori supervision is specific to Maori. As a construct within the social work field it is developing and its foundation is based on traditional beliefs, values and customary practices. Professional knowledge and skills may be added to assist the process to meet the contemporary needs of tangata whenua social workers within their organisations and the profession. The weaving of this supervision kete

starts in Te Ao Maori which provides the foundation to build on. It guides the process and holds the rest of the strands in place in order to achieve a successful outcome. The constructs within Te Ao Maori are woven throughout the five sections of the framework. While there are common themes and principles in a Maori worldview it also creates tensions in summarising what is a particularly diverse and evolving culture. Again, tangata whenua supervision practitioners must be encouraged to formulate and name their own meaningful Te Ao Maori in order to be able to articulate and implement these principles into their practice.

### **A tangata whenua philosophy for supervision**

#### **Matauranga Maori – Kaupapa Maori supervision knowledge base**

*He Korero Korari – The Raranga process has its foundation in matauranga Maori or a Maori cultural knowledge base. This base includes knowledge of korari, planning, raranga processes, cultural processes and beliefs gained through the experience of the weaver, whanau legacies and many others. To demonstrate understanding of this knowledge it must be applied to the practice of weaving with the production of a kete.*

Kaupapa Maori supervision is based on the belief that cultural knowledge provides a foundation in the supervision relationship. Equally important is the professional knowledge base that works in tandem so that a professional social work role can be developed within an organisational context. The kairahi (supervisor's) role is to assist the kaitiaki (practitioner) to develop and apply cultural knowledge into practice.

Kaupapa Maori supervision has a specific knowledge base. Cultural knowledge may include 'te reo me ona tikanga', the dynamics of whanau, local history, access to kaumatua and kuia, whakapapa, the impacts of colonisation on whanau Maori, waiata and many others. The accumulation of cultural knowledge is a developmental journey and the effects of colonisation are such that it cannot be assumed that all kairahi are confident in this knowledge. Walsh-Tapiata & Webster (2004: 17) state that it should not be assumed that just because someone is Maori they will necessarily know how to handle situations in a culturally appropriate manner. Maori too may need to be supported and guided through a process of including cultural processes in their everyday practice. Tangata whenua are diverse in cultural knowledge and it is important to discuss cultural knowledge and its development when negotiating expectations within a supervision contract.

**Reflective questions**

What specific knowledge do you think a Kaupapa Maori supervisor should possess from (1) and (2) below?

1. Cultural knowledge
2. Professional knowledge

**Whakapapa – Inter-relatedness of atua, tangata and whenua relationships within supervision**

*He Korero Korari – Raranga as a process has a whakapapa which has been handed down over the generations. The whakapapa holds important history and stories which describe our relationships, roles and obligations. Within the raranga process there are connections through whakapapa which link spiritual, human and natural dimensions; the whakapapa of creation (wairua/atua), the whakapapa of the korari (whenua), the whakapapa of the weaver (tangata).*

Fundamental to Kaupapa Maori supervision is the cultural construct of whakapapa. Working with whakapapa processes during supervision requires the kaiarahi and kaitiaki to know their own whakapapa and make connections with each other in order to build the supervisory relationship. They would also need to be aware of the whakapapa they may have with colleagues and whanau receiving their services.

Their joint responsibility to manage the possible impact of whakapapa in practice needs to be discussed in an open and honest manner. Once the knowledge of relevant whakapapa is established it can then be applied as a useful tool within supervision.

**Reflective questions**

- What impact might whakapapa have on a Kaupapa Maori supervision relationship? What issues might arise?
- Discuss the concepts of Atua, Tangata and Whenua relationships within Kaupapa Maori supervision.

**Tikanga – Kaupapa Maori supervision process and protocols**

*He Korero Korari – Raranga has cultural processes and protocols which must be adhered to which guide the safe and successful completion of a kete. There are tikanga used when cutting the korari such as karakia for use of the korari, methods of conservation such as not cutting the korari when it is raining as it may*



*damage the plant and cutting only the outer shoots so the baby shoots will continue to grow.*

Kaupapa Maori supervision uses protocols and processes to ensure a meaningful and safe encounter within the time spent in supervision. This can include establishing a process for each session and common understandings and expectations. As kaiarahi there is a role to lead the facilitation of the supervision process, implement and model the use of cultural processes and protocols within the session. Sharing the responsibility for leading these processes will enable the kaiarahi to gain insight into the cultural knowledge and skill base of the kaitiaki.

***Reflective questions***

What cultural processes and protocols will you implement into your kaupapa Maori supervision sessions?

**Mohiotanga – Kaiarahi supervision experiences**

*He Korero Korari – The successful completion and quality of a kete involves a combination of natural abilities, skills and learning obtained from the experiences of the senior weaver. Their teaching and mentoring is highly influential during the development of any weaver.*

Kaupapa Maori supervision is influenced by the supervision experiences of the kaiarahi. For many Maori supervisors their frame of reference is not based on experiences where they have been supervised by a kaiarahi Maori. They are often searching for a process that develops their ability to apply cultural models, approaches and skills into their supervision practice.

It is important for kaiarahi to reflect on their own experiences of supervision and identify those approaches and tools that would be helpful for future practice. An example might include cultural supervisory roles such as the 'kuia' or 'kaipowhiri' at a marae which could be applied within supervision practice.

***Reflective questions***

- What experiences can you identify that have contributed to your ability to integrate cultural knowledge and practices into your practice?
- How might you continue to draw on these experiences in relation to your supervision practice?

**Nga Uaratanga – Kaupapa Maori supervision values/beliefs**

*He Korero Korari – The raranga knowledge base, process and skills are based on cultural values and beliefs which underpin all aspects of the weaving process.*

There are many values and beliefs that form the basis of the kaiarahi supervision approach. These are shaped by personal, cultural and professional influences. Within a Kaupapa Maori supervision relationship this may include ethical principles such as tika and pono (honesty and truth) which is the base line for all communications.

Beliefs could include a commitment to rangatiratanga or self-determination which supports the aspirations of Maori practitioners to achieve best practice. The value of kaitiakitanga or guardianship/protection of the practitioner and ultimately the whanau receiving services would be a determinant in the process of accountability and the development of best practice. An imperative for kaiarahi is to have continual self-awareness and understanding of the values and beliefs that underpin their supervision practice.

***Reflective question***

What values and beliefs underpin your Kaupapa Maori supervision?

**Pukenga – Kaupapa Maori supervision skills and attributes**

*He Korero Korari – Raranga as an art form requires skills which can be learned and practised in order to develop competence. New advanced skills such as different patterns, designs and dye can be incorporated to achieve different outcomes. The natural talents and attributes of the weaver also have an impact on how the process is implemented and the outcome.*

There are many skills which are necessary for effective implementation of supervision for Maori practitioners. Many of these skills are those common to supervision for all cultures, however within Kaupapa Maori supervision additional skills include:

- whananaungatanga – the ability to build and maintain a meaningful supervision relationship
- whakapiki oranga – assist the kaimahi with self-care strategies to balance cultural and professional activities and obligations
- nga pukenga mo te mahi a iwi – facilitate development and learning for professional and cultural best practice for whanau receiving the service
- korero-a-waha – the ability to use good communication skills and micro skills in the language of choice of the kaimahi which may include Maori and/or English

***Reflective questions***

What skills from (1) and (2) do you believe are essential for a Kaupapa Maori

supervisor?

1. Cultural
2. Professional

### **Kairahi example – External Kaupapa Maori supervision**

Mere came to supervision and began to discuss the disclosure of a sensitive issue. A Maori whanau she had been supporting shared the issue with her. The kaitiaki described the experience (in terms of being privy to the disclosure) as a parallel to the whakapapa story of Hine-nui-te-po. On reflection of the encounter she wanted to:

- identify a cultural process for acknowledging the depth and sensitivity of their korero. By the completion of the session this process would enable them to continue with the activities for the day
- identify a process of safety and self-care for herself, after the whanau had left, to clear the heavy emotions and feelings from herself and the room they had met in
- ensure that these processes were acceptable and comfortable for the whanau and were aligned with her role in the organisation
- ensure that she had the knowledge, skills and confidence to carry out these processes correctly.

Discussion within supervision began by focusing on cultural processes and protocols used in formal encounters or occasions, the purpose for their use and the relevance to the situation that had been described. These processes included mihimihi, karakia, sharing of kai, tapu/noa and cleansing with water. The discussion then explored the application of these processes into her organisational context, her own ability and confidence to lead these processes, the whanau knowledge and acceptance of these processes and other supports she may require. At the conclusion of these discussions Mere was able to find meaningful strategies to implement in her practice.

As a kaiarahi, matauranga Maori and uaratanga or shared beliefs were required so that the descriptions used in the retelling of the events could be fully appreciated. Mere would then be confident that there were common understandings about the situation. A knowledge of tikanga was necessary so that the discussion could be facilitated in an appropriate manner. The integration of whakapapa and whanaungatanga assisted in providing the context for discussion. This enabled Mere to feel comfortable to openly discuss issues so that her confidence and cultural knowledge could be enhanced. Pukenga used by the kaiarahi included use of te reo Maori, whakapiki oranga or facilitating a process of self-awareness and self-care for the kaitiaki, integration of tikanga by modelling a process and principle for resolution of the issues.

In conclusion the weaving together of strands which form a Kaupapa Maori kete for supervision is an ongoing process for Maori practitioners. The principle

context of Kauapapa Maori supervision is culture, whereby the supervisor, supervisee and whanau who receive a service are Maori. They also exist within an interdependent relationship which can be at odds with western notions of independence of clients from a service (Eruera, 2005: 64).

This chapter has provided a framework with examples and reflective questions that will assist kairahi to start engaging with kaimahi in their pursuit for developing supervision practices for tangata whenua within Aotearoa.

*Na tou rourou  
Na taku rourou  
Ka ora ai te iwi*

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