

Traditional Māori customs around pregnancy

Some iwi have special tikanga for a hapū wāhine. Pregnancy is about care and awhi for māmā and the unborn pēpē. Some whānau and iwi would provide māmā with special kai and relieve her from stressful or hard work to safeguard her health and the development of pēpē during hapūtanga.

Whaikōrero on the marae ātea by pregnant women is feared in some iwi. They believe that the woman is open to the element of curses, or 'kanga', and puts a pregnant woman at risk of passing these on through the generations.

In other iwi, hapū wāhine don't go into urupā, as this is seen as the realm of Hine-nui-te-pō, the goddess of death, and again may put māmā and pēpē at risk.

Whānau may want to investigate some of their own whānau tikanga around keeping māmā and pēpē safe during pregnancy.



Glossary

- Ātea** - free from obstruction
- Awhi** - cuddle, cherish
- Hapū** - pregnant
- Hapūtanga** - pregnancy
- Iwi** - kinship group, race
- Kai** - food
- Kaumātua** - elder
- Kuia** - grandmother
- Pēpē** - baby
- Pepeha** - tribal proverb
- Tamariki** - children
- Te hau kāinga** - true home
- Tikanga** - customary system of values
- Tūpuna** - ancestors
- Tūrangawaewae** - place where one has the right to stand
- Ūkaipō** - mother
- Urupā** - burial ground
- Wahine/wāhine** - woman/women
- Wānanga** - discussion
- Whaikōrero** - formal speech
- Whakapapa** - genealogy
- Whānau** - family
- Whenua** - land
- Whānau tikanga** - family values



Having a place to stand, belong and recharge are essential to Māori identity, strength and wellbeing.

Ko te reo te mauri o te mana Māori. The language is the heart and soul of the mana of Māoridom.

Pregnancy is about care and awhi for māmā and the unborn pēpē.

Māori will often express whanaungatanga - a close relationship between people, place, time and items.



Supporting Māori Whānau

Understanding whanaungatanga

Whanaungatanga is about being part of a larger kinship system and support network. Māori are known as relationship people, they believe they are related to all living things, and will often express whanaungatanga (a close relationship between people, place, time and items).

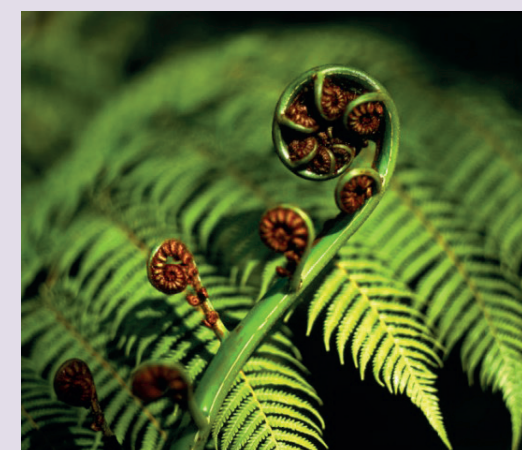
Whanaungatanga has its basic principles whakapapa, manaakitanga, aroha and utu.

- Whakapapa:** gives you identity, a sense of belonging and identifies who your whanaunga are
- Manaakitanga:** caring and looking after ourselves and each other in an active, positive way
- Aroha:** the special bond of love and concern for ones pēpē, tamariki, māmā and whānau
- Utu:** reciprocal responsibilities and obligations to support each other

Staying connected to whanaunga, and maintaining bonds are important to the wellbeing of Māori māmā, pēpē, tamariki and whānau.

Active efforts to connect with people, to support each other and reciprocate appropriately is the type of support that is helpful for Māori whānau, to build resilience and capacity of whānau and to stave off effects of ill health and speed up recovery.

Ki te kotahi te
kākaho ka whati,
ki te kāpuia e kore
e whati.
Alone we can be
broken.
Standing together,
we are invincible.



Hinetitama by Robyn Kahukiwa

PADA

Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Aotearoa is the national organisation committed to eliminating the stigma around perinatal mental health in New Zealand.

We do this by championing awareness and facilitating best practice in perinatal mental health and wellbeing to ensure all families/whānau have access to appropriate information and support.

This resource is freely available to assist in raising awareness of anxiety and depression in new parents.

Content for this resource comes from Maria Baker at Te Rau Ora.

We gratefully acknowledge the Pelorus Trust who donated funds to develop this resource

www.pada.nz

Find out more:

terauora.com

www.waikato.ac.nz/law/research/waikato_law_review/pubs/volume_2_1994/7

www.parentingresource.nz/supporting-information/te-whare-tanga-ta-protection

Contact Us

Phone: +64 4 461 6318

General enquiries: office@pada.nz

www.pada.nz



Strong social networks

In 2012, Te Rau Matatini completed a focus group of Māori wāhine who contributed to a snapshot of their experiences of health care during their pregnancies, childbirth and postpartum periods. The women identified a range of information and support in retrospect of their experiences which they thought could be helpful for hapū Māori women to prepare for childbirth and becoming a mum.

- First time mums need support and someone to talk to in regard to the range of things to consider in childbirth (e.g. what to expect) also when caring for baby (e.g. changing nappies; how to treat baby if unwell at home rather than going to medical professionals)
- A list of Māori midwives in each region
- Information on benefits of having a midwife when you should access one
- Strategies to help with morning sickness
- Benefits of keeping active whilst hapū
- Benefits of a smoke free pregnancy
- Being in contact with other expectant Māori mums
- Breast feeding techniques and practical support for new mums and their whānau when breastfeeding
- Personal care following birth for mum and baby
- Keeping up with pelvic floor exercises after birth
- Diet and nutrition for mum and baby
- How to make healthy food
- Milk formulas if you can't breastfeed
- Helpful phone numbers
- Tips to overcome sleep deprivation especially in the first 3-6 months
- Budgeting tips when having a baby
- Some parenting information



A health service centred on Māori wāhine and whānau

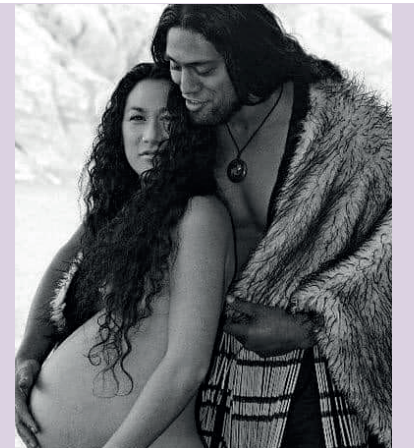
Māori women described the ideal maternal health service as one centred on Māori wahine and their whānau and that understood and practiced whānau-centred approaches e.g. Whānau Ora, by holistic health care models and understanding social contributors to Māori wellbeing.

Ideally, services would focus on Māori women and their whānau and be accepting of whānau involvement across the continuum of health, from pregnancy to childbirth. By doing so, practitioners and services recognise Māori women want their whānau nearby during their healthcare especially when they are in labour.

Other services that would be helpful would be better access to midwifery services, Kaupapa Māori options, access to general practice, wellchild health care provision, free dental care, physiotherapy, rongoa and Māori therapies. Ideally, these could be accessed at a one stop shop delivered by qualified health professionals. In addition, women identified they would like access to primary birthing units for Māori women in communities, with rooming for whānau, access to mirimiri, waiata, breast feeding support, young parenting and nutrition support, with kuia and kaumātua involvement. Women wished for access to tikanga and matauranga Māori with a strong emphasis on Whānau Ora.

Māori women want the opportunity to choose and to experience traditional aspects from their tūpuna that are associated with pregnancy, childbirth and childcare experiences.

They desire safe places for Māori women to learn about the old traditions in relation to pregnancy, childbirth and child care.



Antenatal classes

Māori women chose not to attend antenatal classes for a variety of reasons, e.g. they didn't want to attend with people they didn't know, or couldn't attend due to lack of transport and work commitments. Delivering engaging antenatal classes could include Māori women delivering the classes, and by differing methods e.g. wānanga or online.

Primary care

Eliminating barriers to primary care can occur when wāhine and whānau have knowledge of the various options in their community to know how, where and who they can access to confirm a pregnancy and arrange support for pregnancy and childbirth. This may include information about access and availability of community health, youth and school clinics or online health services as points of entry. Māori will not use services if they are perceived as being negative to Māori. They will use services if they are engaging, promote positive health messages, are whānau-centred and have information and support for Māori women navigating the steps in their maternity care journey.

Te Reo is a key aspect of wellbeing

Te Reo Māori is a key aspect of wellbeing, it enables access to the Māori worldview and contributes to Māori being able to express themselves. When working with Māori, appreciate Te Reo Māori will enable access to information, to forms of communication and connectedness, to elders and other respositories of knowledge, for discussion and learning, that will help Māori meet their full potential.

Ūkaipō, tūrangawaewae and te hau kāinga are concepts Māori refer to often, which ground them to their land, place and home. Māori will return to Marae or their whenua regularly to reconnect to their tūpuna and whānau. Working with Māori requires support and respect of the connections. Realising that attendance to hui, learning and affirming whakapapa and pepeha are critical to a sense of belonging. Programmes that encourage participation in wānanga and Marae will enhance whanaungatanga with hapu and iwi.

Remember -
you are not
alone

THE NUMBER OF BIRTHS IN NEW
ZEALAND IN 2019:

59,637

THE PERCENTAGE OF PREGNANT
WOMEN WHO SUFFER FROM
DEPRESSION DURING OR AFTER
PREGNANCY:

25%

THE PERCENTAGE OF MEN WHO
DEVELOP DEPRESSION AFTER THEIR
CHILD IS BORN:

10%