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**Me aro koe ki te hā o Hineahuone:
Pay heed to the dignity of Māori women**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of the Master of Social Work degree
at Massey University

Sharna-Lee Haimona

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Waiata: Ka Waiata

Ka waiata kia Maria

Hine i whakaae

Whakameatia mai

Te whare tangata

Hine pūrotu

Hine ngākau

Hine rangimārie

Ko te whaea

Ko te whaea

O te ao

A popular Māori hymn sung at gatherings to praise the role of women as "Whare tangata."

Karakia: Tupu ka Puawai

Kia rongona, Kia māia

He hononga, He tūmanako

He kaha

Tupu ka puāwai

Ngā maunga, Ngā wai

Te aio o te whenua

Te tini o te rangi

He Hōnore

Tihei Mauri Ora

I composed this karakia in 2018. I watched as the words fluttered and I felt each kupu as I wrote them. This karakia represents a haerenga of healing and the possibilities that await.

He mihi

I te taha o tōku māmā

Ko Pukehapopo tōku Maunga

Ko Waiomoko tōku Awa

Ko Tirianini tōku Waka

Ko Rīwai tōku Hapū

Ko Paikea tōku Rangatira

Ko Ngāti Konohi, ko Ngāti Porou ōku Iwi

Ko Whangara Mai Tawhiti tōku Marae

Nō Whangara āhau

Ko Sandra tōku māmā

I te taha o tōku pāpā

Ko Rāwhitiroa tōku Maunga

Ko Waitangi tōku Moana

Ko Ngatokimatawhaorua tōku Waka

Ko Uri Taniwha tōku Hapū

Ko Kupe tōku Rangatira

Ko Ngāpuhi, ko Tūhoe ōku Iwi

Ko Taumarere tōku Marae

Nō Ohawae āhau

Ko Peter tōku pāpā

Ko Thomas rātou ko Tangiwai, ko Te Rautangi, ko Te Ao Marama ōku kaumātua

Ko Nacey tōku tungāne, ko Peta te potiki o tōku whānau.

Ko Quentin tōku hoa rangatira. Ko Pryde rātou ko Honey-Jayde, ko Holden āku tamahine.

Ko Iramāia tāku irāmutu

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Ko Sharna-Lee Haimona tōku ingoa

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This monument of commitment, of dedication and honour is dedicated to my best friend, my Atua; I love you more than all the sand on the beach and all the stars in the sky.

Abstract

This research explored Rongoā Māori as a traditional knowledge system of healing and wellbeing as a means by which to locate culturally defined frameworks as a basis to adequately understand and respond to sexual violence in Aotearoa. Current definitions of sexual violence are located within Western frameworks that do not adequately understand the context of sexual violence for Māori and have significant implications for their subsequent healing journeys.

A qualitative research approach was used to explore the understandings and experiences of seven wāhine Māori Rongoā Māori practitioners. This research also drew on aspects of wairuatanga, Kaupapa Māori, and Mana Wahine research approaches which provided a foundation for their experiences to be acknowledged, their understandings to be valued and their voices to be heard.

The findings in this research demonstrated that sexual violence is an epidemic because of the magnitude and serious nature of it for Māori. It is imperative that Māori can access services that align with their Māori worldview and include tikanga based processes that can adapt and address whānau needs. This research concluded that Rongoā Māori understands the context of sexual violence for Māori and is a specialised field of Indigenous tradition and practice that heals the impacts of sexual violence and promotes holistic health and wellbeing.

Glossary and Key Terms

This glossary provides meanings and translations of te reo Māori (Māori language) terms used within this study based on the context of this research. They are by no means intended to be exhaustive or definitive, as there are variations in translations, understandings, and meanings across different contexts, whānau (families), hapū (tribe), rohe (region) and iwi (sub-tribe).

The meanings and translations for the majority of Māori words used in this thesis, and recorded in this Glossary have been supplied from the online Māori dictionary

<https://maoridictionary.co.nz/>

- Some meanings have been supplied from my own knowledge and experience of te reo Māori.
- Other meanings have been applied according to the meanings attributed to them in the thesis.

Key Terms

In this thesis, many kupu Māori or Māori words are utilised to enrich the discourse and contextual understanding of this research. The inclusion of a glossary serves as a reference tool and an invitation to engage deeply with te reo Māori and Māori concepts. By providing translations or meanings alongside the first kupu Māori of a chapter, this research creates a space to listen, discuss, and share Indigenous knowledge. However, there are key terms such as Māori, te ao Māori, Rongoā Māori, wāhine Māori, Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine that I do not provide meaning or translation to, as these kupu transcend this research. This approach emphasises the importance of cultural nuance in academic discourse and highlights the role

of te reo Māori as a vital medium for exploring and articulating Indigenous perspectives within this thesis.

Māori cosmology: Our tūpuna (ancestors) and whakapapa (genealogy) have been passed down through generations, sharing our collective knowledge and narratives of iwi, hapū, whānau, and individual origins. These creation stories have been shared with me through my whānau, iwi, and hapū connections, forming the foundation of our cosmology. Our Atua (deities) guide us through life, and these sacred narratives have been entrusted to me, shaping my understanding and informing my perspectives. The insights shared in this thesis reflect my personal journey.

Wāhine Māori embodies Māori women and the beauty that sits within this term and ourselves. I use this term to refer to the seven women who participated in this research. I also use this term to refer to the woman they are supporting and who are navigating their healing journeys. *Wahine Māori* is the same but is singular.

In this research, the term *whaiora* is defined as a person's pursuit of holistic wellness, particularly in relation to those who are navigating their healing journeys after experiencing sexual violence. This study also uses the term survivor, which symbolises resilience and encapsulates the impact of endured events. In this thesis, survivor refers to my time working in the sector, while *whaiora* reflects my experiences thereafter.

Rongoā Māori represents a profound and multifaceted space of traditional Māori healing that is deeply embedded in the cultural framework of te ao Māori. Rongoā Māori is a dynamic expression of Indigenous knowledge that harmonises various therapeutic modalities. Rongoā Māori is a vital practice, reinforcing its significance not only as a healing tradition but also as a cornerstone of Māori cultural identity and community life.

Te ao Māori embodies the fundamental Māori worldview, emphasising a profound and holistic understanding of existence that highlights the intricate interconnectedness of all aspects of the environment, society, and spiritual realms. Deeply rooted in the rich tapestry of Māori cultural traditions, historical narratives, and Indigenous knowledge systems, this worldview provides a framework for the Māori people of Aotearoa to engage with and interpret their realities. *Te ao Māori* encourages a comprehensive understanding of the relationships that connect individuals to one another and to the land, promoting a sustainable and reciprocal existence within the larger cosmos.

I use the kupu *Māori*, to specifically represent Tangata Māori, the Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa. This kupu, highlights our unique cultural, social, and historical contexts which are shaped by our ancestral traditions, languages, and the ongoing impact of colonisation. This choice not only honours our identity but also serves to educate others about the rich heritage and diverse experiences of Māori communities, fostering a deeper understanding of our place within Aotearoa's broader societal framework.

Tino rangatiratanga embodies the essence of self-determination and sovereignty within *te ao Māori* and serves as a foundational principle that transcends this research. This principle not only shapes our understanding of Māori governance and identity but also challenges the dominant frameworks of authority and autonomy in modern society (Smith, 1997). *Tino rangatiratanga* has emerged through resistance and advocacy, and it is realised through *te Tiriti o Waitangi* legislation and policies. *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* is an agreement between Māori and European settlers, it represented a foundational commitment to an equal partnership between two peoples sharing the same land. The Treaty of Waitangi is written in English and was signed by 42 Rangatira (Leader) Māori in 1840 and the Indigenous version *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* was signed across a span of four years by 512 Rangatira Tāne and 13 Rangatira

Wāhine. Tino rangatiratanga signifies our right to exist authentically, both in the present and in our future, which is crucial for the preservation of Māori culture.

Each chapter opens with *Tīmatanga* and closes with *Mutunga* which depicts the start and the finish of a chapter.

The term *Aotearoa* is intrinsically linked to the rich cultural and historical heritage of Māori, signifying the land prior to European colonisation. In contrast, *New Zealand* represents the social, political, and cultural landscape following colonial contact and governance.

Glossary

Aotearoa - New Zealand, Land of the long white cloud.

Aroha – Deep felt emotion and a way of thinking that encompasses love

Atua - Spiritual entities, deity, Goddess/ God(s)

Haemata - Pressure points within the body

Hapū – Subtribe, place of belonging

Harakeke - An important native plant

Harirū – Formal greetings, embrace

Hauora - Wellbeing, wellness, to be well

Hineahuone - The first human and female element

Hinemoana - Female Atua of the sea, Atua of healing

Hinengaro – The mind, thought, consciousness, the emotional

Hine-nui-te-pō – The Goddess of death, Guardian of the spiritual welfare of the deceased

Hinetītama - Dawn maiden

Hongi - Māori greeting, pressing of noses, sharing of the breath (hā)

Ikura - Period, menstruation

Io - Supreme being, Supreme source, higher power

Iwi – Tribe, place of belonging

Kai – Food, process of lifting tapu, having something to eat

Kaitiaki – Guardian, protector

Kaitiakitanga – Guardianship, protection

Kanohi kitea - The seen face

Kanohi ki te kanohi - Face to face interaction

Kanuka – Native white tea-tree of Aotearoa New Zealand

Karakia - Incantation, prayer

Kaumātua - Adult, elder male

Kaupapa - Principle, purpose

Kaupapa Māori – Māori philosophy, Māori initiative

Kawakawa - Tree with heart-shaped leaves native to Aotearoa New Zealand

Kitea – to see

Koha - Gift, offering, contribution.

Kohekohe – A native tree of Aotearoa New Zealand

Kōmiri – Discerning conversation

Koromiko - A native shrub of Aotearoa New Zealand

Kōrero - Talk, speak, voice

Kotahitanga – Stand together, unity

Kuia – Grandmother, elder female

Kūmarahou - A native shrub of Aotearoa New Zealand

Kurawaka - Name of the place in the creation narratives where the first woman was created

Mahaki – to be humble, to be inoffensive

Mahi - Work

Mahi ā pona - Working the joints of the body for good mobility

Mahi wairua - Working in energy, working spiritually

Mamae - Pain, injury, hurt

Mana – Personal power, authority, status

Mana Wahine - Power and authority of Māori women, methodology

Manaaki - To take care of, give hospitality to, to create comfort

Manaakitanga - To support, to create comfort, take care of (in action)

Manuka - A giant tree fern of Aotearoa New Zealand

Mana Motuhake -Self-determination, autonomy, independence

Māori - Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand

Mātauranga - Knowledge

Mātauranga Māori - Māori knowledge

Mauri - Life force, life essence, the fire in our belly

Mirimiri - Soft tissue bodywork

Mokopuna - Grandchildren

Ngahere - Forest

Noa - Common, unrestricted, free from tapu

Pākehā - New Zealander of European descent

Papatūānuku - Mother Earth, mother of the Atua

Pōneke - Wellington

Pou – Strength to lean on

Pūkenga - Skills

Pūmanawa - Emotional welling

Pungaio – Bottom of the spine, base, stability

Puhangaia - Womb space, creativity

Pūrākau – Traditional stories/ narratives

Pure - Healing ceremony

Rākau - Tree, plant

Rangatira - Leader, chief

Rangatiratanga - Leadership chiefly, autonomy

Rangahau - Research

Ranginui - Sky Father, father of the Atua

Ritenga - Ritual, customary practice

Rohe - Region

Romiromi - Deep tissue bodywork

Rongoā Māori - Space of healing, approach to healing, Māori healing

Rongoā rākau - Plant medicines/remedies

Taha – Side, dimension

Takahia te tinana - Tramping the body with feet

Takahia - To trample with feet, disregard

Takutaku - To recite karakia, incantation

Tai Tokerau - Auckland

Tai Rawhiti - Gisborne

Taiao – The natural world, environment, nature

Tāne Mahuta - God of the forests

Tangaroa - God of the sea

Tāngata - People

Taonga - Treasure, treasured possession

Taonga tuku iho - Treasure passed down from ancestors

Tapu - Sacred, prohibited, restricted

Tāwhirimātea - God of the winds and change

Te ao Māori - The Māori world/worldview

Te ao Pākehā - The European world

Te reo Māori - Māori language

Te taha wairua - The spiritual dimension

Te Tiriti o Waitangi - The Treaty of Waitangi

Tīhei mauri ora - Breath of life

Tikanga – Responsibilities, values, protocols

Tinana - Physical body

Tino rangatiratanga - Self-determination, cultural sovereignty, autonomy

Tiwawe - Moving the internal waters

Tohu - A sign

Tohunga - A skilled person, expert, traditional healers

Tuākana - Elder relationship

Tūpato - To be cautious, careful

Tūpuna/tīpuna - Ancestors

Wahine - Woman

Wāhine - Women

Wai - Water

Waiata - Song

Wairua – Spirit, belonging

Wairuatanga – Spirituality, similar to wairua but actioned

Wānanga – A space to deliberate, consider, listen and learn

Whaiora - seeking wellness, pursuit of

Whakaaro - Thought, opinion, understanding

Whakanoa - To remove tapu

Whakapapa - Genealogy, relatedness, lineage, connection

Whakarongo - To hear, to listen

Whakataukī - Proverb, significant saying

Whānau – Family, extended family, families

Whanaungatanga – Relationships, connection, building rapport

Wharenuī - Traditional meeting house

Whare Wānanga - Place of higher learning

Whare Tangata - Womb, house of humanity

Whatumanawa - Intuition

Whenua - Country, land

Whitiwhiti kōrero – Engaged in conversation/ discussion

Wiri - To tremble, to shake, shiver

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

E kore au e ngaro, he kākano ahau i ruia mai i Rangiātea.

I can never be lost; I am a seed sown from Rangiātea.

Tīmatanga

Our traditional healing practices are intricately woven into the cultural fabric of Māori society, representing a continuum that encompasses both historical and contemporary contexts. This thesis highlights the inherent rights of wāhine Māori to engage in these healing practices free from interference, emphasising the vital importance of tino rangatiratanga, or self-determination, and mana motuhake, or cultural sovereignty.

This research investigated the relationship between te ao Māori, the Māori worldview, and traditional Māori healing practices, known as Rongoā Māori, in addressing the implications of sexual violence for wāhine Māori and women across Aotearoa New Zealand. This study intended to expand upon and enhance, the vital contributions of the sexual violence sector and the frameworks that have been essential in supporting numerous whaiora, survivors, and their whānau (families) throughout their healing journeys. Kaupapa Māori, Mana Wahine and wairua (spirit) ground this research and the research methodology. This chapter introduces the topic, outlines the reasons for the research and positions the researcher's perspective, the significance of this research is defined before the aims and the outline of the thesis are revealed.

Whakataukī

Aroha is an ancient Māori word and concept. The word describes a deeply felt emotion and a way of thinking that encompasses love, compassion, sympathy, and empathy (Elder, 2020). Aroha is also understood in this thesis as aro-hā, an acknowledgement of the breath. From this perspective, 'aro' can be understood as taking notice of or paying attention to and 'hā' can mean breath or essence. The breath is significant, it is what Tāne the Atua of the forest used to bring to life Hineahuone - the first human and female element, it is through the breath that we connect to our ancestors, it is the breath that allows us to walk this world.

Each chapter of this thesis begins with a whakataukī (proverb) of aroha from Elder (2020), to keep my mahi (work) true to the wisdom of my ancestors, to ground this thesis in aroha, and the potency of Māori values. The whakataukī were specifically chosen for each chapter. Yet I have chosen not to describe these connections to allow the kupu, the words to speak to you and for you to obtain your own meaning and understanding; just as this book, *Aroha*, helped me to find new possibilities and ways of thinking throughout the research process.

Honouring the Journey

At fifteen, I welcomed our first daughter and embraced motherhood - she was perfect, and I was incredibly proud. During this time, I attended a wonderful teen parent unit where guest speakers often came to share their personal stories and career paths. One day, a social worker visited to discuss the importance of budgeting. She was impeccably dressed in designer clothes and shoes, with sparkling jewellery, flawless makeup, and perfectly styled hair. I remember sitting there, looking at her, then glancing around at my fellow teen parents, thinking, "*This lady has no idea of what it is like to be us.*" We were all barely scraping by,

living pay check to pay check, with barely enough to cover rent, transportation, and groceries. Her message, though well-intentioned, was disconnected from our reality. Later in her speech, she talked about social work being a change agent, being a role to promote transformation. I wanted to make a difference; I wanted to change the narrative from a place of understanding. That was the moment I decided I was going to become a social worker.

After welcoming our second daughter into the world, I was filled with gratitude and joy. Being a mother was my top priority, and I was committed to empowering my daughters, teaching them to believe in their limitless potential and to pursue their passions with courage and determination. I aspired to demonstrate to my girls that as women and mothers, we can overcome obstacles, pursue our dreams and thrive. With the love and support of my whānau, I took the leap and enrolled in Massey University's Social Work programme. However, I soon found myself struggling to keep up with academic demands. Despite my passion for writing, I lacked understanding of even the basics, including what constituted an essay or a paragraph. But I was determined to succeed, I was determined to prove that being a teenage parent did not define our potential. I persevered, seeking out additional resources to help me improve my skills, including academic writing classes, student support services, tutoring and online tools. It was a journey, but I showed myself that I am capable of succeeding, and I was proud to be a positive role model for my daughters.

As a third-year social work student with Massey University we were able to go on placement in the community as a practical experience. Massey University provided options for placements, and I noticed a sexual violence service. I knew sexual harm, and rape were an issue, but I did not realise such services existed. *'There was no way I was applying for that one,'* I thought. The first option I applied for was declined and the second option - a 3-hour return trip daily, had closed. I asked for another option, but the sexual violence service was the only one on offer. Arriving at the interview, I was anxious, I was nervous, I had no idea

what to expect or what the work entailed. I stood in the foyer admiring the healthy lush pot plants that adorned the space. The manager greeted me, she had no shoes on and was waving a blue glittered pen with a long feather attached. From then on, I knew I was going to be ok and within no time, I quickly blended into the culture of the organisation which was like a family.

A couple of weeks in I asked the coordinator what we do here? She said, *'We hold the flags for these women until they can hold them for themselves.'* On a daily basis, I observed the remarkable resilience and determination of each woman I walked alongside. The women not only navigated their personal challenges but also actively engaged in processes of self-advocacy and empowerment. I was humbled by the passion and commitment of the staff and soon enough could not imagine working anywhere else. After graduation I was immediately offered a full-time position, I picked up where I left off and was honoured to be doing such great work. I also accepted part time and casual positions with other organisations within the sector.

A few years later I experienced sexual violence and gained a perspective that changed everything. The organisation that had become like family, held me in their care and surrounded me with their support. Yet, I was completely absorbed by the profound truths that I felt and experienced, which went far beyond anything I had previously believed or understood. These truths resonated deep within me, challenging my existing beliefs and perspectives, and revealing a new level of understanding and awareness. I felt alone, like all of my tūpuna, my ancestors had left my side. It felt like I was carrying a burden of shame for my whānau. I felt afraid, I felt lost. I was angry, the tools and techniques that I had shared and facilitated with survivors were not working for me. My whānau supported me to no end, but they refused any support for themselves, 'therapy' was a foreign concept to them, and they preferred that all resources were directed towards my wellbeing. It was difficult because I

knew they were struggling too. I had been in the sector for years by this point, but there was never any reason to look closer or question what I was doing until then. I delved into the sectors research and came across the whakataukī that I have chosen for my title of this thesis, *Me aro koe ki te hā o Hineahuone: Pay heed to the dignity of Māori women*. It served both as a guiding principle and a profound acknowledgement of the inherent dignity and mana (personal authority) of being a Māori woman.

When I looked closer, what I found was that in Aotearoa New Zealand, existing research identified a disproportionate representation of Māori as survivors and victims of sexual violence in comparison to the general population (Leary & Hay, 2019; Pihama et al., 2016; Te Wiata & Smith, 2016). According to a data summary of adult sexual violence by The New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse (2017), the lifetime prevalence of sexual violence for Māori women is 29.1%, compared to 16.1% for non-Māori women. This meant that Māori girls and Māori women are nearly twice as likely to be sexual violated than non-Māori. I understood that the implications of sexual violence extend beyond individual trauma; they can also disrupt family and cultural structures, resulting in enduring consequences for the entire community.

I explored further and discovered a reliance on Western paradigms that inadequately address the cultural contexts of Māori communities. This reliance led to a significant disconnect from the unique needs and perspectives of Māori, as highlighted in various scholarly works (Armstrong & Gleckman-Krut, 2018; Leary & Hay, 2019; Mossman et al., 2009; Pihama & McRoberts, 2009; Pihama et al., 2016). The consequences of this cultural oversight are evident in the sexual violence sector, which suffers from a critical lack of both the availability and accessibility of services informed by Māori perspectives (Te Wiata & Smith, 2016; Wharewera-Mika & McMillan, 2016).

I returned to my roots in te ao Māori and reconnected with Rongoā Māori. This healing was deeply connected with the land, with tūpuna (ancestors), and the spiritual wellbeing of Māori; it understood who I was and what I needed. I embraced the pūrākau, the narratives of my ancestors, drawing strength and wisdom from them, which reinforced my identity as a wahine Māori. This healing space allowed me to rediscover and reclaim my place in the world, recognising the inherent worth and dignity that comes from that connection. Rongoā, with its holistic approach to health and wellbeing, provided a profound means to nurture all aspects of my being. This journey highlighted the need for a shift towards culturally informed frameworks in the provision of support and recovery. All of this inspired me to deepen my knowledge in this field and enrol in a Master of Social Work programme, specifically focusing on healing the impacts of sexual violence from a te ao Māori perspective, utilising Rongoā Māori modalities of healing and well-being.

Researcher's Perspective

I was raised as an only child for twelve years before becoming the tuākana, the older sibling to my brother and sister. My mother's siblings and my cousins lived nearby, and I enjoyed a wonderful childhood. My papa, my mother's father, was the cornerstone of our family, regularly bringing us together for meals and to practice kapa haka, traditional Māori songs and dance. I grew up in the capital city of New Zealand, and my father's whānau resided in a charming rural town on the coast. I cherish my time with them; they converse in te reo Māori and often spent time in their mara or gardens, harvesting Rongoā rākau (plant-based remedies) or weaving flax. My mother instilled in me the belief in 'angels' as our protectors, and my father taught me from a young age about the healing properties of wairua (spirit) and mirimiri (traditional bodywork). I was brought up with strong values centred around whānau

connection, honesty, respect, and pride in my Māori identity. However, as I progressed through the education system, I began to lose touch with the richness of my culture and the healing practices and perspectives we uphold. Upon entering University, I embarked on a profound journey of self-discovery that allowed me to reconnect deeply with my cultural roots. I now recognise that this transition marked the beginning of my decolonisation process.

By the time our potiki, our youngest of three daughters started school, I was a registered social worker. I worked on the front line of the sexual violence sector. I held a role as a therapeutic social worker and had the privilege of walking alongside many survivors. I worked on the afterhours crisis line, alongside Police and Medical Staff specialised in sexual harm. My experience in the sector also extends to facilitating prevention programmes in our community and contributing as a Board of Trustee's member. In New Zealand, the sexual violence sector encompasses a highly skilled and specialised workforce, characterised by a profound passion for their roles. These professionals demonstrate a commitment to addressing and ultimately ending sexual harm within our communities. At this time, I believed that being Māori was enough. But I soon realised that operating independently of Māori Indigenous knowledges significantly hinders the delivery of effective and culturally responsive interventions that address the impacts of sexual harm for Māori.

I left the sexual violence sector, filled with gratitude for the experience and the life-long connections that were made. I returned to my roots of te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori, I sang waiata (Māori songs) and I recited karakia (incantations). I returned home to my whenua, my land on the East Coast and the North Island of New Zealand, where I cleansed myself in my moana (ocean) and my awa (river). I walked my maunga (mountain) and I embraced my marae (ancestral home). A new version of myself emerged, and I felt honoured to move forward. I graduated as a wairua practitioner, and I trained as a Rongoā practitioner in mirimiri and romiromi. Working with a kaupapa Māori initiative, I embarked on a deeper

journey of decolonisation, critically reflecting on and letting go of certain beliefs and practices. I conducted an in-depth exploration of how te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori offer vital frameworks for whaiora to reconnect with their authentic selves, rediscover their inherent worth and dignity, and facilitate their own healing processes.

Completing this thesis has been a lengthy journey for me, and I now hold the title of Kui (grandmother), having welcomed two mokopuna (grandchildren) into my life. When I first began writing, I was determined not to translate or explain the kupu Māori I used, believing that te reo Māori is the official language of Aotearoa and that I was exercising my tino rangatiratanga. I was comfortable with the notion that if someone could not understand my words, then this research was not meant for them. However, as I progressed in my writing and began to embody the words, living and breathing them, I recognised the power of presenting this research in a manner that reflects aroha, stemming from a place of unconditional love. While I acknowledge the deep emotions of anger resulting from the impacts of colonisation, I understand that such feelings do not lead to solutions; nothing new can grow from that seed. Instead, I am committed to cultivating a new path forward, one that is rooted in hope, resilience, and determination. This is essential for the future of my mokopuna, and I am dedicated to sharing a new narrative that will allow them to thrive.

Significance of this Research

Having worked alongside whaiora and navigated my own healing journey, I understand that the impacts of sexual violence extend far beyond concerns of personal safety and the pervasive feelings of shame and self-blame that often accompany such experiences (Fuller & Foreman, 2013; Kingi & Jordan, 2009; Mossman et al., 2009). From a te ao Māori perspective sexual violence is seen as a profound violation of te whare tangata, the house of

humanity, which represents the sacredness of the human body and lineage. This violation not only affects the individual but also has far-reaching consequences for whānau, hapū (tribe) and iwi (sub-tribe) undermining the core principle of mana that is central to Māori culture. Additionally, the frameworks and definitions addressing sexual harm in New Zealand are predominantly based on Western paradigms, which fail to adequately reflect Māori experiences or consider the unique cultural contexts of Māori communities. This disconnect creates a significant gap between established practices and the specific needs of Māori whaiora and their whānau (Armstrong & Gleckman-Krut, 2018; Leary & Hay, 2019; Mossman et al., 2009; Pihama & McRoberts, 2009; Pihama et al., 2016).

I resonate with the literature that highlights how Māori respond positively to culturally tailored services. I flourished, healed, and grew through te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori services because they were specifically designed to meet my unique Māori cultural needs and those of my community. The effectiveness of these approaches lies in their creation, definition, and development by us as Māori, deeply embedded in Māori worldviews and aligned with our aspirations for health and well-being. (Jackson, 2015; Mark & Lyons, 2010; O'Connor, 2007; Pihama et al., 2016, 2017; Wirihana et al., 2020). Engaging with te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori is a crucial component in effectively addressing sexual violence. These spaces are uniquely designed to holistically understand and meet the health and well-being needs of wāhine Māori, offering a pathway to healing for all women affected by sexual violence. While there is increasing academic interest in Rongoā, particularly among practitioners exploring its collaborative potential, there remains a significant gap in research on how Rongoā Māori specifically supports healing from the effects of sexual violence in New Zealand. This highlights an urgent need for further investigation in this area.

I support and, in this study, emphasise the importance of integrating te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori methodologies as essential frameworks for addressing the complex impacts of sexual

violence within Māori communities. These culturally grounded healing practices and philosophical perspectives are not only beneficial but essential for promoting holistic well-being, as highlighted by Durie (2013). By genuinely embracing these Indigenous approaches, the research seeks to develop a more inclusive, culturally sensitive, and comprehensive recovery model. This model prioritises self-determination, resilience, and empowerment, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of interventions. Extensive literature supports the success of these methodologies (Durie, 2013; Jackson, 2015; Mark & Lyons, 2010; O'Connor, 2007; Pihama & McRoberts, 2009; Pihama et al., 2016, 2017; Wirihana et al., 2020), underscoring the significance of culturally responsive practices in the healing journey following sexual violence.

Research Aims

This research aims to shed light on the ways in which te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori address and heal the impacts of sexual violence.

The three aims of this research are:

- To examine how sexual violence is represented in Aotearoa New Zealand,
- To analyse how te ao Māori provides an understanding of the impacts of sexual violence for wāhine Māori and all women, and
- To explore how Rongoā Māori heals the impacts of sexual violence and promotes health and wellbeing.

Outline of Thesis

Chapter One is the *Introduction*. This chapter includes the aims of this research and the reason for pursuing this topic. It outlines the significance of this research and lays the foundation of what is included in this thesis. This chapter is able to present me as the researcher and my motivation and interest in this research.

Chapter Two is the *Literature Review*. It considers literature in Indigenous Māori knowledge, Rongoā Māori, and te ao Māori concepts important to the sexual violence sector. Literature pertaining to colonisation is also considered as a way of understanding the current systems and the need to consider and implement Indigenous knowledge.

Chapter Three is the *Methodology*. This chapter introduces the methodology and methods used for this research. It outlines wairua, Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine theories. It highlights a qualitative approach in relation to acquiring rich, in-depth data. Ethical considerations are identified as per Massey University requirements as well as ethical dilemmas that occurred when the interviews were conducted. This chapter also focused on the selection and criteria process for recruiting the wāhine.

Chapter Four is the *Findings*. It presents the results and findings from seven wāhine Māori and their experiences and understandings of the impacts of sexual violence and using te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori as a method of healing and wellbeing. Following the interviews, three key themes were identified, and then sub-themes emerged from these. This section used direct quotes from the wāhine Māori to ensure their voices are heard.

Chapter Five is the *Discussion*. It weaves the voices of the wāhine Māori together with the literature and critically explores the meaning, and implications of the findings as they relate to the literature.

Chapter Six is the *Conclusion and Recommendations*. Having examined how sexual violence is represented in Aotearoa New Zealand, this chapter covers the recommendations and offers a pathway forward where te ao Māori provides an understanding of the impacts of sexual violence and Rongoā Māori is used to heal and promote health and wellbeing for wāhine Māori and all women.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Ehara taki toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini.

My success is not mine alone, it is the success of the collective.

Tīmatanga

This chapter will offer a concise overview of literature that captures an understanding of the Māori people and the essence of wahine Māori, from a Māori perspective. It will examine literature that supports Māori Indigenous knowledge in addressing sexual violence, highlighting Rongoā Māori, followed by a discussion of te ao Māori concepts such as wairua (spirituality), tikanga Māori (Māori protocols), mana (personal power), te whare tangata (the womb), and cultural identity, which serve as the foundations of Rongoā and help contextualise sexual harm for Māori. Additionally, it will explore significant historical events, particularly the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in 1840 and the Tohunga Suppression Act of 1907.

A range of literature was researched and includes primary, secondary and grey literature. The primary focus was literature from Aotearoa New Zealand. This is because Aotearoa New Zealand is unique to Rongoā Māori.

Tangata Māori

To fully articulate and honour the essence of wāhine Māori, of the Māori people - the Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand, it is essential to analyse this understanding from a Māori lens (Mikaere, 1999). As wahine Māori, this approach not only acknowledges our unique experiences and contributions but also challenges prevailing narratives that have

historically marginalised the voices of Māori women (Murphy, 2011). Both men and women were essential parts in the collective whole, both formed part of the whakapapa (lineage) that linked Māori back to the beginning of the world, and wāhine in particular played a key role in linking the past with the present and the future (Mikaere, 1999; Murphy, 2011; Simmonds, 2011).

There are a range of iwi (tribe), hapū (subtribe) and whānau (families) narratives that speak to their origins, or the creation of humanity, and it is important not to presume that there is only one definitive truth or version of understanding Māori ways of being (Pihama, 2020, p. 353). In Māori cosmology, Io, often referred to as Io Matua Kore, the supreme being, the supreme source is considered the creator, responsible for bringing forth the universe from nothingness and creating Ranginui, the sky father and Papatūānuku, the earth mother (Marsden, 2003). Ranginui and Papatūānuku were joined together, and their children were born between them in darkness (Marsden, 2003; Pihama, 2001). Eventually, the children, the Atua (deities) decided to separate their parents, to allow light to come into the world and the beginning of humanity (Marsden, 2003).

It is said that after a long search for the female essence, Tāne Atua of the forests, a son of Papatūānuku and Ranginui, was guided by Papatūānuku to Kurawaka where he would shape the first human form (Murphy, 2011; Pihama, 2020). Arriving at Kurawaka, Tāne sculpted clay steeped in the ikura, the mensural blood of Papatūānuku (Murphy, 2011; Pihama, 2020). Throughout this sculpting process the Atua gifted body parts as sacred offerings. Upon completion and following a hongī (pressing of noses) from Tāne sharing the hā, the breath of life, Hineahuone the first human and female element was created (Pihama, 2020). Each part of Hineahuone was gifted from the Atua and as such within her fundamental being the sacredness of Māori women is embedded (Keats-Farr, 2022; Murphy, 2011; Pihama, 2020; Wikaire, 2020).

Hinetītama the daughter born of Hineahuone and Tāne, is said to sit between the worlds of night and day and control the space associated with shifting consciousness and development, the traditional space of magic (Pearse-Otene, 2021). The pūrākau (narrative) of Hinetītama is one of strength and choice; when challenged by the transgression of her lineage, Hinetītama transformed into Hine-nui-te-pō - the guardian and protector of the spiritual welfare of the deceased, declining the burden of shame, and transforming into a powerful, wise, and fully independent being (Pearse-Otene, 2021; Pihama, 2020; Simmonds, 2011; Te Wiata & Smith, 2016). The pūrākau of Hinetītama and Hine-nui-te-pō are rich in symbolism and meaning, serving in the sexual violence sector as sources of empowerment, transformation, and hope (Pearse-Otene, 2021; Te Wiata & Smith, 2016). Through this pūrākau a new dynamic to te whare tangata was created, and the womb conceptualised the power of women with life and death, creation and destruction (Murphy, 2011; Pearse-Otene, 2021; Pihama & McRoberts, 2009).

Te whare tangata also known as the womb of wāhine represents the foundational pillar of lineage and cultural heritage (Murphy, 2011; Pihama, 2001, 2020; Simmonds, 2011).

Menstrual blood received by Papatūānuku united the genders as men had their own practices that honoured te whare tangata (Murphy, 2011; Simmonds, 2011). These male-led traditions included the gathering of special foods, the presentation of gifts, and the preparation of nourishing meals that catered to the needs of menstruating women (Murphy, 2011). The roles of wāhine Māori were held in high esteem, significant in ensuring the continuation of whakapapa and future generations of whānau and culture (Pihama 2001; Pihama et al., 2016; Simmonds, 2011; Te Wiata & Smith, 2016). The power of women's autonomy was evident in their freedom to express their views and fully participate at all levels of social and political affairs affecting the tribe (Jahnke, 2019). Te whare tangata is embedded in the creation of the world and connects wāhine Māori to our female deities, Papatūānuku, the earth mother;

Hineahuone, the first human woman; Hinetītama, the dawn maiden; and Hine-nui-te-pō, the goddess of death (Jahnke, 2019; Murphy, 2011; Pearse-Otene, 2021; Pihama, 2001, 2020; Wharewera, 2022).

Rich, Collective of Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous knowledges represent a rich, collective of understandings that have emerged, evolved, and been preserved across generations. In contrast to prevailing beliefs that these knowledges are confined to historical contexts, they have evolved and adapted to modern settings ensuring they remain applicable, relevant, and significant (Durie, 2004; Pihama et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2015; Wirihana & Smith, 2014). Various studies advocate for the collaboration of Māori Indigenous knowledges in exploring the cultural dimensions of sexual violence and avenues for collective healing (Pihama et al., 2016; Te Wiata & Smith, 2016; Wikaire, 2020). Relevant scholarly contributions have not only highlighted the overrepresentation of Māori as survivors; they also emphasise the holistic impact of sexual violence as an epidemic due to the magnitude and serious nature of it for whānau (Pihama et al., 2016; Pihama & McRoberts, 2009; Te Wiata & Smith, 2016). The literature highlights that Māori respond well to practices that are implemented in ways that are empowering for Māori, that are defined and developed by Māori and are specific to Māori needs and aspirations of health and wellbeing (Jackson, 2015; Pihama et al., 2015; 2016; Smith, 1997; Tiakiwai, 2001). Research has established the importance of Māori being able to access services which align with their Māori worldview and include tikanga based processes that can heal their specific needs (Dobbs & Eruera, 2014; McLachlan et al., 2017; O'Connor, 2007; Pihama & McRoberts, 2009; Te Wiata & Smith, 2016; Wikaire, 2020; Wirihana et al., 2020). For example, in Durie (2001), his Te Whare Tapa Whā model mentions four dimensions or

taha of holistic health that must all be addressed in order to achieve good health. These taha include taha tinana, taha hinengaro, taha wairua, and taha whānau (Durie, 2001; McLachlan et al., 2021; Teinakore, 2023; Tulip, 2021). All of the taha represent a Māori lens in looking at health, our hauora with the intentions of wholeness, embodiment of all aspects. Indigenous knowledges understand that tailored interventions, grounded in the unique cultural and social realities of Māori communities, will facilitate a more profound process of healing (Wirihana et al., 2020).

Indigenous knowledge in Aotearoa, known as mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledges), encompasses a rich tapestry of cultural insights and practices integral to Māori wellbeing (Hikuroa, 2017; Pihama et al., 2015, 2016; Sharman, 2019). A significant feature of this knowledge is Rongoā Māori, a space of healing that focuses on collective health and wellbeing (Mark et al., 2017; Wikaire, 2020). Rongoā Māori has a long history in Aotearoa, it is said that after the separation of Ranginui and Papatūānuku, their sons set about creating homes for themselves and their lineage (Diamond, 2019). Tāne created the forests home of Rongoā rākau (plant-based remedies), Tangaroa went to the sea, a realm often used in Rongoā Māori for energetic cleansing and to provide spiritual protection, and Tāwhiri took charge of the winds associated from a Rongoā perspective with creating change in the mind, body and soul. Rongo and Haumia, took refuge with their mother, Papa, and became the guardians of spirituality and peace or balance (Diamond, 2019).

Rongoā Māori was carefully structured, developed over centuries through cultural practices, deep spiritual beliefs, and keen observations of the natural environment (Koea & Mark, 2020; Mark et al., 2017, 2019; O'Connor, 2007; Wikaire, 2020; Wirihana et al., 2020). Within this space, Māori health and causes of illness were traditionally understood in relation to the values of tapu (sacred) and noa (unrestricted) that regulated all of society and maintained harmony (Mark et al., 2017; Mead, 2016). In this worldview, any deviation from normal

health was interpreted as a breach of tapu and viewed as an offense against the spiritual realm (Mark et al., 2017; Mead, 2016). Consequently, healing practices included specific rituals known as whakanoa, which aimed to purify individuals and restore balance, effectively mending the spiritual rupture caused by the initial breach (Mark et al., 2017; Mead, 2016).

Rongoā Māori was traditionally the exclusive domain of tohunga, or expert healers, who held esteemed positions within Māori culture and played a vital role in maintaining the spiritual and lawful health of society (Koea & Mark, 2020; Mark, 2012; Mark et al., 2017, 2019; O'Connor, 2007; Wikaire, 2020; Wirihana et al., 2020). Historical evidence suggests that the term tohunga referred to individuals who were skilled at interpreting and conveying knowledge about specific tohu, or signs (Smith, 2008). The areas of expertise for tohunga were determined by their specialist knowledge; for instance, tohunga ahurewa were ritual experts skilled in the use of incantations, while tohunga matakite were seers who interpreted visual omens (Mark, 2012; Smith, 2008). The ancient whare wānanga served as a centre for higher learning, where tohunga were instructed in their people's knowledge of healing practices, history, whakapapa and religious rituals (Tuna & Paringatai, 2018). Given the sacred nature of their work, tohunga were often regarded as some of the most tapu individuals within their hapū (Mitchell, 2021). Māori healers today may not receive the same training as traditional tohunga (Ahuriri-Driscoll et al., 2015; Mark et al., 2017; Mitchell, 2021). However, they undergo a range of training, from informal cultural practices to formal education like wānanga and university programmes (Ahuriri-Driscoll et al., 2015). Many healers are born into Rongoā and use Māori medicine to treat illness as part of their upbringing (Mark et al., 2017).

According to Sir Mason Durie's work (1998), Rongoā Māori encompasses five distinct categories of Māori healing practices: ritenga (rituals) and karakia (incantations), Rongoā rākau, mirimiri (traditional Māori bodywork), wai (sea water), and surgical interventions.

While Durie's classification primarily positions Rongoā within the scope of herbal remedies, modern scholars broaden this definition to encompass all healing modalities associated with Rongoā, including mirimiri, karakia, and wai (Koea & Mark, 2020; Mark et al., 2017; Wikaire, 2020). These components are acknowledged as part of a traditional healing framework that aims to restore balance to the mind, body, and soul (Mark et al., 2017, 2019). Rongoā is known for its restorative properties, focusing on uplifting and enhancing the holistic health and wellbeing of the collective (Ahuriri-Driscoll, 2014; Koea & Mark, 2020; Mark et al., 2017, 2019; Wikaire, 2020; Wirihana et al., 2020).

Rongoā Māori is known as the therapeutic use of medicines derived from herbs, trees, and plants in Aotearoa, which falls under the category of Rongoā rākau (Mark et al., 2017; Riley, 1994). According to our tūpuna (ancestors), plant life is believed to possess its own spiritual essence, or wairua, and is considered superior in status to humans, given that Tāne created plant life before the emergence of humanity (Mark et al., 2017). Rongoā rākau involves the gathering and formulation of plant materials like leaves, roots, and bark (Mark et al., 2017; Riley, 1994). These plant-based ingredients can be applied topically as an ointment, consumed as a boiled tonic, or used as a bath infusion by steeping the plant stems, roots, or blossoms in water (Riley, 1994). The collection and preparation of these plant materials require an in-depth knowledge of their properties, as well as adherence to tikanga and the principle of whanaungatanga, or connection, which involves respecting the interconnectedness of all living things and giving back to te taiao, the natural environment (Diamond, 2019; Riley, 1994).

While Rongoā Māori is commonly linked to Rongoā rākau, it also encompasses physical therapies such as mirimiri and romiromi (Diamond, 2019; O'Connor, 2007). These therapies are regarded as traditional Māori bodywork and involve applying pressure to specific areas of the body to alleviate toxic build-up and remove waste (Davies, 2022; O'Connor, 2007).

Practitioners must possess a comprehensive understanding of human anatomy, pressure points, nerve centres, and muscle tissues. This traditional bodywork is referenced in the literature as a form of massage, this is not the case as mirimiri and romiromi are grounded in a deep appreciation and a sound understanding of Māori cultural customs, beliefs, and values (Keats-Farr, 2022; Mark et al., 2012, 2022; O'Connor, 2008).

Rongoā Māori is much more than a healing system or approach to health; it is a way of life and belonging to the world (Boulton et al., 2014; Kerridge, 2020). Rongoā can be described as an expression of Māori culture; it is as much about identity as it is about healing sickness (Keats-Farr, 2022; Mark et al., 2012). Rongoā provides a space where culture is expressed and nurtured and where individuals and whānau can attract strength and confidence; a space where Māori can explore our differences, centre ourselves and reclaim and redefine who we are (Pihama et al., 2017; Simmonds, 2011). This space emphasises that as Māori, we embody a complex interchange of systems and dimensions including the mind, body, and spirit, that collectively shape our identities and overall wellbeing (Koea & Mark, 2020). Within this is the belief that we have the ability and potential to heal ourselves and our whānau. Therefore, developing and strengthening connections to cultural identity were reported to help whaiora to feel more empowered and complete. These findings are consistent with previous research (Ahuriri-Driscoll et al., 2008; Diamond, 2019; Gemmell, 2020; Mark & Lyons, 2010). In this sense, Rongoā Māori has multiple layers of healing that contribute to health and wellbeing for individuals and collectives across numerous dimensions.

Traditional Māori knowledge

Rongoā Māori is intricately tied to te ao Māori (Ahuriri-Driscoll, 2014; Mark et al., 2017; McLachlan et al., 2021; Mead, 2016; Wikaire, 2020). The kupu or word Rongoā originated

from Rongo, the name of the Māori Atua that looks after the cultivated foods and peace or balance (Marsden, 2003). To rongo also means to sense, to use your human senses of listening, hearing, seeing, feeling and intuition (Diamond, 2019). It is said that Rongoā Māori is the personification of all things and ways of healing. Te ao Māori represents a holistic worldview that is shaped by key principles which collectively inform the Māori perspective on life and the interrelationships among people, their environment, and the spiritual realm (Ahuriri-Driscoll, 2014; Mark et al., 2017; McLachlan et al., 2021; Mead, 2016; Wikaire, 2020). This section will briefly describe some essential values of the current study.

Wairua holds a central position within Māori culture and worldview, encompassing the spiritual dimensions that underpin Māori life (Dobbs & Eruera, 2014; Lindsay et al., 2020; Mark et al., 2019; Mead, 2016). Wairua is understood to exist before a person is born; it is said that the wairua is activated in the womb when the eyes of the foetus first open and that it lives on after a person dies; it is connected to one's mauri or life force and it joins Māori to the universe and cosmos that surrounds them (Ahuriri-Driscoll, 2014; Fox, 2024; Mead, 2016; Ngawati et al., 2018). It is understood to be formed by the experiences and people around an individual, shaping their inner morals and values (Fox, 2024; Mead, 2016).

Wairua is considered a portal to the spiritual realm, likened to intuition, allowing individuals to connect with their inner self and the world around them (Ahuriri-Driscoll, 2014; Lindsay et al., 2020; Mead, 2016). This concept is deeply relational, influencing collective wellbeing and the broader environmental context (Ahuriri-Driscoll, 2014; Valentine et al., 2017). The term wairua can be translated as 'two waters,' reflecting the intricate relationship between the spiritual and physical realms (Rameka, 2016).

Wairua encompasses a spectrum of experiences, including personal beliefs, cultural practices, and an individual's sense of connectedness to the natural world (NiaNia et al., 2019). The

significance of wairua is deeply subjective, manifesting uniquely for each person, serving as a source of inner strength that resonates within the multifaceted dimensions of life (Mead, 2016; NiaNia et al., 2019). The power of Rongoā Māori healing is attributed to wairua, which is believed to have the capacity to heal and restore balance within individuals and their connection to the world around them (Ahuriri- Driscoll, 2014; Davies, 2022; Mark et al., 2022, 2017; NiaNia et al., 2019).

The principle of tikanga Māori encompasses a comprehensive framework of protocols, customary practices, ethical behaviours, and overarching moral principles integral to Māori culture (McLachlan et al., 2021; Mead, 2016). It serves as a vital guide to ensuring that actions and practices are conducted in a manner that is deemed 'tika' or appropriate (McLachlan et al., 2021; Mead, 2016). Tikanga can be likened to rules and responsibilities; however, they are fluid and can vary widely, manifesting not only on marae (traditional meeting houses) but also within individual households. For instance, the customary decision to remove shoes before entering a home reflects an adherence to tikanga, while some households may not uphold this practice. Similarly, some people say karakia, or a prayer, before meals, while others may not (Mead, 2016).

Central to the concept of tikanga is the belief that the wellbeing of Māori communities is linked to the maintenance of balance in various aspects of life (Mead, 2016). This notion of balance is closely associated with the fundamental principles of tapu and noa, which are pivotal in te ao Māori (Mead, 2016; Walker, 2004). Tapu is often understood as sacredness or restriction, signifying a status that requires careful consideration; in contrast, noa translates to unrestricted, referencing elements of everyday life that can be freely engaged with (Mead, 2016; Walker, 2004). Historically, tapu and noa facilitated a harmonious coexistence among people, their environment, and the spiritual dimensions of life (Wikaire, 2020). This balance acted as a protective mechanism, safeguarding both collective health and natural

sustainability, aligning practices with the core values of Māori society (Mark et al., 2019).

The dynamic interplay of tikanga, tapu, and noa underscores the importance of cultural practices in fostering wellbeing and maintaining the interconnectedness of individuals with their community and environment (Mead, 2016).

Mana is fundamental within Māori culture, signifying the inherent power, status, and collective recognition of an individual's place within their community (Mead, 2016; Pihama, 2020; Simmonds, 2011). Every person possesses mana from birth, and it is both an intrinsic quality and a variable attribute that can be enhanced or diminished based on one's actions, demeanour, and treatment of others (Mead, 2016; Pihama, 2020). The nature of mana is both tangible and intangible, encompassing internal qualities such as self-esteem and external expressions of respect and authority. Scholars have explored the complexities of mana, leading to an understanding that it is multi-dimensional and significantly influenced by spiritual beliefs (Mead, 2016; Pihama, 2020; Simmonds, 2011). For instance, Mead (2016) highlights the deep connection between mana and whakapapa, illustrating how mana is transmitted across generations and shaped by ancestral ties. As a crucial concept within te ao Māori, mana profoundly impacts interpersonal relationships, guiding ethical behaviours and practices across various contexts (Dobbs & Eruera, 2014; Pihama et al., 2020).

Understanding mana is essential for engaging respectfully and knowledgeably within Māori communities, as it informs the dynamics of authority, respect, and social responsibility. This understanding is vital for fostering positive interactions and nurturing the wellbeing of both individuals and the community as a whole.

Whakapapa is a core concept within te ao Māori, functioning as a fundamental network of interconnectedness that goes beyond genealogy and encapsulates the evolution of all living entities (Dobbs & Eruera, 2014). It represents a dynamic process that transcends traditional family boundaries, connecting relationships that extend across whānau, hapū, and iwi (Keats-

Farr, 2022; Wikaire, 2020). By exploring whakapapa, individuals gain a deeper understanding of their identity and heritage, which connects them to their origins and existence in both historical and contemporary contexts (Keats-Farr, 2022; Pihama, 2020). Whakapapa reveals a complex web of relationships and interconnections among people, as well as the extensive Māori cultural knowledge that influences their worldview (Dobbs & Eruera, 2014). It underscores the numerous obligations, responsibilities, and accountabilities that are shared across generations, highlighting the significance of collective identity and community bonds (Dobbs & Eruera, 2014).

Whakapapa lays the foundational principles that guide the practice of kaitiakitanga, or guardianship. This principle is often associated with the protection, and sustainable management of the natural environment and its resources (Keats-Farr, 2022; Wikaire, 2020). However, kaitiakitanga encompasses a broader philosophy of guardianship, where individuals or collectives actively assume the role of kaitiaki (guardians) to protect traditional knowledge and cultural heritage for future generations (Keats-Farr, 2022; Wikaire, 2020).

Whanaungatanga is a foundational concept within Māori epistemology, serving as a paradigm that intricately links whakapapa to the processes of building understanding and fostering enduring connections. This concept is pivotal in both therapeutic contexts and Indigenous community settings, emphasising the significance of the whakawhanaungatanga process, which serves as a mechanism for nurturing relationships and creating spaces of connection (Carlson et al., 2016; Tuakiritetangata & Ibarra-Lemay, 2021). In practice, whanaungatanga involves the intentional nurturing of relationships through acts of care, connection, shared understanding, and the acknowledgement of reciprocal obligations (Hamley et al., 2022). By establishing relationships through whanaungatanga, connections become resilient and persist beyond short-term interventions, fostering a strong foundation for personal and communal growth (Hamley et al., 2022). The effectiveness of such relationships can be attributed to

their roots in reciprocity, and mutual respect, creating a culture of care and understanding (Carlson et al., 2016). A key aspect of whanaungatanga is the establishment of a "bubble" of cultural safety, as articulated by Durie (1998). This concept refers to the creation of an environment where individuals feel safe, valued, and respected, allowing them to engage authentically and progress towards holistic wellbeing (Durie, 1998). The cultural safety bubble is crucial in facilitating the healing process, as it enables individuals to feel comfortable sharing their stories, emotions, and experiences, ultimately leading to a deeper sense of connection and understanding.

The impacts of sexual violence

In this section I explore and reveal a lot of sensitive information. In Māori society, women were not only honoured but also played a crucial role as influential caretakers and nurturers, reflecting a worldview that valued our equality and agency (Mikaere, 1999). Our social standing was marked by an acknowledgement of our rights and contributions, with acts of violence, whether physical or sexual, considered serious crimes deserving of harsh penalties such as death or exile (Pihama et al., 2016; Mikaere, 1999; Murphy, 2011). The arrival of European settlers in Aotearoa New Zealand brought patriarchal values and standards of gendered power, resulting in the marginalisation and oppression of Māori women (Mikaere, 1999; Murphy, 2011). Colonisation played a significant role in the breakdown of gendered structures, contributing to the ongoing violence faced by Māori women today (Pihama et al., 2017). Māori women became invisible in our own narratives, erased from cosmology and replaced by Māori men (Murphy, 2011; Simmonds, 2011). Māori history transformed into Māori mythology, with women relegated to minor roles (Murphy, 2011; Pihama, 2001).

The literature indicates that the incidence of sexual violence in pre-colonial Māori society was a rare occurrence, as evidenced by the works of Pihama and McRoberts (2009) and Te Wiata and Smith (2016). However, recent literature draws attention to a troubling escalation of sexual violence in contemporary New Zealand, which poses significant and far-reaching implications for affected individuals, their whānau, and broader communities (Pihama et al., 2016). The psychological impact of such violence is frequently documented, with anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) emerging as common psychiatric diagnoses among survivors (Kingi & Jordan, 2009; Mossman et al., 2009). In addition, the discourse is heavily loaded with issues concerning personal safety and the pervasive feelings of shame and self-blame (Fuller & Foreman, 2013; Kingi & Jordan, 2009; Mossman et al., 2009). Beres et al., (2020) further describe the physical consequences of sexual violence, including traumatic injuries, the transmission of sexually transmitted infections, and unintended pregnancies, painting a comprehensive picture of the multifaceted challenges stemming from this urgent social issue.

It is important to add that the literature has long highlighted the significant limitation of PTSD in addressing the impacts of historical trauma experienced by Indigenous peoples (Wirihana & Smith, 2014). This is because PTSD diagnoses fail to capture the intergenerational nature of trauma, as the criteria do not account for events that occurred in past generations (Salter et al., 2020; Wirihana & Smith, 2014). While complex-PTSD is a newer diagnosis that acknowledges multiple and ongoing trauma events in the present, it too falls short in addressing the unique dimensions of intergenerational trauma.

For Māori, sexual violence is deeply intertwined with the broader violence inflicted upon whānau, hapū and iwi during and after colonial invasion (Cavino, 2016; Pihama et al., 2016; Wirihana & Smith, 2014). This violence extends beyond individual acts to encompass the systemic and deliberate disruption of Māori social structures, cultural practices and spiritual

connections (Cavino, 2016; Pihama et al., 2014, 2016). The rape of the land, a metaphor for the exploitation and desecration of Papatūānuku, is directly linked to the physical and spiritual violation of Māori ancestors (Cavino, 2016; Pihama et al., 2014, 2016; Wirihana & Smith, 2014). These acts of colonial aggression have left enduring scars, manifesting as historical trauma that continues to affect Māori communities intergenerationally. The loss of land, language, and sovereignty, coupled with the imposition of foreign systems and values, has perpetrated cycles of harm, disconnection and marginalisation, further intensifying the impacts of sexual violence within Māori society (Pihama et al., 2016; Pihama & McRoberts, 2009).

For Māori, sexual violence is viewed as a serious violation of te whare tangata, which represents the sanctity of the human body and lineage (Pihama & McRoberts, 2009; Pihama et al., 2016; Te Wiata & Smith, 2016). This breach affects not only the individual but also has harmful consequences for whānau, hapū, and iwi, because it undermines the fundamental principles of tapu and mana, that are central to Māori culture (Pihama & McRoberts, 2009; Pihama et al., 2016; Te Wiata & Smith, 2016). Research by Pihama et al., (2016) and Te Wiata and Smith (2016) emphasises that sexual violence inflicts immediate physical and psychological harm, while also causing significant cultural and spiritual disruptions within Māori communities. Sexual violence was raised in the literature as an epidemic for Māori because of the magnitude and serious nature of it for whānau, hapū and iwi in the way in which it is collective spread and maintained through whakapapa (Pihama & McRoberts, 2009; Pihama et al., 2016; Te Wiata & Smith, 2016). The literature indicates that the effects of such violence are complex, revealing an intricate relationship of trauma that impacts cultural identity and community bonds, ultimately jeopardising the holistic well-being of the Māori people (Pihama & McRoberts, 2009; Pihama et al., 2014, 2016; Te Wiata & Smith, 2016; Wirihana & Smith, 2014).

Current literature on the effects of sexual violence reveals a significant trend towards evidence-based practices that primarily emphasise client-centred and trauma-focused individual therapies (Armstrong & Gleckman-Krut, 2018; Leary & Hay, 2019; Pearse-Otene, 2021; Te Wiata & Smith, 2016). This body of work consistently highlights the specialisation of this field in delivering psychosocial support, psychoeducation, and effectively addressing trauma responses (Armstrong & Gleckman-Krut, 2018; Kingi & Jordan, 2009; Leary & Hay, 2019; Mossman et al., 2009). A significant portion of the literature focused on recovery from sexual violence underscores the importance of understanding and enhancing the cognitive and emotional consequences that arise from such experiences (Julich et al., 2013; Leary & Hay, 2019; Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2012; Thorburn, 2015; Wharewera-Mika & McPhillips, 2016). Professionals in this field are anticipated to have a solid theoretical understanding of trauma and to work collaboratively within a multidisciplinary framework (Leary & Hay, 2019; Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2012). However, Indigenous and holistic healing perspectives demonstrate a significant difference from standard Western frameworks concerning the relationship between healing and trauma (Mark & Lyons, 2010; Pihama et al., 2016, 2017; Wirihana et al., 2020). This difference underscores the need for a more culturally responsive approach that incorporates Indigenous healing paradigms to improve the overall effectiveness of therapeutic interventions for sexual violence in New Zealand.

The various definitions of sexual violence, including those found in the Crimes Act 1961 and the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1994, provide definitions that fall short in contextualising the complex experiences of Māori (Armstrong & Gleckman-Krut, 2018; Pihama et al., 2016). While the World Health Organisation's definition of sexual harm is important in the realm of sexual violence, it highlights that sexual violence involves forced physical acts or coerced sexual acts without addressing the cultural, spiritual, and collective repercussions of sexual harm for Māori (Pihama et al., 2016, p.44). Therefore, there is an

urgent need to incorporate Indigenous perspectives in the discourse on sexual violence to provide inclusive support for healing and recovery that is relevant to Māori.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Rongoā Māori

Rongoā Māori is one of several Māori traditions that experienced a significant decline in knowledge retention, translation, and usage due to breaches of te Tiriti o Waitangi, such as the Tohunga Suppression Act 1907. The signing of te Tiriti o Waitangi between 1840 - 1844, which was an agreement between Māori and Pākehā (European), represented a foundational commitment to an equal partnership between two peoples sharing the same land (Mark et al., 2019; McIntosh et al., 2021; Pihama et al., 2014, 2015; Sharman, 2019; Wikaire, 2020; Wirihana et al., 2020). The Tiriti comprises three main Articles, each of which holds considerable importance for Rongoā Māori. Article I sets the framework for governance, affirming a partnership that enables the Crown to govern in Aotearoa. Article II guarantees Māori rangatiratanga, over their lands and taonga or treasures, which encompasses the cherished knowledge and practices of Rongoā. Article III ensures that Māori have the same rights and privileges as non-Māori. However, despite the promises of the Tiriti, the Tohunga Suppression Act of 1907, along with other legislation such as the Crimes Act 1961, led to the suppression of Rongoā Māori, tohunga practices, and Māori prophecies (Koea & Mark, 2020; Mark et al., 2017; O'Connor, 2007; Wikaire, 2020; Wirihana et al., 2020).

Rongoā Māori healers and their practices were effectively driven underground (Ahuriri-Driscoll et al., 2012). Although some arguments at the time were framed as efforts to protect the health of Māori people, O'Connor (2007) points out that the Tohunga Suppression Act 1907 was designed to undermine traditional Māori healing practices and was a deliberate attempt to ensure that all healthcare in the country adhered to Western concepts and methods

(Koea & Mark, 2020; Mark, et al., 2017). The implications of this act have been profound, contributing to complex health disparities between Māori and non-Māori communities (Durie, 2004; Keats-Farr, 2022; Mark, et al., 2017; Wikaire, 2020). Decolonisation processes are vital components of approaching health and wellbeing, and are essential for fully comprehending te ao Māori, Rongoā Māori, and the profound impact of sexual violence on Māori communities (Cavino, 2016; McNabb, 2019; Pihama et al., 2014, 2015; Smith, 1997; Wirihana & Smith, 2014).

Significant evidence underscores the vital role of Rongoā Māori in fostering discussions about health and wellness at both individual and collective levels (Koea et al., 2024; Koea & Mark, 2020; McIntosh et al., 2021; O'Connor, 2007; Pihama et al., 2015; Te Wiata & Smith, 2016). Affirmed by a massive uptake of Rongoā by both Māori and non-Māori communities through initiatives such as the Accident Compensation Commission (ACC) and Employment Assistance Programmes (EAP) (ACC, 2024; Koea et al., 2024). The literature indicates that Rongoā offers a platform that goes beyond simply addressing physical symptoms and illnesses and emphasises that engaging with Rongoā Māori facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of health and healing (Koea et al., 2024; Koea & Mark, 2020; Thompson, et al., 2024). While many studies recognise the difficulties Rongoā Māori faces in maintaining its integrity within Western health systems, a substantial body of research highlights the advantages of collaborative practices between Rongoā Māori and healthcare methods (Keats-Farr, 2022; Mark & Lyons, 2010; Mark et al., 2017, 2019; Wikaire, 2020). This collaboration not only enriches and diversifies healing approaches but also fosters the creation of a more inclusive health system that aligns with cultural values and promotes holistic wellbeing (Mark & Lyons, 2010; Mark et al., 2019; McIntosh et al., 2021; Wikaire, 2020; Wirihana et al., 2020).

Mutungu

It was a privilege to share a body of literature that embodies the essence of Māori culture and highlights the vital contributions of both Māori men and women to the collective community. As a Māori woman, I felt particularly honoured to celebrate the importance of women in our culture, acknowledging our direct ancestry to our female deities. However, it is crucial to recognise that there is no single truth or understanding of Māori ways of being. Instead, we must embrace the diversity of Māori experiences and perspectives.

The growing recognition of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives in addressing sexual violence is a promising development that aligns with my core beliefs. It is reassuring to see that these perspectives are gaining momentum, as they prioritise the empowerment of Māori people and cater to our holistic needs. Recent literature has shed light on the significance of Rongoā Māori, tracing its roots back to Māori ancestral deities. This body of work emphasises that Rongoā Māori is more than just a healing approach; it is a way of life that can benefit everyone. To truly understand and address the needs of Māori communities, it is essential to adopt a te ao Māori perspective. This involves embracing fundamental concepts like wairua, tikanga Māori, tapu and noa, mana, whakapapa, whanaungatanga, and kaitiakitanga.

The prevalence of Western-centric research on sexual violence is unsurprising, but it is concerning that this research often neglects the holistic needs of Māori communities. While some studies touch on the importance of culturally responsive approaches, there is limited research that centres on Māori perspectives and experiences. The legacy of colonisation has led to the erosion of traditional Māori knowledge and ways of being, highlighting the need for decolonisation efforts. Fortunately, a growing body of literature is recognising the value of Rongoā Māori in promoting health and wellness. However, there remains a significant

knowledge gap regarding the intersections between te ao Māori, Rongoā Māori, and sexual violence. Filling this gap through research has the potential to bring about meaningful change by ensuring that support services are culturally sensitive, effective, and inclusive for all individuals affected by sexual violence.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Te manu kai miro, nōna te ngahere; te manu kai mātauranga, nōna te ao.

The bird that eats the miro berries theirs is the forest; the bird that consumes knowledge, the world is theirs.

Tīmatanga

This chapter outlines the theoretical underpinnings of my research that are situated within Kaupapa Māori and celebrate Māori language, traditions, philosophies, and spirituality. Kaupapa Māori serves as a transformative space for me as a Māori researcher to engage in research that is deeply rooted in the values, principles, and traditions of my culture. By embracing a Kaupapa Māori approach, I can ensure that my research is not only culturally sensitive but also culturally competent. This means that I am committed to producing research that honours the diversity and richness of Māori identities, experiences, and worldviews. By doing so, I am contributing to the empowerment and self-determination of our communities, as envisioned by our tūpuna (ancestors) (Barnes, 2000; Jackson, 2015; Pihama, 2010; Smith, 1997). This chapter will then describe the research criteria and recruitment process, outlining how the research was conducted, and the data analysis method used. This chapter will conclude by outlining the ethical considerations to be taken into account for this research.

Methodological Framework

Kaupapa Māori

Kaupapa Māori is rooted in the rich cultural heritage of te ao Māori, it is a research approach that is deeply informed by Māori values, philosophies, and practices. This approach recognises the validity and legitimacy of Māori ways of knowing and doing. At its core, Kaupapa Māori is about enabling Māori to exercise tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) over our own lives, allowing us to live on our own terms, according to our own view of the world (Jackson, 2015; Pihama, 2010; Smith, 1997; Tiakiwai, 2001). This means that Kaupapa Māori is committed to centring Māori voices, perspectives, and experiences. Kaupapa Māori enables a reclamation of mana motuhake (cultural autonomy), where Māori people are empowered to define our own research agendas, methodologies, and outcomes (Pihama, 2010; Smith, 1997; Tiakiwai, 2001). This approach encourages a collaborative and reciprocal relationship between researchers and Māori communities, ensuring that knowledge creation is both relevant and responsive to our needs and aspirations (Jackson, 2015; Pihama, 2010; Smith, 1997; Tiakiwai, 2001).

The development of Kaupapa Māori has its roots in the aspirations of Māori for tino rangatiratanga and mana motuhake (Pihama, 2010; Tiakiwai, 2001). This movement was accentuated by cultural and political intention, serving as both a response to historical injustices and a proactive assertion of Māori rights (Pihama, 2010; Smith, 1996; Tiakiwai, 2001). At its heart, Kaupapa Māori acknowledges that there is no singular Māori worldview; rather, the perspectives and beliefs are diverse and nuanced, shaped by the distinct histories, languages, and experiences of each iwi (tribe) and hapū (sub-tribe). As articulated by Marsden (2003), the variation in Māori worldviews highlights the importance of contextual

understanding in research and theory, ensuring that approaches are not only grounded in Māori epistemologies but also reflective of the multifaceted identities within Māori society.

Mana Wahine

The assertion of Mana Wahine theory is a part of the wider reassertion of being Māori and the affirmation of our language, cultural ways, practices, protocols, and knowledges (Smith, 1997). Mana Wahine embodies a profound acknowledgement of the ancestral knowledge and cultural practices that continue to shape and inform contemporary experiences and identities (Pihama, 2020). It highlights the intricate web of interconnections that bind us to our tūpuna, both those who have walked the land before us and those yet to come. It emphasises the significance of sacred spaces, where the land itself holds spiritual and cultural significance, and highlights how these connections foster a sense of belonging and identity (Pihama, 2020).

Mana Wahine offers a culturally grounded framework for Māori women to reclaim our identities and articulate our unique narratives within a post-colonial context (Pihama, 2001, 2020). This reclamation is crucial, as the voices, experiences, and roles of Māori women have historically been undermined and marginalised through the patriarchal processes of colonisation (Murphy, 2011; Pihama, 2001; Simmonds, 2011; Smith 1997). By situating this research within the principles and methodologies of Mana Wahine, I uphold and prioritise the voices of Māori women, allowing their narratives to emerge and be honoured.

The concept of Rongoā Māori, particularly in the context of healing, often positions wāhine as caregivers and nurturers. While many tāne also make significant contributions to this realm, it is crucial to acknowledge that wāhine are uniquely placed within these healing traditions. This is due in part to their inherent connection to their reproductive capabilities,

which informs their distinct role in Rongoā Māori. A woman's ability to bear children is not just a biological function, but a sacred responsibility that is deeply intertwined with our whakapapa and cultural identity.

Our centre and our existence as wahine Māori, is located in Kaupapa Māori because of the intricate weaving of traditional Māori cosmology with Western epistemologies. By exploring the intersections of these two worlds, I shed light on the distinctive perspectives and experiences of wahine Māori as we navigate and assert our sovereignty within both Indigenous and colonial frameworks, reclaiming our rightful place and agency in the process.

Wairua

For the purpose of this research, wairua can be understood as spiritual guidance that significantly influences the development, processes, and outcomes for this research through both 'seen' and 'unseen' energies and entities including tūpuna and kaitiaki (guardians). For example, initially I was concerned about the last-minute adjustments in interview schedules and venue changes, I gradually embraced fluctuations and learned to go with the flow, trusting in my tūpuna and kaitiaki that things were unfolding as they should. Karakia, an incantation was a fundamental component of my methodological framework; I performed karakia prior to each interview and interaction with participants, and, at times, before writing or editing. This ritual not only grounded my focus but also aligned my intentions with the overarching purpose of safeguarding the work of my tūpuna and the continued work of many within the context of contemporary research (Fox, 2021; Lindsay et al., 2020; NiaNia et al., 2019; Wikaire, 2020).

Qualitative Approach

As the researcher, I acknowledge and deeply respect the privilege of being entrusted with the taonga, the treasures of this mātauranga (knowledge). The combination of Kaupapa Māori with qualitative approaches emphasises my commitment to honour and emphasise participant voices. This integrated approach not only reflects my gratitude but also strives to encourage a positive and empowering research environment that facilitates robust data collection. A qualitative research methodology was utilised to acquire rich, nuanced data that prioritises the personal insights and lived experiences of participants (O’Leary, 2014; Punch, 2016). This approach centres on prioritising participant voices and valuing their perspectives, positioning their subjective positions as central to the research (O’Leary, 2014; Punch, 2016). In alignment with Kaupapa Māori principles, the relationship between the researcher and participants is deemed fundamental to promoting effective communication, information sharing and establishing trust which is crucial to ensuring participants feel safe in sharing their pūrākau, their narratives and their kōrero, their voices (Jackson, 2015; O’Leary, 2014; Punch, 2016).

Participants and Recruitment

Following approval from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (SOB 22/37) (see Appendix 1), I initiated the recruitment of participants for this research. As I navigated both te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā (the European world) contexts, I recognised the importance of recruiting participants with extensive experience in traditional Rongoā Māori healing practices. It was crucial that participants possessed a deep understanding of Māori cultural customs, beliefs, and values. To participate, individuals had to identify as wāhine Māori and actively engage in using Rongoā Māori healing techniques, such as kōmiri (deep

conversation), Rongoā rākau (plant-based remedies), mirimiri and romiromi (traditional Māori bodywork), and mahi wairua (spiritual work). While fluency in te reo Māori was not a requirement, I acknowledged its significance as one of the official languages of Aotearoa New Zealand.

I deliberately focused on wāhine Māori to address a significant gap in the academic literature and to amplify the voices of Māori women in all their strength and beauty. Although this research explores healing from sexual violence, I ensured that involvement in the sector was not a prerequisite for participation. This decision was made to avoid implying that a formal disclosure was necessary to validate one's experience. While some participants did work in the sexual violence sector, all of them had provided healing support to whaiora, survivors, and their whānau.

To recruit Rongoā Māori healers, I employed purposive approaches, leveraging my professional and personal networks. I incorporated the traditional Māori practice of karakia to invoke the guidance of my tūpuna, to aid in identifying suitable participants. By reciting karakia, I sought to focus my intent and affirm the essential requirements for participant selection. As a Māori researcher, I believe in the importance of spiritual connection with our ancestors and kaitiaki, including our Atua. I also acknowledge the thin veil that separates the living and the deceased, enabling us to seek their guidance. To enhance the accuracy of participant selection, I sought the guidance of my tūpuna, focusing on specific attributes such as length of practice, modalities employed, and locality.

Purposive approaches are commonly used in qualitative research, where the goal is to intentionally select individuals or groups who are knowledgeable and experienced in the topic (O'Leary, 2014). Unlike other sampling methods that may prioritise diversity, purposive sampling narrows the focus to those who can provide rich, relevant insights (Etikan et al.,

2016). In the literature, purposive methods are recognised as producing research-led samples, where the researcher identifies what needs to be known and seeks out individuals who can provide the necessary information by virtue of their knowledge or experience (Etikan et al., 2016, p. 4).

With the privilege of knowing each potential participant it was important that I approached the recruitment phase in a manner that facilitated their ability to make an informed decision about partaking in my research. I chose not to address this phase *kanohi ki te kanohi* or face to face. Instead, I distributed an information sheet (see Appendix 2) via email to potential participants which outlined key details of my research including a clear articulation of the study's rationale, methods of research, participant rights and involvement, storage and collection of data, the supervisors' details and contacts (O'Leary, 2014). Alongside the information sheet was my profile, including my *pepeha* and *whakapapa* which is valuable in terms of making that connection to the potential participants and their *whānau*, *hapū* and *iwi* links. In an email reply, I expressed my appreciation to those individuals who indicated their willingness to participate in my research and included consent information (see Appendix 3), interview timeframes and a list of questions for their own preparation (see Appendix 4). Following this initial phase of recruitment, I provided the opportunity to meet prior to the interviews via a phone call or an online platform. This additional opportunity was designed to ensure they possessed a complete understanding of the research context and to address any inquiries.

Data Collection

Kaupapa Māori guided all aspects of this study including the data collection process. All interviews were opened and closed with *karakia* and included time for *whanaungatanga*

(connection) and whakawhitiwhiti kōrero (engaged in discussion). When engaging with Māori, tikanga processes are essential. We gather in wānanga, and it is crucial that our shared environment is prepared with traditional rituals that honour our tūpuna. By observing these protocols, we create a sacred space that fosters respect, trust, and open communication (Kopua et al., 2019; Matamua et al., 2023).

The interviews in this study were grounded in the concept of wānanga. Wānanga is a key dimension of Indigenous methodologies and is a space where we can sit and discuss, listen, and learn from one another (Simmonds, 2014; Smith et al., 2019). The concept of wānanga is deeply rooted in the traditional Māori institutions of whare wānanga, which served as esteemed centres of higher learning (Matamua et al., 2023). These sacred spaces played a vital role in preserving and transmitting precious tribal knowledge, cultural wisdom, and Māori identity from one generation to the next, nurturing a strong sense of cultural endurance and connection to ancestral heritage (Matamua et al., 2023). There are various definitions and descriptions of wānanga. Some refer to wānanga as “seminars”, a “series of discussions”, a “thought space”, “meeting places”, and for others a “practice” (Kopua et al., 2019; Simmonds, 2014). The interviews in this present research reflected aspects of each of these definitions. Wānanga creates a space to share knowledge and is informed by some powerful Indigenous concepts about collective wellbeing, collective responsibility, and collective accountability (Smith et al., 2019).

Face-to-face, or kanohi ki te kanohi, interviews are essential for building meaningful connections, as they allow for a deeper sense of empathy and understanding. This approach is core to Kaupapa Māori, which prioritises connectedness and authenticity, for example, when we can see the person, we are engaging with, it encourages a more personal and human connection. However, just as the interviews were about to begin, New Zealand was struck by Cyclone Gabrielle, which brought devastating winds and flooding to the North Island. The

disaster forced a sudden shift in priorities, as communities focused on recovering from the damage and cleaning up the destruction. To make matters worse, the Therapeutic Products Act 2003 soon received Royal assent, fuelling concerns and anxiety among Māori communities about the potential impact on the future of Rongoā Māori. Given the additional pressure on whānau (families), we adapted by conducting online interviews, leveraging internet platforms to facilitate connection and wānanga. With our ever-growing digital societies, and the mandates of COVID-19, people have become familiar with various platforms and applications to transmit interactions and communication online (Lobe et al., 2020). The online interview format proved effective, as participants appreciated the flexibility they offered in terms of time, space and location.

This research recruited seven wāhine Māori, one interview was completed in person in the comfort of her home, five were conducted online Zoom and one participant wrote her answers and emailed them to me. The interviews allowed for flexibility in the conditions of the interviews according to participants' needs including the comfort and familiarity of their own spaces, the ability to break for a cup of tea or have a kai (food). The participants in this study, share relationships with the researcher as whānau and as colleagues. As a result, the wāhine felt more at ease, allowing for more authentic reflections on their experiences and understandings of Rongoā.

The interviews were semi-structured and varied in length from one hour to two hours. I provided the wāhine with a set of questions to serve as prompts throughout the interview, but I also remained flexible and open to adapting to their individual approaches. Some participants preferred a more fluid and conversational style, which is reminiscent of a traditional wānanga setting, where the focus is on sharing knowledge and stories in a more informal and collaborative manner (Kopua et al., 2019). By embracing this approach, I was

able to create a safe and comfortable space for the wāhine to share their thoughts, experiences, and insights.

Throughout the interviews, te reo Māori was used to accurately convey Māori concepts and practices (Smith, 1997). All of the interviews were conducted in a manner that maintained the mana of the participants and acknowledged them as experts intrusting their mātauranga and experiences to this research (Pihama, 2010; Smith, 1997; Tiakiwai, 2001).

Recording the information occurred with the use of an audio recorder and recording the Zoom interviews with the record function. By implementing two distinct recording devices, I ensured an extra robust safeguard for the integrity of the interview content while minimising the risk of data loss. I ensured a thorough pre-interview check of the equipment to maintain high-quality audio capture. Using two recording devices enabled a comprehensive analysis of the interviews, allowing me to take note of not only verbal responses but also critical non-verbal cues and contextual observations which is one of the benefits of a wānanga. This approach provided deeper insights into participant expressions and interactions during the interviews.

To ensure rigour, the data was read thoroughly and repetitively throughout the data analysis process to ensure that analyses were accurate and corresponded to the meanings of the experiences of participants. In addition, I maintained a reflexive attitude towards data analysis by being careful to avoid bias of the data and by checking to ensure that analyses were based on the data (Whittemore et al., 2001).

Data Analysis

Kaupapa Māori frameworks prioritised the protection of mana associated with the data set by integrating traditional practices of tikanga Māori, including karakia, takutaku (spiritual recitation) and waiata (songs) throughout the analytical process. These culturally significant practices not only honoured the relational aspects of Māori data but also provided a protective lens through which the data was interpreted. The analytical journey was enriched and guided by the expert insights and nurturing support of kuia (elder woman) and kaumātua (elder man), who offered their wisdom and cultural knowledge, ensuring that the data's integrity and significance were upheld in alignment with Māori values (Mead, 2016; Pihama et al., 2015; Smith, 1997).

According to O'Leary (2014) one of the difficulties in moving from raw data to rich meaning, is what can be lost in the process of transcription. To address this gap, the present study included both verbal and non-verbal cues to facilitate this transition. Some of the non-verbal prompts in this research included evident changes in body language like raising their shoulders and chest with pride or shaking their heads in discontent. Additionally, facial expressions were a crucial aspect of their communication. It is very important for non-verbal communication to be observed as in te ao Māori it is one of the most important forms of communication (Eustace et al., 2024; Mika, 2016). Māori are orators, we tell stories, and we share emotions and energies so for me to sit in this space with my participants and observe their body language allowed me to respect the context of their stories (Eustace et al., 2024; Mika, 2016).

The data sets were transcribed verbatim by me to ensure the highest level of accuracy and authenticity in representing the participants' perspectives. All participants were provided with

a digital copy of their transcripts via email to facilitate a review process. Accompanying this was an Authority for the Release of Transcripts consent form (see Appendix 5)

This study utilised thematic analysis, a qualitative research method identified by Braun and Clarke (2020), to systematically identify, analyse, and report patterns and themes within the dataset. The transcription process was a lengthy and challenging but crucial phase of the analysis process. I read the transcripts repeatedly, in an active and immersive way, to uncover meanings and patterns, and to become familiar with the depth and breadth of this mātauranga (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2020). This approach enabled an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives, providing a nuanced understanding of the underlying thematic elements (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2020). The coding process of extracting and categorising the intricate meanings and patterns inherent within the dataset was both organic and complex. The complexity arose primarily from the vast volume and richness of the data, requiring a nuanced approach to ensure that the details and depth of the information were captured accurately (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Academic supervision played a critical role in this process. I also found it helpful to use visual representations, such as post it notes, highlighters, and cutting the data into relevant quotations, to aid in the coding process. To fully engage with the data, I organised the diverse codes into overarching themes and sub-themes on multiple occasions, preferring to physically connect with the words rather than rely solely on computer programme analysis of the participants stories.

Ethical Consideration

This research adheres to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee's guidelines and has received full ethics approval (SOB 22/37), ensuring that it meets its obligations. As Māori

research, this study emerges from a distinctly Māori perspective and is grounded in a Māori worldview. While operating under the umbrella of a Western academic environment, it is crucial to uphold the principles of tikanga Māori throughout the research process. For instance, whanaungatanga is a vital process that fosters deep personal connections between the researcher and participants. This not only enhances social dynamics but also gives space for iwi connections and expressions of Māori identity. By prioritising these cultural values throughout the interview process, the research can more authentically represent the voices and experiences of participants. By doing so, I can uphold the integrity and mana of Māori research, while also ensuring that the participants' stories are respected and accurately represented. The ethical obligations for this research are in accordance with the following seven Kaupapa Māori research values (Smith, 1997):

Aroha ki te tangata (love and respect for people). This value is centred on respecting the research participants and recognising their autonomy. Given my prior relationships with each potential participants, it was essential to approach the recruitment phase with sensitivity and care. I made a conscious decision to avoid kanohi ki te kanohi interactions during this phase, thereby honouring their tino rangatiratanga, and acknowledging their mana motuhake. By doing so, they were empowered to make informed decisions about their involvement in the research, ensuring that their participation was voluntary and free from coercion.

He kanohi kitea (the seen face). Traditionally, kanohi ki te kanohi, interviews are a vital means of connection in Kaupapa Māori research, as they create a sense of connectedness and authenticity. However, due to circumstances, this research utilised online interviews as an alternative. Despite the lack of physical interaction, online interviews proved to be a flexible and convenient option for participants, allowing them to engage in the research at a time and place that suited them.

Manaaki ki te tangata (care for the people). This approach involved nurturing the participants' holistic well-being with manaakitanga, which encompasses respect, kindness, and empathy. A crucial element of my framework was the incorporation of karakia, which I performed to open and close each interview with participants. This created a sacred space for our conversations and acknowledged the spiritual dimension of our encounter.

Titiro, whakarongo, kōrero (look, listen, speak). This principle emphasises the significance of the researcher adopting a stance of humility, where one looks, listens, and then speaks later. This value required me to be intentionally attentive to the participants responses, both verbally and non-verbally. In te ao Māori, non-verbal communication is a vital form of exchange (Eustace et al., 2024; Mika, 2016), and I made a conscious effort to tune into these subtle cues. I also took the time to clarify my understanding of their kōrero, ensuring that I accurately captured the essence and intent of their stories.

Kia Tūpato (be cautious). Participant safety was paramount throughout the research process. To ensure a safe and respectful environment, I adhered to tikanga processes during the interviews. I utilised karakia to create a sacred space and allowed for whakawhanaungatanga and whakapapa processes to unfold naturally. I also followed the participant's lead, respecting their autonomy and agency throughout the process. While some interviews were conducted online, which meant that traditional tikanga processes like harirū and hongī (the pressing of noses and embrace) could not be performed, I was guided by the participants' preferences and adapted my approach accordingly. I prioritised maintaining confidentiality and anonymity for the wāhine, guaranteeing that any identifying information, such as their name, place of work, or town/city of work, was altered to protect their identity and ensure their privacy was upheld.

Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample on the mana of people). This involved ensuring that I was working in a mana enhancing and respectful way. This required ensuring

that the wāhine had a comprehensive understanding of the research context and that there were opportunities for them to 'check in' via phone or email throughout the interview process. It was also essential to take the time to ensure that the wāhine thoroughly understood the contract and consent, thereby empowering them with agency and control over their participation in the research.

Kia mahaki (be humble). This research values and emphasises the profound insights and expertise of the wāhine. By centring the voices and experiences of these women, the study positions them as the 'experts' whose knowledge is essential to understanding these Indigenous frameworks. I felt deeply honoured to assume the role of a facilitator, humbly dedicated to weaving together these invaluable contributions into a rich tapestry of knowledge.

Ethical Issues

Māori values, beliefs, and practices guided and nurtured this research project. This included taking time to practice manaakitanga; to strengthen relationships and ensure the wāhine were fully informed and comfortable with the research process. All of the participants were natural interviewees and shared a wealth of knowledge and expertise in their respected Rongoā modalities. When tikanga occurs in wānanga there are certain processes that happen, for example, after the wānanga, we share food and drink to indicate that the formal talking and discussion is finished, and we can now carry on with our day. Another example is when we initially meet, we harirū and hongī. These processes are important to our culture so because there were some interviews that were online, these processes could not occur. Therefore, I was happy to be guided by what the participants wanted to do. In the context of this research, tino rangatiratanga takes for granted Māori leadership and control of research, positions

Māori as expert knowledge-holders and seeks to empower Māori control over our own health and well-being (Smith, 1997).

All of the wāhine who participated in this research are committed members of their whānau, of their communities and wider society. They are daughters, nieces, sisters, aunties, kuia and māmā. They are inspirational leaders, entrepreneurs and freelancers, facilitators, advocates, front line workers, and management. These wāhine embody the essence of Mana Wahine. Located around the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand from Poneke (Wellington) to Te Tai Rawhiti (Gisborne) and Te Tai Tokerau (Auckland), they frequently travel for whānau and work needs. Interview scheduling was a challenge, and it took a long time to complete this part of the research process. Five out of seven participants opted to participate in online interviews and although it was not initially considered, online interviews still provided quality kōrero, even though it was not my preference.

Mutungā

I had the privilege of working in a Kaupapa Māori research environment, where I could celebrate the diversity and richness of Māori identities, experiences, and worldviews. By using Mana Wahine theory and methodologies, I centred the voices and stories of the participants, respecting their experiences and perspectives. The concept of wairua played a crucial role in shaping my research, from its development to its outcomes. By combining Kaupapa Māori with qualitative approaches, I created a positive and empowering research space that allowed me to collect rich and robust data.

To ensure the authenticity and relevance of the research, it was crucial that participants had a deep understanding of traditional Rongoā Māori healing practices and a strong appreciation for Māori cultural norms, beliefs, and values. They also had to be wāhine Māori who were

actively practicing Rongoā Māori healing techniques. By focusing specifically on wāhine Māori, I aimed to address a significant gap in existing research while amplifying the voices and experiences of Māori women in all their richness, diversity and beauty.

I used a targeted approach to recruit Rongoā Māori healers through my professional and personal connections. I recruited seven wāhine Māori located throughout the North Island of New Zealand for this study. The interviews were based on the concept of wānanga, which promotes collective learning and growth, and were guided by Indigenous principles that prioritise collective wellbeing, responsibility, and accountability (Smith et al., 2019).

To ensure the cultural integrity of the data, I used Kaupapa Māori frameworks that incorporated traditional Māori practices to protect the mana associated with the data. I carefully transcribed the data sets verbatim to ensure accuracy and authenticity in representing the participants' views. I organised the codes into themes and sub-themes multiple times to ensure connection with the words and their meanings. As Māori research emerges from a distinctly Māori perspective and is grounded in a Māori worldview, it was crucial to ensure that the research processes adhered to tikanga Māori principles, even within a Western academic environment.

The next chapter will outline the results of these interviews with the wāhine and disclose their findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Poipoia te kākano kia puāwai.

Nurture the seed and it will bloom.

Tīmatanga

This is the chapter that provides the spark to this thesis, the mauri or life force, the very reason for motivation. Seven wāhine Māori shared their lived experiences and insights regarding the impacts of sexual violence and using te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori as a perspective and method of healing and holistic wellbeing. This chapter celebrates their pūrākau (narratives) and privileges their voices.

This chapter is divided into themes and subthemes in order to place emphasis on certain parts of the research that are relevant and pertinent to the topic (see Table 4.1 Themes)

| Main Themes | Subthemes |
|----------------------------|--|
| Rongoā Māori | Tangata katoa, Whanaungatanga, Kaitiakitanga, Tino Rangatiratanga, Whaiora and Kaimahi |
| Sexual Violence | Kotahitanga |
| Rongoā Māori Hauora | Wairua, Mirimiri and Romiromi, Rongoā Rākau |

Table 1 – Table 4.1 Themes

Each section introduces the theme and subtheme and is followed by the responses of the wāhine. The wāhine will be introduced as a rākau, a name of a native tree to Aotearoa New Zealand to identify their contribution to this rangahau, this study, whilst maintaining their privacy. These rākau include, Koromiko, Kawakawa, Kūmarahou, Harakeke, Kanuka, Manuka and Mamaku. Rongoā rākau are taonga, treasures to Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori

see plant life as the tuākana or senior in status to people, they are significant within te ao Māori, within the realms of healing; a reflection of and acknowledgement to these inspirational wāhine.

Each wāhine described their understandings of Rongoā Māori as a way of life. The wāhine shared stories of their childhood that were inspired with Rongoā including memories of learning to walk the body and feeling the tapu, the sacredness of rākau coming through their homes. All seven of the wāhine are actively involved in the Māori community as well as having strong links back to their whānau (families), hapū (tribe) and iwi (sub-tribe). They all work as Rongoā Māori practitioners including mirimiri and romiromi (traditional Māori bodywork), wairua mahi (spiritual work), kōmiri (deep conversation), whakawhitiwhiti kōrero (engaged in discussion) and Rongoā rākau (plant-based remedies). All of the wāhine work alongside whaiora of sexual harm, three of the wāhine specialise in the field of sexual violence.

In the process of gathering information, I have been very mindful of what information to put in my thesis and what to leave out. My main concerns have been taking care in using our sacred knowledge.

The following is a reflection of their kōrero (voices), which they shared in the time and space provided.

Rongoā Māori

Rongoā Māori is the first theme with the pūrākau or narratives of the wāhine describing the concepts and theories of their Rongoā practice.

The wāhine shared kōrero that offered insight into some of their mahi, the work they do as Rongoā Māori practitioners highlighting the breadth and depth of this mātauranga or traditional knowledge.

Kawakawa: My job is to, I believe is to facilitate an introduction from whānau to the master healer, which might be wairua, it might be that true source that is within them and if I can facilitate that introduction successfully then they... can be inspired or guided to healing practices that work best for them.

Kanuka: Everyone is born into this world with the potential to be whoever they are... we are seeds that are planted right? We have a whakapapa, its apart of that seed that's been planted and we're kind of here to fulfil that potential of growth and being... My view of what happens with violence and abuse... that growth gets inhibited, and that part of my role is to support that to come into being, that people find that potential for them, of themselves that's always been there and allow that to come into the light if you like and into eventually tihei-wā mauri ora ki te ao mārama.

Koromiko: The work doesn't always look pretty, nor does it look gentle or easy, the sessions are communal that's around safety and whānau healing, but if the person knows what they are doing and assurance and aroha flows for the work then it can.

The participants shared the intensity of the work and how whānau can come into the space and feel safe but know there is hard work to come.

Tangata kātoa

Rongoā Māori was highlighted by the wāhine as offering healing and recovery to all whaiora who choose this pathway. Kūmarahou identified the revitalisation of Rongoā Māori as beneficial to everyone:

When we were in the colonisation process at the beginning it was our knowledge that was suppressed and taken away from us, actively taken away from us, who we were and what we were and how we made sense of the worlds, our belief systems were taken away from us and now we've come back full circle and were reclaiming that knowledge of who we are and how we make sense of the world and its helping us to find our power and our strength and our unlimited potential and the beautiful thing of it is we're then in a position where we are then able to offer it to the whole world and say hey, actually these tools can not only help us, they can help all of you too. We can all benefit from this, it's not about discriminating, it's about unity.

Harakeke shared about our Atua (deities) and highlighted Rongoā Māori healing as a right of whakapapa (lineage):

We all come from Io and so does Rongoā Māori so we whakapapa to it. Rongoā is of Papatūānuku and we whakapapa to it, whether you are talking about Rongoā rākau or the bodywork that we do, all of it comes from Papa and all of it comes from Io and especially for those in pain. The creation story about Rangi and Papa being separated, my understanding of that kōrero, my version that I've always known is that it was a very violent act and so Rongoā was given to Tāne to use on his mother to heal her physical wounds from that experience... so straight away it tells you that Rongoā is perfect for wāhine

and Rongoā is perfect for healing the impacts of violence, any violence, any trauma, any injury, Rongoā has an answer for.

Like Harakeke, Manuka highlighted the natural order of Rongoā Māori:

If we go back to nature and the natural order of things women are cared for my midwives, you don't have to go to a GP or a hospital, we've got healers in the community. Its natural you come right down to the simplest form of it and its natural. Nature, natural. Tangaroa, Hinemoana, Tāwhirimātea, Tāne Mahuta, all the way down in the whenua into Papatūānuku. Its natural.

Rongoā Māori was discussed to benefit everyone, it is our own traditional healing methods that has years of knowledge behind it. It is Indigenous and it is ours to share.

Whanaungatanga

The wāhine articulated the significance of whanaungatanga as a fundamental element in the healing process for whaiora. At a basic level whanaungatanga is about getting to know the whaiora and developing trust.

Whanaungatanga was described by Harakeke as a time of:

Just getting to know each other ... taking the time to get to know the whaiora and allowing time for them to get to know you too. This is about establishing that relationship which other people call the therapeutic relationship, but we just call it whanaungatanga. People want to know who they're working with in order to trust them, in order to have trust and faith in you. At least tell them who you are and where you come from and we're also looking to build connections with that person to create a sense of kinship, we look for

connections, naturally in the Māori world this is how we operate when we meet someone else, we're looking for how and where are the ways that we connect with each other and that just creates a better working relationship but we don't think about that at that time we just want to get to know you first.

Alongside providing an opportunity to build rapport, whanaungatanga was discussed by Kūmarahou as a practice of connection and sharing of not only knowledge, but of self:

Creating a space or holding a space to share that mātauranga, to help people to open their hearts and remember themselves, remember who they are, remember why they are here.

Whanaungatanga, as articulated by Mamaku, emerges as a vital framework for understanding the diverse needs of the whaiora, she shared:

Through their kōrero I'm listening to their wairua, through their kōrero I'm listening to what's missing, what they've got too much of, what element or Atua they've got too much of or what their connecting with.

Kanuka explained the deeper level of connection, exploring how it is different from te ao Pākehā (the European world) practices:

[Whanaungatanga is] a really powerful practice... in sort of European context people talk about introductions but its way more than that... [Further identifying that whanaungatanga is therapeutic:] That higher process of connecting with people and their experience of being connected within that te ao Māori kind of way is of itself, therapeutic. That's foundational... which is kind of contrary to Western practice which is, you don't tell people stuff about yourself... no personal disclosure, kind of stuff.

Whanaungatanga is an innate organic space that is so natural to us as Māori. Whenever we meet, we need to practice whanaungatanga, so we know who we are talking to. In Rongoā Māori it is particularly important because this practice supports the connection between practitioner and whānau or whaiora.

Kaitiakitanga

Kaitiakitanga was described as a time of guardianship, a time of protection over whaiora throughout their healing engagements. Kaitiakitanga was also discussed by the wāhine in terms of protecting the integrity of Rongoā Māori.

Kaitiakitanga was discussed by Harakeke as:

We are kaitiaki or guardian of that person [whaiora] and their wellbeing emotionally, mentally, spiritually, physically. We are guardians of their wellbeing and so we act in accordance with that, maintaining a safe space, having interactions with that whaiora that keeps them safe to the best of our ability, in the space that we have created and for a period of time, we are taking care of them but also guardian of their tapu and their mana and their mauri as well.

While, in the physical realm, kaitiakitanga would look like it is between the practitioner and the whaiora, Kūmarahou highlights the unseen aspect of kaitiakitanga:

It is a collaboration between myself [practitioner], my tūpuna and whoever the whaiora is that I'm working with and their tūpuna and our kaitiaki and all those other beings, the Atua and all of those realms, all coming together.

Kaitiakitanga was also identified by two of the wāhine in terms of protecting the integrity of Rongoā Māori.

Kanuka highlights her concerns for the protection of Rongoā Māori:

How do we protect Rongoā? So that it doesn't become sort of like a commodity that anyone can pick up and run with? Cause I just don't trust. There are maybe non-Māori who do that well, I think that's quite possible but I don't know, I feel like, I've spent all my life especially through the last 30 years or so really learning as much as I can and that when I mahi or when I use karakia or when I do any of those things, that comes from a lot of learning and I'm not even, I don't even consider myself to be that immersed either or that knowledgeable. But I get so worried about that, that someone whose been learning for 5 minutes can just start, off they go with it, yeah so, I do worry about how we protect our Rongoā.

As the demand for Rongoā Māori grows through contracts sought by ACC and different EAP services Harakeke shares her perspective on kaitiakitanga in terms of growing capacity and holding Rongoā Māori in its authenticity:

It is about creating capacity [Rongoā practitioners] but doing it in our own way and in our own time so that we're not just creating a drive through Rongoā and by that, I mean people who attend a couple of workshops and suddenly... think their qualified or something like that, the challenges are that Rongoā Māori practitioners take time to develop... there's no regulatory bodies, there's no formal school and myself I would like to see it stay that way for the mean time because that's how we operated in te ao Māori, that's what creates the beauty and the diversity and all the bodies of knowledge that are

particular to rohe, to whānau that's what makes it such a beautiful and versatile practice its all the diversity and the breadth and the depth of mātauranga that's there. Depending on where you go and who you talk to, it's a rich broad and deep body of knowledge and it should stay that way.

Two wāhine emphasised the importance of safeguarding the integrity and authenticity of Rongoā Māori, including the capacity of Rongoā Māori practitioners in response to demand. Rongoā Māori was said to be something that we can share but not to the detriment of it being commercialised or made into what it is not from another culture, therefore this was a very important aspect to this research.

Tino Rangatiratanga

Tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) emerged as a significant outcome of engaging with Rongoā Māori. Harakeke articulated the essence of tino rangatiratanga, framing it as both a foundation and a guideline for practitioners, she shared:

[Tino rangatiratanga is] your self-determination, your ability to determine, to make choices for yourself that are the best choices for you... What we don't do as Rongoā Māori practitioners is looked to create relationships of dependency, that is what I have been taught, "tohunga he" are tohunga who don't know what they are doing, or they have altera agendas or motives that are about power and control. They will look to create relationships of dependency on them. And how I was taught... is never ever, you always look to create, to help that person be independent and to make good choices and decisions for themselves and their own life, this is their birth right and a well

person, someone who has achieved wellbeing is able to do that for themselves and their whānau.

Additionally, Koromiko adds:

When we [practitioners] aren't the main ingredient in someone's healing, then the focus is where it should be, with the client / person in need. Our life is not random, it is predetermined by ourselves. We have choice. We always have choice.

Tino rangatiratanga serves as a foundational principle for practitioners and was mentioned by Harakeke as an outcome sought after through engaging with Rongoā Māori:

Whaiora is someone who is seeking wellness in their life and we always speak in the positive to assist someone to return to a place or a space where they can achieve and maintain wellbeing for themselves even if the practitioner is completely taken out of the picture we would like to think and hope and believe that that person would be ok and more empowered from interacting with Rongoā Māori.

Tino rangatiratanga was discussed as a cornerstone for Rongoā practitioners, and as an outcome of engaging with Rongoā Māori.

Tino rangatiratanga holds significance surrounding the empowerment of whaiora. Kawakawa pointed out:

One of the challenges is to take somebody who has been externally motivated to attend an appointment and change that into an internal motivation... external motivation often doesn't have as much power as somebody being internally motivated... the first thing I want to do is create hunger. Because if

people aren't hungry enough to eat, they will just pick and then we end up trying to force feed food into people and they don't want it and if they're just picking there's not going to be any transformation with Rongoā, if they're not hungry there won't be any movement.

Like Kawakawa, Kūmarahou highlighted the need for agency and change on behalf of the whaiora:

I can't help anyone shift anything they're not ready to shift... people will only shift what they are ready to shift, so I can say to them you need to come every two weeks, but if they are not ready to commit to that then they're never gonna do it.

Mamaku: They [whaiora] have to ask for it, that was something I was taught, they have to ask for the Rongoā they can't be brought, I won't accept clients that someone has brought to the clinic, cause they need to ask for it, they need to have that decision in their mind that they want Rongoā to heal, otherwise your having to preach ... that's who I prefer to work with is people who ask for it.

Tino rangatiratanga is a strong principle for te ao Māori because we politically fight this term in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. In the context of this research, tino rangatiratanga gives us the right to practice Rongoā Māori and to keep showing up for our whaiora even if sometimes they do not show up for themselves.

Whaiora

A key component of Rongoā Māori as discussed by the wāhine are the whaiora, our people we work with and understanding of their holistic needs. Whaiora were described from the perspective of Rongoā Māori including their ability as healers.

As identified by Kanuka, Rongoā understands whaiora as whole and perfect humans:

I really believe in that concept of being born into our own potential and I also believe that everyone is created as a whole and perfect human beings and no matter what, it doesn't matter, and that given the good enough kind of looking after, people will grow and be just what they are meant to.

Rongoā also recognises, as mentioned by Koromiko, that whaiora are the healers:

I tell my client, the greatest healer in this room is you! I have a knowing, a technique, and a way to bring alignment and wellbeing to one's body, but the healer is YOU!. That sentence I heard time and again in the healing work I was surrounded with.

The goal then, as mentioned by Manuka is to believe in themselves:

I certainly believe that everybody has... ahiahi te tio te tangata the divine light, everybody has it, everybody is capable of healing themselves, sometimes we just need help, so in a way my job is to help people remember that they have the ability but unfortunately a lot don't believe it. So that's a shame but it doesn't mean it's not there, that they don't have that ability to heal everything in their lives much the same that I do, and I wish it was simpler but it's not it's still hard work.

Whaiora is simply seeking wellness, and our kamahi know that whaiora have that ability and potential to do that themselves. It was so enlightening to listen to our practitioners shine the light on our people who seek wellness.

Kaimahi

The wāhine shared kōrero, they shared discussions about their development as Rongoā Māori practitioners, noting the importance of connection, collaboration and authenticity.

Kanuka: I think that somehow some of it is just born in there and... I think if it's in you then you seek more of that, you seek more places to go or people to be with who are gonna kinda nurture that in you.

The value of learning from multiple people was discussed and mentioned by Harakeke:

Like most people it hasn't been a mentorship or learning in just one space or with one person, or one tohunga there's been many along the way who have either taught me personally or mentored me personally or through my own healing process, I have met and learned from them. There have been many people along the way I guess, but a lot of the basic philosophy has been woven through all of them, the basic philosophy of our cultural beliefs system has been the same all the way through.

The wāhine also shared kōrero about the influence of wairua (spirit) and their learnings as noted by Kūmarahou:

I was allowing myself to be led by wairua and I was letting wairua make the choice about which way I went. So, looking at the signs, the signs all said here's your line in the sand once you reach that point you are going to have to

stand on your own two feet and walk your own path and so I did, and it's been really interesting and that's not to say that my learning stops because we are always learning.

Mamaku identified the significance of self-care:

The biggest tikanga that I have is putting into place my own hauora and that's paramount because I mean we live this mahi it's not from the time we start at the clinic ay? We're living it all the time... and we always have to be, I mean we signed up for this and that's our mahi... having that connection with Io-Matua-Kore having a really deep connection with Io-Matua-Kore and that is paramount, to know, to do self-reflection and to understand te ao Māori from Io-Matua-Kore from the lens of that pureness.

Further, Koromiko also raised the subtleness of learning Rongoā Māori:

Then came the 'teachers' without realising they were doing that. But they got me busy, go pick this Rongoā, or go get that bark, stand on the back like this, use the foot that way to cut the muscle or the tendon...all teaching[s].

Like Koromiko, Kawakawa highlighted the significance of experience:

Sometimes we need additional teachers to come, in the form of our children or in the form of a guru or whatever you want to call it however we accepted all teachers, but our training came through life experience, inspired thought, inspired actions.

Rongoā Māori are taonga, are gifts to us and it takes a special person to sit in that space with others, there was a deep appreciation for their work, their passion and commitment that showed through their kupu, their words and their kōrero, their voices.

Sexual Violence

While there is the aspect of healing, this research also explored the aspect of what wāhine are healing from. This section is sensitive and reveals a lot of sensitive information. The wāhine discussed the impacts of sexual violence and they noted that it was more far reaching than affecting the individual physically and mentally. Manuka noted that sexual violence impacted on a genetic level:

As I understand it, the impact is on a genetic level... so there's physical, spiritual, it affects all the taha say for te whare tapa whā, it affects all the walls of the whare.

Like Manuka, the spiritual impact of sexual harm was discussed and described by Kawakawa. The impact affecting and stifling future aspirations, dreams, and visions:

On a wairua level we're looking at the deeper things and if the pungaia and the puhangaia, the very core of us is violated then we got a number of things and the tree [whaiora] is going to grow out polluted all of our creativity and our solutions moving forward and our aspirations and our dreams and our visions they become stunted and stifled.

Kūmarahou identified the prevalence of sexual violence and its impact on whakapapa:

The kind of scaring that sexual violence creates is on a completely different level. It's so widespread within our whakapapa if you go up or down, sideways you find it, you find it left, you find it right you find it everywhere it's so prevalent it's heart-breaking... I don't know that it matters if it's a wāhine or a tāne, I still think either way it still gets passed down the whakapapa and you

can't tell in the end, there's no difference between whether that trauma happened to that person or happened to their parents, the impacts are the same.

Kawakawa highlighted the significance of te whare tangata (house of humanity) and likened the assault of sexual violence to storming a wharenuī (sacred ancestral home):

Our wharenuī is formed on the whole body... the architecture of that is the same, the vagina into the whare, into the whare tangata and just as we wouldn't approach the wharenuī unwelcomed none of us would intentionally go there without being welcomed, it's exactly the same thing with the whare tangata because such a spiritual connection happens there, the whanaungatanga happens there, the beauty of joining things happens there, the transference from both parties happens there... Now what would happen if we came onto the wharenuī without being invited and we stormed the wharenuī? Well, it's exactly the same on a spiritual level.... Just as our beautiful wharenuī are living beings, the whare tangata is also a living whare.

The wāhine also identified the negative impacts as a loss of identity and the promotion of unhealthy self-harming practices that have intergenerational implications.

Kanuka: There's so much really that happens as a result. I could probably go on and on for ages, but I think that stuff, the real kind of essence of it is losing that sense of who we are as wāhine Māori and our mana and that place of being wāhine Māori ay?

Kūmarahou: Through really unhealthy practices or ways of being in life: addiction, alcohol, drugs, cigarettes like really not taking care of ourselves, putting up with abuse in relationships like the list goes on with the ways that we

are capable of self-harming and why we are self-harming is in response to that trauma and so then that gets then passed down through the whakapapa too.

Two of the wāhine noted how invasive the sexual violation was to the individual and every aspect of their being. Manuka highlighted the influence on their identity but also recognised that there are exceptions to this:

[Sexual violence] affects our whole inception, physical violence, mental, emotional, spiritual violence it affects everything and every aspect of a person's life and yet there are some who are so resilient that it doesn't have that kind of effect on them... they already have been given a good foundation of something to be able to understand that it's not their fault because of who they are and all of these things. And when that happens, I am amazed and astounded at how well, how some people recovery from sexual violence quickly.

The wāhine pointed out how similar experiences can have a different effect on people. Harakeke highlighted that the impacts are diverse and depend on the whaiora, the situation and how the body remembers it:

How you experience something is very different to how someone else will experience the same thing that happens to them, it all depends on the situation and how the body remembers it and therefore how it impacts your wellbeing emotionally, mentally, physically or whatever.

Like Harakeke, Kawakawa also discussed how the body remembers:

The memory scares, even when the tinana heals the tinana will remember. Even when this wāhine is still walking around years later, the hinengaro still remembers. Everything in us becomes hypervigilant the nervous system remembers, the blood stream remembers because water which of course we

are up to depending, 90 percent of us is made up of water depending, water has memory. So that water in us it then becomes polluted, and it keeps bringing the memories back. It's not until there is a powerful, it's a biblical kōrero that talks about turning water into wine it talks about the wine being sweet... it's the same thing the water in us can go from pollution into clean again.

Manuka: The impacts are huge because it will just keep going until someone stops it. Until someone says enough is enough and I need to heal and heal for my mokopuna and to heal for my ancestors, my tūpuna, āe.

Participants described the incredibly pervasive effect of sexual violence on individuals as being far reaching, complex and layered, having intergenerational effects, and impacting on genetic coding. However, some wāhine noted that they were often taken back with some people's ability to manage their trauma and recovery quickly.

Kotahitanga

The wāhine raised concerns about the priority afforded to te ao Pākehā (the European world) services in comparison to Rongoā Māori. They noted funding discrepancies and the impact of colonial thinking as some barriers to Rongoā Māori accessibility. The wāhine also emphasised the need for unity between Rongoā Māori and te ao Pākehā services as consistent with the needs of whānau.

As pointed out by Kawakawa:

The government funds millions of dollars into hinengaro approaches... and the problem... that they've had people who have been sitting in counselling for 30

years and had no change but the council, the government still puts money into counselling, I'm not saying counselling is inefficient or whatever the word is. But they don't put the equal amount, I don't believe that they see the value in Rongoā and all its forms, they just see Rongoā as pharmaceutical as opposed to all of the ways that Rongoā can be applied... when they don't recognise Rongoā in all its facets, then we don't get the funding if we're relying on funding which means our whānau don't get access to other therapy that te ao Māori can offer on a deeper level.

Like Kawakawa, Koromiko also highlighted the limits of te ao Pākehā services for Māori:

An impact I see on a daily basis, is how underwhelmed they [services for survivors] are and the lack of good help available to Māori women and men. Why? Because most of the recovery to date has been colonised thinking and doing...i.e. 'come sit and talk to this pillow as if it is the perpetrator' or other such mechanisms.

An issue with te ao Pākehā services as pointed out by Harakeke is:

There's way too much focus on the mind, the intellectual mechanics of some people, what their thinking. There's way too much focus on that aspect of the person, it's only a very small part of the person and people are totally ignoring the emotional and the spiritual aspect of that person as well... we cannot just work on one system of the person and expect that whole person will be healed or experience transformational wellbeing. It's a difficult way to work if we're looking at just chopping a person up into different bits and pieces and just working with one little piece and worst-case scenario, excluding te ao wairua,

the spiritual aspect of that person all together. The way that I was taught, you are never going to experience true healing if we are doing that.

The wāhine expressed concerns about the priority of services that do not adequately provide for the holistic needs of Māori.

The kōrero from the wāhine about Rongoā Māori and te ao Pākehā services also included kōrero that highlighted the importance of kotahitanga (unity) and collaboration between the two perspectives. Kawakawa raised:

It isn't it easy to lift a burden off whānau with two hands? But what we do for 200 years or 100 years is try to do it with one hand, the answer we don't believe is to chop that hand off and use the other one and offer te ao Māori stuff because were still one handed but if we could come together collaboratively ... without that superiority with a genuine respect for each other's mātauranga and not try to lead one or the other and remembering that the kaupapa is the whānau then I think we will have giant leaps we will see giant leaps in the recovery for our whānau.

Further, Harakeke highlighted the need for collaboration and a genuine respect for each other's mātauranga (knowledge) because:

People are looking outside for the first time looking outside of the status quo for answers and solutions when it comes to wellbeing and their looking to Indigenous knowledge to plug that gap and it makes sense really, Indigenous knowledge has been around mai rā anō, thousands of years and it shouldn't be superseded by the new kid on the block, it still has a lots to offer, it has years and years of ancient knowledge behind it... there's many situations, many environments that call for healing, they're not calling for medical intervention,

people want healing, they want to actually heal from their pain, their past, their trauma, they don't want to be, they don't want their symptoms medicated anymore.

Whānau hauora (wellbeing) was emphasised by the wāhine as an attainable goal when grounded in collaborative efforts that prioritise mutual respect and acknowledgement of each other's mātauranga.

Rongoā Māori Hauora

The final theme is Rongoā Māori healing, the wāhine responses reflect their mahi and experiences.

Wairua

Wairua is intrinsic to te ao Māori. The wāhine shared kōrero about wairua that highlighted its diversity and its significance within the healing process.

Kūmarahou pointed out her connection to tūpuna (ancestors) through wairua:

I put out the call and they answer, it's nothing to do with me it's about me stepping out of the way and it's about me having no agenda it's about me going in with no objective in mind no expectation, all of my practice is like that because I can't have an agenda, I can't have a goal in mind, I can't wait for something to be a certain way I have to go in with neutrality it's all about going in with neutrality then maintaining that neutrality.

Kūmarahou shared kōrero about wairua and her role within those spaces:

The whatumanawa, we open ourselves up to that everything becomes possible and we start to become, we start to be able to tap into our infinite potential that's unlimited and has actually always been available to us and you see when we come in the fontanel is still open... our channel to the whatumanawa is still really strong and it slowly close's up and so then it's about us, the journey through life is about really reactivating that space and you see in old age as it starts to open up again that whole skull shape starts to change again and so it's about the journey through life, that's what all the Indigenous cultures understand is that it's about bringing us up into this sphere here and rising above the base stuff, and coming up into here, reactivating those.

Like Kūmarahou, Mamaku shared kōrero about the role of wairua in its many forms:

The wairua of rākau and wairua of a human... are different only because the beliefs and filtering of a person creates the wairua of their tinana and so the wairua of a rākau is the blueprint, is the DNA, is the essence of what the rākau entails... I'm listening to that, that's what I'm talking to not to you physically, I'm just listening to their wairua regardless of what's coming out of their mouth.

Wairua is essential to a transformational healing process. The wāhine shared kōrero that highlighted the diversity of wairua and its influence to guide and to administer healing.

As discussed by three of the wāhine, wairua mahi is a practice, it is a methodology, it is a perspective, and it is a lifestyle.

Kawakawa: When we're listening to whānau your guided by wairua about how to apply that medicine, that covers all of those senses, that covers the mamae on the ngākau, on the whatumanawa, on the pūmanawa on all of those

manawa, how do we apply that to the soul? How do we apply that to the wairua? How do we apply that to the memory, I'm guided by wairua and how we can administer that healing.

Additionally, Kawakawa pointed out:

If we had a hinengaro technique, then that's gonna take us six months or 30 years of counselling or whatever it is. But when wairua does the job and comes in and cleans out the whare all we do after that is to teach them 'right this is how you close the door' after you cleanse, swept out all of the paru and thrown it away, this is how you close the door and this is how you guard the door, so that broke, dead leaves and that sort of stuff don't come in again, this is how you keep your mind clean, this is how you stop your mind from wondering down pathways it doesn't need to be in and that's how we apply Rongoā, that's one way.

Like Kawakawa, Harakeke described wairua mahi:

When you're working with someone really then we're working with the person, that includes te ao wairua, on a spiritual level, takutaku we are acknowledging the person spiritually and also their tūpuna that are apart of who they are, their whakapapa, their genetic makeup as well, you're talking to the whole, the whole person and at the same time the takutaku particularly, speaks to the deities or the Atua or the energy that is present in the environment that we live in. We're acknowledging that we have a connection to all of our Atua who make up the environment but are also present in our physical body and we have to acknowledge all these aspects of the person holistically if we're looking to achieve wellbeing.

Wairua mahi as a modality of Rongoā Māori was pointed out by Kawakawa:

We work from a wairua avenue because we believe that if wairua is the first step to doing stuff then water/ wai, wairua it flows downhill and it will flow into the hinengaro it will flow into the tinana and into the whānau but if we start at the whānau level it's a difficult climb, it is very difficult for water to climb up hill, never seen it happen and so we use a wairua approach first.

Wairua mahi, as articulated by the wāhine, encompasses a breadth of interpretations and practices that are essential to healing and wellbeing.

Mirimiri and Romiromi

Five of the wāhine offered mirimiri and romiromi as a pathway to healing. These wāhine shared their understandings of this practice.

Harakeke: Mirimiri literally means to agitate and stimulate blood bones and tissues and romiromi is the same but basically at a deeper level. We have the body work and then the karakia and takutaku that happens alongside as well, that helps to release deeply held tension, stress, and memory in the body.

Like Harakeke, Kūmarahou described mirimiri and romiromi as:

A form of healing that uses haemata or pressure points to activate or shift within the tinana of a person. We're not just a physical, we don't just have a physical form we also have an emotional, a psychological, and spiritual body and so the romiromi shifts across all of those bodies.

Further, Kūmarahou pointed out the depth of this practice including its ability to restore frequency:

Within romiromi you have so many facets, there's so many aspects to that - there's the takutaku, there's the waiata, there's the kōrero... basically... all of us are basically energy and we're vibrating at a certain frequency and what I see this mahi does is that it restores frequency, and it uses different frequency to help achieve that. So waiata, our takutaku, our kōrero, our romiromi the physicality of that, the mirimiri all of those different elements are different layers of altering frequency. There's some that are finer and some that are deeper/ heavier; it doesn't mean that one is more effective than the other necessarily it's like bringing those altogether and weaving those together.

Mirimiri and romiromi were described by two of the wāhine and identified as intrinsically woven together with other Rongoā including karakia (incantation), waiata (singing) and takutaku (incarnation) to promote healing and release.

The wāhine shared kōrero describing some of their mahi or work as traditional Māori bodyworkers including concepts and perspectives that guide their mahi.

Koromiko: There are several different teachings that I use in most scenarios when working with the body, they are: Takahia te tinana - Tramping the body. Tiwawe - Moving waters (mainly to do with calming the hormones in a body) / to still the mind / to drop the body into the heart waves of itself (be kinder to itself). Mahi ā pona - Working the joints for good mobility. Pure - a spiritual cleansing usually done on specific star / sun / moon alliances or as need arises like mental health and wellbeing. To name a few as there are many modalities in the Rongoā bodywork arts.

Harakeke pointed out her focus of healing when working with whaiora of sexual harm:

The main symptom that we will treat as Rongoā Māori practitioners, is this violation of tapu that has occurred, whether it's a physical beating, whether it's sexual violence, whether it's psychological abuse, the symptom that we're treating is... her mamae, and her misalignment, and the disconnection as a result of whatever's happened to her.

Like Harakeke, Koromiko highlighted her focus:

I believe what I prescribe and say and do, is real, its present moment, not in the persons past, I give them goals to reach and a gentle pathway to help. They leave with a methodology, not just a comfortable body.

Two of the wāhine discussed their methodology of restoring tapu (sacredness) and offering a gentle pathway to help.

The art of healing with the use of mirimiri and romiromi is discussed by the wāhine to focus on tuning whaiora into themselves, their needs, and their aspirations.

Manuka: It's like pulling the threads of our whakapapa lines and calling them in for healing as well as clearing because we carry that whakapapa we carry that DNA, we carry it in our DNA so when we start working that way, we are I guess, I want to say we are clearing the lines, the whakapapa lines.

Harakeke: With a lot of our whaiora who come here, we're helping them to transition from Te Pō to Te Ao Mārama, ultimately, and that's way more than just coming here for treatment. Ultimately, it is helping them, the transition from ignorance, from 'I don't know who I am anymore, I don't know what I'm doing anymore' to Te Ao Mārama, boom! 'Now I know who I am and now I know what I need to do, I can see a light at the end of the tunnel' and if all we

do is to put a light at the end of the dark tunnel that they've been going through their whole lives then that's a positive outcome for us.

Kūmarahou: It's about tuning them into their sensors so that they can start to... listen to themselves and listen to their rongo, listen to their sensors so that when their mauri or wairua is communicating through the tinana or the hinengaro or the pūmanawa, when its communicating with them they listen when its whispering and they don't wait for it to be yelling before they start to ask what do I need to do about this?

The ancient healing modality of mirimiri and romiromi were identified by the wāhine as powerful restorative practices that bring rebalance, clarity, and wellness to the whole person. Mirimiri and romiromi were identified as a present moment methodology of hope, self-awareness, and self-determination.

Rongoā Rākau

Rongoā rākau, a significant modality within the framework of Rongoā Māori healing, leverages the natural resources found within te taiao (the natural world). Two wāhine actively incorporate Rongoā rākau into their approaches. The concept of whanaungatanga, was identified as a fundamental element that fosters connection.

Kūmarahou: It's a lifetime's journey, it's about relationships, everything is about relationships and it's about me developing relationships with the different rākau and that takes time for that to be genuine and real and not me going in with any agenda but just taking my time to get to know each rākau real slow, and then build on that relationship and that trust and that

connection and establish and then maintain and develop that connection between me and each rākau and the whakapapa of each rākau.

Like Kūmarahou, Mamaku discussed whanaungatanga and highlighted the importance of:

Knowing the whakapapa, having the whakapapa... and understanding the whakapapa of Io as well... not just starting from Papatūānuku and Ranginui but going higher and having that connection with all of those Atua, like 'te Whe' and 'Atea' all of those, those are the ones that we need to connect to.

Mamaku also pointed out:

When you start to connect with Io, when your there, everything about te ao Māori, everything about this physical world you understand, you start to understand and the pressure and the stress leaves because you understand... you are a reflection of Io-Matua-Kore... having a connection with Io-Matua-Kore feels like nothing else.

Two of the wāhine highlighted the connection between whanaungatanga and healing, including the importance of whakapapa and establishing genuine relationships.

These wāhine also shared some of the tikanga (protocols) that underpin their practice including as pointed out by Kūmarahou:

I was doing a wānanga... earlier this year and... they wanted me to make them some balm and I was like nah cause first up you got to go out and just get to know our rākau guys and we aren't going to be making anything because it's not about what can I get from it, it's about what can I give.

Mamaku: Its starts with wairua first, I'm always looking at the wairua, I'm hearing the wairua of the plant and hearing the wairua of the person and to

me that's always the first connection, the physical body and the physical plant doesn't really matter to me very much it does to some degree but its more about the wairua because the wairua of the rākau will have something totally different it can offer then the physical medicine and that's what we're trying to bring a balance to the tinana and the rākau, were trying to make a balance there.

Kūmarahou and Mamaku identified the significance of tikanga and the position of te taiao and wairua in relation to Rongoā rākau mahi.

The medicinal use of kohekohe and other Rongoā rākau was described by two of the wāhine with reference to clearing the whare tangata.

Manuka: To cleanse and clear the whare tangata... kohekohe is the one that I know it is to help with releasing trauma in our whare tangata or womb space.

Like Manuka, Mamaku discussed her use of Rongoā rākau to work with te whare tangata:

Kohekohe works with the whare tangata what it does is because it's so bitter it creates a wiri in the tinana, that bitterness, what that does is it starts to decongest the whare tangata, so it starts to decongest areas in the body and that decongestion actually helps emotions to start to come out... I use kohekohe mainly for emotional reasons, not just to purify the whare tangata its more to clear the emotions. The mamaku itself is pretty much very similar to what kohekohe does, but it works in the lower part of the whare tangata physically.

The wāhine discussed the core aspect of Rongoā rākau as building whanaungatanga and connection that is genuine and based on intentions of giving back to te taiao. Tikanga was

discussed including the significance of wairua before discussing the medicinal benefits of kohekohe and its decongesting work for te whare tangata.

Mutunga

The opportunity to engage with and learn from seven remarkable wahine Māori was a significant privilege. They shared so much knowledge with me that made this research come alive, to be awake, to instil a deeper appreciation for our ancestry and the essence of indigeneity.

Rongoā Māori, a traditional practice grounded in years of knowledge and experience, was highlighted as a natural and effective approach for those seeking holistic healing and wellbeing. The wāhine emphasised that Rongoā creates a space of aroha (love) and safety for whānau, which are essential for the hard work they have ahead. Whanaungatanga, a fundamental aspect of Māori culture, is crucial for building trust and understanding the diverse needs of whaiora. In this research, tino rangatiratanga enables us to practice Rongoā Māori authentically, maintain its integrity, and to empower whaiora to take ownership of their healing journeys. It was inspiring to hear the wāhine highlight the potential of whaiora to achieve their own wellness, recognising them as their own master healers. Rongoā Māori are taonga, precious treasures that require a special person to hold that space with care and respect. The wāhine expressed a deep appreciation for their work, passion, and commitment to preserving and sharing this sacred knowledge.

The wāhine described the deeply invasive effects of sexual violence as being far-reaching, complex, and layered, with profound spiritual consequences that resonate throughout whakapapa. Some of the wāhine were often taken back by the resilience of some individuals who were able to manage their trauma and recover quickly. However, concerns were

expressed about the priority given to Western-based services, including the accessibility and resourcing of Rongoā Māori. The wāhine emphasised that a collaborative relationship requires mutual respect and understanding, consistent with the needs of whānau. They stressed the importance of a more inclusive approach that acknowledges the value of Rongoā Māori in supporting the healing and recovery of those affected by sexual violence.

Wairua was emphasised as essential and recognised as a guiding force in the healing process. This research highlights the importance of working from a wairua perspective, which involves acknowledging the whole person, including their whakapapa, genetic makeup, and the presence of Atua and energy. Mirimiri and romiromi were described as being intricately intertwined with tikanga Māori, including karakia, tapu, and noa (unrestricted). This holistic healing art focuses on tuning whaiora into their own needs, aspirations, and innate wisdom, and was identified as a powerful restorative practice that brings balance, clarity, and wellness to the whole person. Rongoā rākau, a significant modality within Rongoā Māori healing, harnesses the natural resources within te taiao, leveraging its medicinal properties to heal and clear the whare tangata. The wāhine discussed the core aspects of Rongoā rākau, including the intention of giving back to te taiao, emphasising the reciprocal relationship between humanity and the natural world.

These results will now be analysed alongside the literature to highlight similarities or differences with the narratives of the seven wāhine Māori interviewed in this research.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

He aha te kai a te rangatira? He kōrero, he kōrero, he kōrero.

What is the food of leaders? It is communication.

Tīmatanga

In this chapter, the voices of the wāhine are woven together with existing literature to appreciate the significance of Rongoā Māori from diverse perspectives. The literature honoured the essence of Māori and celebrated the strength of wāhine Māori. It advocated for a more culturally responsive approach to healing the impacts of sexual violence, emphasising te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori in facilitating a more profound and meaningful process of healing and wellbeing.

This chapter is structured into three wāhi, or sections for analysis. The three wāhi are illustrated in Table 5.1

| Wāhi | Themes and Subthemes |
|--|--|
| <p>He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata! <i>What is the most important thing in the world? It is people!</i></p> | <p>Rongoā Māori Hauora – <i>Wairua</i> Rongoā Māori – <i>Whanaungatanga</i> Sexual Violence Sexual Violence</p> |
| <p>He mana o Rongoā Māori <i>The power of Rongoā Māori</i></p> | <p>Sexual Violence – <i>Kotahitanga</i> Rongoā Māori – <i>Kaitiakitanga</i> Rongoā Māori – <i>Whaiora</i> Rongoā Māori Hauora – <i>Mirimiri and Romiromi</i> Rongoā Māori Hauora – <i>Wairua</i></p> |
| <p>Ka puta ki te whai ao, ki te ao mārama <i>Emerging from darkness into light</i></p> | <p>Rongoā Māori – <i>Tangata Katoa</i> Rongoā Māori – <i>Kaimahi</i> Rongoā Māori – <i>Tino Rangatiratanga</i></p> |

Table 2 – Table 5.1 Wāhi, themes and subthemes

Each wāhi builds upon the themes explored in the previous chapter, with the goal of contextualising the inspirational kupu or words shared by the wāhine Māori to offer a deeper meaning and practical terms. This research strives to not only provide insight and raise awareness of how te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori address and heal the impacts of sexual violence, but also to offer a path forward, translating the findings into actionable strategies for implementation and practice. These wāhi emphasise key treatment factors that facilitate effective and transformative healing experiences, not only honouring the distinct cultural narratives and lived experiences of wāhine Māori but also empowering all women who have been impacted by sexual harm.

The wāhine in this study embrace Rongoā Māori as an integral part of their inner-being, deeply rooted in their identity, values, and cultural heritage. Their connection to Rongoā Māori reflects not only a commitment to traditional healing practices but also a profound respect for the wisdom of their tūpuna (ancestors) and te taiao (the natural world). It was easy to see their strong positions on this topic that were shaped by a combination of lived experiences, cultural knowledge, and a desire to preserve and promote this practice for future generations.

He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata!

He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata! (*What is the most important thing in the world? It is people*). This wāhi serves as a profound reflection on the significance of human beings and highlights the importance of prioritising people in our efforts to promote health and wellbeing.

The importance of understanding the cultural nuances of wairua (spirit) for Māori were imminent within the participants pūrākau or narratives, describing the breadth and depth of wairua beyond prayer or religion. Wairua was highlighted in the literature and affirmed by the wāhine to represent who we are, where we come from and speaks to where we will go in the afterlife (Mead, 2016). In practice, taha wairua or the spiritual dimension, is arguably the most critical, as it enables a profound connection with the whaiora, their whānau (families), and their tūpuna. This connection, in turn, leads to a more successful outcome of engagement (NiaNia & Bush, 2019; NiaNia et al., 2019). The wairua of a person was identified by participants as what they are listening to and observing alongside their physical presence to guide and inform their work. This was described as working with the ‘seen’ and ‘unseen’ and raised discussion about physical symptoms including aches and pains, mental health concerns and other physical issues. The wāhine interpret these physical manifestations as indicators of more profound concerns, beyond the physical that require healing. This is consistent with existing Māori literature that discusses wairua as essential to understanding health and illness, to understanding the whole person extending beyond the physical (Kennedy et al., 2015; Mark, 2012; Ngawati et al., 2018; NiaNia & Bush, 2019; Reweti et al., 2022). This broader perspective is identified by various scholars (Kennedy et al., 2015; Ngawati et al., 2018; NiaNia & Bush, 2019; Reweti et al., 2022; Waikarei, 2020), as essential to achieving genuine healing and wellbeing within Māori contexts.

From a Rongoā Māori perspective, health and wellbeing are interconnected aspects of a person's entire identity (Mark & Lyons, 2010, 2014). This holistic approach recognises that health cannot be treated in isolation but must consider the diverse aspects that make up a person's uniqueness (Mark & Lyons, 2010, 2014). The concept of whanaungatanga (connection), as articulated by the wāhine, serves as a vital framework for adequately interpreting an individual's health needs. The wāhine highlighted that whanaungatanga goes

beyond acquaintance; it involves practitioners investing time and effort to genuinely engage with the women they support. Such engagement promotes an environment where whaiora feel valued, and respected, facilitating a foundation of trust (Carlson et al., 2016; Hamley et al., 2022). Through whanaungatanga whaiora are empowered to identify concerns with their tinana or bodies, to describe their hinengaro or emotional capacity, to share what wairua means for them and if they feel connected or displaced spiritually; whanaungatanga also provides space to talk about their whānau (families), and their emotional wellbeing. The cultural nuances underpinning whanaungatanga are much deeper than what is known from Western perspectives as the therapeutic relationship. While there are similarities in the intended outcomes of the therapeutic relationship and whanaungatanga, the latter is grounded in Māori knowledge, it is about the space, time, and meeting of minds to help people to open their hearts and remember themselves; to reconnect and revitalise their fullest potential (Carlson et al., 2016; Hamley et al., 2022; Kopua et al., 2019)

As holistic beings, we consist of interconnected systems and dimensions that together form our identities and overall wellbeing. To restore balance and wholeness, it is essential to engage in practices that embody a comprehensive and integrative approach to health and wellness, acknowledging the interconnectedness of our physical, emotional, spiritual, and emotional selves (Pihama et al., 2016; Te Wiata & Smith, 2016; Wharewera-Mika & McPhillips, 2016). Most of the literature concerning sexual violence recovery is discussed from a Western perspective that prioritise understanding the mental processes of the brain and specialising in psychological trauma and recovery (Julich et al., 2013; Leary & Hay, 2019; Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2012; Thorburn, 2015; Wharewera-Mika & McPhillips, 2016). The wāhine in this current study agreed that healing the brain and working with the hinengaro or the mind is important, but they emphasised that true healing and transformational wellbeing can only be achieved when the whole person is considered and addressed. This

finding is consistent with Mead (2016), who emphasised that a person encompasses more than just their biological or physical self. According to Mead (2016), there are additional, crucial aspects of the self, including the spiritual, the tapu (sacredness) and the mana (personal power) of the individual. Within the current study, the wāhine articulated the detrimental effects of sexual harm, which stifles these essential qualities. The wāhine identified Rongoā Māori, as a crucial modality for restoring balance and harmony across all dimensions of our being. They shared that within their mahi or work, they emphasise the importance of nurturing and revitalising these integral attributes. They acknowledge the mana of whaiora as equal to their own, they prioritise self-protection as a means to safeguarding one's tapu and they highlight the imperative to nurture mauri of life force as a vital element of growth and flourishing. From a Rongoā Māori perspective, each system and dimension of the self is significant, and wellbeing is known as a representation of the self in a state of balance.

In this research, a key focus among the wāhine was the multilayered nature of wāhine Māori, identifying our unique cultural significance, diverse social roles, and inherent worth within Indigenous contexts. Consistent with existing research that highlights the devastating impacts of sexual assault, this current study revealed a central concern as the loss of identity as a wahine Māori (Cavino, 2016; Leary & Hay, 2019; Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2012; Thorburn, 2015; Wharewera-Mika & McPhillips, 2016). The participants assert that identity loss directly impacts mana, and the rightful status as Māori women in Aotearoa New Zealand, undermining cultural narratives for empowerment and resilience. The wāhine articulated a significant shortfall in current frameworks, stating that these systems inadequately cater to the distinctive needs of Māori women (Pihama et al, 2017; Te Wiata & Smith, 2016). In contrast, Rongoā Māori features as an effective methodology that contributes to the reinforcement and celebration of Māori identity. This holistic practice was identified by the wāhine to create empowering environments for wahine Māori, uplifting their status to reflect

not only their abilities to nurture and uphold whakapapa but also their profound connections to female deities, which represent essential qualities such as strength, wisdom, and determination. The literature confirms how engaging with Rongoā Māori serves as a powerful vehicle for wāhine Māori to reclaim and reaffirm their cultural heritage, facilitating both individual and collective healing processes that are deeply embedded in tradition and spiritual beliefs (Pihama et al., 2017; Simmonds, 2011).

He mana o Rongoā Māori

He mana o Rongoā Māori (*The power of Māori healing*) highlights the strength that resides within the realm of Rongoā Māori as a specialised field of tradition and practice.

Existing literature on sexual violence emphasise the significance of engaging with specialised professional support (Leary & Hay, 2019; Mossman et al., 2009; Thorburn, 2015; Wharewera-Mika & McPhillips, 2016). However, it is necessary to note that much of this discourse primarily focuses on te ao Pākehā (the European world) paradigms. Such paradigms are of great value and often highlight Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as a central concern, alongside a range of associated issues, including personal safety and issues related to shame and self-blame (Fuller & Foreman, 2013; Kingi & Jordan, 2009; Leary & Hay, 2019; Mossman et al., 2009; Thorburn, 2015). The findings in this study highlight the need for a paradigm shift in addressing sexual violence, emphasising the importance of moving beyond current specialised approaches to more comprehensive and inclusive strategies that acknowledge the complexities of Māori experiences. For Māori, trauma is not new or isolated to the impacts of sexual violence (Le Grice et al., 2022; Ruwhiu, 2019). Instead, it is a multifaceted and intergenerational reality that encompasses various dimensions, including the historical and ongoing impacts of colonisation (Cavino, 2016; Pihama et al, 2016; Wirihana

& Smith, 2014). Furthermore, sexual violence often occurs against a backdrop of individualising and cultural deficit explanations that blame Māori culture and individual victims (Le Grice 2022). This study suggests that, for Māori, true specialisation goes beyond accessibility to services and instead requires culturally relevant frameworks that are rooted in te ao Māori and prioritise Rongoā Māori. This encompasses practices that are informed by tikanga (protocols) which prioritise and uphold Māori perspectives, even within non-Māori organisations.

Rongoā Māori involves more than facilitating mirimiri and romiromi (traditional Māori bodywork) or administering Rongoā rākau (plant-based remedies) and maintaining a space for wairua to flow. The practitioners in this research are educators, advocates, and lifelong learners of Rongoā; they are kaitiaki, or guardians of those they are working with, and they are kaitiaki of the traditional knowledge that they offer and share. In te ao Māori, our kaitiaki are of excellent value because they are responsible for healing from an esoteric level that involves our wairua, our tūpuna, and the ability to be in that space of connection. A key aspect of their practice was discussed to include being a channel or vessel to bridge the connection between the whaiora and their tūpuna, rather than being the sole source of knowledge or practice. The wāhine believed it was wairua and tūpuna who were the actual healers, rather than them themselves. They emphasised the importance of maintaining a place of neutrality, letting go of ego and personal agenda, to allow wairua and tūpuna to work through them and guide their practice. By doing so, they create a sacred space for the spiritual realms to flow through, ensuring that their work is driven by a higher purpose rather than personal intentions. Research on Rongoā and wairua have shared similar views with the wāhine, that communication with tūpuna and or the supreme source is regarded as important in transferring knowledge between physical and spiritual realities (Brice, 2020; Fox, 2021; Mark & Lyons, 2014; Mark et al., 2017; Wikaire, 2020). Being channels of healing is also

supported by Māori scholars who highlighted that the power of Rongoā Māori heals through wairua (Ahuriri- Driscoll, 2014; Davies, 2022; Mark et al., 2022; Mark et al., 2017; NiaNia et al., 2019). The wāhine in this study agreed that Rongoā Māori is ultimately driven by spiritual forces, as well as a supreme higher power. As practitioners, they recognised their role as mediators or facilitators of this sacred process.

The role of Rongoā Māori practitioners as facilitators has been seen as unique, facilitating a re-introduction between the whaiora and the whaiora themselves as their own master healer. The wāhine shared kōrero (voices) that highlighted everybody having the ability to self-heal, everybody having the potential to define who they choose to be and that sometimes individuals just need help to remember and to trust in their healing abilities. Recognising the inherent mana of whaiora holds significant importance for Māori communities. This not only strengthens cultural identity but is also closely tied to improved health and wellbeing outcomes, as it acknowledges the individual's autonomy and intrinsic worth (Mc Lauchlan et al., 2021; Reweti et al., 2022; Tuakiritetangata & Ibarra-Lemay, 2021). As highlighted by the wāhine, this practice involves always speaking in the positive about the whaiora and maintaining a space where culture is expressed and nurtured. They discussed the utmost importance in supporting whaiora to reconnect with themselves, to learn themselves and to have faith in their innate intuition and knowing. This finding aligns with literature highlighting Rongoā as a champion of 'empowerment,' wherein whānau are equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to take agency over their health and wellbeing (Mark, 2012). The wāhine agreed and emphasised the critical importance of sustainability in the healing process. They asserted that by helping a person to find strength in their independence and to make good choices and decisions for themselves and their own life, the person in return and sustained by their success can continue healing themselves and their whānau (Lipsham, 2011)

The distinctive result of the current research raised the issue of translating mirimiri into massage. In the literature, mirimiri is discussed as ‘massage’, ‘channelled massage’ and ‘spiritual massage’ to promote the use and support of Rongoā Māori within the healthcare sector (Gemmell, 2020; Koea & Mark, 2019; Mark & Lyons, 2014; Mark et al., 2017; O’Connor, 2007; Wikaire, 2020). The word massage is also used to translate the word mirimiri into English, as an attempt to provide an understanding of what mirimiri is and what individuals can expect during treatment. As reported by the wāhine in this study, the translation of mirimiri to massage does not encapsulate the years and depth of ancient mātauranga, or knowledge that embody this traditional practice. This is consistent with many Māori scholars including Pihama (2001) and Simmonds (2011) who highlighted that within te reo Māori (Māori language) there exists a uniquely Māori way of explaining and relating to the world and that there are definite and distinct limitations when translating into English. Exploring research about massage, there are practical similarities between massage and mirimiri like using hands, elbows, knees, or specialised devices to manipulate tissues, muscles, and tendons (Mae et al., 2002). However, as shared by the wāhine, it is the cultural nuances of mirimiri and romiromi that include but are not limited to wairuatanga and tikanga Māori, which position this practice in a realm of its own, unlike any other healing practice. This finding aligns with O’Connor (2007) who mentioned that there is a precise technique for the delivery of and excitation of spiritual energy within the body, which involves honesty and facing one’s fears. It is equally important to acknowledge that whilst Rongoā Māori is broad and does operate occasionally by similar practices to Western medicines, Rongoā Māori should not be defined by Western models, ideas and classifications around what is and is not Rongoā (Koea & Mark, 2020; Mark, 2012; Mark et al, 2017).

Wairua was identified in this study as its own method of practice, as a framework wairuatanga can guide and administer healing. Wairuatanga is the same as wairua but

actioned. From a te ao Māori perspective, wairua is identified as the most widely mentioned aspect of Māori health, with its scope and magnitude existent by the beholder whether it is a belief or a vision, takutaku (incarnation) or karakia (incantation), a sense or a source of strength (Ahuriri-Driscoll, 2014; Fox, 2024; Mead, 2016; Ngawati et al., 2018; NiaNia et al., 2019). But what the wāhine were saying in this study is that mahi wairua (spiritual work), is an approach to health and wellbeing, like the mirimiri and romiromi and the Rongoā rākau. The wāhine emphasised mahi wairua as providing tools and techniques for healing, offering the means to cleanse and clear, guiding the hinengaro (mind) away from harmful and unkind practices and behaviours, and fostering stability and purpose within the whaiora. There is a growing body of literature related to the significance of wairua, as essential to improving the overall health and wellbeing of Māori because it manifests in cultural beliefs, practices, and values and it gives existence meaning and purpose (Ahuriri-Driscoll, 2014; Kennedy et al., 2015; Marques et al., 2022; Ngawati et al., 2018; NiaNia & Bush, 2019; Valentine et al., 2017). Mahi wairua, was discussed by the wāhine as a practice that is reclaiming and revitalising its position within Rongoā Māori; a practice that is recognised but is yet to be fully understood. As referenced by NiaNia et al., (2019), there is power in knowledge and that power should be shared to make wairuatanga less mysterious and to normalise its position as a method of practice within te ao Māori, health and wellbeing.

Ka puta ki te whai ao, ki te ao mārama

Ka puta ki te whai ao, ki te ao mārama (*Emerging from darkness into light*). This wāhi emphasises the crucial shift towards Māori taking control of their own health and wellbeing through the care of Rongoā Māori.

In this study, most of the wāhine discussed the increased demand for Rongoā Māori services, a finding they believe to benefit the health outcomes of all recipients. The New Zealand government has made recent contributions to the funding of Rongoā service provision, particularly via the Accident Compensation Commission (ACC), where Rongoā Māori is accessible with an accepted Physical, Sensitive, or Mental Injury claim (ACC, 2024; Koea et al., 2024). Survivors of sexual harm can access Rongoā Māori under any of these claims, but specific cover is provided under a Sensitive claim or Mental Injury claim, for survivors where a mental injury is deemed present as a result of sexual abuse (ACC, 2024). Rongoā Māori definitions within ACC are consistent with the Waitangi Tribunal and are broad but restricted to healing practices which have whakapapa Māori or Māori lineage, such practices include mirimiri and romiromi, Rongoā rākau and whakawhitiwhiti kōrero (ACC, 2024). In a recent article, McCaull (2024) highlighted that ACC Rongoā Māori claims have almost doubled in the last year with over 6000 whaiora using it by the end of January 2024. This article also reported that 59 percent of people using the services are Māori while the other 41 percent are non-Māori. One of the wahine highlighted that Rongoā Māori services are also accessible under Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) and others discussed its offerings at marae, private clinics, health care centres and residential properties. All wāhine in this research offer their Rongoā within one or more of these spaces and with the support of ACC; Rongoā Māori is experiencing a massive renaissance, a movement reported to benefit not only health outcomes for Māori but for all people (Carlson et al., 2016; Durie, 2004; Koea et al., 2024). As funding provisions under ACC and EAP pathways increase accessibility to Rongoā for whaiora, funding interests for the women who are positioned beyond these pathways, without an accepted ACC claim or not in work have yet to be found.

Rongoā Māori is not a big field of practice; it was discussed in this study to take time to develop as a Rongoā practitioner and as demand rises, so does the need to provide. The

wāhine confirmed that the problem is not meeting demand; the problem is people thinking that they can offer Rongoā Māori without the relevant mentorship and learning. Rongoā Māori is a specialised field of practice that requires specialised training and experience that is grounded in te ao Māori (Ahuriri-Driscoll et al., 2015; Brice, 2020; Koea et al., 2024; Mark et al., 2017; O'Connor, 2007). All of the wāhine reported having undergone extensive, hands-on mentorship training with experienced tohunga (traditional healers) and skilled practitioners. Additionally, they possessed a deep understanding of te ao Māori, including the tikanga specific to their rohe (region), whānau, and the whakapapa of the practice. Notably, their own personal healing journeys were also a vital aspect of their mentorship and learning process. When we engage with healthcare professionals, social workers, nurses, counsellors, the expectation is that they have accomplished the relevant training and that we are safe in their care; Rongoā Māori withstands the same expectation. As highlighted by the wāhine, Rongoā Māori is regulated by te ao Māori in which versatility, diversity and the breadth and depth of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) is promoted and nurtured (Boulton et al., 2014; Mark et al., 2019;). Within te ao Māori, we have our own system of checks and balances as the means by which our traditional healing practices and practitioners are regulated. This is consistent with literature from Māori scholars who highlighted that Indigenous healing practices have grown from centuries of time-honoured adherence to traditional and cultural values, customs and protocols that have been proven over time to enhance individual, community, and environmental wellbeing (Ahuriri-Driscoll et al., 2015; Hikuroa, 2017; Mark et al., 2019; Mark et al., 2022; Mead, 2016; Murphy, 2011; Pihama, 2001).

Previous research has indicated support for the collaboration of Rongoā Māori and Western medical services (Koea et al., 2024; NiaNia & Bush, 2019). As discussed by Durie (2004), instead of integration, which would incorporate Rongoā Māori into Western healthcare

systems, there should be a mutual collaboration, where both systems work together, but remain individually intact and not changed in any way. Rongoā Māori provides a comprehensive and holistic way of treating emotional and physical conditions that differ to many of the treatments available from Western medical practitioners, a point identified by the wāhine in this study to benefit our current health care system (Koea & Mark, 2020). While most of the wāhine in this study supported the idea of a mutual collaboration highlighting benefits such as the inclusion of Māori cultural values into health services, some of the wāhine also raised concerns about the pressures of Western accreditation, quality assurance and monitoring (Koea et al., 2024; Koea & Mark, 2020). The wāhine also raised the utmost importance of decolonisation processes as essential for fully comprehending te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori. Research focused on collaboration shared similar views highlighting concerns about Rongoā being overlooked within the healthcare system and a lack of awareness among healthcare professionals (Thompson, et al., 2024). Some of the wāhine also highlighted that Rongoā Māori is classed as ‘complementary’ and ‘alternative’ in comparison to Western services that are regarded as ‘mainstream’ (Keats-Farr, 2022; Koea et al., 2024; Mark et al., 2019; Rolleston et al., 2020). This position as ‘complementary’ or ‘alternative’ not only displaces Rongoā from its right to be respected as a culturally appropriate healing treatment for Māori but also challenges the inception of mutual collaboration and two systems working together. While recent studies highlighted shared interest in collaborative approaches to healthcare, the wāhine in this study emphasised Rongoā Māori knowledge as a privilege that must remain under the care and control of Māori, including the authority of Rongoā Māori practitioners to administer and set regulations for their healing practice (Boulton et al., 2014; Koea & Mark, 2019; Mark et al., 2019; NiaNia & Bush, 2019).

Mutungā

Throughout this chapter, each section was interwoven with a comprehensive discussion on the research findings, the existing literature, and profound insights on Rongoā Māori as a distinct and culturally grounded perspective and method for healing the profound impacts of sexual harm. This integrative approach allowed for a nuanced exploration of the complex issues surrounding sexual harm, while also highlighting the value and potential of Rongoā Māori as a powerful tool for healing, transformation, and empowerment.

I found it enlightening to focus on the whaiora as individuals with their own stories, experiences, and emotions, rather than just viewing them through the lens of a model or framework. This shift in perspective allows connection to them on a deeper level to understand their unique needs and circumstances. By doing so, by approaching our mahi, our work in this manner we can move beyond simply treating symptoms or diagnoses and instead, truly engage with the complexities and nuances of the person as a whole. Our wairua is the spark that drives us, inspires us, and gives us meaning. In healing, wairua helps us understand the root causes of our imbalances and shows us how we can achieve deeper healing, release blockages, and restore our connection to ourselves. As wāhine we are the keepers of our stories, our traditions, and our values and it is essential that we have access to services that protect and honour this mana, and acknowledge our inherent strength, beauty, and resilience. From a whanaungatanga perspective, we transcend our symptoms and experiences, embracing a more holistic understanding of ourselves. This approach nurtures a sense of belonging, connection, and community, where individuals feel seen, heard, and valued. Through whanaungatanga, we can move forward with purpose, striving for a brighter future and nourishing our connections with people, places, and things that bring us joy and fulfilment. To truly heal and grow, we need approaches that care for and nurture our whole

being. Te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori honour the sacredness of our existence and promote inner harmony, flourishing and balance with the world around us.

Being in a space where te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori were prioritised was a deeply empowering experience. Engaging in kōrero that centred Māori perspectives and approaches served as a powerful reminder of the need to decolonise our healing practices and honour the wisdom of our ancestors. This experience further deepened my understanding of what it means to truly embody this important mahi, and the significance of centring Māori knowledge and values in our healing journeys. To embark on a journey of healing and self-discovery, it is vital that we have access to services that resonate with our cultural heritage and values. This connection is essential for rekindling our sense of identity, fostering a deeper understanding of ourselves, and unlocking a fulfilling path forward. Rongoā Māori practitioners are guardians of traditional knowledge and the whaiora they are working with. They support the reclamation of their role as their own healers, whaiora tap into their innate power to self-heal and define their own identity. This enables whaiora to take ownership of their healing journey, not only transforming their own lives but also creating a profound impact on their whānau and community, with the positive effects resonating through generations to come. The vital importance of wairua in achieving comprehensive health and wellbeing is emphasised, with mahi wairua presented as a distinctive approach that offers a range of specialized tools and techniques. These unique methods enable the cleansing, clearing, and healing of whaiora, their whānau, hapū and iwi. Rongoā Māori is a distinct and autonomous system of healing that can only be defined by Māori models, ideas, and classifications.

Witnessing the passion, commitment, and sense of honour of these wāhine in their roles as Rongoā practitioners was a profoundly moving experience. They emphasised that their mahi goes beyond simply embodying the work but also involves taking all necessary measures to

safeguard its authenticity and to protect it at all costs for the benefit of whānau in the present and future. Their dedication to upholding the integrity of Rongoā Māori was profound, and their determination to preserve its cultural sovereignty was empowering. The increasing demand for Rongoā Māori services has demonstrated positive outcomes for all who engage with them. However, there remains a notable lack of funding for individuals who either do not align with these pathways or choose not to utilise them. Rongoā Māori is a highly specialised practice, becoming a Rongoā practitioner requires a substantial commitment of time and effort, including mentorship under the guidance of experienced tohunga and skilled practitioners. It also necessitates a profound understanding of te ao Māori and the tikanga Māori specific to one's region, whānau, and the whakapapa of the practice. Previous studies have highlighted the advantages of collaboration between Rongoā Māori and Western medical services. Rongoā Māori provides a holistic approach to healing that complements the treatments offered by Western medicine. However, rather than integrating Rongoā Māori into Western healthcare systems, the research underscores the value of mutual collaboration, where both systems work together while maintaining their distinct identities.

The following chapter will explore these conclusions further and summarise the key points of this research.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ko ō tātou whakapono ngā kaiwehewehe i a tātau. Ko ō tātau moemoeā me ō tātau pākatokato ngā kaiwhakakotahi i a tātau.

It is our truths that are the actors of separation. It is our dreams and difficulties that act to unify us.

Tīmatanga

This chapter will highlight the key findings of the entire research, discuss the limitations of the study and conclude by looking at the implications to make recommendations in practice, policy and future research.

The aims of this research were to:

- examine how sexual violence is represented in Aotearoa New Zealand,
- analyse how te ao Māori provides an understanding of the impacts of sexual violence for wāhine Māori and all women, and
- to explore how Rongoā Māori heals the impacts of sexual violence and promotes health and wellbeing.

Key findings

Traditional Western approaches to recovery from sexual violence are not effective for Māori as they often fail to account for the unique cultural, social, and historical contexts that shape Māori experiences. In contrast, a new approach is needed that takes into account the richness

and nuances of te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori. Rongoā Māori weaves together the threads of Māori culture, history, and values, creating a rich tapestry of knowledge and understanding that is unique to Māori. It views a person's identity, experiences, and relationships as connected and crucial to their overall wellbeing. This approach helps people reconnect with their true selves, which is especially crucial for those who have experienced sexual harm. By doing so, it enables them to reclaim their identity and self-worth, ultimately leading to healing and recovery. Our wairua is deeply impacted by tapu violation when sexual violence occurs. When healing, many focus on the physical ailments however, our wairua is the most important to heal, to nurture and to focus on. In order to achieve true healing and transformational wellbeing, a holistic approach like Rongoā Māori is necessary. This approach acknowledges that each individual has a unique makeup of taha tinana, taha hinengaro, taha wairua, and taha whānau (Durie, 2001). These dimensions are intimately connected and inseparable, forming a delicate and intricate web of wholeness.

There is a growing demand for Rongoā Māori services, but a lack of funding support for those who do not fit into Western pathways. Rongoā Māori is a specialised field of practice rooted in te ao Māori that empowers individuals to take control of their own healing, trusting their intuition and inner wisdom. Rongoā Māori practitioners have a sacred responsibility as guardians of the holistic well-being of their whaiora, and to facilitate a deep connection between whaiora and their tūpuna (ancestors), promoting healing and growth. To become a skilled Rongoā practitioner, one needs to undergo extensive hands-on training and develop a deep understanding of Māori culture, tikanga, and whakapapa. Within this context, mahi wairua or spiritual work is an approach to health and wellbeing that utilises unique tools and techniques to promote healing, stability, and overall wellbeing. Collaboration between Rongoā Māori and Western medical services has been shown to be effective in previous research, offering a holistic approach to treating conditions. This study emphasises the

importance of mutual collaboration, where both systems work together while maintaining their independence and autonomy. This approach recognises the value of Rongoā Māori knowledge and ensures that it remains under Māori care and control, enriching the healthcare system and providing whaiora with a broader range of treatment options.

Limitations: Planting the Seed

A strength in this study was that seven Rongoā Māori practitioners were interviewed to share their understandings and experiences of Rongoā Māori as a method of healing the impacts of sexual violence. They did this, despite the barriers and devastation of cyclone Gabrielle and the Therapeutic Products Act 2023 receiving Royal assent at the time the study was conducted. While the number of participants was not representative of all practitioners, it provided rich narratives through the use of wairuatanga, Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine, which allowed the use of pūrākau (narratives) and for the voices of these wāhine to be heard and valued. As an exploratory study, the research did not intend to recruit participants throughout the whole of Aotearoa New Zealand. The seven wāhine participants were located in the North Island and had whakapapa connections to that region. To gain a more comprehensive understanding, it would be valuable to consult with practitioners from the South Island, who have strong connections to the local iwi and hapū and can provide unique insights and perspectives from their region.

One of the significant strengths of this study lies in its successful integration of Mana Wahine theories and methodologies that actively prioritise the empowerment of Māori women. The wāhine who participated in this research are all dedicated members of their whānau, communities, and wider society, holding various roles such as daughters, kuia, māmā, inspirational leaders, entrepreneurs, and advocates. These remarkable women embody the

very essence of Mana Wahine, which is rooted in the values of strength, resilience, and determination. Mana Wahine provides us with a culturally defined framework that allows us to celebrate and affirm our positions as Māori women, recognising our unique experiences, challenges, and contributions (Murphy, 2011). This research has a strong focus on wāhine Māori, engaging participants who identify as wahine and exploring their experiences, perspectives, and insights related to working alongside women. It would be beneficial to explore healing and recovery from the perspectives of practitioners who identify as tāne, as well as from practice perspectives that are specifically connected to working alongside tāne in a healing capacity.

The kōrero I shared with the wāhine in this research were profound and enlightening, and they highlighted the importance of wairua, tūpuna, and the higher source as the true healers in their practice. I would like to take this opportunity to deeply acknowledge the significant role that wairua, tūpuna, and the higher source also had in this research. As a Māori researcher, I incorporated tikanga Māori, such as karakia and takutaku (incantations), to guide and aid me in this study. I also engaged in kōrero (conversation) with my tūpuna, seeking their guidance and wisdom. I firmly believe in the importance of having a strong spiritual connection, and I acknowledge the thin veil that separates the living from the deceased, allowing us to seek their counsel and direction. To ensure the accuracy and integrity of this research process, I sought their guidance throughout, trusting in their wisdom and expertise to navigate the complexities of this study. It would be fascinating to investigate the spiritual experiences of both survivors who are healing from the effects of sexual harm and those of the practitioners who are working alongside them. This could provide valuable insights into the role of spirituality in the healing process and the ways in which practitioners' spiritual experiences inform their practice.

Recommendations

This study makes a vital contribution to the sexual violence sector by providing essential support to numerous whaiora, survivors, and their whānau throughout their healing journeys. The findings of this research reaffirm that Māori respond positively to practices that are implemented in ways that are empowering for Māori, defined and developed by Māori, and tailored to Māori needs and aspirations for health and wellbeing (Jackson, 2015; Pihama et al., 2015; 2016; Smith, 1997; Tiakiwai, 2001). This study strongly advocates for the collaboration of these practices, combining te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori to address the devastating impacts of sexual violence and achieve positive health outcomes for Māori. By adopting this approach, we can create a more culturally responsive and effective support system that acknowledges the unique experiences and needs of Māori. Te ao Māori worldviews provide a nuanced understanding of the context of sexual harm for wāhine Māori, and Rongoā is renowned for its restorative abilities, focusing on uplifting and enhancing the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities; this is the way forward. Furthermore, this commitment seeks to not only accurately represent the Māori population within the sector's frameworks but also to reframe Western approaches, situating te ao Pākehā (European) alongside Rongoā Māori, and promoting a more inclusive and collaborative approach to addressing sexual violence. By doing so, we can work towards a more equitable and just system that prioritises the needs and aspirations of Māori.

The following recommendations are based on this study and the research undertaken:

The establishment of clear referral pathways, adequate funding methods, and strong networking with Rongoā Māori providers is essential to ensure effective collaboration and sustainability in the long term. This includes developing clear guidelines for referrals, ensuring that Rongoā Māori providers have the necessary resources and support to deliver

their services, and fostering strong relationships between Western health services and Rongoā Māori providers. This will enable seamless transitions for wāhine Māori seeking support and ensure that they receive the holistic care they need to thrive.

There is a pressing need for policies that improve professional awareness and development to incorporate the holistic breadth of wairua and its essential role in Māori health practices. It is crucial that referrals are directed towards practitioners who engage from this level of healing that involve our wairua, and the ability to be in and hold our space of connection. This approach is imperative for promoting a healing framework that is not only culturally significant but also unifying of Māori understandings of holistic health and wellbeing.

It is necessary to establish, develop, and adequately resource specialised training programmes that are tailored to the unique context of Rongoā Māori. These programmes would create capacity within the community, empowering Māori practitioners to deliver high-quality, culturally responsive services that meet the unique needs of wāhine Māori. The training programmes would need to be developed by Māori communities, Rongoā Māori practitioners, and other key stakeholders to ensure that they are culturally appropriate, relevant, and effective. This would involve incorporating Māori values, principles, and practices into the training curriculum, as well as providing opportunities for practitioners to develop their skills and knowledge in a way that is respectful of their cultural heritage.

It is imperative for Rongoā practitioners to actively engage in educational initiatives that not only raise awareness about the importance of Rongoā Māori in addressing the health and wellbeing needs of wāhine Māori but also facilitate the monitoring of this process to ensure that it is effective and culturally responsive. This would involve developing educational programmes that are tailored to the needs of healthcare providers, policymakers, and

community members, and that provide a deep understanding of te ao Māori worldviews and cultural constructs.

A mutual collaboration between healthcare systems and Rongoā Māori would require a profound acknowledgement of the value and importance of Rongoā Māori, and a commitment from healthcare providers to not only recognise but actively support and allocate resources towards Rongoā Māori. This would involve allocating funding, infrastructure, and personnel to support the development and delivery of Rongoā Māori services, as well as providing resources and support to Rongoā practitioners to enable them to deliver high-quality services.

Future Considerations

Seven wāhine Māori shared their lived experiences and insights regarding the impacts of sexual violence and using te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori as a perspective and method of healing and holistic wellbeing. Several participants did work in the sexual violence sector and all of the participants had provided support in a healing capacity to whaiora, survivors, and their whānau.

A recommendation from this study is to conduct research based on the lived experiences of whaiora engaged in Rongoā Māori. It would be valuable to understand their perspectives and realities. By engaging with whaiora, the study would seek to acquire vital insights to inform the development of services within the sexual violence sector.

Another recommendation from this research is to explore the concept of healing from the perspective of whaiora. By conducting this research, we can work towards developing more

effective and culturally responsive approaches to healing and recovery, that are tailored to the specific needs and experiences of whaiora.

Another space where research could be conducted is alongside whānau engaged in Rongoā Māori who are supporting loved ones through their healing journey. It would be valuable to understand their perspectives and realities. By engaging with whānau, the study would seek to acquire vital insights to inform the development of services within and beyond the sexual violence sector.

Personal Reflection

It has been an absolute privilege and honour to embark on this research journey, sharing the precious taonga of te ao Māori and the rich cultural heritage of Rongoā Māori through the inspiring stories of these remarkable wāhine. The task was daunting, yet it took me on a profoundly transformative journey that touched every aspect of my being. As I balanced my responsibilities to my whānau, my full-time job, and part-time studies, the topic consumed my every waking moment, adding intricacy and depth to my life. Whenever I could dedicate time to my studies, the learning experience was incredibly rewarding, and I was constantly reminded of the richness and beauty of our Māori culture. This journey has not only opened up opportunities for personal and professional growth but has also provided me with healing, reconnection, and a sense of purpose. Through my research, I have been able to give back to my own whānau, hapū, iwi, and communities by normalising and embodying our traditional practices, reviving our cultural knowledge, and keeping our stories alive.

I have learned the importance of standing in my mana as a wahine Māori, amplifying the knowledge base of te ao Māori for generations to come, and empowering our people to reclaim their rightful place as the guardians of our cultural heritage. This journey has instilled

in me a deep sense of pride, belonging, and identity, and I am humbled by the privilege of contributing to the preservation and revitalisation of our Māori culture. By sharing the stories of these remarkable wāhine, I hope to inspire a new generation of Māori leaders and change-makers to embrace their cultural heritage and to use their knowledge and skills to make a positive impact in their communities. Through this research, I aim to not only honour the legacy of our tūpuna but also to pave the way for a brighter future for our tamariki (children) and our mokopuna (grandchildren), one that is grounded in the values, principles, and practices of te ao Māori.

My struggle with this research was deeply rooted in the immense responsibility I felt in upholding the mana and authenticity of te ao Māori, Rongoā Māori, and the voices of these inspirational wāhine. I battled with self-doubt, wondering if I was the right person for this task, and whether I had the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience to do justice to this important research. At times, I felt like I was walking on sacred ground, and the weight of that responsibility was difficult. However, as the research unfolded, it became clear that I was being driven by a higher power, guided by the wisdom of wairua and my tūpuna. I began to feel a sense of purpose and direction, as if I was being called to fulfil a higher calling. I realised that this research was not just about me or my own personal interests, but about giving voice, empowering, and safeguarding our mātauranga and our ways of being and doing. As I delved deeper into the research, I began to uncover the richness and beauty of our culture, and my passion and eagerness to learn and grow only intensified. I was determined to share this knowledge with others in a way that was respectful, empowering, and beautiful, and to use my research as a tool for transformation and change. The wisdom of my tūpuna became my anchor, providing me with strength and courage. I felt their presence around me, guiding me, supporting me, and encouraging me to persevere. With the support of my whānau, my extended whānau, my ancestors, these wāhine, and the community that entrusted

me with this research, I knew I was not alone in this journey. I was part of a larger community, a community that was committed to the preservation and revitalisation of our Māori culture. Armed with this knowledge, I was able to silence my doubts and fears and focus on amplifying the voices of the wahine and honouring the mana of te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori.

This research took me on a remarkable journey across Aotearoa New Zealand, traversing multiple regions, including my ancestral homelands on the East Coast and the North Island. I felt a deep connection to the land and my people as I meet with kuia (elder woman), kaumatua (elder man), and other community members who shared their stories, wisdom, and knowledge with me. My work also had an international dimension, extending to Indonesia, where I was able to relax, rejuvenate and nourish myself. What is more, I accomplished this research amidst the vibrant tapestry of life, completing work in marae, at joyous celebrations like weddings, graduations, and birthday parties, and even during the precious moments of welcoming my two mokopuna into the world. These moments of joy and celebration reminded me of the importance of whānau and community, and the need to prioritise their wellbeing and success. Towards the end of this journey, I faced a great personal loss with the passing of my best friend. Yet, even in the depths of grief, I found the strength to dust myself off and focus on the honourable task at hand - a task that held me entranced by the majestic beauty of our cultural narratives and nurtured me in the fullness of my identity. This extraordinary journey has reinforced the power of determination, proving that with unwavering commitment, nothing is impossible, and the sky is truly no limit. I will treasure this journey, humbled by the privilege of developing and delivering research that will have a profound and lasting impact on improving health and wellbeing. I am proud of what I have achieved, and I am grateful for the opportunities I have had to grow, learn, and develop as a

scholar and as a person. This research journey has been a transformative experience, one that has nurtured me in ways I could never have imagined.

The Final Word

This research upholds the mana of te ao Māori, of Rongoā Māori, and the practitioners who live and breathe this work. It acknowledges the inherent value and worth of Māori culture, language, and customary practices, and recognises the importance of centring te ao Māori in our approaches to health and wellbeing. By prioritising the voices and perspectives of Rongoā Māori practitioners, this research acknowledges their mana and supports the development of a healthcare system that is truly responsive to the needs of Māori communities. The mana of Rongoā Māori practitioners is intertwined with the mana of their whānau, hapū, and iwi, and is deeply connected to the natural world and the spiritual realm. By upholding their mana, this research also recognises the importance of whanaungatanga, wairuatanga, and tino rangatiratanga in the development of healthcare services that are truly culturally responsive. This research is committed to creating a safe and inclusive space for Rongoā Māori practitioners to share their knowledge, expertise, and experiences, and to supporting the growth and development of a Rongoā Māori workforce that is proud, confident, and empowered to make a positive difference.

Decolonisation processes are vital components of approaching health and wellbeing, and are essential for fully comprehending te ao Māori, Rongoā Māori, and the profound impact of sexual violence on Māori communities. Decolonisation involves recognising and dismantling the systems of oppression that have been imposed upon Māori communities, including the healthcare system. It requires a critical examination of the ways in which Western healthcare approaches have been privileged over traditional Māori healing practices, and a commitment

to centring Māori voices, experiences, and perspectives in the development of healthcare policies and practices. This includes acknowledging the historical and ongoing impacts of colonisation on Māori health and wellbeing and working to address the systemic barriers and inequalities that have prevented Māori from accessing healthcare services that are responsive to their unique needs. In the context of sexual violence, decolonisation is particularly important, as it involves recognising the ways in which Western approaches to addressing sexual violence have often failed to account for the specific experiences and needs of Māori survivors. By centring te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori in our approaches to health and wellbeing, we can work towards a more just and equitable system that prioritises the needs and aspirations of Māori communities. This involves supporting the development of Rongoā Māori services that are tailored to the unique needs of Māori survivors of sexual violence and working to create a healthcare system that is committed to decolonisation and cultural responsiveness.

My findings of this research reveal that engaging with te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori offer a uniquely transformative healing experience like no other. It is as if one is called home, summoned back to a sense of familiarity, comfort, and belonging. This journey is not just about physical healing, but a profound spiritual, emotional, and psychological transformation. Engaging with te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori is like being called to clean up your whare, your sacred space, your temple. It is an invitation to purify and renew your body, mind, and spirit, to rid yourself of the burdens and weights that have held you back. It's a call to occupy your reality, to take ownership of your life, and to be proud of who you are, in all your complexity and beauty. This transformative healing experience is a personalised journey that recognises the unique cultural, historical, and spiritual context of the individual. It is an acknowledgement that each person's healing pathway is different, but that the principles and values of te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori can provide a guiding framework for navigating the

complexities of sexual harm. Ultimately, my research suggests that engaging with te ao Māori and Rongoā Māori offers a powerful and transformative healing experience that can lead to profound and lasting change. It is a call to come home to oneself, to reclaim one's cultural heritage, and to occupy one's rightful place in the world with pride, dignity, and purpose.

Waiata: Ko te Pū

Ko te pū

Te more

Te weu

Te aka

Te rea

Ko te wao nui

Te kune

Te whē

Te kore

Te pō

Ki ngā tangata Māori

Nā Rangi rāua ko Papa

Ko tēnei te Tīmatanga o te ao

Ko tēnei te Tīmatanga o te ao

We are seeds of potential and promised growth, we hold the key to our own destiny.

Karakia: Ka tohi Au

Ka tohi au ki te tohi a Nuku

Ko tohi au ki te tohi a Rangi

I tupu iho ko ngā Pū

ngā Weu, ngā More, ngā Pūkenga

ngā Wānanga, ngā Taura ngā Taura

Tēnei te kimi noa, te rapu noa i te taketake,

i te ahuru mai nō ngā rangi tūhaha

Whakaea kia rite

Uhi, Wero, Haramai te toki

Haumi e, hui e

Taiki e!

*I was introduced to this karakia as a means of reconnection and dedication to my true self
and my divine purpose.*

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Massey University Human Ethics Committee



4/10/2022

Dear: Sharna Haimona

Re: Ethics Application - SOB 22/37 - Rongoā Māori as a method of healing: Sexual violence from a Māori perspective

Thank you for the above application that was considered by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee:

Ohu Matatika 3 at their meeting held on **Thursday, 14 July 2022**

On behalf of the Committee I am pleased to advise you that the ethics of your application are approved.

Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, reapproval must be requested.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Professor Craig Johnson
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and Director (Research Ethics)

Research Ethics Office, Research and Enterprise
Massey University, Private Bag 11 222, Palmerston North, 4442, New Zealand T 06 951 6841; 06 95106840
E humanethics@massey.ac.nz; animalethics@massey.ac.nz; gtc@massey.ac.nz

Appendix 2: Information Sheet

(on Massey University letterhead)

Rongoā Māori as a method of healing: Sexual violence from a Māori perspective

INFORMATION SHEET

E ngā mihi, e ngā reo, e ngā karangatanga maha o ngā hou e whā, tēnei te mihi ki a tātou katoa.

Ko wai au? Ko wai tōku whānau?

I te taha o tōku māmā

Ko Pukehapopo tōku Maunga

Ko Waiomoko tōku Awa

Ko Tirianini tōku Waka

Ko Rīwai tōku Hapū

Ko Paikea tōku Rangatira

Ko Ngāti Konohi, ko Ngāti Porou ōku Iwi

Ko Whangara Mai Tawhiti tōku Marae

Nō Whangara āhau

Nō England, nō Wales, nō Scotland
ōku whakapapa hoki.

Ko Sandra Haimona tōku māmā

I te taha o tōku pāpā

Ko Rāwhitiroa tōku Maunga

Ko Waitangi tōku Moana

Ko Ngatokimatawhaorua tōku Waka

Ko Uri Taniwha tōku Hapū

Ko Kupe tōku Rangatira

Ko Ngāpuhi, ko Tūhoe ōku Iwi

Ko Taumarere tōku Marae

Nō Ohawae āhau

Ko Peter Haimona tōku pāpā

Ko Thomas Farr rātou ko Tangiwai Leach, ko Te Rautangi Haimona, ko Te Ao Marama Kohatu ōku kaumātua

Ko Nacey Haimona tōku tungāne, ko Peta Haimona te potiki o tōku whānau.

Ko Quentin Lance Hata tōku hoa rangatira. Ko Pryde rātou ko Honey-Jayde, ko Holden āku tamariki.

Ko Sharna-Lee Haimona tōku ingoa

Tēnā koe,

My name is Sharna-Lee Haimona, and I am enrolled in the Master of Social Work programme at Massey University. I am a registered social worker working within the sexual

violence sector alongside those who have been impacted by sexual harm. I am also a rongoā Māori provider of mirimiri and romiromi. My professional and personal experience has highlighted barriers for Māori survivors of sexual harm accessing culturally appropriate services and the need for interventions that are responsive to Māori specific needs, such as rongoā Māori. My research topic focuses on identifying rongoā Māori as a method of healing for survivors and or victims of sexual violence and I am interested to hear about your personal and professional experiences as I believe that your stories will be able to contribute to the literature on rongoā Māori as a method of healing and sexual violence from a Māori perspective.

Project Description

The aim of this research is to gain an understanding of your experiences and knowledge of rongoā Māori practices, the impacts of sexual violence for wāhine Māori and all women, how rongoā Māori can be utilised to work with wāhine Māori who have experienced sexual harm, potential challenges for this kind of work and prospects for the use of te ao Māori and rongoā as a method of healing in sexual violence.

Invitation to the study

I would like to invite you, a rongoā Māori practitioner to participate in an individual interview of approximately two and a half hours. This will allow time for whakawhanaungatanga and the interview itself and if in person, I will provide a shared kai afterwards. It may take an additional half hour to review your transcript. Interviews will be conducted via kanohi ki te kanohi, zoom or skype at a mutually agreed place, date, and time.

To participate in this research, you will need to fulfil the following criteria:

- Identify as a wahine Māori
- Be experienced in the use of traditional rongoā Māori healing
- Have a sound understanding of the underpinning cultural customs and beliefs of rongoā Māori
- An understanding of treating the impacts of sexual violence, however direct experience and or specialisation in the field of sexual violence is not required.

The interview will have specific questions about the research topic and will be provided to you before the interview.

Data Management

All data relevant to the research will be saved as soon as it is obtained, and it will be stored in a safe place with password access only accessed by me, the student researcher.

Confidentiality will be assured through a careful process of de-identification in the final report. The audio recording will be deleted after the transcript is completed and confirmed. All other data including the consent form of this research will be shredded or deleted after the examination of the thesis.

Participant's Rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study up until you release your interview transcript;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;

- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview, and if after 15 minutes you do not want recording to restart, data collection will cease;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

Project Contacts

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Student Researcher | Research Supervisor | Research Supervisor |
| Sharna-Lee Haimona | Dr. Paul'e Ruwhiu | Hannah Mooney |
| Master of Social Work Massey University. | School of Social Work Massey University | School of Social Work Massey University |
| ██████████ | ██████████ | ██████████ |
| ██ | p.ruwhiu@massey.ac.nz | h.a.mooney@massey.ac.nz |

Committee Approval Statement

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application SOB 22/37. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Gerald Harrison, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 356 9099 x 83570, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.

Appendix 3: Consent Form

(on Massey University letterhead)

Rongoā Māori as a method of healing: Sexual Violence from a Māori perspective

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM – INDIVIDUAL

I have read and I understand the Information Sheet attached as Appendix I. I have had the details of the study explained to me, any questions I had have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I have been given sufficient time to consider whether to participate in this study and I understand participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study up until I release my interview transcript.

1. I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.
2. I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.
3. I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Declaration by Participant:

I _____ [print full name] _____ hereby consent to take part in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 4: Interview Guide

(on Massey University letterhead)

Rongoā Māori as a method of healing: Sexual Violence from a Māori perspective

Interview Guide

Participant interview questions for qualitative interviewing research of Rongoā Māori as a method of healing: Sexual violence from a Māori perspective.

May 2022

Research Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself?
2. Can you tell me about the rongoā Māori you work with?
3. Can you tell me how the rongoā Māori you practice promotes healing?
4. Where did your knowledge and learning about rongoā Māori come from?
5. Can you tell me about the values and beliefs that underpin your rongoā practice?
6. What is your understanding of the impacts of sexual violence for wāhine Māori and all women?
7. How would you define the impacts of sexual violence from a Māori perspective?
8. What is your experience and understanding of how rongoā Māori can be utilised to work with wāhine Māori who have experienced sexual violence?
9. Please tell me why you would use rongoā Māori to work with wāhine Māori and all women who have experienced sexual violence?
10. Can rongoā be used to work with all women who have experienced sexual violence?
11. What do you think are the challenges of this kind of work?
12. What would you like to see in the future for the use of rongoā Māori being used as a method of healing for survivors and victims of sexual harm?

If you have found any of this kōrero and reflection distressing I am available to talk further if needed and you can also access key support people for you including your whānau. In addition here are some helpline information where you can access free support:

- Safe to talk – 0800 044 334
- Depression helpline – 0800 111 757
- Alcohol drug helpline – 0800 787 797
- Gambling helpline – 0800 654 655
- Healthline – 0800 611 116 – to get help from a registered nurse 24/7.
- Lifeline – 0800 543 354

Appendix 5: Transcript Release

(on Massey University letterhead)

Rongoā Māori as a method of healing: Sexual Violence from a Māori perspective

AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPT

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

Signature:

Date:

Full Name - printed

Appendix 6: Flow Chart

