Safe Spaces at Festivals

A Thematic Analysis on how Festival Organisers and Safe Space Managers in Aotearoa Understand this Service that they are Providing

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Abstract

Safe Spaces are a supportive space provided by an event for people who seek help or require emotional assistance. They are a complex safety mechanism that is becoming increasingly commonplace at festivals globally, yet very little academic research has been conducted into what these spaces are, and their potential as a harm reduction service. Addressing this gap, the present study conducted 17 semi-structured individual and group interviews with festival organisers and managers of Safe Spaces at festivals in Aotearoa. These interviews were analysed with phenomenologically informed thematic analysis to explore how the participants understand this service they have chosen to provide. It was found that the creators of Safe Spaces understand them to be a site of active psychological intervention, situated within a dynamic and far reaching network of safety, and a complex, specialised, and world changing phenomena that evolves to meet the needs of the festival. A number of novel findings were produced related to their key operational elements, the adaptability and transferability of the service, and the role they play in individual and community mental health and well-being. Included in this write-up is a series of guidelines on what to consider when establishing a Safe Space service at a festival or event.

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Introduction

Carnival comes from the Latin word, carnivale, meaning "farewell to the flesh"
(Arcodia & Whitford, 2006)

Festivals are a site of celebration, sexual expression, music, dance, and connection. But they are not always fun. This world of permitted mayhem carries with it a vast array of physical, personal, and social challenges that can leave a person feeling anxious and overwhelmed. In answer to this, Safe Spaces have been developed with the aim to mitigate some of the risks presented by the festival environment. Characterised by comfort, peer support, and crisis intervention, the Safe Space is a temporary site for harm reduction at festivals world wide. However, very little is known about the concept, what purpose it meets, and how it addresses risk. Furthermore, no research exists in Aotearoa despite festivals being contextually located. My research therefore aims to explore how festival organisers and Safe Space managers in Aotearoa understand the service, as those who are responsible for creating it.

The following literature review provides a brief overview of what festivals are, where they come from and why people like to attend them, as context for the environment in which the Safe Space sits. I then use the concept of heterotopia and its theory of spaces as "other" to provide a theoretical framework for understanding first festivals, and then Safe Spaces, as non-normal places. Harm reduction is at the heart of the Safe Space service, so next I discuss its evolution in response to politics, the heroin crisis, and the British rave scene where the intersection of harm reduction and Safe Spaces began. From here I tie in concepts of drug testing, consent culture and venue backing to construct a more holistic framework of the elements feeding into the Safe Space phenomena. I then discuss the origins of the Safe Space concept and what is known about the service as it has been applied to festivals in contemporary times. Lastly, I examine their value in the festival scene to show why their presence is so important, ending on what we know about Safe Spaces in Aotearoa and why the topic is relevant to this context .

Literature Review

What is a Festival

The term “festival” encompasses many things. Traditionally, a festival was considered a day or period of time in which communities would feast and celebrate religion or events, such as a change in season (Cundy, 2014). They can also incorporate celebrations of cultural heritage, music, and artistic performances, during which individuals form new connections and experience things outside their everyday routine. Bakhtin (1984) in his work on mediaeval festivals, introduced the concept of “carnivalesque” and the notion of licenced chaos and rebellion against the status quo, which speaks to how festivals temporarily dismantle the social order. Festivals can range in size from family orientated gatherings, to the coming together of entire communities throughout regions and countries (Duvignaud, 1976), with some festivals reaching hundreds of thousands of participants. The first recorded instance of a festival dates back to the Pythian Games in Greece, 582 BCE, a precursor to the Olympic games which consisted of musical as well as athletic performances in honour of the god Apollo (Richardson, 2015). Other historic examples include the Beltane Fire Festival, which celebrated the onset of summer in mediaeval Europe (Matheson & Tinsley, 2014), and the Day of the Dead festival which has been celebrating dead loved ones across Mexico and parts of Latin America since ancient Mesoamerican times (Day of the Dead, 2021).

Developing within both social and economic contexts (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006), a more modern, western era of festival began to thrive after the second world war when other ways of spending free time, such as theatre and tourist trips began to flourish (Cundy, 2014). Popular examples include Woodstock, Glastonbury, and Burning Man. Whilst these types of events have constructed their own unique versions of culture, they have largely exchanged their historical roots for modern pleasures related to music, alcohol and drugs, and immediacy. It is in this vein of music, art, hedonism and its intersection with commerce and consumer culture, that the current study positions itself.

Below, I briefly discuss Britain as an example of how music festivals became commercialised. Anderton (2011) illustrated how commercial pirate radio and its promotion of both psychedelic pop and rock in the 1960’s helped to connect music festivals with an emerging counterculture of anti-authoritarianism attitudes and sex and drug experimentation. This connection to popular pirate radio stations led to the commercialisation of festivals throughout the late 1960’s and

early 1970's at which time, in protest to the commercialisation of music, not-for-profit "free festivals" began to appear all over Europe, nearly extinguishing the commercial scene (Anderton, 2011). Festivals became highly politicised and contested by Margret Thatcher's neo-liberal government (McKay, 2000), which came to a point in 1985 when over 1,300 police ambushed a convoy of 500 festival goers in the famous "Battle of the Beanfield" (Worthington, 2005). This led to amendments of the Public Order Act 1986 which nearly destroyed the free festival movement (Anderton, 2011). Although the free festival movement continued, a far more significant development from this was the emergence of multiple commercial festivals that became a normalised part of young people's social lives. While this increased young people's participation in festivals, for some it came at a cost, Presdee (2003) for example, argues that over time, and in an attempt to assert control over the working class, leisure activities like festivals became tightly controlled by policy. What was once a site of unadulterated hedonism, is still a site of unadulterated hedonism, only diluted, gift wrapped, and charged out to people for the price of admission in what Ruane (2017) called "commercialised carnival transgression" (p. 37). However, despite their now largely commercialised status, festival organisers often still have a broader commitment to social change, performance, enjoyable experiences, and bringing people together (Laing & Mair, 2015) to create the festival experience.

Why do People Attend Festivals

All kinds of people attend music festivals for many reasons. However I would argue that the greatest and overarching explanation is to experience something meaningful. The term "experience" covers a wide range of different inclinations that hinge on an individual's personal motivation to attend an event. Crompton & McKay (1997) point out that, whilst literature on basic human needs is vast, the relationship between human needs and festivals is not as well documented. More modern literature on festival attendance tends to focus on economic and tourism needs, however, as Crompton & McKay suggest, individual motivations to attend festivals are far more humanistic. They use Crompton's 1979 framework of seven socio-psychological domains of human motivations for pleasure vacations; novelty, socialisation, status, rest & relaxation, intellectual enrichment, enhancing relationships, and regression to analyse the motivations of 415 participants in attending festivals. This study elicited six factors pertaining to what motivates people to attend festivals, outlined below in table 1.

Table 1: Crompton & Mckay's Six Motivational Factor for Attending Festivals

Factor	**Definition**
Cultural Exploration	People enjoy attending festivals because it allows them to explore new cultures and experience customs different from their own.
Novelty and Regression	People enjoy the unexpectedness and unpredictability of being in an environment that allows them to engage in new experiences and to behave without thinking too carefully about the consequences.
Recover Equilibrium	Festivals allow people to get out of their everyday routine and let go of boredom and frustrations.
Known-group Socialisation	People attend festivals to spend time with friends and friend groups.
External Socialisation	People are motivated to attend festivals to observe and meet other, new people.
Gregariousness	People attend festivals to be around other people.

By comparing feedback from their participants with Crompton's (1979) framework for understanding people's motivations to engage in *vacation activities* for pleasure, Crompton & McKay (1997) were able to show how *attending festivals* met people's need for fulfilling life experiences. Further to this, Vinnicombe & Sou (2017) conducted a meta-analysis of people's motivations to attend *music* festivals. They combined nine music festival studies across Europe, the United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (USA), Australia, and New Zealand into what they called an "exhaustive" list of available literature. These studies were then compared to a list of themes taken from a further two studies on motivations to attend festivals in general (rather than music specific festivals) that had also independently produced the same seven factors; socialisation, group socialisation, event novelty, escape and relaxation, excitement and enjoyment, cultural exploration, and event specific music. They concluded that, whilst music was

the key motivating factor for attending music festivals, the remaining factors were still heavily present across all of the studies.

The similarities between Crompton & McKay's 1997 study and Vinnicombe & Sou's 2017 work demonstrate a consistent orientation in people's motivations over time to attend festivals, namely, connection and enjoyable experiences. Human beings are an inherently social species, with the desire to belong intrinsically linked to a historic need to survive (Allen et al., 2021). Festivals by nature have always had a heavy focus on bringing people together, and so I argue that by providing a space that facilitates moments of connection, they satiate a powerful, innate human drive to connect with one's community.

Hedonism at the Heart of the Festival Experience

Connection at festivals is greatly facilitated by the pleasurable, hedonistic activities that become available to people when they step onto a festival site. Between the music, art, interactive installations and people there is a place for pure indulgence. O'Grady (2015) describes this scene as "play" or "having fun, messing around, cutting loose, making believe, experimenting, imagining, becoming someone else, creating something else" (p. 160). In reality this can look like staying up all night, participating in workshops (Morgan, 2006), dressing up, dancing, spontaneous interactions (Little et al., 2018), and excessive drinking, recreational drug use, and sexual promiscuity (Anderton, 2011). Combined, this literature speaks to a culture of excess and frivolous engagement which amounts to nothing short of true hedonism,

Furthermore, festivals as a form of escapism from everyday life, is a common theme throughout literature. Little et al. (2018) describes three different forms of escape that motivate people to attend electronic music festivals; psychological escape, physical escape, and societal escape. The concept of societal escape was understood to be a desire to deviate from the normal expectations and break free of the mundane social order. In the next section I use the idea of heterotopia to develop this concept of escapism and create a framework for conceptualising both festivals and the Safe Spaces within them.

Festivals as Heterotopia

A festival is not your everyday space. They transplant the individual into a world of abstract experience, intentionally tangential to the norm. The concept of spaces that have a sense of "otherness", was first described by philosopher and cultural historian, Michael Foucault as

heterotopia. It seems generally agreed upon in literature that he did little to develop the concept himself (St John, 2020; Evans et al, 2010; Quinn & Wilks, 2017), which has led to a diverse application of the term throughout literature (Johnson, 2013). However, one definition by Quinn & Wilks (2017a) stands out as particularly relevant to the current study; “heterotopias are spaces where an alternative social ordering is performed, in contrast to the taken-for-granted mundane idea of social order that exists within society” (p. 40). This is relevant because within the festival space the normal course of social life is turned upside down (Bakhtin, 1984) in exchange for a creative space that facilitates diverse expression (Amanatidis, 1998) and the opportunity to revolt against common social issues (Bakhtin, 1984). The concept of heterotopia is therefore useful when thinking about festivals, as they are a site where normal social structures and rules of engagement do not always apply.

Recent literature has adopted heterotopia as a way of understanding the festival space, because the underlying principles map well onto the “other place” energy festivals exude. Quinn & Wilks (2017) provide an excellent framework for applying heterotopia to the festival space by speaking to Foucault’s original six principles underpinning the theory. Firstly, the notion that all cultures contain heterotopias translates to an understanding that society understands the need to set aside time and space for creativity and celebration. Which is to say that communities have an organic understanding of the importance of taking time out from routine to connect with other members, and express other parts of themselves. Howell (2013) develops this further by explaining how creating these alternative spaces also affords the opportunity for communication and thus creates occasion for people to enhance community bonds. This brings us back to people’s motivations to attend festivals as a means of connecting with other people.

The second principle; the function of a heterotopia evolves as its society evolves, also readily maps onto the concept of a festival. All societies evolve over time to meet economic and social needs, and as such the expectations people have on festivals also evolve. Festivals therefore also change in size, location, and nature over time to meet these changes in expectation.

Quinn and Wilks (2017) describe the third and fourth principles as “particularly evocative of festivals” (p. 37) given how easily they can be mapped. Heterotopias bring together more than one, sometimes conflicting spaces into a single real space. Quinn and Wilks explain how festivals combine people and ideas from multiple different backgrounds that do not commonly co-exist, for example, a burlesque performer and an installation artist. Wilks & Quinn (2016)

provide a further example by speaking about the nature of a stage at a festival as a form of “umbilicus” (p. 25) or central point of focus around which other things gravitate. In this example the surrounding space is a site where festival attendees can interact with each other in juxtaposition with the performers, as the presence of a stage creates several different spaces within the same space.

Festivals are specifically mentioned by Foucault in the fourth principle, which speaks to heterotopias as “slices in time” (Quin & Wilks, 2017, p. 37), or a hiatus from the standard way of spending time as Quinn and Wilks interpret. As temporary environments designed to interrupt everyday life this principle maps exceptionally well onto festivals, with people stepping out of their normal lives and into an alternative way of being for a moment in time.

The fifth principle, that heterotopias require a certain ritual to gain access, can translate to festivals when we consider that often a ticket must be purchased, and a series of steps carried out, to both prepare for the event and enter the site. Quinn and Wilks (2017) also argue that developing knowledge of the festival offerings and some form of relationship to the event can be a part of this ritual as well. To further explain, some festivals do not require a ticket. They do however require the individual to engage with the festival premise and prepare to attend the site regardless. Wilks & Quinn (2016) develops this further by stating that whilst, in theory, anyone is able to enter the festival space, entry does not equal inclusion as this is facilitated via certain permissions in response to certain gestures, presumably a ritual that facilitates community acceptance. Which is to say there is a ritual to gain access to certain social spheres within the festival space.

The final of Foucault’s heterotopic principles; that they exist relative to all other time and spaces, is explained by Quinn and Wilks (2017) in two separate, but equally valid ways. The first is the obvious notion that the festival space requires a physical placement, that must also negotiate the link between that space and its cultural heritage. This is particularly relevant in an Aotearoa setting where the indigenous Māori population had much of their land unjustly confiscated under the New Zealand Settlements Act 1863 (Thom, 2022). Māori culture encompasses a strong physical and spiritual connection to the land, with some places in particular holding significant cultural and historical importance (Mead, 2016). Given the culturally significant heritage of some sites around Aotearoa, negotiating the link between space and heritage is something that festivals must consider.

The second explanation Quinn and Wilks (2017) uses to map this sixth principle onto the concept of a festival is more nuanced. They speak of a heterotopia as an “altered time-space” (p. 42) which allows people to reflect intrapersonally, as well as on their social sphere. In this explanation Quinn and Wilks demonstrate an understanding that the individual can operate as an entity that exists both in their everyday time-space context, and be an independent observer of it, whilst in the altered time-space. For example, Howell (2013) discovered that laughter and dance, in combination with spending time in one's community allows attendees to experience the festival in a “sensual” (p 58) way. In this example the individual can be both the everyday version of themselves, and simultaneously exist as a different mental version, allowing them to experience the festival both as themselves, and as a more emotionally diverse being.

The concept of heterotopia is useful for my study as it helps us to understand places with different social rules and ways of being. People behave differently within the festival site which opens them up to new risks as much as it does new possibilities. A space free of normal conventions allows for relaxed social boundaries, and behaviours such as participation in the consumption of alcohol and psychoactive substances. This highly stimulating and creative environment carries with it much social and personal value, however, it also brings with it increased risk and therefore a need for harm reduction strategies, including Safe Spaces.

Festival Safe Spaces as Heterotopia

Inside this world of permitted mayhem another heterotopia can be found, a heterotopia *within* a heterotopia. A detailed description of what a Safe Space is will be given later in this literature review, but for the context of understanding festivals as heterotopia, a Safe Space can be defined as “a place free of bias, conflict, criticism, or potentially threatening actions, ideas, or conversations” (Merriam-Webster, 1970). Within the context of a festival, a Safe Space can be thought of as a designated area where anyone can go, in whatever mental state they are in, to sit, relax and receive care.

Somewhat unsurprisingly there appears to be very little literature on Safe Spaces within a heterotopic framework, perhaps because both concepts are still relatively fringe. However, it is not difficult to see how the connection can be made between Safe Spaces at festivals and Foucault’s six principles of heterotopia. In the following section I build a framework for

understanding Safe Spaces at festivals as heterotopic by adopting an understanding that the festival now represents a temporary “normal” space, and the Safe Space is the heterotopia.

Safe Spaces at festivals can be mapped onto Foucault’s first principle; the existence of heterotopias in all cultures, by approaching each festival as an embodiment of its own unique culture. There is an understanding throughout festival societies of the need to set aside a place where people can go to take time out from normal festival behaviours. As with most cultures, within the festival site the need to keep attendees safe is paramount and this often translates to the presence of a medic’s tent, a space for security, and various work spaces away from the rest of the festival. Within the realm of emotional safety, the Safe Space strives to have a sense of otherness to the main festival site by taking someone from a high intensity environment, to a place of calm and low stimulation.

The idea that the function of a heterotopia can evolve as its society evolves translates to festival Safe Spaces remarkably well. McConnell (2019) talks about how the use of the art therapy space changes to meet the needs of the child, who uses “flexible” (p. 1) forms of artmaking to develop an understanding of how to further express these needs. They state it is a requirement that art therapy must be a Safe Space where trust is built over time between therapist and child in order for this process to work. Much like the art therapy space, an argument can be made that a festival Safe Space changes in response to the needs of its community. Over time, and by developing trust between attendees and the Safe Space, it can evolve in further response to the needs they communicate. Ruane (2017) found this to be the case in their research on Safe Spaces at seven different festivals across the UK, USA, and Portugal, stating psychedelic support and harm reduction spaces “developed within, and were shaped and nurtured by, the transformational festival scene” (p. 13).

Safe Spaces at festivals also map onto Foucault’s third principle in that they have “juxtaposing” (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1984) sites within the one place. In one part of the Safe Space can be a light hearted energy with people playing with interactive objects, yet alongside this there can also be a more sombre energy as people are assisted through challenging experiences. In addition to this, Nielsen and Bettencourt (2008) described a team of people working in a Safe Space as “having different backgrounds and ways of working” (p. 41), demonstrating how the Safe Space can bring together people and skill sets that would not normally coincide. Therefore, within the Safe Space, different people simultaneously exist alongside each other, playing out a

diverse spectrum of experiences that are both singular and connected to the space around them.

Perhaps the most significant heterotopic principle for Safe Spaces at festivals is the disruption of the normal flow of time. In this instance, the normal flow of time is the festival experience happening around the Safe Space, which in turn acts as a disruption to this as people step into a place of rest and tranquillity. McConnell (2019) interprets this within the art therapy space as a change in focus and consciousness, because something “different” is going to happen. The primary purpose of the Safe Space is to take the experience someone is having and turn it into something different, switching the focus from the demands of the festival to personal need. It allows people to pause, sort through whatever is happening to them at the time, and recover (Doyle, 2003) before stepping back into the normal flow of festival time.

Foucault’s fifth principle around heterotopias requiring certain acts to gain entry is more challenging to map onto Safe Spaces at festivals. Safe Spaces by nature aim to eliminate any barriers to entry in a “come as you are” (Marlatt, 1996) approach to harm reduction. However, Ruane (2017) notes that festival attendees internalised thoughts around the stigma of drug use, and how wider cultural drug narratives can make it difficult for staff to interpret their needs and provide effective support. In this sense, a ritual to gain access to the support can occur, wherein staff and attendee navigate complex and nuanced social narratives in order to enter the therapeutic relationship. Further to this, Wilks & Quinn (2016) discuss how perceived right of entry is related to the knowledge one has of a space. As Ruane (2017) notes, individuals who have taken drugs can sometimes experience anxiety around entering the Safe Space, be that due to fear of being judged or not wanting to interact with strangers. They explain how “taking the leap of physically entering the space” (p. 246) can require an act of overcoming mental barriers, which could also be framed as their perceived knowledge of the space. Further to this Ruane points out that to seek out the Safe Space to gain access to it, one must have some knowledge of where it is and what it does.

Finally, that Safe Spaces exist only in relation to all other time and space can be interpreted using Wilks & Quinn’s (2016) term “umbilicus”. The Safe Space can be envisioned as the focal centre for psychological aid and well-being at a festival, operating within its own time-space sphere, alongside the time-space of the festival, which again operates alongside the time-space of the wider world. Without the festival going on around it, and the wider world around that, there

would be no Safe Space. These temporary spaces only emerge in relation to the persistent nature of the constructs around them, and the ongoing work done by people in all other time-spaces that contribute to the need and function of the Safe Space.

In connecting the literature on heterotopia with Safe Spaces, the present thesis offers a novel framework in using heterotopia as a concept for understanding Safe Spaces within the festival environment. I argue that heterotopia is particularly useful as it allows us to comprehend the Safe Space as a site that is starkly different, yet closely related to the festival space, which helps to better illustrate the function of the Space. The Safe Space may be a step towards reducing the potential harm that can happen to a person when interacting with the wider, hedonic and hyper-stimulating outer festival experience. To better understand the harm reduction role Safe Spaces play, next I trace the history of the concept of harm reduction before discussing how it intersects with Safe Spaces at festivals.

What is Harm Reduction

Safe Space operation today is framed around the concept of harm reduction. Harm reduction is a broad term, primarily used to describe the action of mitigating the harmful effects of drug use, outside of its criminal implications and despite their illegal status. The term ‘harm reduction’ in everyday settings (as in outside the festival scene) is defined by The International Harm Reduction Association (2010) as “policies, programmes and practises that aim to reduce the adverse health, social and economic consequences of the use of legal and illegal psychoactive drugs” (p. 1). Within the festival scene, this starts with acknowledging the fact that drug use is likely to take place. From here a festival can address the subsequent consequences of that fact by establishing internal policies which allow for help to be provided to an individual, regardless of the choices they made. At the heart of harm reduction is the aim to address adverse consequences, rather than eliminate drug use altogether as this may not be realistic or desirable for some users (Riley et al, 2000).

Harm reduction is also a highly politicised topic, approaches to which are heavily influenced by the dominant government ideologies, which in turn impact the provision of care. Marlatt (1996) explains how top down policies (generally more conservative) aim for a drug free society by framing use as a criminal issue, and focusing on the issue as a moral responsibility of the individual, thus resulting in high-threshold access to support services. However, bottom up policies (generally more liberal) frame drug use as a health issue, shifting the focus away from

the drug use itself and towards the impacts on the individual and wider society. As stated by Marlatt (1996), harm reduction is located in this bottom up approach, taking a pragmatic, low-threshold attitude to public health initiatives.

The impact of the dominant government ideology within which the harm reduction action takes place therefore shapes our understanding of harm reduction, making it important to understand the concept within its historical context. Below, I therefore offer a socio-political-historic overview of harm reduction using the USA, UK, and countries in Europe, as examples of the tumultuous effects of policy on harm reduction.

Harm Reduction, Politics, and the Heroin Crisis

The first emergence of harm reduction according to Hedrich et al. (2010) was as far back as 1912 with the development of narcotic maintenance clinics in the USA. These clinics supplied low cost narcotics to users with an agenda of eliminating the black market supply of heroin, and giving users the opportunity to focus on more pro-social activities. However, Phillips (2014) labelled this as a “brief experimentation” (p. 4), initially formed at the bidding of the USA federal government, only to be dismantled by most of the same people in 1923. According to Philips this was due to the failure of one “poorly organised and ineffective” (p. 36) Worth Street Clinic which, unlike other clinics, required its patients to detox entirely off opiates. Up until the development of these clinics the USA government had taken a strong stance for the criminalization of drug use so there were many who still held this view, which acted as a barrier to the clinic’s success. As such, the clinic closed due to pressure from the New York Department of Health and the newly formed Federal Narcotics Bureau. The failure of the clinic was used as evidence that maintenance clinics were ineffective at reducing harm, even though historians later claimed they were actually highly successful at reducing the spread of opiate addiction (Phillips, 2014).

An important shift in thinking then occurred in the 1960’s that led to the reframing of the consequences of tobacco, alcohol, and drug use from an illness that only affects the individual, to a social issue (Erickson, 1999). This had already been established in the UK at the time and Phillps(2014) reported that American physicians and policy makers visiting the UK noted its success at reducing black market supply of opiates and the number of addicted people. The American Bar Association and the American Medical Association went on to conduct a comprehensive study on addiction and the laws surrounding it at the time, which they used to

suggest a law reform in favour of a less punitive, more medicalised approach. Despite initial push back from the Federal Narcotics Bureau and a panel of specialists put together by President Kennedy at the time, in November 1963 a new Advisory Commission recommended a law reform towards treating narcotic use as a medical issue. Unfortunately, with the assassination of President Kennedy the law reform was never passed and punitive drug laws in the USA remained in practice (Phillips, 2014).

It wasn't until the 1980's that the concept of harm reduction then gained real momentum in response to the global heroin crisis and spread of HIV/AIDS (Stimson, 2016). Erickson (1999) explains that this "lethal" situation was the result of the criminalised approach to drug use at the time. The punitive nature of drug policies made access to health care and safe drug utensils particularly difficult, leading to the swift spread of HIV/AIDS through contaminated needles.

The rapid increase in HIV/AIDS related deaths, along with the increase in violent crime, prison overcrowding, and police corruption that can be attributed to top-down policies, therefore acted as a driving force for the resurgence of less conservative drug policies (Riley at al., 2000). This momentum was specifically driven by "peers" with the understanding that those who know best what drug users need, are those who use, or have used, drugs (Ruane, 2017). As specified by Marlatt (1998), this peer based, bottom up approach was known as the "Dutch Model" for harm reduction. Marlatt explained that Holland began making "radical" (p. 31) changes to their national drug policies which had previously been highly punitive and carried with them long term prison sentences, even for things such as marijuana possession. However, with these changes, drug use became recognised as a complex behavioural issue and harm reduction became the method to provide medical and social care, which helped to avoid some of the more harmful consequences of injecting drugs as people worked on their recovery (Riley et al., 2000).

Whilst Marlatt (1998) accurately states this was a form of harm reduction, they also note that the term "harm reduction" itself was not introduced until 1981 in a publication by the State Secretary for Health and Environment. This report outlined how government support was trending towards forms of aid that were easily accessible to the drug user and aimed at improving the physical and social well-being of the individual, rather than attempting to end their addiction (Engelsman, 1989). With input from drug users themselves the first needle exchange programme began in Amsterdam in 1984 and the success of this practice in reducing the spread of HIV was quickly evident (Marlatt, 1998). By the late 1980's needle exchange programs began in the USA, and

whilst political opposition continued, research has clearly demonstrated the significant effectiveness of these programs at reducing the spread of HIV (Des Jarlais, 2017).

Also in the 1980's, Liverpool in the UK had adopted a similar model, The Mersey Harm Reduction Model (also known as the UK Model according to Marlatt, (1998)) which likewise focused on reducing harm caused by opiate use, rather than reducing drug use itself (O'Hare, 2007). This approach was centred around the doctor-patient relationship (Ruane, 2017) but took on a community oriented, public health perspective and still included input from drug users (O'Hare, 2007). In conjunction with cooperation from police who agreed not to target the centres, this brought with it one of the first needle exchange schemes in the country (Riley et al., 2000).

O'Hare (2007) went on to report the establishment of a drop-in centre in Liverpool in 1985, wherein individuals were able to briefly stop by the clinic in order to gain honest information and training around safe drug practices. They reported wide success for the Mersey Harm Reduction Model, stating that established contact with over 50% of high risk users enabled long term users to seek help for the first time. There was also a reduction in physical problems related to injecting, and the provision of education likely played a key role in enabling Mersey to avoid an HIV epidemic, despite the region being known for its high levels of heroin use. A place that offers safe, non-judgemental information regardless of the choices people make can be considered a form of Safe Space. Individuals can seek help for substance misuse despite its illegal status, in a manner that is free from criticism and potentially threatening actions.

In essence, legislation that endeavours to enforce abstinence does not seem to be effective at reducing drug use, and the harm caused by taking this approach is arguably worse than the effects of the drugs themselves (Riley et al., 2000). The pressure to do something about the harm drug use causes to individuals and communities continues to shift further away from arrest and punishment and towards public health care. Spearheading this change was the first International Conference on the Reduction of Drug Related Harm which took place in Liverpool in 1990, due to international interest in the success of the Mersey Harm Reduction Model (O'Hare, 2007). Throughout the 1990's many European countries then began including harm reduction in their national drug policies (Hedrich et al., 2010).

The 90's Rave Culture and the Second Generation of Harm Reduction

Meanwhile, in the UK in the late 1980's a counterculture rave scene was under way. Rave parties emerged in opposition to the conservative government which took an authoritarian attitude to law, order, and social discipline (Hill, 2003). Free market policies had created a significant increase in socioeconomic and health inequality, disadvantaging youth, ethnic minorities and gay people, which led to substantial social class division (Scott-Samuel et al., 2014). These neoliberal policies took the position that people should make appropriate choices, positioning decisions regarding health, such as drug consumption, as an individual responsibility (Barnett & Bagshaw, 2020). However, the Acid House movement soon emerged, but unlike heroin which was causing many drug-related deaths in the 1980s and 1990s in the UK, Acid House focused on different drugs such as LSD, MDMA, and amphetamines (Critcher, 2000).

Between 1987 and 1990 the Acid House era attracted many young people from different social and cultural backgrounds (Hill, 2003). This afforded them the opportunity to experience a "sense of collective identity" (Reynolds, 2016, p. 64) that had been diminished by the neoliberal agendas and class division. Hill (2003) reported that what began with a number of nightclubs, the consumption of Ecstasy, and the appearance of House music, became a nationwide spread of weekly parties of up to 20,000 people. The "moral panic" (p. 220) towards parts of the rave scene was exacerbated in the newspapers who called it a "threat to social order and the nation's young people" (p. 220), whilst highlighting the presence of excessive drug use and confrontations with police. Hill (2003) goes on to explain how the conservative government responded by drastically amplifying police action against the rave scene on a national scale, with the establishment of a police Pay Party Unit in 1989 that targeted the rave scene.

In response to this government action a "DIY" culture emerged in the UK in the early 1990's, as many marginalised people continued to gather in protest and the pursuit of a vision for how good life could be (McKay, 1998). This counterculture was described as a "youth-centred and directed cluster of interests and practices around green radicalism, direct action policies, new musical sounds and experiences" (McKay, 1998, p2). People were fed up with the way things were and took a stance in favour of working together to live life the way they wanted. This led to a resurgence in festival culture and activism, to which the conservative government retorted by passing the Criminal Justice Act and Public Order Act 1994 (McKay, 1998), which specifically outlawed raves and music with repetitive beats (Clover, 2010). However, the scene itself did continue inside legal venues such as night clubs, and subsequently commercial festivals.

Between 1989 and 1991 Russell Newcombe, a social researcher from Liverpool, interviewed over 50 individuals and observed thousands of ravers at night clubs in the area. In July 1991 he issued a report that stated demand for rave facilities, made worse by police efforts to eliminate them, resulted in increasing numbers of night clubs staging House music nights. As a club became popular, attracting larger numbers of ravers, it would inevitably end up getting shut down by local police. This led to what was described as a “jelly splatter” (p. 25) effect, meaning the shutting down of clubs resulted in the appearance of more unauthorised and unsafe raves due to a lack of security and building regulations (Newcombe, 1991). Despite this, conservative, neoliberal policy continued to dominate the UK, increasing its focus on public management via the amplification of police and defence forces (Scott, 2009). However the rave population continued to grow (Newcombe, 1991).

As a result, police and local authorities eventually began to see the value in cooperating with clubs under certain conditions. Evidently, the best way to address safety in this scene was to accept that people are going to dance and take drugs, and this can only be managed by encouraging cultural changes. Much like the way harm reduction targeted the behaviour of heroin addicts to reduce the spread of HIV. Fortunately, Newcombe (1991) provided a Strategy for Safer Raves which included suggestions such as education around safe drug use within party venues, security, and “chill out” (p. 27) areas, or quieter, cooler spaces with seating.

In the 1990s new public health initiatives then combined this recommendation from Newcombe with other harm reduction policies associated with heroin use, to address the more diverse drug use and related risks happening in the rave scene (Sanders et al., 2020). Popular drugs in this scene included GHB, Cocaine, LSD, ketamine, and most prevalently, ecstasy (Rome, 2001), all of which are used in combination with music and dancing. However, this amalgamation of indulgence is not without risk. For example ecstasy commonly causes excessive increase in body temperature, sexual risk taking, and dehydration (Kelly, 2020). Whilst these factors are not always a major cause for concern they can be, especially in combination with alcohol and other substance use. Chill out spaces, ideally providing water, cool air, and someone with medical experience, therefore became an accepted form of harm minimisation that largely turned a blind eye to drug use in rave scenes as far as Australia (Luckman, 2000).

Contemporary Harm Reduction Strategies

Given the illegal status of substances in the rave scene, chill out spaces focus on the use of peers as a source of safe drug information and psychological first aid. For example, Crew 2000 started in Scotland in 1992 and DanceSafe in the USA in 1998. Both are peer based organisations who continue to operate today, offering chill out spaces, drug education, consent culture education, and psychological support at clubs and festivals (Crew2000, 2018, DanceSafe, 2022). Similar organisations also developed across Europe, and collectively chill-out zones, or Safe Spaces, along with other harm reduction initiatives aimed at reducing the acute effects of drugs and other event related harm have since spread worldwide (Brunt, 2017). The importance of peer support continues today, for example Van Schipstal et al. (2016) in their study of harm reduction amongst recreational drug users in the Netherlands and online communities, found that peers who were knowledgeable about substances and dosages actively shared this knowledge with less knowledgeable people. Experienced drug users were also careful when administering drugs to new peers, e.g., checking on their body weight and what other substances they had taken so as to avoid any unwanted interactions.

Further to this, contemporary harm reduction initiatives also encompass the implementation of drug testing. This is a means of identifying the strength and chemical composition of substances (Brunt, 2017) as much of the immediate danger associated with drug use comes from either taking unknown substances or taking a higher dose than anticipated. Within the context of festivals, Measham (2019) reported on the success of a pilot drug testing initiative at two festivals in the UK by stating 66.7% of people discarded their drugs upon finding out they were significantly different to what they expected them to be. Furthermore, there was a 95% reduction in drug related hospital admittance from the same festival the following year. Each visitor to the service received a 15 to 20 minute consultation during which their results were discussed and personalised harm reduction advice was subsequently given. In reviewing this research the implication is that, combined with accurate drug safety information and an appropriate setting such as a peer based space, drug testing can save lives.

Harm reduction work continues to develop within organisations such as Crew 2000 and DanceSafe, but also informally as well, and within that work is the development of an emerging consent culture. The concept “consent culture” has yet to be well defined in academic literature, however, grey literature does provide some context for this. For example the “Campus Toolkit for Creating Consent Culture" was created by a group of Canadian students and encompasses

the essence of consent culture as the idea that everyone has full autonomy of their own body because they understand their own needs better than anyone else (Canadian Federation of Students n.d.). In other words, consent culture is a way of respecting bodily autonomy by asking for permission to touch or otherwise engage with another person's physical being. This concept is especially important in the festival scene where substance use is high and the physical boundaries normally at play in everyday life become blurred.

Research also points to the importance of venue backing, such as the promotion of consent culture, when cultivating a safe environment for attendees. Hill et al. (2019) states that venue backing means event organisers need to be proactively developing and promoting a common understanding of how everyone within their venue is expected to behave so that all in attendance feel safe. Hill et al. also reported resounding feedback from attendees of events saying they want practical measures to be taken to adjust behavioural norms in favour of safer, more inclusive attitudes from everyone. Through policy and procedure designed to target unsafe behaviour such as consent breaches, perpetrators of said behaviour can be shown that their behaviour is not supported, which creates an environment that feels safer for everyone. However, Hill et al. additionally noted that many organisers struggle to know what to do about behavioural issues, despite their desire to address them.

Whilst venue backing and a sense of community are key to both event organisers and attendees working together to develop and maintain a safe environment for everyone, the idea of exactly what it means to be a Safe Space is still under development. Above I have highlighted the importance of chill out spaces, peer support, drug testing, consent culture and venue backing as they relate to contemporary harm reduction. These are separate to, yet interconnecting with, the concept of space Safe Spaces, which I elaborate on below.

The Origin of Safe Spaces

The initial concept of a Safe Space has an unexpected origin according to some literature. It was first developed in the business world (rather than for vulnerable communities as other literature often assumes), as a means of improving workplace environments (Bradbury et al., 2008; Burnes, 2007; Memon et al, 2020)

The first known instance of a Safe Space described in academic literature began with Kurt Lewin, a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany who came to America in the 1930’s (Burnes,

2004). Lewin, one of the founders of social psychology, was tasked with helping to create positive change in work domains by eliciting honest answers from workers about their employment. The challenge Lewin faced was how do you elicit honest answers unless people feel safe from judgement or threat of dismissal? He achieved this through group psychology, wherein groups of employees were given an understanding that they were safe to express their thoughts and feelings to a group of peers without fear of repercussion; “the idea could be challenged but not the person expressing it” (Roth, 2021). This created a space for people to express things that could potentially make themselves and others feel uncomfortable, but do so in a safe and healthy manner that would then enable those issues to be addressed.

Given the heavy presence of racism and anti-semitism in America at the time, Lewin focused a lot of his work on social change through modifying group behaviour on a wider scale. He achieved this in part by developing a three step model, which begins with *unfreezing* the complex driving forces behind behaviour, then *moving* the behaviour towards a more acceptable one, before *refreezing* the driving forces to stabilise new group behaviours (Roth, 2021). The initial unfreezing step was further deconstructed by Schein (1996) who argued that psychological safety is necessary for people to feel free from judgement or repercussion, regardless of their views, in order to welcome new ideas and change their behaviour. Psychological safety forms the basis for contemporary Safe Spaces, as it is key to helping someone who is going through a difficult time reach a state of calmness, which in turn allows them to work through the experience. Without this sense of psychological safety permitting people to feel free to express themselves, it can be difficult for staff to develop the trust required to support people through crisis.

However several researchers, (Kenney, 2001; Rosenfeld & Noterman, 2014; West, 2014) report the term “Safe Space” first appeared in the mid 1960’s, either because they are unaware of its longer history or because the concept had a second origination outside of Lewin’s framework. It was a phrase used by gay and lesbian bars to signal to patrons that they can attend these spaces without fear of violence against them due to their sexual orientation. Not surprisingly, due to their shared need for social justice and freedom from violence, the phrase was later adapted to suit the women’s movement in the 1960’s and 70’s. It became a means of allowing women to gather in a “communal” (Kenney, 2001) and safe manner to talk about violence, sexism, patriarchal oppression and what could be done about it.

The concept then diversified over the years and was adopted by a much wider variety of marginalised communities, such as transgender people and people of colour. Nowadays what most people think of when they consider these kinds of Safe Spaces are termed “separative Safe Spaces", which are essentially physical spaces that separate marginalised people from oppressive norms (Rosenfeld & Noterman, 2014). They provide individuals with mutual understanding and acceptance (Day, 1999), as well as the opportunity to transform the oppressive norms that make everyday spaces unsafe for some people.

An obvious example of such a space is Safe Black Space in America, founded by a member of the Association of Black Psychologists alongside leaders of local religious organisations in response to the murder of an unarmed 22 year old Black man by local Police. Safe Black Space provides regular meetings for Black people to help each other overcome rage, fear, and the trauma of systemic racism (Safe Black Space, n.d). Be it sexual orientation, gender, or skin colour driving the existence of a Safe Space the basic premise of psychological safety remains a core value. People who, for any reason, might feel vulnerable to judgement or violence are given a space to feel free from harm, where whoever they are can be accepted and supported without prejudice. Acceptance and freedom from harm are fundamental concepts when considering Safe Spaces at festivals as well.

Contemporary Safe Spaces at Festivals

Contemporary Safe Spaces at festivals have a number of theories underpinning their service. Schein’s (1996) principles of psychological safety and freedom from shame or ridicule are notably the bedrock of the Safe Space as a site of acceptance for the whole person and the choices they have made. This is facilitated by non-judgemental care and freedom from physical and mental harm, grounded in de-stigmatising the behaviours that lead to help seeking (Marlatt, 1996). Further to this, Safe Spaces act to address care based on Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs by providing basic food and water, physical safety, and a sense of belonging which facilitates accessing higher level needs (Carvalho et al., 2015).

Research in the field of how Safe Spaces at festivals enact these principles in practice is limited, and much of what is discussed next is based on a very small number of academic studies, in conjunction with grey literature in the form of bulletins based on field observations by MAPS (Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies). Combined, they point to key elements of

contemporary Safe Spaces at festivals being comfort, peer support, and crisis intervention. Below I outline these elements and discuss how they function as a form of harm reduction.

Characterised by Comfort

Safe Spaces can provide relief for people experiencing a full spectrum of challenges by offering physical comfort and emotional support to those in need. This is managed by some existing Safe Spaces by addressing the basic levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Carvalho et al., 2015). Spaces provide comfort, hydration, basic nutrition, as well as safety and support to enable a person to more easily address the higher level needs presented to them in the crisis of a challenging moment. Haven for example, a Safe Space at a festival called Ozora in Hungary, offered a large circus tent with soft lights and a team of 26 support people which included psychologists, nurses, and psychotherapists (Gregorio, 2012). Furthermore, Ground Central Station, a Safe Space at an event in Portugal, provided art supplies for "nonverbal expression", bottled water, and fresh fruit, as well as an "altar" which held items such as aromatherapy oils and trading cards. This made the environment more interactive which helped individuals "ground" themselves (Karpetas, 2003). At a festival in Wales, a further Safe Space was constructed out of a large tent, filled with pillows, blankets, decorative fabrics, art, and an assortment of objects for people to interact with (Ruane, 2017). The literature on Safe Space settings is limited, but it does consistently suggest an image of warmth and calmness by managing sensory input. Soft lighting and nice smells such as incense, interesting things to look at and touch, comfortable seating, relaxing music, and food can all be used to create an atmosphere of safety and serenity, in contrast to the chaotic atmosphere of the festival itself. This helps facilitate a calm mind which is necessary, as it tends to be people's minds that are struggling when they seek out a Safe Space.

Peer Support - the Key Ingredient

Arguably the most significant resource in any Safe Space is the presence of well trained peers. The word "peer" is key here as the resounding voice in literature states people seeking help at festivals do not respond well to authority (Hoover et al., 2021).

Safe Spaces overcome this barrier by implementing the use of peer bonding, wherein staff are seen as people who "get it" because they are a part of the festival scene, rather than the operations team governing the event. Ruane (2015), in their work on caring for drug related crises at festivals, explained that Safe Space workers come from the festival community itself

and are people who have backgrounds in both mental health work and festival experience. Workers engage visitors as they enter the Safe Space to establish what kind of care they require, and create an “atmosphere of safety” (p. 62) by meeting them where they are at in their internal process. The familiarity between peer workers and the people in need of care functions to facilitate the process of peer bonding.

Additionally, Ahrens et al. (2009) in their work interviewing survivors of sexual assault, talks about the helpfulness and harmfullness of different social reactions from different sources of support. A key finding of their research is that the identity of the support provider plays an essential role in how an individual interprets the way the support person responds to their needs. It was found that, whilst formal support providers such as police, medics and counsellors supplied aid that was more tangible, it often did not encompass the emotional support element individuals were seeking to help them overcome their negative experiences. Reactions when disclosing to friends however, were almost always seen as positive. Whilst this research focused specifically on sexual assault disclosure in an everyday setting, much of the literature echos the sentiment that seeking help from peers is almost always preferred, due to the neutral power dynamic and relatability that exists between group members (Ruane, 2017; Sweeney, 2019; Fileborn et al., 2020). In order for the Safe Space to function as an effective support mechanism vulnerable people must feel comfortable engaging with it, therefore approachable staff are a necessity when aiming to help someone in crisis.

Crisis Intervention- the Crux of the Safe Space

Simington (1996) describes crisis intervention as “a short term active mode of therapy that focuses on solving the clients immediate problem and reestablishing psychological equilibrium” (p. 376). Descriptions of Safe Spaces provided by Ruane (2017) and their work in the field mirrors this understanding of how to provide care to those in crisis. She illustrates how Safe Spaces help people to regulate their behaviour in a non-inflammatory manner, keeping them safe from themselves and others as they work through their immediate issues. MacLean (2014) further illustrates the concept of crisis intervention by describing harm reduction in the festival scene as being about sitting in “uncomfortable and unpredictable” (p. 35) situations with strangers who have ingested unknown quantities of unknown substances. Combined, Ruane and MacLean demonstrate how the festival Safe Space can facilitate intervention by responding to unpredictable situations in a supportive manner.

Central to the literature on Safe Spaces is the idea of their role in intervening in situations where individuals are experiencing mental duress. In this context Carvalho et al. (2015) developed the Kosmicare Intervention Model through research alongside the Safe Space, Kosmicare, at Boom Festival in Portugal. This model contains five principles and was designed with the intention to create an evidence-based framework to lend legitimacy to the Safe Space practice, specifically as it pertains to psychoactive substance crisis intervention. The principles begin with an *assessment of physical safety and information collection*, wherein details on the substances a person has taken, along with a description of their presentation, are recorded as they enter the space. Next, the principle of *offering a safe, supportive, and comfortable care space* takes into account both physical and social elements, such as warmth, sound, and privacy with the understanding that many people will improve simply through the provision of basic needs. Then, the principle of *facilitation* involves the presence of a support person, such as a peer, to guide the individual through the experience they are having.

Also included in this model is the principle of *ensuring safety*, meaning that the individual is kept safe from hurting themselves and others whilst experiencing crisis. Here, Carvalho et al. (2015) highlights the importance of using language that works to keep the individual calm and techniques that do not involve badgering someone with too many questions. The last principle, *promoting health and globally reduced risk*, is based on a harm reduction model that aims to replace high risk drug related behaviour with less risky behaviour, in order to reduce the wider negative impacts associated with drug use. Combined, these five principles demonstrate how crisis intervention is achieved in an overseas example of Safe Spaces. The Safe Space can provide the resources to keep people safe from themselves and others whilst guiding them through a difficult experience, and the nature of these experiences can take on many different forms.

Why do People use Safe Spaces

Along with understanding the central elements to creating a Safe Space, an understanding of the reasons why people may need these spaces is also important. Next I discuss the reasons why people may seek help from Safe Spaces in response to the possible major risks that can occur at festivals.

Dealing With Negative Drug Experiences

When we consider what can cause an individual to seek out a Safe Spaces the most obvious answer is substance use. In Carvalho et al.'s (2015) work on Kosmicare they discuss the reasons people visited this Safe Space, and the most common by far was difficult drug experiences (69%, n=176). Also included in their findings were non-crisis reasons (13.4%), mental crisis involving drugs (9.5%), personal crisis not involving drugs (2.4%), and mental crisis not involving drugs (0.8%). Ruane (2017) provides a further detailed account of the types of drug related experiences that brought people into Safe Spaces at festivals across the USA, UK and Europe. The most common crisis was fear and anxiety, manifesting as either a perceived immediate threat to oneself, or broader more conspiracy centric beliefs. Other themes included social isolation and loneliness in which people felt rejected by their peers, distortion of reality where people were not sure what was real, and distortion of consciousness as people lost the ability to engage in structured thought processes. Combined, these studies demonstrate some of the personal risks involved with drug use, and highlight the prevalence of this as a factor that brings people into Safe Spaces at festivals.

A key reason people attend festivals is to connect with like minded people in a setting where normal social boundaries are stripped away. Alcohol and drugs, and their ability to stimulate the release of “feel good” hormones such as dopamine and serotonin, not only make it easier for people to find these connections, but they also enhance them at the same time. As Ruane (2017) states “substances are not only used to enhance the party but also to bring about experiences considered to be profound and meaningful, with the potential to catalyse connection and personal transformation” (p 10).

Such experiences are highly sought-after by festival attendees and whilst these moments are often fleeting in nature, they can also be laden with a high level of emotional investment for people. Ruane (2017) speaks to a desire for connection that is the focus for many festival attendees, and this focus can sometimes fracture the experience when things do not go the way a person was expecting. Whilst consumption of alcohol and drugs can enhance the moments shared with other people, they can also lead to emotional vulnerability, poor choices, and misinterpretation of situations, which enhance negative emotions. Given the consumption of multiple substances at once, or poly-substance use, is particularly common at festivals too, (Fernández-Calderón et al., 2019), there is a further increased risk of negative experiences

occurring in this setting. Consequently, there is a need for the Safe Space to have the capacity to care for people having negative drug related experiences.

Mental Health Problems

In addition to situations involving substance use, people also struggle with mental health for many reasons, including everything from anxiety and depression to post traumatic stress and severe mental illness. The intersection of mental health and festival Safe Spaces is not well documented in literature beyond Ruane (2017) illustrating how drug use can trigger mental health episodes, which then cause individuals to seek out the Safe Space. As mentioned earlier, Carvalho et al. (2015) also noted “personal crisis not involving drugs” as a reason people sought out Kosmicare. They further reported that this category included psychological symptoms such as paranoia, depression and other mental health symptoms. Additionally, in their work on crisis intervention programmes in everyday settings Simingtons et al.’s (1991) discussed a number of reasons people seek help due to crisis, including alcohol and drugs, anxiety and depression, personality disorders, suicidal factors, and physical assault. Combined, these three studies suggest there are common reasons for help seeking shared between both festival and every day settings, and that mental health is arguably a problem in both.

Within the context of mental health it is also not uncommon for individuals to carry personal trauma as this can be caused by many things, and it is not always defined by an obvious event (Health, 2016). Rather, whether or not any given experience has a lasting or traumatic impact on an individual can simply be the result of how they internalise what happened to them. The U.S Department of Health and Human Services (2014) further explained that trauma can be triggered by any form of “sensory” input, from smell to noise to physical or visual stimulus. Triggers can also generalise from even the most remote source, and things such as fatigue make people more susceptible to flashbacks. Therefore I argue that the combination of the overwhelming sensory nature of festivals and the possible fatigue that comes along with these events has the potential to trigger acute episodes of mental distress that may require the kind support a Safe Space can provide.

The Intersection of Drugs and Mental Health

Lifetime use of psychoactive substance use has been linked to anxiety, depression, and dissociative episodes (Sumnall et al., 2004), as well as the onset and intensification of psychopathy (Saban & Flisher, 2010). Mental illness is not always caused by drug use, just as

drug use is not always driven by mental illness, however the two are well known to go hand in hand and many mental disorders are associated with the increased likelihood that an individual will turn to substance use.

Research on the relationship between mental illness and drug use suggests that even common mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression can lead to substance use (Swendsen et al., 2010) which can further exacerbate a person's poor well-being (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). This suggests that drug use occurs not only because people are seeking connection, but also sometimes because they are seeking escape from themselves, which can lead to a volatile internal state. Within the festival community this means a high degree of mixing drugs, with possibly unstable minds, in highly stimulating environments. The potential for mental breakdown or crisis is therefore also high, and Safe Spaces therefore must be able to help people presenting with mental health problems in a way that meets their needs.

Doyle (2003) offers a good example of what can happen when drug use and mental health intersect when they reported on an experience in the field at Sanctuary, a Safe Space at Burning Man festival in the USA. They describe a woman who was brought into the space because she was yelling loudly at what appeared to be nothing and disturbing her campmates. When she realised she was in a space where she was safe to be vulnerable she proceeded to perform the act of giving birth. She lay on the floor of the Safe Space for hours, ”sweated, groaned and underwent contractions” (p. 29) until she gave birth (to herself) before slowly returning to normal. It was later discovered that she’d had an abortion earlier in life and had never fully come to terms with the choice. This experience, induced by psychedelics, enabled her to work through her unresolved feelings and reach a point of catharsis. This was only possible because the people at the Sanctuary were able to provide her with a space that made her feel safe to work through her trauma.

Sexual Harassment and Assault

Along with drug problems and mental health crises, a third cause of harm at festivals relates to sexual harm, which can be common in this setting. Relaxed social boundaries and “temporarily sanctioned chaos” (Ruane, 2017, p. 37) are what many people seek to find at a festival. However, when coupled with substance use, inhibitions are low and interactions with strangers are high, so the desire to connect with people makes mischievous and sometimes reckless

behaviour the norm. Unfortunately, an unsurprising side effect of such unfettered environments is that prevalence of sexual harassment can be high (Fileborn et al., 2020; Sj et al., 2018).

For example, The BBC produced a news article titled “Shocking Level of Sexual Harassment at Music Festivals” in which they reported on a survey commissioned by the Press Association (a multimedia national news agency of the United Kingdom). The survey showed 43% of women under 40 have faced unwanted sexual behaviour at a music festival at some point in their life (BBC, 2018). Contradictory to everyday settings, this survey also showed that 70% of sexual violence that occurred at festivals was perpetrated by strangers rather than someone known to the victim. This is not surprising when we consider the crowded “carnivalesque” nature of the festival space and the opportunity it provides to predators.

Not unlike everyday life there is significant under-reporting of instances of sexual harassment at festivals. Reasons for this include; concerns that being intoxicated would erode victim credibility, the festival environment making it hard to find someone to report to (Fileborn et al., 2020), victim blaming (Fileborn et al., 2019), feeling like it will not be taken seriously, and police and security lack the training required to help (Fileborn et al., 2020, Fileborn et al., 2019). As the potential for sexual harm is high and desirable reporting options for victims are minimal, Safe Spaces must be equipped to provide vital, frontline support for victims who wish to disclose. Not only are victims more likely to seek out Safe Spaces when they have been harmed, but this also gives them the opportunity to report what has happened and receive support and advice should they wish to take things further.

Broader Issues Requiring Assistance

Whilst serious situations can be the driving force for people coming into a Safe Space, the full list of reasons for using the space is a lot more broad. As mentioned earlier Carvalho et al. (2015) reported the categories “non-crisis” and “personal crisis” as reasons why people attended the Safe Space. They expand on these areas by providing examples such as relationship problems, being lost, overheated, tired, wanting information and minor health care, although did not discuss them further. These are simple, yet likely common, examples of why a person might seek solace and sanctuary from the fast paced, intense festival environment. However, at this time research that aims to discuss non-drug related reasons for visiting Safe Spaces at festivals has not yet been conducted.

However, despite previous literature's focus on drugs and, by proxy, mental health as reasons for people seeking out Safe Spaces, I argue that the demanding festival environment makes Safe Spaces a place of refuge for so much more than just bad drug experiences. As outlined earlier, the festival is a heterotopia, emotionally and geographically separated from everyday life. This means people do not have access to their normal comforts, resources, or support tools, and instead they have to survive with whatever infrastructure, supplies, and people they brought with them. For some, the combination of long days, constant socialising, and sleeplessness, can become a test of endurance, both physically and mentally. If the addition of relationship breakdowns, or bad news are also thrown into the mix then this can sometimes be enough to set off a crisis, or at the very least, a challenging situation for the individual. Safe Spaces can offer a reprieve from the non-stop intensity of the festival and allow people to rest and overcome these experiences in a safe and calm atmosphere by offering people a low-threshold method for help seeking.

How Safe Spaces can Help

Safe Spaces not only provide a place for people to work through difficult experiences, they also have a more welcoming atmosphere than other festival services, and staff better equipped to support people who are feeling vulnerable, which makes them easier to engage with. Below I discuss how Safe Spaces can reduce barriers to help seeking by addressing distrust for authority and providing the appropriate response for people who are having negative drug experiences, mental health episodes, and are victims of sexual assault or personal crisis.

The negative effects of drug use and mental health (such as anxiety), as well as the wider cultural discourse around these topics and the way people perceive them, can prevent individuals from seeking help from most festival staff. Through conversations with people in the field Ruane (2017) was able to elaborate on why there is mistrust for staff, and how speaking to volunteers in care spaces was a preferred method for seeking help. Firstly, people expected volunteers in Safe Spaces to be less judgemental because of the way they dressed. Ruane provides an excellent example of this when they describe a situation wherein a terrified individual was hiding in the corner of a medical tent, unable to speak. They were approached by a Safe Space staff member, and happily left with them upon seeing she was dressed "like a festival person, not a uniform person" (p. 168).

Furthermore, Ruane found that talking to Safe Space staff was preferred as they often spoke in a way that was relatable for the person in need of care by talking about their own, similar experiences. Staff in these spaces do not need to hide or denounce these (often drug related) kinds of experiences as the space promotes open-minded care regardless of the choices people make. The “porous boundaries” (Ruane, 2015, p. 69) between staff and visitors allows those in crisis to feel safe, relaxed, and free to express themselves without fear of judgement or consequence. It was also found that the atmosphere within a Safe Space, with the relatable people, gentle lighting, and comfortable seating, gave people the impression they would be welcomed and met with understanding, which in turn allowed them to open up about their experience. Conversely, medical spaces were seen as “dehumanising, terrifying, and paranoia-inducing” (Ruane, 2017, p.168).

Most significantly however, and also supported by Fileborn’s et. al. (2020) findings, Ruane noted that people in crisis tended to see authorities such as Police, Security, Medics and other festival staff as likely to get them into legal trouble. They felt if they were to seek help from these people whilst in the possession of illegal drugs, or under the influence of them, their crisis would be ignored in favour of taking punitive action against them. Furthermore, both festival attendees and Safe Space staff viewed authorities as being poorly informed, both in how to handle a person in crisis, and on the effects of substances. Their perceived ignorance with these matters led people to consider them as “unsafe” options when it came to seeking help from services such as medics (Ruane, 2017). In addition to this, festival goers see such services as authority figures who are more likely to judge, blame, and interrogate individuals than they are to help them. Fileborn et al. (2020) stated this has a lot to do with the overall style of policing drugs at festivals, which creates an “us versus them” sense, where Police and Security are seen as being there to enforce regulations against patrons, rather than look out for their well-being. This can lead to individuals feeling isolated and unsupported, and in turn their experiences can have a lasting negative impact on their well-being. Safe Spaces can provide a “safe” alternative for people wanting to disclose their experience without the need to approach an authority figure.

Responding to a personal crisis is simply not a service Police and Security, or even Medics can provide in a festival context, as they are responsible for the safety of so many people and often ill-equipped and untrained in dealing with such situations. Responses by these services tend to be in the vein of physically subduing, rather than caring for an individual and this kind of a reception for someone in crisis can have a long term negative impact on their well-being.

Sweeney et al. (2019) in their work on how psychiatry reinforces the silencing of sexual violence survivors, describes how physically restraining an individual in a crisis state can cause them to relive trauma. The “power over" (p. 599) approach used by authorities can be “hugely damaging” (p. 599) and assert feelings of invalidation and coercion over an individual. Sweeney’s et al. research was specific to psychiatric settings and sexual violence survivours, however, it can also be applied to any individual in a vulnerable state. Police, Security and Medics all play a vital role in keeping people safe at a festival, however their focus is often on acting quickly, rather than delicately to situations. This is understandable given the size of the crowds they are responsible for, however not ideal for the long term mental health of individuals in crisis.

Within the context of the Safe Space providing staff who are able to appropriately address the needs of vulnerable people, there is significant research that supports the idea that the way someone is received when asking for help can impact their long term well-being. Carvalho et at. (2015) explains that there is a thin line between what could be a very positive experience, and a crisis situation. High stimulation and lack of understanding can drive a person further into a volatile state, whereas a calm, welcoming presence can be an effective tool in helping someone relax. Further to this, the idea that a vulnerable crisis state can even be used as a transformative experience is also common in literature. By taking what could be a traumatising event, and providing the individual with the space and tools to address it, they are sometimes able to overcome personal issues (Carvalho et al., 2015; Simington et al., 1996; MacLean, 2014; Grof, 1994; Ruane, 2017; Soares, 2017). Carvalho et al. (2015) explains how the Safe Space can facilitate this transformation because a person's reaction to a crisis episode is not just dependent on personal characteristics, but also on the event itself and the surrounding context. Therefore providing a space where an individual can be guided through their crisis rather than forced to act “normal” can have a lasting positive impact.

Above, I have described the literature on the principles of Safe Spaces and the problems they may be required to address. However, very little research has been done on Safe Spaces at festivals and I was able to find a total of three academic studies in this field to incorporate above. Most significantly, Ruane’s 2017 doctoral thesis and article (2015) extensively covers the Safe Space phenomena in the context of caring for drug related crises at festivals using data they collected from fieldwork across a selection of festivals in the UK, USA, and Europe. The third piece of literature was the article evaluating the Safe Space practice at Kosmicare, also in

the context of psychoactive substance care by Carvalho et al. (2015). As mentioned earlier, this field is additionally supported by a number of bulletins based on field observations produced by MAPS. I have therefore drawn together a body of evidence which, though small, points to consistent findings so far. These findings include comfort, peer support, and crisis intervention as key elements for Safe Space function, and that multiple, complex risks exist within the highly stimulating festival environment. Combined with a Foucaldian lens this points to the need for a heterotopia within a heterotopia, the Safe Space as a potential solution to a variety of harms that exist. Next, I examine what we know about the Safe Space concept in an Aotearoa context, and bring this literature review to a close by highlighting why my research is important for developing our knowledge of Safe Spaces.

Safe Spaces in Aotearoa

To date, there has been no academic literature on festival Safe Spaces in Aotearoa, however there has been some media reporting on Safe Spaces in a variety of contexts. In 2016 Radio New Zealand reported that Safe Spaces had “gained cultural currency” in Aotearoa as they have established a presence at festivals, gigs, campuses, and conferences around the country. This article told the story of two very different Safe Spaces, first, a queer support space at Victoria University they described as “actively maintained, inclusive, and welcoming” where people are free to be themselves “without fear of retribution, retaliation, or resentment”. The second, a 100 person festival called Yes! Fest which aimed to create an event to start to dismantled rape culture and victim blaming. The festival promoted behavioural expectations around consent and respect, employed a rape crisis trained crew, and established a “chill zone” where people could take a break and call outside organisations for help.

In both cases Radio New Zealand reported resistance from the wider community as the concept of a Safe Space was unfamiliar to the mainstream and not always well executed. The article noted that people found the task of creating a Safe Space was “largely uncharted” and “a fluid thing” that could be guided by policy but, in large, should be shaped by feedback from the community the space is for (Bollen & Callister-Baker, 2016).

In a different vein of the concept of a Safe Space, in 2019 Stuff, a national news website, also reported on a LGBTGIA+ initiative wherein an Auckland artist created a rainbow circle that could be used to visually identify a space that is free from discrimination and judgement (Gooch, 2019). This received significant support from local businesses and government sectors, and

now this symbol represents an organisation called “Safe Space Alliance”. This organisation, which started in Aotearoa, now works to identify and verify Safe Spaces for LGBTGIA+ people around the world to connect with. Interestingly, according to their website, at the time this research was conducted Safe Space Alliance had verified only one overnight music festival in Aotearoa as a LGBTGIA+ Safe Space (Safe Space Alliance, 2021).

Relatedly, an action group Sound Check Aotearoa was started in 2020 by a large number of music industry organisations, including the NZ Music Commission. Their aim was to create a more inclusive culture wherein people felt safe from discrimination, harassment and sexual harm as they work in the music industry. This group was created in response to unequal opportunity and systemic discrimination that had been found against things such as gender, race, and disability within the music industry (NZ Music Commission, 2020). The festival industry in Aotearoa is part of the music industry and therefore this initiative is also aimed at improving the safety of the festival space, as well as other spaces such as recording studios and venues. However, at the time this research was written a formal structure for Sound Check Aotearoa was yet to be created, as they were still in the process of gathering feedback from the community. This initiative demonstrates an awareness of the need to cultivate safety within the music scene in Aotearoa, and whilst their aim is not to create physical Safe Spaces at festivals it does speak to a desire to improve well-being in this setting.

The combination of grey literature discussed above shows evidence for a variety of Safe Spaces being developed in Aotearoa, however there is no academic literature available. Media reports describe Safe Spaces related to festivals, universities and local businesses, and Sound Check Aotearoa discusses enhancing safety in the wider music industry. However, whilst they highlight engagement with minorities such as LGBTQIA+ communities, they also show a lack of understanding and concerns from wider populations. Combined, this demonstrates an absence of both academic and social knowledge about Safe Spaces within the population of Aotearoa.

Aims and Rationale

It is important to understand the role of the Safe Space, theorised as heterotopia, within the context in which it sits. Therefore below I outline the Aotearoa context and how this makes Safe Spaces an important research topic.

Drug use is a common occurrence in Aotearoa, demonstrated in the Drug Use in New Zealand 2007/08 survey which found that 49% of people (1,224,600 individuals) aged between 16 and 64 had used recreational drugs at some point in their life (Ministry of Health, 2010). Recreational drug use in Aotearoa includes cannabis, LSD and other hallucinogens, and stimulants such as amphetamine, cocaine, and opiates (Boden et al., 2006). Furthermore, the rate of consumption of illicit drugs at festivals is higher than that of the outside population (Hungerbuehler et al., 2011; Erickson et al., 1996), suggesting that drug use at festivals in Aotearoa is likely common.

However, Aotearoa has also become the first country in the world to explicitly legalise drug testing (NZ Drug Foundation, n.d). The Drug and Substance Checking Legislation Bill (No 2) was passed in December 2020 under the Labour government and permits individuals and organisations to test drugs without the risk of legal consequence (NZ Drug Foundation, n.d). The current Labour government stands for democratic socialism, taking a pragmatic approach to the values of social justice, equality and human rights (King, 2016). The bill therefore passed using the argument that drug testing makes harm reduction possible through education, access to health advice, and behavioural change (New Zealand Parliament, 2021).

The community based organisation, Know Your Stuff New Zealand (KYSNZ) was at the forefront of the drug testing movement, operating unofficially since 2016 alongside The New Zealand Drug Foundation with the desire to reduce the harm done by recreational drug use. Since their conception, at the time of writing, KYSNZ had tested more than 13,540 samples at 270 festivals and events across Aotearoa, discovering more than 5,990 dangerous substances being sold as other substances (Know Your Stuff NZ, 2022). The presence of drug testing services at festivals in Aotearoa, and the support from government policy that permits it, has the potential to create an environment that supports Safe Space practice by destigmatizing risky behaviours and making those behaviours easier to manage.

Further to drug use, the prevalence of mental health problems in Aotearoa is arguably, also high. According to one government survey on well-being in 2018, one in four people in Aotearoa over the age of eighteen experiences “poor” mental health on the World Health Organisation’s WHO-5 scale (Stats NZ, 2019). Additionally the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey in 2020 showed that almost 30 percent of adults in Aotearoa have experienced intimate partner violence or sexual violence at some point in their life (Kibblewhite, 2020). This is to say, a large percentage of Aotearoa and by extension, people who attend festivals there, have likely

experienced mental duress at one time or another which may resurface in the festival environment and need support.

There is also evidence to suggest that the promotion of consent culture as a harm reduction strategy has already made it into the festival scene in Aotearoa. For example, a number of festivals are actively promoting the culture of asking before making physical contact on their websites, e.g. “would you like a hug” rather than initiating the hug without asking (see Splore, 2022 and Twisted Frequency, n.d for examples). Additionally, a review of websites shows that Safe Spaces are occurring presently at festivals in Aotearoa (see Rhythm and Vines, n.d, Aum Festival, 2023, and Deep Space, 2023 for examples), yet no academic work has been done in this context.

The above section shows how the Safe Space concept is already particularly relevant to the festival scene in Aotearoa. The very small body of literature discussed above focuses on visitors of the Safe Space, their experiences and how the Safe Space aims to help them, specifically within the context of drug related harms. What we have little knowledge of is how providers of these spaces make sense of them, yet having this info would allow us to better conceptualise the space space and understand its role and potential for harm reduction. My research therefore aims to develop our understanding of how festival organisers and Safe Space managers at festivals in Aotearoa understand this service they are providing.

Method

Design

My research employed the use of semi-structured interviews, in combination with phenomenologically informed reflexive thematic analysis to interpret how providers of Safe Spaces at festivals in Aotearoa understand this service. It was also underpinned by my insider status as somebody who had substantial experience working at festivals in Aotearoa. Two groups of participants were recruited; festival organisers, and Safe Space managers, as these people provide or are responsible for, the Safe Space service.

Recruitment Procedure

The inclusion criteria for my study was for a participant to be a festival organiser or Safe Space manager of a festival with more than 1000 participants, where electronic music and overnight camping were primary components. This is because larger, overnight, electronic festivals by nature carry more risk, and therefore are more likely to require a Safe Space that can meet complex needs. Given this is the first study on Safe Spaces at festivals in Aotearoa the focus needed to be on larger events with more diverse needs.

Participants who met the criteria for this project were identified using personal knowledge and anecdotal information provided by connections within the festival scene in Aotearoa. Potential participants were contacted via two different methods. This first was a passive process wherein a link to a purpose built website was distributed via the social media platform, Facebook. The link was posted on my personal profile, along with other relevant group pages, and included a small amount of information describing the study. Interested participants were then able to navigate to the website where they could find more in depth information and an email address created specifically for this study for them to contact me.

The second method for participant recruitment took an active approach that followed two different pathways. I contacted potential participants who I knew personally by email or Facebook messenger, or asked an intermediate person known to both myself and the participant to share information regarding this study.

An introductory email containing key points about the project, along with the information sheet (Appendix A), consent form (Appendix B), and interview schedule (Appendix C) was sent to each participant once they had expressed an interest in being involved (see Appendix D for example email). Also included in the email was the offer of a phone call or further emails should the participant wish to talk through any questions, and a link to a calendar app called Calendly. This app allowed participants to book a time in for their interview when it suited them, automatically adding it to my calendar, and anonymously blocking the chosen time for other participants.

Given the nature of working with people it is worth mentioning that the recruitment process was not always as linear as described. Some participants required following up a number of times before an interview occurred, and others booked themselves in with very little communication. The recruitment process was intentionally designed to be flexible so that participants could interact with the project in a way that suited them.

Participants

The data set is made up of 22 participants, who are either festival organisers or Safe Space managers, and they represented 16 different festivals across Aotearoa. By their choice, some participants were interviewed individually, some in pairs, and one in a group of three, creating a total of 17 interviews that ranged from 66 minutes to 144 minutes in length and producing 25 hours of raw data. In the interest of anonymity, each participant was given a pseudonym name, and each festival was given a number from one to 16. For the sake of clarity each Safe Space was numbered according to its corresponding festival. For example, the Safe Space for “festival 1” is henceforth referred to as “Space 1”. The exception to this was Space 8 as this Safe Space was located at more than one festival.

Participants Within the Context of their Festivals

Table 2 below outlines which participant was present for each interview, their role within the festival, and the relationship each festival has with the presence of a Safe Space. I have split festivals into two groups; operated for at least five events or less than five events, and likewise Safe Spaces have also been split into two groups; operated at least five times, or less than five times at the corresponding festival. I have chosen to create these groups to provide some context around how established these events are and the

relative experience they have with Safe Spaces. This is because the events scene in Aotearoa is relatively small so reporting the exact number of times a festival operated, or how many years a Safe Space has been present, may allow some readers to identify some of them.

Table 2: The Relationship Between the Participants, Festivals, and Safe Spaces

Interview number	Participants	Role of participant (SSM= Safe Space Manager FO = Festival organiser)	Festival number the participant represented and if that festival has occurred at least five (Y or N)	Has a safe space operated at least five times at that festival	Has this participant operated in their role at that festival for at least five events
1	Cindy	SSM	Festival 1 (Y) Festival 7 (Y)	Y N	Y N
2	Fynn	FO	Festival 1 (Y)	Y	Y
3	Amanda Cameron Charlotte	SSM SSM SSM	Festival 2 (Y) Festival 2 (Y) Festival 2 (Y)	Y	Y Y Y
4	Dylan	FO	Festival 2 (Y)	Y	Y
5	Shawn	FO	Festival 3 (N)	N	N
6	Steph	SSM	Festival 4 (Y)	Y	N
7	Dexter	FO	Festival 4 (Y)	Y	Y
8	Shannon	SSM	Festival 5 (Y)	Y	Y
9	Freya Francis	SSM SSM	Festival 6 (Y) Festival 6 (Y)	Y	Y Y
10	Dean	FO	Festival 7 (Y)	N	Y
11	Mia	SSM	Festival 8 (Y) Festival 15 (Y) Festival 16 (Y)	Y N Y	Y N Y
12	Alison	FO	Festival 8 (Y)	Y	Y
13	Ruby Jacob	SSM SSM	Festival 9 (N) Festival 9 (N)	N N	N N
14	Spencer Talia	SSM SSM	Festival 10 Festival 10	Y	N N
15	Luca	FO	Festival 11 (Y)	Y	Y
16	Felix	FO	Festival 12 (N) Festival 13 (N)	N N	N N
17	Troy	FO	Festival 14 (N)	N	N

Data Collection

In this section I discuss semi-structured interviews, as well as my interview procedure to illustrate the principles that supported the data collection and demonstrate how they were enacted for the purpose of this study.

Principles of Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews operate from a series of predetermined, open-ended questions around the research topic. They act as a guide during the interview that provides the flexibility for further themes and new ideas to be presented (Harvey-Jordan & Long, 2001). The word “guide” is key here as not all questions are asked every time, or in the same way, creating space for participants to take the conversation in new directions, which is an integral part of the data collection process. As Galletta (2016) explained, semi-structured interviews allow for exploration into an individual's lived experience on the topic of interest, whilst also allowing for the researcher to retain a connection with the research question. This is important as it provides a consistent perspective during data collection that helps to maintain the analytical focus.

Semi-structured interviews are particularly useful when the research subject is largely unknown as it was in the case of my study. They also allow our knowledge to be expanded by considering the participant and their subjective experience as the source through which a phenomena can be better understood (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The participants are seen as the expert on the subject, and it is through their experiences that a framework for understanding the Safe Space service can be developed. As Walton (2021) explains the function of the semi-structured interview is to aid in facilitating a conversation between interviewer and interviewee about the interviewee’s “subjective experiences and understandings" (p. 61).

The most noted disadvantage to semistructured interviews is they are labour intensive, both to create and to perform. The researcher needs to have a comprehensive understanding of the research topic in order to prepare talking points that will elicit rich data, and be able to engage in meaningful directions throughout the interview (Adams, 2015). Fortunately, with my background in the festival industry in Aotearoa I was as well placed to make this a manageable task.

The Practice of Semi-structured Interviews

In practice, the semi-structured interviews looked much like a discussion as I would ask open ended questions and then engage in active listening to the response. I often nodded or said one or two words to show I was engaged with what was being said and to encourage the conversation to continue. When something novel about Safe Spaces came up, or a particular point was emphasised I made inquiries to draw out a richer description of the topic, and asked for clarification when I was not sure what meaning they were trying to convey. Further to this, I gently guided the conversation through the interview schedule in a manner that made sense for each specific interview, so that a focus could be maintained on exploring the Safe Space experience. Next, I discuss the interview procedure in greater depth.

Interview Procedure

Participants were given the option of conducting the interview in person, or online via Google Meet and each time an audio file of the interview was created. The interviews began with casual conversation so as to foster a more relaxed environment before asking permission to start recording. As a recording was necessary for data collection, all participants in this study had to agree to be recorded. The conversation then continued with a systematic breakdown of the consent form which allowed each point to be explained, clarified where needed, and consented to verbally on record.

The semi-structured interview then began with a broad enquiry into the nature of the festival the participant was representing, their description of it, why people attend, and how they became involved. This helped to facilitate a relaxed and open conversation, and I often found this part of the interview would take some time as participants expressed a great deal of passion when speaking about their respective event/s. Questions then became increasingly more in-depth and specific to the research topic, which allowed the participant to ease into the conversation and helped to elicit more meaningful answers to more central questions. However, this funnelling process was not always adhered to as participants would sometimes naturally bring up topics that would have been addressed later in the conversation.

Interviews that had more than one participant at a time also included discussion between participants as well as between participants and myself. In these instances, I allowed

space for participants to take these discussions in the direction they saw fit, in keeping with the participant led approach. I also made space for each person to answer each question, checking with them each one every time to see if they had more to add to what someone else had said, or directly asking each participant about their experience with the question topic. This was important as my research focused on the experience the individual person had with the Safe Space.

Interviews were transcribed into text using Otter Ai software, anonymised, and returned to the participant who was given a week to make any changes they saw fit, before granting permission for the final version to be used for data analysis.

Due to the time consuming task of conducting semi-structured interviews, and the volume of data each one can produce, they have also been criticised for not being able to encompass enough of the population being researched (Adams, 2015). However, using a purposeful, opportunistic sampling procedure I believe I captured a relatively large number of people in relation to the potential sample size. This sampling procedure meant participants were targeted based on their perceived ability to provide insight into the research question, whilst simultaneously allowing others to emerge during the recruitment process (Emmel, 2013). To the best of my knowledge there were only four festivals that met the inclusion criteria not represented in this study. As such I argue that it is likely I was able to identify the prevalent issues relevant to my research question. Using Guest et al. (2020) method to assess thematic (discussed next) saturation in qualitative research I also estimate my study reached saturation after the thirteenth interview. I did not hear anything new during the remaining interviews, which further supports my claim that this study encompasses the prevalent issues.

Data Analysis

Below I examine the theory that underpins my analysis of the data I collected, before discussing the process I undertook when carrying out the data analysis procedure.

Theoretical Framework for Data Analysis

This research project adopted an interpretivist framework, which considers the nature of a person's reality to be subjective, and constructed based on individual interpretation of phenomena (Cuthbertson et al., 2020). From this perspective, each participant's understanding of Safe Spaces is distinct, and developed through their unique interpretation of their experiences that surround these spaces.

Within the field of psychology, a commonly applied lens to an interpretivist way of understanding knowledge is phenomenology. Phenomenology was founded by Edmund Husserl in the early 20th century as a way of understanding and analysing the conscious experience (Smith, 2013). This is further interpreted by Smith as they consider the etymology of the word phenomenology and how, at its core, it is speaking to the study of phenomena, or more specifically "the way things appear to us in our experience" (p. 181). By extension interpretive phenomenology, as explained by Brocki & Wearden (2006), is a way of understanding how individuals make sense of their subjective experience, by exploring and interpreting a person's first hand account of a given event. To assess the nature of an individual's experience, we must therefore first acknowledge that the experience is based on their subjective interpretation of a given phenomena, which in turn is embedded in their subjective interpretation of reality.

According to Fade (2004) interpretative phenomenology has historical roots in critical realism. Critical realism takes on a realist ontology with a relativistic orientation to knowledge (Stutchbury, 2021). Or put simply, it is an understanding that phenomena exist independent of people, but that they are interpreted by each individual differently based on that person's understanding of the structures related to said phenomena. Phenomenology however, as Willig (2013) discusses, is less concerned with what causes phenomena and more interested in the participant's experience of said phenomena, as told by them. In this instance the phenomena does not exist independently of people, rather it is constructed by their experience and consequent understanding of it. With this in mind, interpretive phenomenology then takes a person's account of their experience and attempts to also understand it through wider social, cultural, and psychological meanings. This framework also acknowledges the notion that it is impossible to

completely observe a participant's experience, and the researcher's own interpretations, as well as the interaction between researcher and participant, will affect the research. This needs to be kept in mind whilst considering the data in the current study, as interpretive phenomenology should focus solely on the individual's experience and trying to understand the way they make sense of phenomena (Finlay, 2011).

Reflexive Thematic Analysis

A range of methods can be used for phenomenological analysis in psychology to focus on exploring the individual's experience as they interpret it. One such method is reflexive thematic analysis which, when informed by phenomenology, seeks to identify patterns, or themes, in how people make sense of an experience or topic relevant to their lives (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

In this type of analysis the relationship the researcher has with the data set and the influence they have on both the nature of the data collected, and the way it is interpreted is carefully considered to develop a richer analysis of the participants' experience. This is achieved by bringing their own set beliefs and understandings into the process and questioning them (Braun & Clarke, 2022). In their discussion on objectivity and psychology as a science, Mascolo (2016) stated that subjectivity in psychological science has long been a point of contention amongst scientific researchers. As scientific research is commonly understood as objective, "publicly observable", "unbiased", and accurately representing the world as it "truly is" (p. 544), centering subjectivity in research traditionally presents a challenge in meeting this scientific standard.

However, Mascolo (2016) argues that all observation is based on pre-understanding, a kind of bias in all research that shapes what we choose to observe and how we can interpret it. Braun & Clarke (2022) take this a step further and say this subjectivity is an instrument that helps us further comprehend the knowledge produced by a study. They explain that qualitative data can never be completely objective, within an interpretivist paradigm, there is no single truth to uncover that makes the analysis objectively correct. However, meaning can be created "at the intersection between the data set and the interpretive resources that you bring to the analysis" (Terry, 2021, p. 152).

In order to successfully complete this thematic analysis, I therefore had to analyse my own beliefs about Safe Spaces, as well as the participants' understanding of their experiences and my understanding of the concepts they talked about. For example, during my interview with organiser of Festival 4, I felt confronted when the participant discussed having separate interview rooms for sexual assault disclosure. This added a clinical feeling to the Safe Spaces which I felt challenged my beliefs around the function of the space as a low level care service. However, this also afforded me the opportunity to better understand the level of care this participant considered necessary, and how they experienced the Safe Space as something that was capable of providing higher levels of care. The theoretical framework discussed above, along with the principles of reflexive thematic analysis were then employed throughout the data analysis procedure.

Data Analysis Procedure

My data analysis procedure followed a six step process for reflexive thematic analysis detailed in Braun & Clarke (2022), a method that became extremely popular in qualitative research after it was first produced in Braun & Clarke (2006). It is worth noting that this method appears to be heavily based on Attride-Stirling's (2001) six step approach to thematic analysis, with some subtle differences. However, the Braun & Clarke (2022) procedure has been rigorously developed and reproduced throughout literature, to the point where I struggled to find a thematic method that did not reference their six step process. This is testament to how robust the procedure can be as a qualitative research method for data analysis when used correctly.

Step One - Getting Familiar with the Data

This is a process of intimately getting to know the data by immersing oneself in the transcriptions and listening to the audio recordings until it feels as if there are no more insights to glean. Braun & Clarke (2022) describe this as an overlapping, iterative process that starts with reading, and listening to, the data many times until it has almost been assimilated into memory. Critical engagement with the data begins here, wherein the researcher asks questions about the data, not in a way that leads to answering those questions, but in a way that allows meaning and patterns to develop through inquiry. As discussed by Guest et al. (2012), transcribed conversations are not straight forward like other forms of coherent, intentionally written text. Rather, they are full of incomplete statements and complexities, which create additional challenges. The same can be said

for the audio files from which the transcripts are made. The researcher must therefore be patient as they screen the data over and over to make sense of it in order to build good quality codes later. The interpretive framework discussed earlier in this section must also be continuously implemented throughout the data analysis procedure. For my project this meant maintaining a consistent focus on the way participants made sense of their experiences with Safe Spaces, and the understanding that these experiences are subjective interpretations of a subjective world.

For the current research project I began this step by listening to each interview, and following the written transcript simultaneously, highlighting the occasional piece of text whenever a participant emphasised a certain point. During the next iteration of reading and listening I began jotting down brief notes about patterns and potential meanings that were becoming apparent. As I have a long history in the festival scene in Aotearoa and a personal connection to Safe Spaces (which I discuss more in the reflexivity section of this chapter), this step involved having to be especially mindful of the *reflexive* element of thematic analysis. I was consistently checking in with myself to ensure that any observations I had made were from the data itself and not rooted in my own preconceptions.

Step Two - Meaningful Coding and Analytical Lenses

An essential element of thematic analysis is succinct, descriptive codes, and this is not a quick process. Good quality coding takes time and repeated reflexive consideration of the data set, and each data point, to really develop a rich and comprehensive set of codes which meaningfully represent the overall data set (Braun & Clarke, 2022). As also emphasised by Terry (2021) it is important to fully engage in this early step of thematic analysis to build a robust foundation for the proceeding steps. Throughout this process three analytical lenses were applied; inductive, semantic, and experiential. These are tools used to position the researcher's approach to the process of analysis in order to provide an explicitly clear lens for how the data is observed, and therefore the nature of the knowledge that is produced by the research.

An inductive approach is data driven, meaning themes are derived solely from the data without any preconceived framework (Willig, 2013). Given the unexplored nature of the current research topic an inductive approach was considered most fitting as this pathway

uses a broader, more encompassing analysis of the entire data set (Kiger & Vapio, 2020). This is useful in new areas of research as it doesn't rely on the data being examined in relation to existing theories (deductive approach) (Marks, 2004), which makes space for more fitting theories to be considered after the analysis, or possibly new theories to be developed from the analysis. However, Marks (2004) also argues that no approach can be absolutely inductive as the researcher will always be bringing their own influence to the analysis. Therefore, reflexivity and a consistent focus on what was present in the data was necessary as I applied this lens.

A semantic approach is a surface level way of exploring the data, wherein meaning is derived from the language participants explicitly use (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Coding was therefore driven by what was present on the transcript paper and the language participants overtly used when responding to interview questions. Braun & Clarke point out that codes do not have to be either semantic or latent (deriving deeper, more implicit meaning from the data). Rather they can lay on a continuum between these two end points, and semantic codes can therefore also have an implicit element. As I have a strong connection to the festival scene in Aotearoa I was able to understand the wider context within which some language was used. Whilst coding during this step was primarily semantic, my understanding of this context enabled me to apply elements of underlying meaning to codes I considered relevant to the research topic, and reflexively appropriate. For example, I developed a code that referenced how Safe Spaces separate people from what is causing them harm. This was not explicitly stated but it could be inferred from statements such as "*a person who is behaving in a way that I don't enjoy, or is harmful towards me [...] it's [the Safe Space] really creating that infrastructure for people to get their safety back*" (Ruby).

An experiential focus, in the context of the current study, is underpinned by the theoretical assumption that the language each participant uses to express how they think and feel is a reflection of their singular reality (Braun & Clarke, 2017). As explained in Braun & Clarke (2022a) there are different ways of adopting an experiential focus and in the current study it is used to understand a participants "sense-making" (p. 12). This is a means of comprehending the things participants say by analysing the way they make sense of the various features that frame a given phenomena. The framework for

understanding Safe Spaces produced by this study was therefore in large, created by the participants themselves, as the direct providers of the Safe Space service.

Whilst employing these analytical lenses codes were developed by adding a simple label to the data every time something appeared to be potentially relevant to understanding how participants experience Safe Spaces. This step presented a challenge, given the volume of data produced by the interviews it was difficult to code the whole data set in a manner that was visually comprehensible. To overcome this, as I combed through the data I wrote out extracts that contained information relevant to the participants' experience on an A2 paper pad. This produced a series of sheets of paper that could be placed next to each other to better visually represent the data set as a whole than could be done on a computer. I then systematically went through each sheet of paper and began developing codes for each piece of text present. This afforded me a clear visual representation of all the codes I had named so each time I thought of a new code its appropriateness could be considered in relation to those that had already been named. Codes were edited, merged, or deleted as I developed the analysis and different conceptual parameters for describing the patterns in the data were rendered, with a view of constructing a set of distinct codes that represented the entire data set.

Step Three - Initial Themes

Codes were then grouped according to shared meaning to create themes. A theme can be defined as a pattern of meaning that captures something interesting or significant within the data set in relation to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006) This step was very much emphasised by Braun & Carke (2022) as “generative” (p. 79), meaning the researcher should not attach themselves to any particular theme or direction. Each potential theme is just that; potentially a theme, it may be removed or changed as the process moves forward. This step involved constructing patterns that make sense of the data (Terry, 2021) by clustering together codes that share similar meanings into candidate themes (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Codes must be clustered around a central organising concept which allows many different features of the same idea to be brought together.

My approach to this was a simple one, I wrote each code produced in step two on one large piece of paper. I then began conceptualising what elements linked each code to every other code, regularly checking in with the sheets of extracts from step two so as not

to lose sight of what each code represented. This afforded me the opportunity to create a thematic map as advised by Braun & Clarke (2022). This was a hand drawn visual aid that helped me record how patterns of meaning could be connected, and the context of each candidate theme within the wider data set.

As the iterations progressed I loosely incorporated a strategy for refining themes offered by Gibson and Brown (2009) by applying a “membership rule” (p. 138) to each potential theme. This was a broadly defined rule that helped guide my decisions around which potential theme a code was grouped with. For example, for a code to be placed within a theme that was developing to capture meaning around a network of safety, it needed to connect the Safe Space with other defined services.

Step Four - Developing Succinct Themes

With the researcher as the analytical tool, good quality themes are succinct and actively constructed through systematic engagement with the whole data set, and the many iterations of codes and themes that are produced (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The phrase “themes emerge” from the data is popular in research, however as Taylor & Ussher (2001) and many others argue, themes do not lay in wait to be discovered, they are produced by active seeking. Themes are assembled through a process of analysing, combining and comparing the data set, (Varpio, et al., 2017) and as such, they are “analytical outputs” of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 8), rather than emerging from it. In keeping with reflexivity this means the researcher should be careful not to look for patterns within the data they expect to see based on what they already know. In the case of my research project, the data produced was significantly rich which meant that systematic analysis was unavoidable if I wanted to make sense of all of it. The difficulty was in succinctly developing themes that described the whole data set, rather than trying not to look for what I thought I should see.

This step provided a vital opportunity to check that the themes developed in step three meaningfully represent the data and the research aims, or if there was need for further development. Following the Braun & Clarke (2022) approach, each theme was reviewed initially by looking at all the text associated with each of the codes clustered within it, and asking if each data point is actually evidence for the theme. To assist with analysis and

theme development, I also kept a live document of all the extracts that related to each theme, adding to and changing it as I felt it was needed.

Next, the scope was widened and each theme was considered within the context of the data set as a whole, asking if all meaningful concepts within the data set are clearly defined by the themes. On page 99 of Braun & Clarke (2022) a series of questions were listed that I used throughout both these phases to decide if a candidate theme was viable.

1. Can I identify the boundaries of this theme?
2. Is there enough data to evidence this theme?
3. Is the data contained within this theme too diverse and actually lacking in coherence?
4. Does this theme convey something important to the research topic?

As a part of this process I merged two themes, one about Safe Spaces filling a gap in the internal safety network, with another about Safe Spaces being a part of the internal safety network. This was because there was significant overlap between these two themes as both represented the way the Safe Space related to other festival services and therefore nothing was lost from the overall pattern of meaning by merging them.

Step Five - Descriptive Themes

This step forms the basis for the final analysis written in the next chapter. Theme names needed to be concise and clearly communicate the overall idea each theme represented. As part of this defining process themes were further grouped into three superordinate themes that described the overall pattern of meaning of a group of subthemes. Each superordinate theme and subtheme was then given definition in the form of a few sentences that articulated the central organising concept they represented, and any relevant features of the scope they encompassed. In keeping with the Braun & Clarke (2022) process, as part of this step I also selected the data extracts used in the next chapter to represent each facet of each theme. This took some time as each extract needed to be a clear and compelling portrayal of a concept, in order to support the convincing illustration of a pattern during the write-up as Braun & Clarke (2021) suggests.

Step Six - Write up

Once the penultimate, data driven draft of the analysis was complete I then deepened the analysis by returning to the key relevant literature for what had been found. As this research was specifically data driven, framing it within the wider context of what we know about Safe Spaces and harm reduction allowed for a more meaningful understanding of participants' sense making around the Safe Space phenomena to be developed. This final step cumulates all the compelling ideas and complex learnings to present a rich analytical story for the reader that clearly demonstrates new and meaningful knowledge on Safe Space at festivals in Aotearoa.

Ethics

The current research project follows the ethical guidelines laid out in the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching, and Evaluation Involving Human Participants (Massey University, 2017) by Massey University, and is endorsed by the Human Ethics Committee. Key issues that were addressed included informed consent, anonymity, and data storage, which are discussed below.

Informed Consent

Informed consent goes beyond a participant freely choosing to engage in the study, and ensures they are actively aware of what they are consenting to. Informed consent is ongoing in qualitative research due to the dynamic nature of the research method, and therefore participants also need to be kept informed if anything changes (Miller & Bell, 2012). In the case of the current study this was facilitated by a detailed information sheet that outlined the purpose of the study, what each step of their involvement looked like, how their data would be protected and their rights as a participant. Contact details for myself, my supervisor, and the ethics board were also provided should a participant wish to question any element of the research with or without my knowledge.

To further address the need for informed consent, each participant was given the opportunity, either by phone or email, to ask for clarification or provide feedback before agreeing to participate. Additionally, at the beginning of every interview, each factor on the consent form was explained, and individually consented to by the participant before beginning the questions. Verbal consent was recorded as part of the audio data obtained, but only after first asking each participant for consent to start recording. In keeping with

the notion of ongoing consent I also followed up with participants who had not yet confirmed they were happy with transcripts, and asked for consent to use specific quotes from participants who did not have time to review their transcript. The final written transcripts and extracts used in this study were therefore individually approved by each participant.

Anonymity

Anonymity is closely linked to informed consent as it is important for participants to understand how the information they provide will be managed, so they may choose to agree to the level of confidentiality offered by the study (Steffen et al., 2021). Anonymity is a basic ethical principle, but particularly relevant for this study because a festival is a type of business, and therefore participants had the right to know its image would be protected. Furthermore, this study covered sensitive topics such as drug use, sexual assault, and some personal experiences, so it was important for participants to feel safe that their privacy, and the privacy of anyone spoken about was going to be protected. With this in mind, anonymity was extended to each festival as an individual entity, as well as to each participant, as described above.

It was equally important to remove any identifying information from transcripts provided during an interview, such as the location of a festival, well publicised incidents, and dates. Some interviews also included the names of other organisations associated with safety at festivals, and these were also changed or, where possible, removed. Setting was also taken into account as an additional privacy consideration. Interviews, either online or in person, were conducted in a private room with the door closed and a sign to prevent any unwanted entry.

Data Storage

Data in the current study came in the form of emails, audio and visual recordings of interviews, unedited transcripts, anonymised transcripts, and tables used to map participants and festivals. With the exception of emails, all data was stored on my personal laptop in encrypted folders. My laptop was password protected and stored privately. A backup of the data was also kept on my university OneDrive, which could only be accessed using my secured login details. Additionally, OneDrive has further privacy

measures that prevent Microsoft engineers from acquiring the data, as well as security monitoring systems to prevent unwanted access.

A unique email account was created for use in this study that only I could access. This was done using the Gmail service which also afforded access to Google Meet, an online meeting software that facilitates video conferencing. Most interviews were recorded using this service which automatically uploads the video to a personal online storage location called GDrive. From here these recordings were downloaded into a folder on my personal laptop and deleted from GDrive. Unauthorised access to GMail and GDrive was prevented by a two factor authentication process, meaning both my login details, and my personal phone were needed to gain access to the account. The remaining interviews were recorded using a microphone that created an audio file on my personal laptop, which could then be stored in the folder with the other recordings.

These recordings were then uploaded into an online software called Otter Ai which transcribed the interviews into text. This software does not rely on third party servers to process transcripts which means all data is kept on their own servers and only accessible through Otter.ai. Once a transcription was obtained it was then downloaded onto my personal laptop and deleted from their server.

Reflexivity

In this chapter I have discussed the concept of reflexivity as a tool used to enhance the quality of research produced in thematic analysis. This next section will discuss the elements of reflexivity unique to the current research project.

Researcher on the Inside

Finlay & Gough (2003) described reflexivity as a “critical attitude” (p. 22) towards uncovering and appropriately utilising the impact the researcher has on data collection, analysis, and research outputs. The biggest consideration for this study needed to be my position within the festival scene in Aotearoa. I had been in management positions at various festivals for eight years. I had never held a Safe Space manager position, however I have worked closely alongside one since my first year as an event worker, and hold a directors position in relation to a second. Dwyer & Buckle (2009) call this an insider

position, which means that, not only do I have prior insider knowledge of Safe Spaces in Aotearoa, I was also already a member of the group of people targeted by this study.

My position in the festival scene afforded me some key benefits, the first being that it was not difficult to conceive of appropriate topics and research questions to cover during the interviews. Having previously spent some time around Safe Spaces and been a part of countless conversations around harm reduction at festivals, I already understood much about the basic concepts surrounding them. Furthermore, whilst I have not personally used a Safe Space service before I have experienced feeling unsafe, overwhelmed, and in need of support, and have my own ideas around what I need to feel safe. I have also helped friends through similar situations, and had numerous conversations with people about their experiences around needing support. A significant reflection is therefore that my interview schedules were heavily shaped by my own pre-existing beliefs and understandings of what is important to the Safe Space phenomena. However, to recognise and mitigate this I also drew on what I had learnt from previous conversations with people in the festival industry about Safe Spaces, as well as the literature discussed earlier in this research. For example, Ruane (2017) highlighted the value of focusing some questions on what makes a good Safe Space member as they discussed the effectiveness of the peer relationship.

Being an insider researcher afforded me the benefit of greater access to participants, and whilst it is possible that some festivals may have been missed it also gave me confidence in my assessment of how many I did reach. To the best of my knowledge there are only four festivals that met my criteria not represented in this study, resulting in an estimated inclusion level of 80%.

My insider status meant that my participants either already had some idea of who I am, or at the very least the events I am involved with. As Dwyer & Buckle (2009) suggest, this permitted a high degree of automatic acceptance and willingness to engage which, along with the ease of shared language around events, facilitated deeper, more open sharing, especially from participants I have a closer relationship with. There were difficulties with this however, as Dwyer & Buckle (2009) notes can happen, sometimes there were instances where participants did not fully explain their experience because a shared understanding between us had been implied. This led to incomplete ideas within the

transcripts that otherwise may have added value to the research. These relationships therefore shaped the data collection phase in both positive and negative ways, sometimes eliciting greater detail, and other times eliminating it.

Finally, because I had an insider status and thus clear ideas about what a Safe Space should be, I was careful with each new code that I created and each theme that I developed. I made a point of questioning, is this truly the participants experience or could it actually in part, be mine? It was not always easy to separate the two as often I shared the participants' views, meaning extra care had to be taken to ensure they were presented from the participants perspective and not my own. In keeping with interpretive phenomenology this meant maintaining a focus on what the participant was saying about their personal experience of the Safe Space and considering how those experiences shaped their personal understandings. I found the act of creating meaningful codes to be as labour intensive as the literature states it is. I regularly had to remind myself that patiently going over and over the raw data would set me up for more quality theme development later on.

Participant Reflexivity

Participants' responses to the research project were very positive. Upon reflection this was likely because it held personal significance to each of them. The work these individuals do is unique and it was clear they each put a lot of themselves into it, making it easy for them to talk at length. Several stated they chose to participate only because they considered the subject to be important. Others stated the interview had encouraged them to think more about their Safe Space, or re-invigorated their drive to work in them. Most participants also indicated they were glad the subject was being acknowledged and hoped it would lead to positive real world outcomes.

Quality Criteria

As outlined above, the quality criteria followed in my study included an adaptable recruitment procedure that was accessible to participants which met the inclusion criteria, as well as a carefully detailed and dynamic interview procedure. Quality criteria also included a meticulous, iterative analytical process, during which the principles of interpretivist phenomenology and reflexivity were applied at each step, in conjunction with the inductive, semantic, and experiential analytical lenses. Furthermore, a clear audit trail

was kept in order to produce a replicable methodological procedure, and to uphold the ethical principles of informed consent, anonymity, and data storage.

Analysis

By employing the thematic analysis discussed in the previous section I was able to develop three superordinate themes which I discuss in the following section. These themes are; an active site of psychological intervention; the safety network; and complex, specialised, and world changing. Each major theme consists of a number of subthemes that work to develop a framework for understanding how Safe Space providers interpret their experiences with Safe Spaces, and how they understand the service they are providing.

Theme one: An Active Site of Psychological Intervention

Participants experienced the Safe Space as an active site of psychological first aid. The Safe Space was understood as a way to address the known risks associated with mental and emotional harm related to the festival environment, for the purpose of enhancing the well-being of individuals. In constructing the Safe Space as an active site of psychological intervention participants described four subthemes. First the Space was a tool for festival safety participants could use to address the harms associated with individual well-being. Next, Safe Spaces are highly variable environments as they respond to risk in a dynamic manner. Participants also constructed Safe Spaces as a place of mental and physical refuge whereby the physical space provides a sanctuary from the chaotic festival environment. Lastly, participants described the use of specialised staff as a key element in the provision of active psychological intervention within the Safe Space.

Subtheme 1.1: A Tool of Festival Safety

Participants understood the Safe Spaces as a tool that festivals can use to take responsibility for the harm that can occur during an event. They acknowledged the inherent risk to people's safety and well-being that exists within a festival, as well as their duty to keep people safe, and experienced the Safe Space as instrumental in addressing this.

> *(Fynn, Festival 1 organiser)*
> *"You can't have that many people together on such a broad spectrum of experiences and pushing boundaries in every direction and not find that some people may need to be caught [...] I think you can't create an environment where people will take the opportunity to experiment with drugs and whatnot, and then pretend it's not happening. It's not how it works."*

Here, Fynn linked a rich and diverse festival environment *(broad spectrum of experiences)* with his understanding of the way people respond to being in such a place *(pushing boundaries).* He acknowledged that festivals "*create*" this relationship, and implied a sense of responsibility for it by stating they cannot "*pretend it's not happening*". In this context, Fynn described the Safe Space as a way for the festival to engage with this responsibility, constructing it as a form of safety net where people can be "*caught*". This speaks to an understanding of the Safe Space as a tool which serves the function of capturing and caring for the way people behave at festivals.

Other participants also described a sense of responsibility that comes with running a festival, using phrases such as a "*duty of care*" (Steph, Cameron), "*customer care*" (Dexter) and "*host responsibility*" (Shannon). Relatedly, the Safe Space was experienced as a way to "*protect your patrons*" (Mia), supply "*crowd care provision*" (Dexter), and "*represent[ing] attendees and their needs*" (Steph). This shows participants made a strong connection between their need to manage the potential risks to their patrons, and their experience of the Safe Space as an effective means to do this. This effectiveness was also extended to managing the legal risks to a festival. Some participants drew attention to health and safety laws in Aotearoa, constructing the Safe Space as a tool to help keep them safe from liability. Jacob illustrated this by describing the Safe Spaces as not "*any different to me than a responsible host policy with alcohol*". Which demonstrates an understanding that, much like how host policies[1] are a tool used to mitigate the risks of alcohol, the Safe Space is a tool to mitigate the risks of the festival environment.

Whilst Fynn broadly discussed the festival environment, other participants gave more specific examples of how people can experience it. The festival environment was described as "*overwhelming*" (Fynn, Shawn, Steph, Troy, Cindy, Charlotte), "*intense*" (Dylan, Alison) and "*hectic*" (Francis, Mia, Troy). Participants understood that after potentially days of sleep deprivation, substance use, sun, and not enough food or water, people's "*nerves become raw*" and it is possible to "*tip over into an anxious, overwhelmed state*" (Fynn). They described seeing relationship breakdowns, mental discomfort, and crisis as personal issues and trauma surfaced. There was a common understanding that the festival environment has the potential to exacerbate all types of harm, describing this harm as "*inevitable*" (Charlotte) and "*highly likely*" (Shawn). In this context of psychological and social risk the Safe Space was understood as an

[1] Host policies are policies and plans made by the venue to manage and promote a safe environment in the context of alcohol consumption.

effective tool in reducing this harm and promoting emotional safety. Various participants described this tool as a way to "*assist with the fall out*" (Dexter), from "*difficult emotional situations*" (Shawn), in much the same way as you would have "*a first aid kit or people first aid trained*" (Shannon) for physical injury. This conveyed a sense that the Safe Space was understood as an almost obvious solution to a diverse range of issues, therefore constructing it as a tool that could manage safety in many different ways.

> *(Shawn, Festival 3 organiser)*
> *"I think it's important if we're bringing that many people into a space we need to damn well make sure that the facilities are gonna hold. Basic facilities, you know, like toilets, showers, accessibility, drinking water, like all of that kind of fundamental infrastructure in place, lighting, stuff like that. So that's kind of like on a ground level. And then kind of more on a kind of energetic level, it's kind of like, a holding field or that holding space that we can provide that."*

Shawn constructed the Safe Space as a practical approach to managing risk, framing the service within the context of other forms of infrastructure which help to cater to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs for festival attendees *(toilets, showers, water, lighting)*. He experienced the Safe Space as a way to meet people's emotional needs *(energetic level)* and associated this with the importance of making sure all "*the facilities are gonna hold*" for the people they are responsible for. Here, Shawn is not only acknowledging the festival's responsibility for providing practical safety in multiple different ways, but by including the Safe Space in this overarching approach to event safety he also constructs it as a pragmatic safety tool. Other participants framed this practical approach to managing risk as a "*no brainer*" (Jacob), a way to "*prepare*" (Charlotte) and "*deliberately*" (Spencer) fostering safety, demonstrating how the Safe Space was experienced as an intentional tool for festival safety.

Participants demonstrated a strong understanding of the relationship between the festival space, attendee behaviour, and risk of harm, and the ability of the Safe Space to address this so there are "*less people having a s**t time*" (Cindy). In the context of well-being and emotional risk, Dexter said "*we have to get our heads around the fact that this stuff is going to happen*" because "*if you don't dedicate a team to it, then you're kind of just rolling the dice*" (Jacob). Showing firstly that festival workers are motivated to recognise and address harm, and secondly

that Safe Spaces, as sites of active psychological intervention, are a pragmatic risk management tool that allows them to do so.

Subtheme 1.2: Highly Variable Environments

In the previous subtheme participants discussed a variety of issues that can cause problems during the festival. Next I expand on how this variety, along with the dynamic nature of risk, meant participants experienced the Safe Space as a highly variable environment. In this subtheme participants connected the highly changeable Safe Space atmosphere to the diverse range of harm that presents at the space. The Safe Space environment was understood as providing varying levels of support in response to this harm, resulting in a space that can look and feel different depending on the need at the time.

> *(Spencer, Space 10 manager)*
> *It can just be quite full on and then other times in the day it can be quite quiet. Maybe someone drops in and does some yoga or like, has a chat, just wants some light support. And then it can be like people vomiting or like losing their minds. I think support varies between someone who just wants a little bit of well-being support, to quite severe states of acute mental crisis.*

Here, Spencer links variations in the Safe Space atmosphere to the different ways in which people behave within the space. He experienced the support provided by the space as responding to these needs in the moment and as such, changes to the intensity of the Safe Space environment. This speaks to an understanding of the Safe Space as both dynamic and active as the environment changes to cater to acute and varied instances of harm. Spencer's depiction of a variable Safe Space environment was supported by others who described the space as "*a place to go if you've lost your keys or your marbles*" (Fynn) or "*for anyone that feels like no other space is for them right now*" (Steph). They experienced the Safe Space as "*unpredictable*" (Steph, Freya, Spencer, Talia), "*volatile*" (Dexter), and "*adhoc*" (Cindy), with an atmosphere that ranged from "*chill*" (Steph, Luca) to "*challenging*" (Ruby) in response to this harm.

The Safe Space was therefore constructed as a site of diverse experiences for both staff and attendees, in which anything is both possible and expected, yet simultaneously unknown. Several participants described this phenomenon by stating they "*never know who is going to*

walk through the door" (Mia, Cameron, Cindy). Participants described a range of issues they had to deal with, from people seeking help because of side-effects from drugs, to mental health and trauma and relationship fall out. See appendix E for a list of reasons that brought people into the Safe Space, given during interviews. Together, the understanding that the space can cater to a full range of situations and the experience of a changeable atmosphere illustrates the relationship between festival harm and the energy in the Safe Space.

> *(Freya, Space 6 manager)*
> *"I would say that people that are on drugs are more volatile and unpredictable and need more of the [...] need more access to different types of care. But we also have other like, we often have wee girls that may be coming by themselves or with their best friends. And they've, you know, they're just dehydrated, they need a place to sit and be looked after. They're cold and, you know, they haven't eaten. And then all the way up to sexual assault. Yeah. Various degrees."*

Here, Freya connects the nature of people who are on drugs with the necessity of being able to provide them with care specific to them. She goes on to discuss her experience with multiple other types of harm and links this to the Safe Space service as a form of resolution to it. In contrast to Spencer's talk on the variable Safe Space atmosphere, Freya focused on the pragmatic way it can provide varied solutions to "*various degrees"* of harm. As such she understood the Safe Space to provide a highly variable, yet practical service that actively addresses and reduces harm by considering the forms that harm can take, and offering variable solutions to it.

Within the variable environment subtheme participants also experienced the Safe Space through the lens of time. The time of day, and day of the festival were understood as having an influence on the activity within the space and the demands on their resources, with certain times of the night, and later days in longer festivals, eliciting more presentations. This was illustrated by various participants using language such as "*peaks*" (Troy), "*typically*" (Cindy), and "*depends what time*" (Dexter) when speaking to their experience of the ebb and flow of the Safe Space atmosphere. Despite this, due to the unpredictable nature of the Safe Space Cindy and Spencer also found that they can experience these peaks at any time of any day. Participants gave examples such as "*quiet murmuring*" (Troy), people "*throwing stuff*" (Mia), and attendees "*spinning with anxiety*" (Steph) to illustrate the types of situations they experienced in the space.

Psychological issues and physical behaviours could vary in length from five minutes to many hours, with staff providing active support on an as needed basis.

The people who seek care within the Safe Space were also experienced by participants as highly variable, "*we've learned that all kinds of people need time to reflect*" Fynn explained. The space was understood as being for anyone that feels unsafe, regardless of any social identities or the experience they are having, "*there isn't one specific kind of person who uses that space*" (Cindy). Participants discussed age, gender, disabilities, and festival experience as some of the factors that vary from person to person within the space. Fynn expanded on this by speaking to his experience with people's emotions being "*an infinite realm of possibilities*", thus constructing the Safe Space as an all encompassing site for the physical and emotional spectrum of the human experience.

Subtheme 1.3: A Place of Refuge

Safe Spaces were understood by participants as a place of mental and physical refuge from the issues outlined above. Through intentionally curated physical space the Safe Space was described by participants as disrupting the challenging situations patrons were facing by offering a place of respite from the festival environment. With a primary focus on mental health and well-being the Safe Space then allowed visitors to receive any care they might need to work through the experience they were having as a result of these issues.

> *(Spencer, Space 10 manager)*
> *I think it's about nurture too, we've talked about a space that sort of seems like a womb, it's nice and warm like a mother. The original thought in behavioural theory was that it was just about food but that was proved untrue pretty early on in psychology's history. They'll always go to the mother, as the soft, cuddly warm thing [over food].*

Here, Spencer is illustrating how he understands the Safe Space as giving a sense of safety by providing soft, womb-like comfort. He spoke to the notion that people seek out spaces that make them feel secure when in need of mental comfort and that this is facilitated by physical elements *(the soft, cuddly, warm thing)*. Spencer normalises the need for safety by using his knowledge of how psychology has shown us that safety and comfort are simplistic in regards to the fundamental ways in which people reach for them when they are feeling vulnerable.

As a place of refuge, the physical space was important to participants, as they demonstrated a strong comprehension of how an intentionally curated physical space can help alleviate the mental stress people are experiencing, because "*comfort is a form of safety*" (Cindy). This physical safety was understood to have a calming effect on people's psyche, which helped to bring them back into emotional equilibrium. This was established through the use of pillows, blankets, plants, and other "*soft cosy things*" (Amanda) to facilitate a sort of "*feng shui*" (Talia) aesthetic.

Within the physical space participants also spoke about the addition of interactive activities such as Jenga and art supplies, and sensory objects like squishy balls and soft toys. In the context of connecting with people's emotional needs through physical engagement, appealing to people's senses was understood as a way to reduce mental discomfort as it enabled them to focus on something external. This "*interactive*" (Dean) space was described by participants as "*different forms of mindfulness*" (Ruby) to "*sooth your nervous system*" (Jabob) by being "*distracted from the thing they were distressed about*" (Luca). Most participants showed an understanding for how giving people something to do with their hands or visual field could change their internal state and reduce anxiety.

All participants also spoke about the need for low stimulation within the Safe Space to better facilitate a sense of mental refuge for attendees. Noise was identified as a key factor in achieving this, with participants describing the space as "*quiet*" (Mia, Ruby, Talia, Spencer), with only "*background noise*" (Alison) or "*gentle music*" (Troy). Participants noted that Safe Spaces should be located away from loud music and busy parts of the festival as this helps to limit the stimulation on people's senses when they are in the space.

Gentle lighting was also considered essential by all participants as another form of low stimulation which helps to reduce people's mental load. Specifically soft, warm lighting was considered more welcoming and comfortable, whereas bright, cool lighting was considered harsh and abrasive. Various participants described red or bright fluorescent lights as something that "*freaks people out*" (Mia), or makes them become "*more psycho*" (Francis). The right lighting for a Safe Space was understood by participants to be "*very soft*" (Troy), "*low light*" (Luca) and "*dim*" (Talia) as this was considered less overwhelming. The significant emphasis on gentle lighting and comfort spoke to a wider understanding of the Safe Space as needing to create the sense of a safe and welcoming environment. This was understood as a way to give

the impression from the outside that it is a nice place to be, and therefore increase the likelihood people will want to engage with it. As such, participants experienced the Safe Space as a place of refuge and understood that this was achieved by creating an environment that was in contrast, not just to the over stimulating festival environment described above, but also to a wider judgemental culture.

> *(Shawn, Festival 2 organiser)*
> *"The essence of the word safe, you know, is to be free from danger. Threat. I think a part of it is like, acceptance, non-discrimination, and non-judgement, accepting people as they are. A lot of people who don't necessarily feel safe, also don't feel safe because they feel judged, and they feel excluded or not good enough. I think that kind of, like, that's another quality of the word safety, not just like, might die".*

Here, Shawn demonstrates his understanding of what it means for a person to feel safe, constructing safety as something that is about more than physical safety by extending it to psychological safety as well. He described a psychologically safe environment as one of *"acceptance, non-discrimination, and non-judgement"* and contrasted this to psychologically unsafe environments which make people "*feel judged", "feel excluded"* and *"not feel good enough"*. He therefore experienced the Safe Space as a site of complete acceptance for "*the whole person*" who could "*be there as who they are*" regardless of social identity or the choices they have made. This speaks to an understanding that the Safe Space is about more than just harm reduction and risk, it is a way to consciously think about a different kind of norm. The outside world can be psychologically damaging but the Safe Space can address this by actively constructing an environment which engages with an alternative way of doing things.

In the context of psychological safety and acceptance, the Safe Space was understood as a place of "*refuge*" (Dexter, Fynn, Felix). Various participants spoke about how it helps attendees "f*eel less cast out*" (Cindy), press the "*pause button*" (Ruby), and "*recenter and reground*" (Shawn, Jacob). The Space was experienced by participants as providing a sense of "*relief*" (Charlotte, Shawn) for attendees as it makes no demands of them, and they can feel like their safety is in someone else's hands. The Space was therefore understood as a service that provided psychological intervention by striving to deconstruct negative experiences and reconstruct a sense of control in people.

Subtheme 1.4: Specialised Staff

In the pattern of meaning that was constructed around staff qualities, participants linked both personal and professional characteristics with the successful provision of the Safe Space service. In a context where effective, accessible psychological first aid was the goal, staff in the form of peers were understood as key to an effective therapeutic relationship that aimed to reduce harm.

> *(Cameron, Space 2 manager)*
> *"And so when we're looking at bringing people into the space, even when they are mental health professionals, we think very carefully about what they're bringing. They need to at least have some comprehension of what it means to be at a festival."*

Cameron connected the process of recruiting Safe Space staff with the need to consider what they are going to contribute to the role. He argues that even people with qualities that seem desirable in a well-being space (*mental health professionals)* need to understand the festival specific harm in order to effectively provide care in this environment. The Safe Space service was constructed as largely intuitive as it is primarily created by staff while they are practising it, so it is important to consider what they bring to the moment. Cameron experienced the knowledge and skills staff possess as key to its success, and as such he understood the Safe Space to be a specialised care service that required staff with specific qualities to be effective.

All participants considered empathy to be a key personal trait for Safe Space staff, as well as "*compassionate*" (Cameron, Spencer), "*non-judgemental*" (Charlotte, Dexter), "*nourishing*" (Shawn), "*natural born carers*" (Dexter) and "*calm*" (Luca). These personality traits construct the Safe Space worker as highly altruistic, where the care they provide is all encompassing for the person in need, and not at all about the person providing the care. These qualities were seen as necessary for facilitating human connection and calming people down, allowing for the effective provision of psychological first aid. As Dexter said "*they're not going to share that they feel unsafe if they think that we're going to be a further unsafe place*", showing that staff are also understood to be a part of the setting as well as the service.

Participants considered professional qualifications in mental health, such as psychologists or mental health nurses to be helpful to aid in understanding people's needs within the Safe Space, but not as important as personal qualities. Whilst participants experienced the Safe

Space as a place of well-being, it was also understood as there to address acute needs, rather than historical trauma. They acknowledged the importance of staff being able to "*hold that space*" (Steph) for whatever need an attendee is expressing, however, many also felt it was unsafe for staff to try and provide a more indepth level of mental health care. A range of reasons for this were discussed, including a festival not being the "*appropriate time*" (Cindy), concern about the impacts of "*amateur psychologist stuff*" (Shannon), and "*treatment is an ongoing thing*" (Spencer) as opposed to something that can be done during festival time.

> *(Dylan, Festival 2 organiser)*
> *No, or not not in a safe way for, especially for people in our, you know, underground communities where there's a severe distrust for the medical health profession. And there's a severe distrust for police and distrust for anyone in a high vis jacket. You know, like, for some people will just be like, "oh, hell no".*

In this instance, in response to my question about other professional organisations being able to provide the kind of care the Safe Space does, Dylan stated "*No, or not in a safe way*". He spoke about the distrust some festival communities have for authority figures, and connected this to their help seeking behaviour as it related to their impression of officialdom. Dylan constructed Safe Space staff as "safe people", who attendees are more likely to approach for help due to their non-professional demeanour. Which demonstrated an understanding of the Safe Space as a site which achieves active psychological intervention by being relatable for people feeling vulnerable. In this sense, the specialised quality of the staff within the Safe Space is the peer status they share with the people attending the festival, providing care by way of being accessible to their community.

The concept of staff as "*peers*" (Spencer, Cindy, Cameron) was understood as important by most participants, as they found this relationship to be instantly more familiar to visitors of the Safe Space, which better facilitated the therapeutic relationship. Peers were described by some participants as "*not affiliated as a police officer, a medic, or a security guard*" (Luca), not "*anyone in a uniform*" (Cindy), and "*people you relate to [...] they don't come from a different community*" (Spencer). As Steph pointed out, "*there is a certain level of judgement*" people feel when engaging with services such as police or health care providers when they have "*not looked after themselves*" which makes people not want to ask them for help. Participants therefore understood the Safe Space as having an element of casualness or

non-professionalism which is used as a tool to reduce the barriers to help seeking for festival attendees.

Some participants constructed “safe staff” as having an awareness of their “*attitude*” (Charlotte) or “*biases*” (Cameron) around things such as drug use and gender, which helps staff remain non-judgemental so attendees do not feel shamed for being themselves. Others considered safe staff as those who can “*recognise their own trauma*” (Cindy) and “*know where their boundaries are*” (Talia) in a manner that allows them to draw on their own experiences, without making the therapeutic relationship unsafe for people. Steph called these “*appropriate people*” whom she considered key in delivering a space that is truly safe, rather than “*actually unsafe*”. This demonstrates an understanding that the qualities staff need to possess are quite complex and about more than just personal and professional traits. They also need to have a level of self awareness to deliver the service in a manner that is safe so that it does not result in more harm being done to the individual.

In the above theme of an active site of psychological intervention, Safe Spaces were described as tools for psychological safety, applied to manage the various risks that occur within a festival. As risk unfolds in a range of dynamic ways a need is created for dynamic intervention that offers a place of refuge for a variety of people who may be experiencing a variety of needs. Given this complexity and the wider social stigma that surrounds drug use and help seeking, specialist staff are required who understand what is needed for a festival Safe Space to act as an effective form of psychological intervention.

Theme two: The Safety Network

Within this theme participants illustrated an understanding of the Safe Space as both an independent service, and one that is connected to the whole event in a general sense as well as a practical one. This superordinate theme encompasses three subthemes. Firstly, Safe Spaces were experienced as promoting an event wide atmosphere of safety. They then work in collaboration with other internal safety services, and lastly they also connect with organisations external to the festival.

Subtheme 2.1: Enhancing Safety Event Wide

Participants described Safe Spaces as having an overall presence which functions to enhance overall safety throughout the festival. They constructed it as a central hub that facilitates event

wide conversations about well-being that then permeate the attendee experience, setting safer expectations event wide.

> *(Shannon, Space 5 manager)*
> *"We have a safe zone, look out for each other, go easy on what you're consuming. I think the best thing about it is the fact that it's pretty empty most of the night. That's all about the amount of education and time and energy we put into letting people know how to behave and also the kind of, I call it like a critical mass, of encouraging a culture of everyone looking out for each other."*

Shannon connects the presence of the Safe Space with an open dialogue about substance use and the behavioural expectations the festival has on its attendees. She associates "*education*" and putting "*time and energy*" into conversations with patrons, with a quieter Safe Space and a safer festival overall *(culture of everyone looking after each other).* This speaks to an experience of the Safe Space as a site that, by way of existing, allows the festival to engage with their audience around issues of safety in a direct manner that would be more challenging without the support of the Safe Space. Thus, the Safe Space was understood as a symbol that both represented and communicated the festival's commitment to safety with its patrons, which led to enhanced overall safety.

Many other participants also spoke about the importance of education and messaging as key strategies that can be used to create a safer event for everyone. There was a common understanding that communicating on issues such as drug use, sexual harm, and the way to treat each other helped to foster higher expectations of people and their behaviour during the festival. The Safe Space was experienced as a site that then "*amplifies*" (Fynn) the language participants used to promote safety and "*social responsibility*" (Alison), which in turn cultivates "*emotional sustainability*" and "*a kinder, more caring community*" (Fynn). Many participants described this as a "*culture*" (Dexter, Fynn, Shannon, Charlotte, Amanda) of care and safety they strived to develop throughout the event. Others saw the Safe Space presence as "s*etting the tone*" (Alison) by encouraging "*a more compassionate approach to every aspect of the festival*" (Cameron), which led to "*a very quick and real change*" towards "*people feeling safer*" (Dylan). This speaks to an experience of the Safe Space as an effective tool which can influence the way large numbers of people behave, and an understanding that its presence can be the difference between a safe event culture and an unsafe one.

Several participants spoke about wanting their whole festival to be seen as a Safe Space and the actual Safe Space was understood as one of the "*ingredients*" (Shawn) needed to achieve this. They believed that, by showing attendees the event itself is "*primed*" (Fynn) to offer a Safe Space, the intentions "*trickle down*" (Cindy) throughout the festival. Other participants emphasised the importance of an attitude of safety being applied throughout the whole festival by implementing the Safe Space ethos into event wide practices. Cindy said "*you can't just slap a Safe Space in the middle of an incredibly unsafe festival, you have to carry the responsibility of that in everything that you do*". Which speaks to an understanding of the Safe Space as something that should be a sign of dedication from the festival to uphold a commitment to well-being event wide.

> *(Troy, Festival 14 organiser)*
> *Less dramas, because people will be able to manage themselves more easily if we provide a space for them to do so. If we don't, the energy that can be created through the friction of not being able to get away causes frustration and anger and violence. It reduces the threat of violent behaviour, irrational decision making. That's the calming space that we provide for the for chilling out*

Troy constructed the Safe Space as a preventative space by connecting "*less dramas*" event wide with the intentional provision of a space which allows them to *"manage themselves more easily".* He understood that without the Safe Space people are often left to their own devices which can increase their risk to themselves and others. Most significant here, is the understanding that the Safe Space geographically separates people from whatever it is that is causing them harm. Troy understood that by creating this separation people are given the space to de-escalate, which in turn prevents risk *(violent behaviour, irrational decision making)* from spreading throughout the event.

Other participants described this as a "*dedicated space*" (Shawn) for preventing people from getting to "*a point where they're over-stimulated and go crazy*" (Luca) so they can "r*ecover and then go back to the festival*" (Mia). Which constructs the Safe Space not only as a preventative space, but also as a transitional space through which people are able to reconcile their experience before returning to the festival space in a less risky state. In this instance the Safe Space promoted the safety network in the form of festival culture, enhancing overall event

safety by providing a space which keeps people safe from themselves and others. By constructing the Safe Space as an effective harm reduction tool for acute instances of potentially serious risk, the resulting increase in event wide safety formulates a network of festival care.

Subtheme 2.2: The Internal Safety Network

Participants visualised the Safe Space as situated within an internal network of safety services that all work together to address safety in many different ways. They understood the Safe Space as both being supported by, and supporting other services to fulfil their specific roles thus creating a network .

> *(Dexter, Festival 4 organiser)*
> *"I feel like it's this holistic customer well-being space that encompasses all these areas from Know Your Stuff drug checking, to customer service, telling somebody where to go and where the nearest toilets are, through to psychological help."*

Dexter connected the care provided by the Safe Space *(psychological help)* to other forms of care provided by the festival, constructing the sum of these services as a "*holistic customer well-being space*". This speaks to an understanding of the Safe Space as part of a system that enables the festival to connect their audience to as many different forms of support as they may need. In the context of the internal network Dexter experienced the specific role of the Safe Space as one that addresses the mental and emotional aspects of the patron's needs.

Participants described a collaborative flow of communication between the Safe Space and the internal safety network. This allowed both for festival attendees to be connected to the most appropriate space, and for these services to share important information as it pertained to their roles. They discussed the relationship between the Safe Space and other services such as "*medics*" (all), "*security*" (all), "*festival management*" (Dylan, Dexter), "*KYSNZ*" (most), and "*alcohol management*" (Freya, Francis). They found the Safe Space could take the pressure off many of these other services by caring for the people who were experiencing mental health and well-being issues. This allowed the other services to focus their resources on the specific risk management tasks for which they are actually intended. Thus, the Safe Space was constructed as a multi-directional support service, reaching both outwards to connect with attendees, and inwards to connect with the internal safety network.

(Francis, Space 6 manager)

"It was always a real struggle to take a person who was wasted, and decide whether they were going to go to the medics who would say, "look, there's nothing medically that we need to do with this person, they just need to chill out", [other contracted safety team] going, "too much for us, can't deal with it". And then security going, "well, we can't babysit somebody". Yeah. And then the police going, "there's no crime involved. So we don't want anything to do with it". And there were various situations and various specific punters that just totally fell through the cracks"

Francis spoke about the challenge she faced in knowing which service to take an intoxicated person to prior to having a Safe Space at Festival 6. She demonstrated how other services were not well suited to address this type of harm, by illustrating the various reasons they refused care. She recalled "*various situations"* and "*various specific punters"* (slang for festival attendees) who could not be cared for effectively *(fell through the cracks)* because there was no suitable place or service to provide the care they needed. Thus, Francis understood the Safe Space as a unique service which is capable of providing support to people whose needs do not match the service output of any other festival facility.

All participants experienced the Safe Space as a type of missing link within the internal safety network which provided a distinctive and highly necessary form of harm reduction at festivals. They described this as filling "*a gap*" (Dexter, Dean) in the safety network that had previously gone unaddressed. In particular, participants emphasised that security and medics, who have historically been asked to manage crisis situations at events with no Safe Space, were considered not well suited to manage the emotional well-being needs of festival communities. Cameron reported that "*people used to be tied to trees*" in situations where they needed to be removed from the wider festival activities but there was no other space for them to go. He acknowledged that this approach would have left people with "*psychological scars*", subsequently framing the Safe Space as a service that could better cater to such situations. The experience participants had of the Safe Space fulfilling mental health and well-being needs which, historically, have not been considered, shows that festivals have started to broaden their understanding of harm to include psychological, as well as physical, risk. This speaks to a wider understanding of the Safe Space as necessary due to its ability to cater to this risk in line with the new way they are starting to understand it.

Participants emphasised an understanding that the purpose of Safe Space is to work with emotional rather than the physical risk, "*which other kinds of spaces can't necessarily do*" (Shawn). In the context of psychological risk participants emphasised privacy as one type of resource the Safe Space is able to offer. They understood that people who are experiencing challenging situations are more likely to improve if they do not feel visible to judgement from the wider festival. Troy noted that other private festival spaces are "*functional for a purpose that's not calming*" and highlighted that in these other spaces someone can burst in at any moment and disrupt the process of calming a person down. Conversely, the Safe Space was understood as a place that "*listen[ed]* " (Cameron, Luca, Cindy, Ruby), where people could have "*conversations*" (Shannon, Dexter, Steph), and "*slow[ing] you down to reduce your anxiety*" (Troy). Participants elaborated on this further by stating the Safe Space provides the "*soft skills*" (Ruby) to bring "*sensitivity to the situation*" (Jacob), distinguishing this from other festival services by highlighting the fact that this is "*not their job*" (Steph).

Furthermore, participants understood the Safe Space as a service that has the time to sit with someone for as long as is necessary, without the chance of being called away to handle anything else. As Charlotte said *"it's literally our job to be there and to have time for people"* whereas other festival services *"don't have the resources or the time to sit with them for the next hour while they get comfortable".* Steph called this matching of needs and service provision "*appropriate spaces for appropriate problems*" and Dean explained how "*everything's there for a purpose*". By emphasising their experience of the Safe Space as being distinct from other services participants demonstrated an understanding that it belongs within the internal safety network equally as much as other pre-established services.

Subtheme 2.3: The External Safety Network

Participants experienced the Safe Space as further connected to safety services outside of the festival itself. They understood the Space as a point of contact within the festival that facilitated both acute and non-urgent communication with external safety services in order to both continue the service of safety as it is needed, and develop the quality of the service.

> *(Steph, Space 4 manager)*
> *There are things that we couldn't deal with, like we can deal with suicidality, up until a point because we can't like, I can't force someone to stay in my space, I can't force*

> *someone to stay anywhere. I can't physically force anyone to do anything. And in the case of people who were quite intent on harming themselves, there is a necessity for having access to services off site where we can keep those people safe. Having connections with those, because we can't do that amongst 1000s of people. "*

Steph acknowledged that there are situations that the Safe Space is unable to manage, thus constructing the service as one that is restricted in its ability to keep people safe. She understood that sometimes people have an especially high level of risk *(quite intent on harming themselves)* and recognised the importance of having a way to engage external help to meet the needs of those people. This speaks to an understanding that there are limits to what is possible when it comes to keeping people safe within the festival site. Steph understood the need to connect people to appropriate external organisations in order to maintain a service of safety in particular circumstances.

The Safe Space was also framed as somewhere to hold space for such situations whilst these connections were made, demonstrating an understanding that participants felt it was their responsibility to make these connections. Various participants described the decision to contact these services as a judgement call based on "*someone in our care needs care we can't provide*" (Cameron) because "*we're not actually trained to deal with this*" (Mia), so "*we shouldn't be doing it*" (Freya). In particular they noted emergency psych teams for cases of acute mental health episodes, and police for instances of sexual harm. Which shows that participants recognised there are boundaries to the level of care that the Space can safely provide, and by connecting it to other service providers the Safe Space was constructed as one node in a wide reaching network of safety.

Participants also considered additional relationship building with agencies such as police and DHBs as an integral part of cultivating the Safe Space service. As safety provision doesn't stop until the risk of harm is no longer a concern, participants acknowledged the need to develop these relationships in order to grow the Safe Space service. As Steph said "*the authorities have a role to play*" and knowing the role of external agencies is important when it comes to directing people to the appropriate service. Fostering relationships with these services also allowed participants to better communicate the needs of their particular festival, and set realistic expectations for the kinds of support they may need. In one instance this also extended to relationships with other festivals, in which information provided by KYSNZ was shared with

events where drug testing was not present. Sharing information meant those events could be made aware of the risk of drug related harm in real time, and be better prepared to manage presentations both at the Safe Space, and other festival safety services.

> *(Dean, Festival 7 organiser)*
> *Some people you just have to get off the festival site, right? And that's a pretty worst case scenario [...] and where we got to is, key processes around escalation, you know, like, okay, this is a problem now [...] we actually had contact next of kin to get them to come and pick them up. You can't leave them on the road*

Dean showed an understanding that there is a bottom line that festivals have to work to in order to keep everyone safe *(some people you just have to get off the festival site).* Although he constructed evicting people as the least desirable outcome, he also drew attention to the fact that having a plan in place for this is a part of upholding a safety ethic. In this instance the person in need of care was connected to family outside the event rather than an external authority such as police or health services. This demonstrates a desire to take a less serious or punitive approach to the situation, whilst also addressing it in a practical manner. The person in need of care must leave the festival but "*you can't just leave them on the road*", therefore the pragmatic solution is to get a safe person to come and collect them. This not only eliminates the risk and helps the individual avoid any major consequences, but it also means diverting the issue away from local authorities when possible, which may help to better maintain those relationships with the festival. In effect, the Safe Space is one element of a wider safety network that works in collaboration with other teams within the network, which all have different roles within the festival. Where necessary, the Safe Space also reaches out to friends and family to connect people with their personal safety network.

In the above theme, the safety network, the Safe Space was described as a presence that enhances overall event well-being, with tendrils reaching throughout the event to both connect the festival audience to a culture of festival care, as well as practical internal and external services. Combined, participants illustrated the Safe Space as an integral part of a multifaceted event safety network.

Theme three: Complex, Specialised, and World Changing

This pattern of meaning speaks to an understanding that Safe Spaces are a complex service that caters to need in a very dynamic and exploratory manner. Participants constructed four subthemes encompassed within this superordinate theme. The first is growing the service, whereby participants described how the Safe Space evolves overtime to create a highly specialised service tailored to the festival it serves. In the subtheme, getting in and staying in, participants discussed a broad array of social and practical challenges associated with developing a Safe Space. Within the subtheme, representing hope for social change, participants described an understanding of the Safe Space as having the ability to positively influence on both the individual, and the wider community. Lastly, human centric harm reduction, demonstrates how participants understood the Safe Space as a new approach to risk management that focuses on individual well-being.

Subtheme 3.1: Growing the Service

Participants experienced Safe Spaces as constantly evolving over time to better meet the needs of the festival. They understood the Space as a product of its relationship with the festival, created in response to the needs produced by the festival context, and continuously changing through collaborative communication to improve on the provision of harm reduction.

> *(Jacob, Space 9 manager)*
> *"Well, it's just the fact that we're even having this conversation [...] people understand that if somebody knocks their head on the ground, and blood starts coming out, you need a medic [...] and it's just because we're used to it [...] the first time that ever happened no one would have known what to do. [...] and so that's, that's literally where we are in terms of these sorts of Safe Spaces. This is the stuff that's been happening for however long. [...] we're increasingly needing to confront this kind of, you know, the retrograde edge of that [...] it's very new [...] but I think it won't take long [...] you look at what happens without the Safe Space, and what happened with the Safe Space and it's kind of a no brainer."*

Jacob demonstrates an understanding of Safe Spaces as a relatively new response to known psychological harm. He implies that Safe Spaces are in an early phase of their development *(just the fact that we're even having this conversation)* by comparing them to the way we have learnt to respond to physical harm *(if somebody knocks their head [...] you need a medic [...]*

and it's just because we're used to it). He then explicitly states this by pointing out that, just like how knowledge on how to respond to medical events was once unknown *(the first time [...] no one would have known what to do)*, Safe Spaces responding to psychological harm is also new territory *(that's literally where we are in terms of these sorts of Safe Spaces)*. He goes on to acknowledge that whilst the Safe Space is a new concept, the harm they address is not *(this is the stuff that's been happening for however long).* As a result, Safe Space practice is currently developing in response to harm as it becomes even more known *(we're increasingly needing to confront [...] the retrograde edge of that).* He understood the Safe Space as an obvious solution to this harm that, whilst new, is also an effective form of harm reduction.

Dexter provided an example of this effectiveness when speaking about the change in presentations to the Safe Space once it was opened up to harm on a more general level, as opposed to having it tailored towards sexual harm. He experienced a "*drop off*" in sexual harm presentations and an "*increase in those seeking assistance in psychological issues*". Dexter understood this to be the result of providing "*the facility for people to actually talk*" and noted "*that changed everything*". This speaks to a strong belief of the effectiveness of Safe Spaces at reducing harm, both by being able to identify that harm and by being able to change in response to it.

All participants experienced the Safe Space as changing over time in response to the needs of the festival in which it served. They understood the Safe Space to connect the festival to its attendees, thus allowing these needs to become known and adapted to in following years. Participants described this evolution as "*organic*" (Fynn), "*grown naturally*" (Dylan), and "*every year we're better prepared*" (Cameron). The Space was described as a "*direct link*" (Dean) to attendees and a way to "*realise what is needed*" (Felix), because "*every festival has a completely different need"* (Mia). This speaks to a relationship between the space and the festival that is symbiotic in nature, with a focus on growing a tailored harm reduction service unique to each festival through a complex and continuous feedback loop. As Cindy said "*if you give the Safe Space enough time to come into its own, it becomes what the festival needs"*.

> *(Charlotte, Space 2 manager)*
> *"I wonder, down the line, whether there would be a possibility for a coalition of Safe Spaces around New Zealand to have a collective together to share stats, experiences and things like that, to have other people that know exactly what they're dealing with."*

Charlotte considered the potential value of sharing what they had learnt from being on the ground and immersed in observation of the Safe Space-festival relationship, with others who may wish to learn how to develop a Safe Space practice. They connected the possibility of a nationwide Safe Space collective and information sharing, with the possibility of educating others on Safe Space operation. This speaks to an experience of the Safe Space service as sophisticated, because knowledge around them is not readily available to people who are not already in the know. It also demonstrated how established Safe Spaces practitioners have a rich understanding of the way in which the Space operates, but also that they lack a platform to connect with a wider audience to better grow the service nationwide. The knowledge that Charlotte spoke about sharing is both explicit *(stats)* and experiential *(experiences)* which implies a level of complexity that is not easily accessible to others without ongoing collaborative communication. In this instance the Safe Space was understood as highly specialised due to the fact that their unique nature makes developing them difficult without insider knowledge.

In the context of growing the service nationwide Dexter stated *"it's a very exciting time for this space in the industry"* and Cameron said *"as an event grows [...] risk also grows [...]".* Which speaks to an experience of the space as both novel and unknown, as well as an understanding that it will continue to grow in unexpected ways within the events industry, due to its effectiveness at managing risk.

Subtheme 3.2: Getting in and Staying in

Participants discussed a broad array of challenges associated with developing and maintaining the presence of a Safe Space at festivals. These challenges included both practical and social issues, many of which are ongoing and related to the novel nature of the practice.

> *(Cameron, Space 2 manager)*
> *"And to have that responsibility is one thing, but to turn that into a reality, you're getting a lot of people to do a lot of mahi [work] to get there, and logistically, like, it's taken us six, seven years to get to a point where we're a fully fledged functioning organisation with a solid core crew, and feel like we're really doing the job that we came here to do."*

Here, Cameron talks about how he understands the role of a Safe Space developer to be a serious duty *(to have that responsibility is one thing).* However, transitioning that awareness of a

duty of care into practice means hard work for many people. He experienced the Safe Space as needing a lot of time *(it's taken us six, seven years)* to evolve into a service that competently fulfils that duty *(fully fledged functioning organisation).* This first shows a belief that there is a sense of responsibility for people's well-being that needs to be adopted by Safe Space providers, and second, that actualising this responsibility can take a significant commitment to the cause. It was also implied that knowing how to do this is not a simple task, as the service is complex in nature and therefore challenging to effectively implement *(feel like we're really doing the job that we came here to do)*. Further to this, Cameron demonstrated a sense that they have progressed to achieve this *(a solid core crew)*.

The initial challenge experienced by all participants was grounded in the reality that the concept is not well recognised or understood. Several participants noted that they had seen such spaces at festivals overseas, but nothing like it existed in Aotearoa at the time they pursued creating one, meaning they had very little to go off when starting the process. Participants all shared the experience having to work out what the Space needed and how to implement it, describing a process in which a "*figure it out*" (Fynn, Alison), "*give it a go*" (Dexter) " or *"make it up*" (Spencer, Freya) approach felt like the only option. Cindy explained that "*it kind of just grew from an idea or a concept*", however, according to some participants, still "*nobody knows what it's doing*" (Dexter). This highlights a shared experience amongst participants of a lack of industry knowledge around Safe Spaces and the subsequent challenge of creating one it presented them with. As such, the Safe Space was understood as a new and complex service still under development.

From here, all participants discussed staff recruitment and financial implications as challenges they face with maintaining the Safe Space practice, and many also discussed placement. Given the complex nature of the Safe Space service, Safe Space managers experienced challenges around finding enough skilled volunteers for each event, and festival organisers were challenged with finding someone to develop the Space. In response to a Safe Space manager stating she felt concerned she did not have any qualifications, Troy stated "*we don't know anyone who does either*". Which highlighted the fact that this type of harm reduction work is relatively unexplored, meaning those who practise it are unable to rely on any official training or specific qualification, which then falls back on Safe Space managers and festivals organisers.

The Space was further understood as something that did not generate any revenue, meaning participants needed to find the money to run it from elsewhere within their budget. Tents, marquees, staff costs, seating, decor, power, and warmth were all considered necessary budget items which can make the running of a Safe Space challenging or even prohibitive for some events. Furthermore, participants highlighted the need to carefully consider where in the festival was best to place the Safe Space so as to make it visible and accessible, but not over stimulating for the people who needed it. One participant chose to have the Safe Space on a main thoroughfare as they felt it helped to show patrons it was supported by the event and "*not a secret little thing [...] where psycho people go*" (Dylan). Others shared experiences of the Space being too far away for people to find, or being too close to the speakers for medics to hear people's heartbeat, "*it's a challenge every year*" Alison explained.

> *(Dylan, Festival 2 organiser)*
> *"Cynical or objectionable attitude, some people have taken towards it [...] from people who are in the scene enough to possibly change people's minds. But if you'd seen what I've seen, it's one of the hardest parts of the job is people with these these toxic or problematic attitudes that can be, like, it can be potentially weaponized in a way that is unsafe"*

Dylan experienced *"cynical or objectionable"* attitudes from some people towards the presence of the Safe Space at Festival 2. He expressed concern for the potential of these people to disrupt the success of the service because of the position they held within the community *(people who are in the scene enough to possibly change people's minds).* He also experienced a significant challenge in managing these attitudes in a manner that allowed him to keep people safe *(it can be potentially weaponized in a way that is unsafe).* This speaks to an understanding that Safe Spaces can be a place of contention within communities that do not entirely agree with the Safe Space ethos. Dylan's concern that these attitudes can be *"weaponized"* also shows that he experienced the Safe Space as a polarising topic for some, which required negotiation to establish the Safe Space as a concrete support service. His willingness to engage with the matter regardless, speaks to an understanding that the Space is important for the overall well-being of the community.

Other participants also experienced a significant challenge with the opposing attitudes they met from subsections of the festival culture. In some cases this was considered to be the result of

people's perceptions of individuals who use drugs, who fail to see the value in harm reduction. Dexter described this attitude as a "*totalitarian*" approach by those who do not want to cater for the problems they consider people create for themselves. Others experienced "*pushback*" (Shannon) from a type of 'man-up' culture which sees help seeking when vulnerable as a weakness, and the Safe Space as a form of coddling people. Amanda also experienced "*a lot of politics*" and "*patriarchal attitudes*" as people with old ways of thinking attempted to diminish the value of the Safe Space by attacking those who were working to create it. Dylan shared how overcoming these schools of thought caused "*social turmoil and psychological pressure*" for Safe Space creators. The very different perspectives towards safety participants encountered, along with the stress of having to negotiate this and the evidence of their perseverance to continue with the work regardless, speaks to the complexity of the Safe Space and its many challenges.

Participants often highlighted how challenging Safe Space work is for staff. The work was described as "*so intense*" (Mia), "*a constant battle*" (Cameron),"*exhausting and traumatic*" (Freya) and "*emotionally taxing*" (Ruby). Several participants expressed the need to protect staff from this emotional impact by implementing boundaries for the level of care they provide, and checking on their well-being after difficult shifts. Participants shared experiences of "*one of the worst anxiety attacks I'd ever had*" (Cameron), "*my hair fell out*" (Steph), and "*I would just bawl my eyes out for like, hours*" (Mia) as examples of how challenging their work can be. Some of the situations participants illustrated included "*alcohol poisoning*" (Mia), a person who was "*absolutely convinced they were dead*" (Cameron), and people getting "*really sexual"* (Shannon). This not only illustrated how specialised the Safe Space work can be, but also highlights the importance of having staff who are capable of managing complex issues. Furthermore, it shows the psychological toll this work can take on staff and emphasises the need to ensure they are also given appropriate support from the festival organisation.

Subtheme 3.3: Representing Hope for Social Change

Within this subtheme, participants experienced the Safe Space as being uniquely placed to influence people in a way that can generate positive social changes which reach outside the festival. They understood the space as being able to both support the individual in a worthwhile and lasting manner, as well as being able to deconstruct wider, harmful personal and social dynamics in a way that promotes healthier communities.

(Alison, Festival 8 organiser)

"I actually think that festivals are really important for people [...] festivals have their place in contributing to our society. [...] I think that having a Safe Space, one, will encourage people to come back and do something that is potentially confronting for them because they know they've got somewhere safe to go [...] I also think that it's important for human beings to feel supported and cared for. And that's what a Safe Space does. On the broader picture, the event organiser [...] cares for me, because they provided me a space. Two, there was a person in there that cared for me while I'm feeling vulnerable and anxious and overwhelmed. For some people, the whole world's against me, I'm alone. Immediately they are shown that they're not, they take that away with them. I know that probably sounds a bit ridiculous, but I actually think that I actually think it's that important."

Alison speaks about a belief that festivals can have an impact on the wider world *(festivals have their place in contributing to our society)* and constructs the Safe Space as a site that can facilitate meaningful moments for people. She understands the Space as encouraging people to experience personal growth *(do something that is potentially confronting)* and argues that this is because of the sense of support it provides *(because they know they've got somewhere safe to go).* She also demonstrates a belief that the Safe Space can assist people who are feeling cast out *(the whole world's against me, I'm alone)* to feel reconnected to their community *(immediately they are shown that they're not)* and acknowledges the lasting impact this can have *(they take that away with them).*

Alison shows an empathetic understanding of the notion that life can be hard for individuals in general, and that not everybody feels supported by the people around them. She demonstrates an understanding of the innate importance for human beings to feel connected to each other, and experienced the Safe Space as fostering this sense of community in people. Other participants built on this by showing an understanding of the Safe Space as a platform that encourages people to care more for each other. They understood that by promoting the Safe Space ethos they can inspire a shift in people's attitudes that can have a lasting impact, and be carried over into the world outside of the festival. As Cindy said "*it's that whole feed a man a fish, teach a man to fish mentality*", meaning that by promoting the idea of the Safe Space people are able to take the lessons they learn about caring for themselves and their community home with them. In this context of fostering wider social change and more caring communities,

participants understood the Safe Space as representing hope for real world change in the way people behave. Various participants described this as "*trying to make positive growth*" (Dylan) that "*doesn't just stay in the festival, it goes out into the world and creates change*" (Amanda), by "*overflow[ing] into other aspects of people's lives*" and creating "*cultural change*" (Charlotte).

> *(Ruby, Space 9 manager)*
> *"I think of it also as being like an interruption, sort of, like to the status quo. You know, people, a lot of people, like, I think, especially women have experienced a lot of harm from the sort of micro aggression level to the harassment level to like, all the way through to assault throughout their lives, to the point that I think a lot of our communities have, at times, been quite complacent toward it. And so it's really about trying to interrupt those cycles of harm and interrupt the complacency while providing support and hopefully like a little bit of a healing space for people who have experienced consent breaches."*

Ruby experienced the Safe Space as a means to disrupt long standing, harmful power dynamics *(an interruption, sort of, like to the status quo),* particularly those that work to oppress women. She understood overlooking harm done to women as the norm *(a lot of our communities have, at times, been quite complacent toward it)* and framed the Safe Space as advocating for these people in a manner that works to combat this norm *(interrupt those cycles of harm and interrupt the complacency)*. Furthermore, Ruby hoped that by doing so people would feel supported in that moment, which in turn she hoped would allow them to heal from their wider experiences of consent breaches in a more meaningful way.

Ruby demonstrated an understanding that people can experience harm on a wide scale throughout their lives and how this harm has been perpetuated by enduring social frameworks. Jacob built on this by sharing his understanding that, within the festival scene, the people being harmed tend to be those with less power and influence, making it more difficult for them to feel able to speak up. He explained how there has been "*a tradition of seeing those people as collateral damage*" due a belief held up by the community that harm is inevitable, therefore a certain level of it is accepted. However, by providing a platform to advocate for all people the Safe Space was experienced as a tool that could work to dismantle inequality and harm on a wider social level. It was understood that by challenging those beliefs and the status quo that upholds them (such as patriarchal dominance) a voice could be given to those less powerful.

Within the context of widespread social change, participants understood the Safe Space as a site for "*changing social norms and culture*" (Amanda). Ruby explained how she had "*seen the difference it makes*" to people when they are treated with care and respect during a difficult time. Cameron expanded on this by speaking to his experience of people telling him their time in the Safe Space "*changed the way they look at a lot of the world*". He explained that this was because many people do not have much experience with talking about their emotions or being fully supported through a difficult situation, and the impact this can have on people can be "*really powerful*". Amanda illustrated this by providing an example of "*young masc people*" who she experienced as unaccustomed to having "*open conversations and vulnerable connection*". They were able to experience this within the Safe Space which helped to "*build a little bit of that trust*", and teach them that it is okay to be vulnerable going forward.

Subtheme 3.4 Human Centric Harm Reduction

Participants experienced the Safe Space as a more philanthropic approach to harm reduction that focuses on the needs of the individual. Many participants experienced the Safe Space as a reflection of a wider emerging cultural shift around our perception of harm and risk management that has more of an emphasis on mental health and well-being. Given the success participants experienced Safe Spaces having in this sphere, they also expressed a real drive to see the service developed into a more mainstream concept.

> *(Freya, Space 6 manager)*
> *"There's a real cultural shift [...] I think also what's helpful for that is with the asking for Angela[2] stuff and just in general society being, you know, there's more conversation around sexual assault and things that are unacceptable, and consent, [...] we now have more punters coming to us for help [...] there was a couple years there where I was kind of overwhelmed around sexual assault. Because it seemed like there was more of it, but in fact, there wasn't, it was just that people were coming and asking for help."*

Freya associated a change in attitude amongst the wider society *(there's a real cultural shift)* with changes in the way people respond to unwanted behaviour *(what's helpful for that is [...] there's more conversation around sexual assault and things that are unacceptable).* She noted

[2] Ask for Angela is a way for people who are feeling vulnerable to discreetly signal they need help, by approaching a staff member and asking to speak to Angela.

feeling “*overwhelmed*” when these changes first started, as it brought the issue of sexual assault, which had always been present but previously gone unnoticed, into the light. This not only demonstrates the effectiveness of the Safe Space as a help seeking platform, but also constructs it as a reflection of broader social changes understood to be happening in Aotearoa.

Several other participants expressed a belief that culturally, society has evolved in recent years to change the way we see harm. They noted that the wider conversation around drug use, mental health, and consent has opened up and this has helped to create a shift in people’s perceptions of harm. They experienced the Safe Space as helping to facilitate this change amongst the festival community by “*normalising*” (Shawn) asking for help and addressing the social stigma around mental health and drug use. Although one participant also highlighted that Aotearoa “*as a whole*” (Dylan) still needs to work on the way mental health is viewed and a “*major flaw*” is how social stigma still discourages people from reaching out for support.

Participants understood that more traditional risk management tends to come from organisations that make people feel judged, and this judgement makes people shy away from help seeking. The Safe Space was understood as a shift away from “*punitive thinking*” (Ruby), which was described as putting people in a sterile room monitored by authority, making them leave the festival, or causing them to feel like a burden. The shift was instead towards “*if you need something, we’re here to care for you*” (Dean) because “*they're not being bad people, they're just having a bad moment*” (Alison) which implies a very philanthropic understanding of the Safe Space service. The Space was therefore constructed as a service which shows people to feel the festival cares about them, and cares about turning their negative experience around, regardless of the choices they may have made.

As a result of this wider cultural pressure to better the way harm is addressed, some participants felt that the expectation on harm reduction at festivals is higher than it was ten years ago, approximately when Safe Spaces first started emerging at festivals in Aotearoa. There is now a push for change as people “*take a stand*” (Dylan) against unsafe environments by refusing to be involved unless their safety is better catered for. Dexter shared an understanding that Safe Spaces are now becoming more “*common place*” at events as a result. He expressed that this is a very fast evolving part of the festival industry in Aotearoa, and indicated a belief that we will continue to see growth in this area at a rapid rate. Steph also supported this line of thinking by

explaining how festival attendees are starting to better understand what a Safe Space is for, and therefore they are beginning to see them as "*normal*" or "*an expectation*" (Steph).

Throughout the interviews the terms "*provide*" and "*service*" were frequently used by participants, giving a strong sense that they experienced Safe Spaces as supplying care outwardly, without any expectation of something in return. This was described by some participants as "*there's no KPIs attached*" (Fynn) and "*this is not a revenue making thing*" (Dexter), rather it is a purely humanitarian agenda, constructing the Safe Space service in opposition to the consumerist values of the festival. Through a non-judgemental ethics of care that allows healing, the Safe Space models an approach that could be taken outside of the festival by festival goers. As Ruby explained "*at its best, a Safe Space is transformative"*, thus indicating the potential of the Safe Space to influence behaviour on personal and social levels.

> *(Dexter, Festival 4 organiser)*
> *"As an industry, we can maybe make a collective approach or standardise our approach to this space so that it does have a purpose, this is what it's for. And we can actually put some decent documentation behind it or guidelines on how we can operate these spaces, that we can then get buy in from people like the DHBs [government health bodies], we can get buy in from the police, we can get buy in from you Know Your Stuff, or the health board, or even central government and say, hey, look, this is, this is what we're trying to do. To keep our kids safe. This isn't just about Front of House drug testing. This isn't just about alcohol and liquor licensing control. This is about looking after people"*

Dexter speculated about the possibility of the festival industry in Aotearoa working together *(a collective approach)* to universally define what a Safe Space does *(so that it does have a purpose, this is what it's for).* He expressed a desire to clearly define how the Space functions *(decent documentation [...] guidelines on how we can operate these spaces)* so that other organisations can better understand what the Space is about and hopefully support it. He demonstrated an understanding of the Safe Space as being about more than just what it appears to be on the surface, it is also about a deeper desire to care for people by keeping them safe *(this is about looking after people).*

There was a strong drive amongst participants to continually explore and improve the service the Safe Space provides. As Dexter said *"it's in its embryonic stages, we've got a long, long, long way to go in this world".* There was an understanding that the knowledge around what these spaces can do and how they operate may exist within the festival industry in Aotearoa, however, it was also considered fractured and disjointed. Participants felt that each time a new group ventured into creating a Safe Space they would "*reinvent the wheel*" (Shannon). They expressed the need to share known experiences of Safe Spaces with the community in order to improve the initiative and define what it is for, so a safe, standardised approach to harm reduction can be developed nationwide. This was framed in the context of creating an awareness for the Safe Space agenda, with a view to change the way people see harm reduction on a wide scale. Participants therefore believed Safe Spaces warrant support and funding from central government as they understood it to perform "*key mental health work"* (Shannon) that has the potential to have a big impact on events and generations to come.

Participants understood the Safe Space objective to be making sure that people are happy and cared for, regardless of why they are there. They described this as a "*human interaction*" (Cameron) that is "*present*" (Charlotte) and focused solely on the needs of the individual as a form of humanist, non-sensational care. Participants often associated Safe Spaces with the recent law change and emergence of legalised drug testing, as well as the opening of the conversation about sexual harm and mental health, "*it's all one thing*" Dexter explained. There was a prevalent understanding that harm can have a long term impact on people and "*as a society, now we're not going to stand for that*" (Fynn) when instead, the Safe Space can "*prevent[ing] further harm from happening*" (Jacob).

In the final theme of Safe Spaces as complex, specialised, and world changing discussed above Safe Spaces were described as a constantly evolving service that grows to meet the specific needs of the festival it serves. The challenges experienced by participants show how the Safe Space is complex, not just because of the harm it addresses, but also because of the way it must adapt to overcome both practical and social challenges. As the culture of the Safe Space integrates with the festival culture the Space was considered to have the potential to influence personal and social behaviour in a positive way. This change is in part influenced by the Safe Space's human centric approach to harm reduction that focuses on individual care, creating a complex, specialised and world changing phenomena.

Discussion

Summary of findings

This study set out to further our knowledge of how festival organisers and Safe Space managers in the festival community of Aotearoa understand and shape the service they are providing. My phenomenologically informed thematic analysis produced three superordinate themes and below I consider each of these themes in relation to my research question. Starting with the Safe Space as a site of active psychological intervention, I then move on to examine their role within internal and external festival safety networks. Finally, I consider the complex, specialised and world changing nature of the Safe Space phenomena as it was constructed by participants.

The creators of Safe Spaces at festivals in Aotearoa made sense of the service as a site of active psychological intervention, used to address multiple known risks present within the festival environment. Given the varied and unpredictable nature of acute harm reduction as it pertains to mental health and well-being, the Safe Space environment was experienced as a dynamic, highly changeable site of active well-being intervention. The provision of psychological first aid was achieved using physical space designed to be comfortable, calming, and interactive, and most importantly through the presence of peers to facilitate the therapeutic relationship. These peers were specialised staff who possessed altruistic personality traits, an understanding of the effects of the festival experience, and sometimes professional mental health skills. This shows that Safe Space providers understand the service to be founded on mental health and well-being, and structured around the concept of connecting with people's internal states in order to facilitate a sense of calm. Safety was achieved in multiple ways, including through the use of relationships and group membership which signalled that the space was not associated with any festival authority, something that does not exist elsewhere in the safety network.

Participants of my study made sense of the service by situating it within a wide reaching network characterised by safety. The Safe Space itself was seen as facilitating the creation of a more compassionate and considerate atmosphere that could be felt event wide. It was also connected to an internal network of festival safety services, each addressing risk in their own unique way. Previously this network had failed to capture psychological harm and well-being and the Safe Space has become a way to address this gap. Participants understood and

constructed important boundaries and limits to what the Safe Space could provide which were addressed by connecting it to safety services external to the event. The Safe Space service was therefore understood as one integral part of a larger team designed to encompass risk from as many angles as possible. Safe Spaces are seen as an effective solution to this risk by participants, who demonstrated a belief that they successfully fulfil a role that had previously gone unaddressed. As well as being part of a logistical network which encompassed services such as medics and police, it was also imagined as part of a wider social network. The values embodied in the Safe Space also diffused outside of the Space to imbue the festival with the ethics of non judgemental care, consent, and respect.

This intricacy was explicitly engaged with by participants when they described Safe Spaces as a complex, specialised, and world changing phenomena. Through a collaborative relationship with the event the Space evolves over time to better represent the unique demands of a given festival. The process of starting and developing the presence of a Safe Space brought with it a number of practical and social challenges. Participants described their experience of Safe Spaces as a relatively new and undocumented concept, meaning they had little guidance or a cohesive knowledge base to draw from to achieve their Safe Space goals. As a result they had to design the practice themselves and continuously work on it as they learnt and as the festival developed. They also sometimes experienced having to justify the principles of the Safe Space approach to others with oppositional attitudes, who did not see the value of harm reduction or consider it an appropriate response to the issues the festival was facing. Participants expressed how these conflicting attitudes, along with the sometimes intense nature of the issues managed within the Safe Space, can make the work overwhelming, and the psychological toll this takes on staff can lead to them needing extra support.

Despite the challenges, Safe Spaces represent for some, the possibility of widespread social change as they teach people new ways of thinking about harm and caring for people on a wider scale. They depict a shift in the way festivals understand risk, away from risk management and reduction and towards holistic well-being. Participants shared a belief that there has been a wider cultural shift throughout Aotearoa towards a more human centric rather than risk oriented approach to harm reduction, and hoped that by embodying this attitude within the space they could facilitate cultural change. As such, participants made sense of the Safe Space service as about more than just acute harm reduction, it was also a site of socially significant change. Whilst the concept is still in its early years of development its ability to have a lasting, positive

impact on both the individual and the community had already been experienced by participants, and there was a belief that this could continue to improve and be amplified over time.

In summary, this study found that Safe Spaces were understood as a necessary form of psychological intervention at festivals. This is both because of the nature of the festival environment, and the wider judgemental culture within which festival goers live. Safe Spaces as the site of psychological first aid were embedded within multiple networks related to health and safety, and also acted as an independent well-being network by shaping culture and behaviour outside of the Safe Space. They are an important element of a complex and ever evolving, sometimes threatened, approach to harm reduction that centres around individual well-being, flourishing in contrast to a consumerist, risk-oriented approach. Combined, this represented a multifaceted ethic of care which has also subsequently taken a significant toll on those working to make it happen.

My Study in the Context of Wider Literature

Globally, there is a significant gap in academic research on the role of Safe Spaces at festivals. What has been done was conducted in the UK, Europe and the USA with a focus on user experience (Ruane, 2015; Ruane, 2017; and Carvalho et al., 2015), with some data collected from Safe Space producers in terms of how they understood this user experience (Ruane, 2017). The present study offers a novel focus on Safe Space providers and festival organisers as those who facilitate the provision of the Safe Space. Understanding their experience and interpretation of these Spaces addresses an important gap in the literature because these are the people who have the vision and behind-the-scenes experience of Safe Space development. Therefore, it is necessary to make sense of the way they comprehend the Safe Space in order to understand its concept, the immediate impact it can have on users of the service and the wider value it adds to festival communities and collective social change. Next I consider the findings of my study, from the perspective of Safe Space providers, in the context of previous literature on Safe Space from the perspective of users.

Comfort, Peer Support, and the Kosmicare Intervention Model

The need for a comfortable physical space (Ruane, 2017; Carvalho et al., 2015; Gregorio, 2012; and Karpetas, 2003) and the value of peer support (Ruane, 2017; Carvalho et al., 2015; Hoover et al., 2021; and Fileborn et al., 2020) has been acknowledged in previous literature. Participants in my study also highlighted how imperative these elements are to the successful

provision of a Safe Space. I discuss these elements below by framing them within the context of Carvalho et al.'s (2015) Kosmicare Intervention Model in order to demonstrate how these components are employed in much the same way by Safe Space service in Aotearoa as they are overseas.

The five principles of the Kosmicare Intervention Model were developed by Carvalho et al. (2015) with the intention to create an evidence-based model to lend legitimacy to the practice, specifically of psychoactive substance crisis intervention. However, these principles were also endorsed by my participants outside of the context of psychoactive substances, demonstrating the validity of this model as a Safe Space practice tool.

My findings were strongly aligned with two of Carvalho et al.'s principles, adding shared agreement to what is known about the importance of comfort and peer support within the Safe Space. In the context of comfort, the principle of *offering a safe, supportive, and comfortable care space* encompasses quiet, warmth, and privacy where basic needs such as hydration can be met. My participants also discussed these factors along with the significance of lighting, physical comfort, and atmosphere as elements that contribute to the well-being of the consumers of the Safe Space service. In the context of appropriate staff Carvalho's et al. principle of *facilitation* explored the importance of developing a trusting relationship by using experienced and trained peers to establish a connection. Participants in the current study also discussed how the therapeutic relationship was key in delivering the Safe Space service, and that this is facilitated by having staff who come from the festival community, making them instantly more relatable. Further to this, Carvalho et al. (2015) and Ruane (2015; 2017) discuss altruistic personality traits, knowledge of festivals, and the value of professional experience, as peer qualities which contribute to the success of the Safe Space. These elements were also endorsed by participants in the current study, demonstrating a shared agreement across literature on what constitutes an effective staff member.

Findings from my study map well onto two of Carvalho et al.'s other remaining principles, however not all elements contained within these principles were discussed by all my participants. The principle of *assessment of physical safety and information collection*, discusses how staff should be assessing what, how much, and when a particular substance had been taken, and observing a person's physical condition and symptoms. Not all participants in the current study discussed collecting information on the people coming into the Space, and

their focus was always not on the substances they had ingested. However, the intention to assess a person's safety by evaluating their physical presentation, and enquiring about their circumstances was consistently present across participants. They discussed adapting the service to meet each person's individual needs and whilst drug use was a consideration sometimes, it was not always the focus. Despite the Kosmicare Intervention Model's focus on substance use the same assessment principles were applied by my participants across different presentations to the Safe Space, demonstrating the generalisability of this model to other forms of harm observed by participants.

Carvalho et al 's principle of *ensuring safety*, highlights the importance of keeping individuals safe from themselves and others and is discussed in relation to the content of the speech staff use in order to avoid escalation. Participants in my study understood the Safe Space as a tool for keeping people safe from themselves and others as the space separates the individual from the wider festival environment and facilitates de-escalation. Speech content was not overtly discussed by my participants beyond a non-judgemental and calm approach to interacting with people. However, the basis of this fourth principle is providing intervention in a manner which facilitates safety for everyone, which is evidenced in the current study.

Finally, Carvalho et al. (2015) principle, *to promote health and globally reduced risk*, is a harm reduction practice which uses the values of pragmatism, humanism, and proximity to mitigate drug related crises in the setting in which they occur. This approach, which has already been generalised to nightlife and recreational settings, aims to reduce the wider negative impacts of substance use by replacing high risk behaviours with less detrimental ones. This principle can be broadly applied to Safe Spaces in Aotearoa as their on the ground approach aims to mitigate the harmful effects of both drug use and other festival harm, in part by educating patrons on safe drug use, consent, and a culture of caring for others. Thus, the method of addressing festival harms in a pragmatic and humanistic manner in the setting in which they occur, was endorsed by participants as a way to reduce harmful behaviour on a wider scale by way of education.

By considering the five principles of the Kosmicare Intervention Model I have demonstrated that Safe Spaces in Aotearoa follow a similar model for harm reduction as those overseas, regardless of the overseas focus on drug use. Despite the diversity amongst festivals represented in the current study and overseas examples, the same basic principles for providing

care remain the same, showing that findings from my study are likely to be transferable across a range of different contexts.

In addition to this, my research also adds to our understanding of the importance of a comfortable space by highlighting *why* the physical components of the Safe Space are important. Previous literature (Ruane, 2015;2017 and Carvalho et al, 2015) also drew attention to elements such as lighting and pillows within the Safe Space, however they do not discuss the role these play in facilitating the Safe Space service. My research showed that the physical presentation of the space not only helps people feel more inclined to approach it, but also helps to calm their internal state by engaging their senses in a soothing manner when they are inside it. This concept can be understood through the lens of environmental psychology which tells us that a relationship exists between a person and the physical environment, and through this relationship a person's internal state can be influenced (Steg et al., 2018). Thus, creating an environment that feels safe through the use of intentional spatial design can enhance well-being. Whilst the characteristics of an appropriate physical space seem to be largely intuitive, it is important to explicitly recognise what processes are at play in this regard, as it feeds into our ability to understand and create Safe Spaces.

Collaborative Networks and Government Policy

In addition to the Kosmicare Intervention Model, the existence of a collaborative safety network used to encompass safety from a multitude of angles was also supported by previous literature. Ruane (2017) referred to this safety network as an “interconnected web” (p. 11) with the inclusion of medics, security, customer services, drug testing, and Safe Space teams to effectively address safety event wide. A number of MAPS bulletins also highlighted the presence of internal safety services and their successful relationships with the Safe Space (MacLean, 2014; Gregorio, 2012; Karpetas, 2003). As with the current study, Carvalho’s et al. (2015) further noted external relationships with organisations such as hospitals and addiction services. Combined, this research illustrates how the Safe Space represents the “umbilicus” (Wilks & Quinn’s, 2016) or focal centre of the festival well-being network, operating both independently and in relation to all other safety services.

The integration of Safe Spaces globally into the safety network at festivals also supports findings in my study that Safe Spaces are becoming a known tool for festival safety and an effective method for reducing certain types of harm. This helps to contribute to our

understanding of what a practical approach to safety within chaotic environments can look like, and the transferability of this system globally. It also shows how the culture shift mentioned by participants in reference to how we see harm in Aotearoa is happening in different places around the world. This is important as it contributes to our wider global knowledge of patterns of social change in response to harm.

In addition to a global shift in the way some festivals see harm, the current study also adds to our knowledge of the relationship between the Safe Space, the safety network, and the political climate within which they sit. Ruane (2015) noted that punitive drug policies in the UK, and the RAVE Act 2003 in the USA which bans harm reduction facilities at festivals, make it difficult for festival organisers to associate themselves with Safe Spaces. At the same time, Kosmicare in Portugal, where all drugs are decriminalised, is not only supported by Boom festival, it is endorsed by the government (Ruane, 2015). Kosmicare is the most frequently discussed Safe Space in literature (Ruane, 2015, 2017; Carvalho et al., 2015; Nielsen & Bettencourt, 2008; Karpetas, 2003), demonstrating how a supportive political climate can facilitate more open conversation and research into this topic.

My study showed a more collaborative relationship between Safe Spaces, festival organisers, and other internal event services than those noted at festivals in the UK and the USA. Interestingly, this appeared to be the case before drug testing was legalised, although it was less openly spoken about. This may in part be because of more relaxed drug policies in Aotearoa compared to other parts of the world. For example, in 2019 drug laws were changed so that police may only prosecute someone for drug possession if it is in the public's best interest, with health focused approaches being the preferred course of action (NZ Drug Foundation, n.d.a). Across the data participants argued that Safe Spaces, in combination with drug testing, are a unique and critical form of harm reduction. More liberal government policies seem to have made it easier for festivals in Aotearoa to form collaborative relationships within the safety network, and there is evidence in my study to suggest that in Aotearoa this works well to facilitate effective harm reduction methods. Between my research and Kosmicare examples it becomes evident that, with cooperative drug policies, people are less afraid to openly discuss the Safe Space agenda, and a more collective approach to Safe Space operation is made possible.

The Safe Space's potential to create widespread social change as a follow-on effect of their approach to well-being has significant social value. Therefore understanding the utility of collaborative relationships and their effectiveness demonstrated by my study adds critical knowledge to our comprehension of the service. This is important, as in order for this service to flourish it must become a more mainstream concept, both locally and globally.

More Than Just Drug Harm

Most significantly, the current study advances our knowledge of Safe Spaces at festivals by demonstrating that they are about so much more than just mitigating the harmful effects of drug use, as previous literature has suggested. Both Ruane (2015; 2017) and Carvalho et al. (2015) specifically focused on the Safe Space as a site of crisis intervention for drug related harm. Whilst both Ruane's 2015 and 2017 pieces of work also touch on the subject of mental health, they do so in the context of working with drug related crises. The same is true of Carvalho et al.'s (2015) work, which also mentioned non-drug related presentations, but stated that this was not their focus and that the Safe Space would help with these "when possible". Not surprisingly, all MAPS bulletins also focused on Safe Spaces as a site of harm reduction in the context of substance use (Doyle, 2001; Doyle, 2003; MacLean, 2014; Gregorio, 2012; Nielsen & Bettencourt, 2008; Karpetas, 2003). Whilst drug management was emphasised as important by participants in the current research, this was not considered the sole purpose of the Safe Space service. These spaces were seen as a more holistic approach to all types of harm that can cause mental duress, be it mild or severe. This opens up the field of Safe Space research and enables us to more broadly consider the scope of the Safe Space's potential by showing they can address more diverse needs than previously thought.

Despite being rooted in a sociology of deviance, Safe Space providers in Aotearoa have a much wider vision of their purpose than has been previously identified in literature. They are a form of non-sensational, non-judgemental human focused ethics of care that fosters a sense of acceptance for all people and walks of life. Safe Spaces have the capacity to teach us about community, kindness, and new ways of thinking which has the potential to dismantle negative attitudes such as those related to toxic masculinity. Howell (2013) argues that festivals strengthen the bridge between space and community, influencing morality, perspectives, and behaviours. Furthermore, Brownett and Evans (2020) explains how festivals can be a form of placemaking, wherein participation, being together, and transformation come together in one site to facilitate self reflection and connection with both known and unknown members of the

community. They argue that this can foster a sense of belonging that can contribute to the overall well-being of both the individual and community.

Feeling connected to and cared for by one's community is an important part of the human experience and is known to have a heavy impact on a person's mental health. In their book The Crisis of Connection: Roots, Consequences, and Solutions, Way et al. (2018) discusses how the 21st century has brought with it feelings of isolation and disconnection from self and others for many people. This has resulted in decreased levels of empathy and trust, as well as rising rates of depression, anxiety, and social isolation which has led to higher rates of suicide, drug addiction, and sexual violence. When we frame this in the context of the mental health statistics in Aotearoa discussed in the literature review of this study, Safe Spaces become an even more important social phenomena. Their human focused ethics of care can help people feel connected to themselves and others by demonstrating empathy and trusting relationships.

Therefore, I argue that Safe Spaces, as a site of influence, self reflection, and connection for some festival goers, have the potential to significantly impact the long term well-being of both the individual, and the people they encounter in their everyday lives. Echoed throughout the current study was a belief that Safe Spaces nurture a sense of community cohesion and belonging that can teach others to be vulnerable and the value of caring for one another. Little et al. (2018) in their research on attendee's experiences at electronic music festivals, also found that participants expressed a desire to adopt new and altruistic behaviours after experiencing them at the festival. Behaviours they saw as being transferable to daily life. Participants in this study shared experiences of Safe Space consumers changing the way they think about caring for others and therefore, it stands to reason that Safe Spaces can also facilitate the adoption of new and altruistic behaviours.

A Living Space

An interesting finding of my research that adds to previous literature, is the understanding that Safe Spaces evolve over time to meet the needs of the festival they serve. Whilst this seems intuitive, this is the first time attention has been drawn to the way the Safe Space responds to the festival over time. Ruane (2015) does mention that Kosmicare has "earlier iterations" (p. 69), and MAPS writers Nielsen & Bettencourt (2008) also state Kosmicare is under "continuous development" (p. 42), thus implying it changes over time. However, how and why this happens is not discussed. Knowledge of the almost living relationship between the Safe Space and the

event allows us to understand that the Space is not a static approach to harm determined by individuals who think they know best. Instead it is a collaborative harm reduction approach that listens to feedback and changes accordingly. This is important as it helps us understand the potential of the Safe Space service to adapt to its environment, thus broadening our understanding of how, if given time, it can become a highly specialised well-being service.

Heterotopia as a Theoretical Framework for Safe Spaces

This is the first time that festival Safe Spaces have been theorised as heterotopia and therefore a novel contribution to literature. As an active site of psychological intervention participants emphasised the stark difference between the Safe Space atmosphere and the closely related festival space, a perspective I also highlight in discussions on heterotopia in the literature section earlier in this study. This contrast allowed people to step out of the festival environment and into a type of “other” space where the “normal” flow of time was disrupted, which facilitated the point of intervention. The Safe Space was illustrated as intentionally separate and unique from the festival space, yet simultaneously intimately connected to it through a series of festival safety networks. The complex, specialised and world changing nature of the Safe Space can be theorised as heterotopia as it represents how Safe Spaces exist in relation to all other time and space. The relationship between the Safe Space, the festival, and the wider world forms a continuous feedback loop, evolving the Safe Space over time only because of the persistent nature of the constructs that surround the space.

Theorising the Safe Space as heterotopia allows it to be understood as a distinct site with a separate value system from the festival that surrounds it. These values are understood as distinct because they are also in contrast to the values of wider society, where principles such as patriarchal influences and social division are upheld. As such, theorising Safe Spaces as heterotopia allows them to be seen as part of concentric circles with the influences of wider society as the outer layer, and the festival society characterised by a collective community, hedonism, and high stimulation as the middle layer. The Safe Space then forms the inner layer as a site characterised by calm and an individualised humanist approach. This not only allows us to theorise the Space and the role of the Space in a new way, it also helps to understand how it can only be made sense of in relation to what it is not, due to its contrasting nature to the wider space it sits within.

Practical Implications

This research demonstrates the importance of the festival Safe Space and the value they add to the well-being of festival communities. Through my study I was able to identify a number of ways in which Safe Spaces function in order to serve the purpose of enhancing safety, and the influences that contribute to their success. These practical implications help to provide a framework for understanding Safe Spaces in Aotearoa and can act as a foundation for further research, or for those wanting to develop their understanding of Safe Spaces for application in a real world context.

Firstly, this research has shown that Safe Spaces, as a form of heterotopia, work well to mitigate harm when connected in multiple ways to a wider network of safety. The Safe Space fulfils an important and previously overlooked role in reducing known harm that occurs within a festival by addressing mental well-being. They function as a separate space which also works in conjunction with other festival services to comprehensively manage safety on many levels. This helps us to better understand how the Safe Space fits into the wider festival context and therefore how best to implement them in the most effective manner.

My research also showed that the people who both develop and work in these spaces have a particular set of expertises that need to be valued. These personal and professional attributes strongly tie into the successful provision of the Safe Space service and by identifying them and the contribution they make we can better source and develop an effective work force. My research has also identified the psychological stress that comes with being in these roles and the subsequent support that needs to be given to those in this line of work. This is important for future Safe Space development as it provides direction for how to support staff in a manner that promotes emotional sustainability and avoids burn out.

Despite some basic Safe Space principles being seemingly transferable across a range of festival contexts my research has also shown that, given the dynamic nature of festivals and Safe Spaces, they need to be under constant review in order to be as effective as possible. As with all heterotopias, Safe Spaces evolve as the surrounding culture evolves, which means as the wider society changes so too does the demands on a given festival, and therefore the demands on the Safe Space within it. This research has demonstrated how the Safe Space must respond to the needs of the community in order to continuously meet their expectations of the service. Having an awareness of this process has practical implications for Safe Space

developers and social researchers looking to better understand the nature of the Safe Space and its role within the festival and wider communities. In particular, the fluid nature of the Safe Space is important for developers to be aware of as this knowledge can help better prepare them to effectively drive the Safe Space progress over time.

This research has also shown that Safe Spaces work well in the context of wider harm reduction policies that enable them. Drug testing, along with liberal policies which promote low threshold access to health care, and less punitive action against drug use, help to facilitate a more open conversation about mental health and safe substance use through more collaborative festival relationships. The implication of this knowledge being that we now have a better awareness of what influences Safe Space development and how to support this service from a political perspective.

Being able to have open conversations about well-being also paves the way for the more human centred ethics of care that has been constructed and enacted by my participants. Historically, safety at festivals has primarily taken on a more risk oriented approach wherein problematic individuals are contained or removed from the festival without a great deal of focus given to the experience they may be having. Whilst this is an effective method for reducing risk, it does not take into account the potential negative impacts on the individuals well-being. Conversely, a more human centric approach both reduces risk and works to meet the needs of the individual, mitigating both acute harm and potential long term impacts on well-being. This has important implications for festival organisers who are ultimately responsible for the well-being of their patrons by demonstrating the value of a human focused ethic of care.

Implications for Safe Space Developers

My research also has implications for people wanting to reflect on their Safe Space practice, and those who are wanting to create them, as previously there has been little to assist them with this process. A recent report issued by The New Zealand Drug Foundation noted that Aotearoa is lacking in essential harm reduction services and highlights failings in areas of availability, coverage, and accessibility (Helm, 2022). This report does not factor in Safe Spaces at festivals, or indeed Safe Spaces at all outside of one reference to a drop in cafe, likely due to their largely unknown existence outside of the festival community. However, their lack of a mention arguably speaks volumes. In a country that is calling out for accessible harm reduction services, Safe Spaces connect to an audience of tens, if not hundreds of thousands of people every year. By

nature of being at a festival this audience is also primed for having an open mind, a willingness to learn new things, and a higher likelihood of engaging in these services as the social stigma is less of a concern when outside of the “real world”.

Furthermore, under the Health and Safety Act (2015) festival organisers hold the primary responsibility for ensuring the health and safety for all workers, and attendees at their event as far as reasonably practicable. Under section 22 of the act “as far as reasonably practicable” is defined as, if it is reasonably able to be done to ensure health and safety, having weighed up and considered all relevant matters. It expands on this by framing relevant matters in the context of risk, how likely it is to occur, how severe might the harm be, how the person understands the risk, and what measures exist to eliminate the risk (Work Safe, 2019). An argument can be made here that Safe Spaces should be considered a requirement of some festivals under the Health and Safety Act (2015) which defines health as physical *and* mental (New Zealand Legislation, 2015). As the most appropriate measure for addressing mental harm, Safe Spaces are arguably the best way to adhere to this act, in much the same way as medics are expected to be onsite for potential instances of physical harm. Especially considering that festivals are aware of the mental harm that can occur, its severity and likelihood can be high, and the Safe Space is a measure for effectively addressing this, which are all relevant matters under the Act.

Unfortunately, this study also highlighted the financial difficulties many festivals face when wanting to include one of these spaces at their event. Under section 22 of the Health and Safety Act (2015), “relevant matters” also include how available and suitable the control measures are, and if the cost of managing the risk is grossly disproportionate. Currently, Safe Space organisations in Aotearoa are exclusively volunteer run, with funding largely coming from event organisers in order to cover costs and pay key staff members for their time onsite. This makes the long term progression of these spaces difficult for Safe Space managers, minimising the availability of the service nationwide as infrastructure and trained staff cannot grow to meet demand. Furthermore, the overhead costs of running a festival are extremely high, making funding Safe Spaces difficult for some, particularly when they can draw on other paid services to cover the gap. However, as this study has shown, these measures are less suitable for addressing psychological harm.

Therefore, if proper documentation defining what these spaces are, and unified policy guiding the practice is developed, Safe Spaces should be considered for government funding. This is both due to their ability to enhance individual and community mental health, and their success in the harm reduction sphere. Given that the current government in Aotearoa invested $800,000 in drug testing for festivals in 2021 (Little, 2021) it is my hope that this study comes at a pivotal time.

As it stands, when it comes to health care at festivals precedence is given to medical health but, much like in the wider world, mental health and well-being has only recently joined the conversation. St John's, a largely government funded medical service widely used at festivals throughout Aotearoa, outline a series of best practice guidelines for operating at events on their website. Some suggestions include having medics for the entirety of the time people are onsite, proper placement to facilitate emergency response times, educating staff and attendees as to where the medics are, and clear access in and out of the event for ambulances (St Johns, n.d). The knowledge produced by the current study can form the basis for doing the same with the Safe Space service. Based on this, below table 3 highlights a series of practical considerations, table 4 outlines considerations around service provision, and table 5 lists challenges not previously mentioned in literature to be aware of. Together they are designed to act as a framework for those wanting to develop a Safe Space practice at their event. These are my suggestions based on what I have found throughout this research process, however, they will need to be developed further for anyone wanting to use them as a robust best practice policy.

Table 3: Practical Considerations for Safe Space Development

Consideration	Elements to Explore
Placement	The safe space needs to be accessible, easily located, and distanced from excess noise, people, and stimulation.
Spatial Design	Depending on the size of an event a safe space may only need to be one room, but consideration should also be given to separate spaces for: monitored rest across different genders, active engagement with staff, private spaces for sensitive conversations, relaxation, and engagement upon arrival. This will depend on both the number of attendees and the nature of the crowd, i.e. are they a young crowd, is alcohol consumption abundant, or is the crowd older and more relaxed.
Atmosphere	Be sure to consider warmth, pillows, comfortable seating, and atmospheric elements such as nice fabrics and plants. Interactive tools such as art supplies, simple games, and things to fiddle with are also recommended.
Infrastructure	Safe spaces need soft lighting, power, and structures that can withstand the weather. The main structure should have an open entrance that makes it easy to see what's happening inside / walk through.
Communication	The safe space needs to be able to communicate with the rest of the event. Radios are a must, especially at larger events.
Staff	The number of staff required depends on how chaotic the event is, and how many hours the space operates. For smaller events two staff on at any one time is sufficient, for larger events between eight and 12 staff can be necessary, although this can vary greatly depending on the time of day. A vetting process that covers biases, personality traits, social skills, experience, and qualifications should be used during recruitment.
Training	Staff training should include harm reduction techniques, non-violent communication, escalation processes, what to expect, and how to respond to a range of situations.
Policy	Define exactly what each safety service within the festival is responsible for, including the safe space, and communicate them to everyone. Develop an escalation processes for both serious events, and for situations individual staff members may be uncomfortable handling within the space

Table 4: Service Considerations for Safe Space Development

Consideration	Elements to Explore
A Charter of Conduct	The safe space must be non judgemental, non biassed, welcoming, and accepting of the whole person regardless of their choices.
Keep Staff Safe	Ensure staff understand their own boundaries and will step away from situations they're not comfortable handling, check in with them especially after challenging situations, and have enough staff to manage the emotional taxation of the work. For larger festivals shifts should be no more than four hours and shift leads should be present to ensure staff do not get burnt out.
Define the Ethos	Outline the core values and goals, and define intentions for the safe space. This should include acknowledging that harm exists and that this is a pragmatic approach to mitigate it rather than eliminate it. People deserve to be helped and feel cared for regardless of circumstance.
Diversify the Service	Ensure the service has the means to respond to many different kinds of harm, including but not limited to dehydration, heat exhaustion, anxiety attacks, and psychosis.
Diversify the Team	Where possible, recruit staff from different backgrounds, cultures, and gender representations as this will help establish trust with a wider audience.
Keep Records	Records don't need to be stringent but collecting information that helps to understand what happened i.e when the busy times are, what substances or situations people are coming in for, and how any significant issues were handled, will help to grow the practice.
Be Patient	The best safe spaces develop over time, listen to feedback and adapt in following years.

Table 5: Challenges for Consideration in Safe Space Development

Consideration	Elements to Explore
Cost	Safe spaces do require financial investment with no monetary return on cost. Just remember, present is more important than perfect.
Staffing	Staff should always be peers who understand the festival experience. It is not always easy to find someone with the capabilities to run a safe space, or enough staff with the right skill sets to carry out the work. However, appropriate staff are key to the success of the safe space.
The Work is Hard	Working in a safe space during an event can be intense and mentally draining, people do burn out. Year round work comes with its own set of challenges as well and there is a significant amount of responsibility on some safe space managers to deliver an effective service, yet the work is largely unpaid.
Opposing Attitudes	Not everyone in the festival community supports the presence of a safe space. Whilst not common, be prepared for some push-back.
Resource Deficit	The safe space concept is still in its early years, and as such resources to help with this development are limited, as are resources for training staff.
Creating Awareness	Many people do not know what a safe space is, therefore it is important to let people know the safe space exists and what it's for in order for it to be effective.
Legal Liability	Having a safe space means you are responsible for what happens in it, creating policy will help protect festivals from this.

Findings across different festivals throughout my project, as well as festivals in different countries shows us that we can expect Safe Spaces to be highly variable environments, yet the nature of the service they provide remains relatively consistent. This suggests the guidelines above can be transferred globally to any given festival and will likely result in a successful Safe Space, and some of these items have already been endorsed in grey literature. For example, MAPS has developed a very thorough Manual of Psychedelic Support which notes the importance of vetting staff, creating a budget, and choosing infrastructure, to name a few of the guidelines noted above, when developing a Safe Space practice (Oak et al., 2017). The Zendo Project, a programme associated with MAPS and harm reduction at festivals, also produced a training manual for Safe Space staff which notes the potential for staff to burn out due to the challenging nature of the work (Zendo Project, 2022). This is to say that many of the guidelines provided above are also considered by others to be transferable across festivals. However, this is the first time they have been noted in academic literature and my study adds to this by also including items not previously mentioned, such as the potential for oppositional attitudes and the development of internal policy to support the practice.

In addition to this, my research highlights the need to be patient as the Safe Space develops over time. So whilst the framework above can be transferred across settings, the best Safe Spaces grow to meet the more localised needs and therefore this research can only provide guidance on how to facilitate this process. Further development of these ideas within the unique context of each festival, along with time and perseverance are also needed to a formulate robust, event specific best practice guide.

More broadly, these guidelines could also be helpful for organisers of nightclubs, raves, and house parties, wanting to enhance the safety of their events. Given that Safe Spaces are historically rooted in the rave scene and the similarities in risk between these spaces and the festival space they can be directly applied. With further development they could also be generalised to Safe Spaces outside of the party space, such as gender diverse Safe Spaces, or spaces for people with disabilities. Most importantly, individuals need to feel connected to the environment in which the Safe Space is placed, and to the people working within the space.

Parameters of the Research

Interpretivist qualitative research focuses on delineating the parameters within which the research can be considered, through reflexivity as well as considering the limitations of the study. Therefore, next I discuss my reflections on this research and the subsequent limitations of this study.

The high level of support I received from participants for this topic was a strong motivating factor as it enhanced my belief that the topic was seen as important by others. However, it also solidified some pre-existing beliefs, such as that Safe Spaces are chaotic environments and that they provide a service that other organisations cannot. Whilst this research showed that my participants believed the same, it also honed my focus in a manner that may have resulted in contradictory information becoming more difficult to notice. Dwyer & Buckle (2009) warn that this can happen and, and facilitate a situation in which data collection and analysis are shaped by core aspects of the researcher's experience, or shared factors between researcher and participant. Given my long standing relationship with the festival industry in Aotearoa and my experience with Safe Spaces it would be difficult to completely omit my subjectivity from the research process. As such, this has the potential to impact the findings of this research by limiting the scope I gave my focus to during data collection and analysis.

However, Braun & Clarke (2022) also tell us that subjectivity helps to more thoroughly comprehend the data and I believe that my pre-understandings put me in a unique position to make sense of what participants said, as I also understood the culturally laden context in which they said it. Further to this, because most of my participants had some idea of who I am and my relationship with the festival industry in Aotearoa, they may have been inclined to speak more openly about their vulnerabilities and sensitive information pertaining to the festivals they represented. This would have enabled a richer and more meaningful data set to be produced as my peer status with participants facilitated an instantly more trusting relationship.

Furthermore, my presentation as a pākehā had the potential to influence the content of the conversations I had with participants. Many of my participants were also pākehā, and whilst some came from different cultural backgrounds the nature of the Safe Space work also tends to attract people who are more socially aware of things such as cultural sensitivities. As Aotearoa is also a colonised country with ongoing problems of systemic racism and inequality, discussions with participants around the topic of cultural safety and racism were limited. The

times I did ask about cultural considerations within the Safe Space were met with a degree of shyness and uncertainty from participants. For pākehā participants there may have been a desire to be sensitive and to be careful not to assume knowledge on the subject, and for others my pākehā status could have resulted in perceived ignorance on the topic, which may have limited their willingness to engage with it. As a result this topic was often not discussed with participants which limited the findings on culture and racism within the Safe Space operation that could have been produced by my research.

I also present as female and which may have influenced my participants willingness to talk about sexual harm. As a member of a social group known to be heavily impacted by sexual violence my presentation and identification with being a woman had the potential to facilitate more free talk about this subject. Given the fact that sexual harm and Safe Spaces are inextricably linked this likely enabled valuable information to be elicited from conversations with participants.

Practical Limitations

My study produced a significantly large volume of data for one researcher to collect, transcribe, and analyse in the period of time allocated to a master's thesis. Braun & Clarke (2022) note that often thematic analysis is conducted by a team of researchers who are able to compare codes and brainstorm ideas. Whilst I did work with a supervisor who consistently provided valuable feedback, I was the only one viewing all the data. The results of this study were therefore limited by the fact that only one mind was interpreting a significant amount of data. In future this could be avoided either by expanding the project to one that includes more researchers, and potentially over a longer time period, or limiting the number of participants.

I also found that many of my interviews went on for longer than the expected time frame. This led to fatigue in both my participants and myself as the data collection phase was nearing completion. This resulted in some, less key, interview questions being omitted from some interviews which was a factor related to both rich discussion with participants, and my interview guide containing too many questions. Most noteworthy, I initially included a question regarding the influence of culture on Safe Space practice. However, as previously mentioned, after receiving several responses to this question that suggested participants do not currently feel confident in implementing culture into Safe Space practice, it was removed. If I were to do this

research again I would refine the interview questions to avoid any unnecessary or repetitive elements, and potentially narrow the focus of the questions if this seemed appropriate.

Whilst this study took on a more experiential lens it also introduced the framework of heterotopia as a concept for understanding Safe Spaces at festivals. The themes; *an active psychological intervention, the safety network, and complex, specialised, and world changing*, can be mapped onto the concept of heterotopia. Safe Spaces are evidently a temporary "other" space, full of juxtaposing sites and designed to disrupt the flow of festival time. This allows us to theorise a space previously thought of literally. However, there is room for further development of this concept so as to draw out a richer understanding of how Safe Spaces can be theorised as heterotopia and the meaningful ways in which this adds to our conceptualization of them.

Further Research

My research highlights the possibility of further development and theoretically informed work exploring how the concept of heterotopia might be better used to think through the possibilities of Safe Spaces. It also highlights the utopian vision of a Safe Space beyond a type of harm reduction that focuses on risk management. There is significant opportunity to explore this further, both in terms of how people understand and envision the relationship between festivals and wider culture, as well as potentially the mechanisms and theoretical frameworks for understanding how this relationship might work.

Furthermore, this research could be extended to better understand the relationship between Safe Spaces at festivals and different cultures. As it stands, culture is not a significant consideration in Safe Space practice but perhaps it should be. Anecdotal evidence given to me as a member of the festival industry in Aotearoa gives the impression these festivals are often criticised for being predominantly white middle class, and under representative of non-white and or indigenous cultures. This is likely to have an effect on the limited scope to which my participants were able to talk about cultural considerations. It may also contribute to the way that people from other cultures find themselves willing to engage with Safe Spaces. Given the value of Safe Spaces for marginalised populations, an argument can be made for the importance of Safe Spaces at festivals that are also culturally safe. Through interview based discussions with Safe Space managers, festival organisers, and cross-cultural festival attendees it could be possible to develop a better understanding of how necessary this may be and how to achieve it.

Due to the legalisation around drug testing and the impact this has had on our ability to have open, collaborative conversations about harm, Aotearoa is uniquely placed to develop and explore the full potential of Safe Spaces as a form of harm reduction at festivals. Future research could include a longitudinal study with festival organisers and Safe Space managers to see how the service further develops over time, and the way the landscape of risk and harm reduction continues to co-evolve in response to supportive legislation.

Although some participants mentioned using knowledge they had taken from overseas experiences in Safe Spaces and training manuals, it was clear from this research that Safe Space practice in Aotearoa does not follow any standard training protocols. Overseas research has also only just begun developing evidence based intervention models for psychoactive substance care. An interesting direction for future research would be to observe and discuss practices within Safe Spaces in Aotearoa to learn more about the similarities and differences in how the practice is implemented across different events. This would pave the way for a more generalised model for harm reduction practice at festivals to be developed. In turn this could also form the basis for creating a much needed training programme to increase the number of trained staff available nationwide. In particular, future research might be around what happens when a global conversation can occur about Safe Space operation and training with relevant stakeholders, Safe Space managers, and festival organisers.

Conclusion

Overall, I have shown that Safe Spaces may be considered as an important factor in festival safety. Through interpretivist phenomenology I have demonstrated the benefit of examining how festival organisers and Safe Space managers experience the Safe Space phenomena and how this constructs their understanding of it, and in turn the nature of the service they provide. I offer this framework for future research on Safe Spaces, suggesting it has significant potential to be developed in the fields of harm reduction and festival studies which, at the time of my research, is severely underrepresented in literature. Finally, I suggest that Safe Spaces offer huge possibilities for individual and community well-being and that future research into festival welfare might explore how these spaces can be developed into a more mainstream concept.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Information Sheet

Safe Spaces at festivals in Aotearoa; an exploration into the purpose and function of Safe Spaces according to festival organisers and Safe Space managers.

INFORMATION SHEET

Researcher(s) Introduction

Kia Ora! My name is Holly Bennett and I am a postgraduate student who is completing a Masters of Science (Psychology) at Massey University. I have worked in the events scene in Aotearoa for almost eight years and I have a particular passion for mental health and well-being within this carnivalesque environment. The decision to dive into the not-so-well understood world of Safe Spaces was therefore an obvious one. This research project will look at how the people who are responsible for organising these spaces (either as a festival organiser or a manager of a festival Safe Space) understand their function, as well as the costs and benefits of Safe Spaces, and what they might provide to people in the future. I am being supervised by Professor Sarah Riley, a critical psychologist with a long standing relationship with qualitative research and a history of working in Safe Spaces herself.

Project Description and Invitation

The aim of this research is to uncover a richer understanding of how Safe Spaces at festivals in Aotearoa currently operate, and the role they play within the festival environment. There is research about these spaces in other festival communities but none currently, about their role in the festivals of Aotearoa. This study will be the first in literature from Aotearoa to speak directly with festival organisers and Safe Space developers, as the individuals behind providing these spaces.

A “Safe Space”, or *Wāhi Haumaru* for the scope of this research, is “a supportive space provided by an event for people who seek help or require emotional / mental assistance”.

It is intended that this project may add to the developing body of literature on psychological care and harm reduction within the festival scene. On that note, I humbly ask for your participation / *whai wāhi* in this research. I very much value what you have to say.

Participant Identification and Recruitment

I have developed the following definition of what a “festival in Aotearoa” means for the purpose of this study. I acknowledge that there are other events out there that can also be considered Aotearoa’s festivals as well. This research project must be completed within one year and therefore the scope must have some limitations, so I wanted to target events that are more likely to have experience with Safe Spaces.

Definition: ***"a multi day ticketed event with over 1000 attendees wherein electronic music performances and overnight camping are a major component"***

You are invited to take part in this study if you meet the criteria below;

- ➢ You hold a position within a festival in Aotearoa, as per the above definition, that makes you directly responsible for the overall operation of the event.
- ➢ You are responsible for the operation or management of a Safe Space at a festival in Aotearoa, as per the above definition.

Project Procedures

If you decide to take part in this project then together we will arrange a time for either a face to face, or virtual interview / *uiuinga* at a time that suits you. I am Auckland based and am able to travel within the district.

If you would like to see my interview prompts in advance then please send me an email (info@safespaceresearch.co.nz) and I will send them to you. This exists simply as a guide to use during our conversation and what I hope is to have a relaxed and in depth discussion that takes a natural course. I welcome any feedback on these conversation points before we begin.

When we meet for the interview I hope to spend some time talking and getting to know one another before we begin. This will also be an opportunity to discuss any questions you may have, and to talk about consent for the audio recording which will take place. It is designed to take between one and two hours, however this is entirely dependent on how involved you would like to make it.

I will need to take an audio recording of the interview, which will then be transcribed into written word, and anonymised so that it contains no identifiable data on either yourself, or the event we spoke about. You will then receive a copy of this transcript and be given time to edit it should you so choose. I will follow up with you within two weeks after you have received this transcript to make sure that you are happy with it, or allow more time to consider things if need be. There will be a maximum time limit of three weeks from the time you first receive the transcript to make any changes, this is so that I am able to keep to my deadline.

If you are interested in participating in my research, then please send me an email (info@safespaceresearch.co.nz). I can either send you some more information to think about or we can arrange a time for a quick phone call so we can talk about where to go next.

Making sure this research is a safe space

Safe Spaces can inherently be associated with sensitive subjects, such as drugs, assault, and mental illness. I want to ensure that what you say will be used with the utmost care so that neither you nor the festival you're talking about will be identified from any quotes from your interview that appear in my report. I will do this by using pseudonyms and redacting information that makes you or the festival identifiable, such as a description of how the festival site is laid out.

I hope that participating in my study will be an enjoyable experience, and additionally it has been assessed as low risk. Having said that, sometimes talking about everyday issues can bring back memories of difficult or challenging experiences. So I will be mindful if the conversation moves towards subjects that can make people feel uncomfortable. I will hold space for these conversations in a non-judgemental and open-minded manner, and if you do not wish to talk about something I will respect this completely. We can discuss an easy way for you to say no to a topic or conversation before we begin the interview, such as a stop signal with your hand. If this is something you would like to do, and if at any time you want to stop the interview you are welcome to do so.

Should you find the interview to be triggering in anyway then I encourage you to reach out to some of the following services;

Aunty Dee

Feeling overwhelmed or something getting you down? https://www.auntydee.co.nz/

This is a great website with lots of tools for helping yourself if you don't feel like talking to anyone.

1737

Want to talk to a trained counsellor for free? https://1737.org.nz/

Free call or text 1737 any time,

Helpline

Struggling with depression or just want some help feeling better? https://depression.org.nz/

Free call 0800 111 757 or text 4202

Data Management

Sound recordings, transcriptions, and any other relevant information will be stored on my Massey University OneDrive. This is secured using login details specific to my university identification. A backup copy will be stored on the hard drive of my personal laptop, which is password protected. Note I will not be saving your personal details or and identifying information alongside the data, and this includes any contact details or written conversation we have outside the interview and follow up times.

This project will work entirely with anonymised data. This means that no information that could identify you personally, your event, or any other persons or event will be included in the transcripts or any written text pertaining to this project, including the final thesis or any published work.

Reports based on this data will be uploaded onto the Massey University website, and may also be shared with the community, or possibly published as journal articles. My supervisor will see anonymized transcripts. These transcripts may also be uploaded onto a public research database, but only with your permission. All data will be destroyed after five years as per university policy, unless uploaded to a public research database.

If you are interested in the results / *otinga* of this study I will email you a copy of my summary of findings, which is essentially an easy to read (and much shorter) version of my 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 / pātai;*
- *withdraw from the study up to one week after the interview;*
- *ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;*
- *provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;*
- *ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.*
- *be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.*

Project Contacts

If you have any questions then please feel free to contact myself or my Supervisor:

- *Researcher: Holly Bennett,* ***info@safespaceresearch.co.nz***
- *Supervisor: Sarah Riley, S.Riley@massey.ac.nz*

ETHICS DECLARATION

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application SOB 21/48. 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 B: Consent Form

Safe Spaces at festivals in Aotearoa; an exploration into the purpose and function of Safe Spaces according to festival organisers and Safe Space managers.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read and I understand the Information Sheet attached as Appendix I, including my right to withdraw from the study up to one week after the interview for any reason. 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 any time up to one week after the interview.

	Yes	**No**
I agree that I meet the inclusion criteria, as outlined in the Information Sheet in Appendix I.		
I agree to the interview being recorded (you must agree to this in order to participate in the study).		
I understand that I will be receiving an anonymized written transcript of the interview, but I would also like to receive the recording.		
I agree to have my anonymized interview transcript placed in an official archive, this is to lend legitimacy to my study if it gets published at a later date, and contributes to providing research participants interviews to a global publicly accessible database. This means the anonymized transcript can be viewed by anyone searching the public archive it has been uploaded to. You do not need to say yes to this to participate in the study.		
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 C: Interview Schedule

Questions for Interview with Organizers

- How would you describe your event
    - What do you love about it?
    - Why do you do it? Prompt: how did you get into it?
    - Physical size, population size, age demographic, years of operation

- How would you describe the people who attend your event
    - Is there a particular demographic or subculture that attends your event? Prompt: can you describe it?
    - What do you think your audience loves about your event?

- Tell me about how this space came about
    - Why did you decide to make a Safe Space? Prompt: what feelings did you have towards making this space e.g. excited, anxious
    - How does it fit with the festival ethos? Prompt: what did you think would make a good Safe Space at your festival at the time.
    - What was the process of setting one up like? Prompt: were there any challenges
    - What *kind* of challenges did you face establishing this space?
    - What was your role in creating this space? Prompt: who else was involved, how did you work together, why were they important?

- How does this space operate now? - Prefix this section with letting the organiser know that it is expected that they won't be able to answer all these questions as they are probably not the one directly responsible for operating the space. This is about understanding their role and its boundaries.
    - What kind of role do you have in operating the space? Prompt: do you spend any time there during the event? Why / why not? Do you brief / debrief with the people who run this space? Why / why not? How would you define the boundaries between what you do for the safe space, and what the person you employ to run the safe space does?
    - Can you tell me about the various operational elements that go into the day to day set up or operation of the Safe Space? Prompt: who runs the space and why

did you choose them / what can you tell me about the other staff who work in the space (what makes a good sitter) / how is it resourced / who is responsible for designing it / who is responsible for deciding how it operates?

- What physical elements go into the space? Why were those elements chosen?
- What about the more intangible elements - how would you describe the vibe of your safe space? Prompt: Why is it designed that way? Tell me about the relationship between the festival ethos / vibe and the way your safe space functions - Prompt for clarity - what, if anything, makes your safe space unique to your event?, is culture ever a consideration in the way the safe space service is provided?
- Do you have a particular kind of audience in mind when you think about what the safe space needs to provide? What kind of impact does this have on the way the service is presented / operates?
- How would you describe the demographic of people who use the safe space? Prompt: Is it similar to the overall demographic of the festival or does it feel more like a specific subsection of people? Is it always the same demographic or does it change from year to year?
- What kind of situations do you imagine happening in these spaces? Prompt: Can you give me any examples of things you have seen or heard of happening in this space at your event?
- Are you happy with your safe space as it currently stands? Prompt: What do you like about it? What changes would you like to make? How do you think it fulfils its purpose at your event?
- Are there any legal, health, or financial implications involved with running the space? Prompt: Do any of these make running the space difficult?

- What does having a Safe Space do for a festival and its patrons?
    - How would you describe the function of a safe space? What do you think this means for patrons? How would you define the boundaries in terms of your responsibility to your patrons versus their own responsibility to themselves?
    - What, if anything, do you think a Safe Space can provide that other services cannot? Prompt: What makes a safe space different from other services?
    - Do you think festivals are responsible for providing a space for people who are having bad experiences due to drug consumption?

    - What about assault?
    - What are the ongoing benefits and challenges of having a Safe Space?

- In an ideal world, if there were no barriers to a Safe Space fulfilling its full potential, what does that potential look like to you?
    - What kind of staff would you have?
    - What would the space physically look like?
    - How would you describe the vibe?
    - What services would the space provide?
    - What would the space's relationship be to the event? Prompt: Who would be responsible for it and why.

Questions for interviews with Safe Space developers

- How would you describe the event you work for
    - What do you love about it?
    - Why do you do it? Prompt: how did you get into it?
    - Physical size, population size, age demographic, years of operation

- How would you describe the people who attend the event?
    - Is there a particular demographic or subculture that attends your event? Prompt: can you describe it?
    - What do you think your audience loves about your event?

- Tell me about how this space came about
    - How did you first get involved?
    - When did you first get involved? Prompt: at what stage of the development process did you start?
    - What was your experience like stepping into the set up and / or operation of this safe space? Prompt: What kind of challenges did you face throughout this process? Tell me about the support the event organisers gave you.
    - What was your role in creating this space? Prompt: who else was involved, how did you work together, why were they important?
    - Why did you choose to get involved? Prompt: did you have experience working in these kinds of spaces, what made you feel qualified to step into the role?

- How does this space operate now?
    - What is your role in operating the space? Prompt: How much time would you say you spend there over the course of an event? Can you describe a typical 24 hour period? Can you tell me about what goes into setting up the space - pre event and pack in.
    - Can you tell me about the various operational elements that go into the day to day running of the Safe Space? Prompt: who works in the space and why did you choose them (what makes a good sitter)? What are your processes like for helping someone? Do you use any set guidelines or tools to help with your processes - tell me about them.
    - What physical elements go into the space? Why did you choose these specific elements?
    - What about the more intangible elements - how would you describe the vibe of your safe space? Prompt: Why is it designed that way? Tell me about the relationship between the festival ethos / vibe and the way your safe space functions - Prompt for clarity - what, if anything, makes your safe space unique to your event?, is culture ever a consideration in the way the safe space service is provided?
    - How would you describe the vibe of the people who use the safe space? Prompt: Is there a particular demographic? Is it similar to the overall demographic of the festival or does it feel more like a specific subsection of people? Is culture ever a consideration in the way the safe space service is provided? Is it always the same demographic or does it change from event to event? Who normally brings a person to the Safe Space? i.e themselves / security / friends
    - Do you have a particular kind of audience in mind when you think about what the safe space needs to provide? Does this have an impact on the way the service is presented / operates?
    - Are you happy with your safe space as it currently stands? Prompt: What do you like about it? What changes would you like to make? How do you think it fulfils its purpose at your event?
    - Can you think of any challenges that the event organisers might face with having one of these spaces?

- What does having a Safe Space do for a festival and its patrons?
    - How would you describe the function of a safe space? What do you think this means for patrons? How would you define the boundaries in terms of your responsibility to your patrons versus their own responsibility to themselves?
    - What do you see happening in these spaces? Can you give me some examples of things that have stood out for you?
    - What, if anything, do you think a Safe Space can provide that other services cannot? Prompt: What makes a safe space different from other services?
    - Do you think festivals are responsible for providing a space for people who are having bad experiences due to drug consumption?
    - What about assault?
    - What do you see as the ongoing benefits and challenges of having a Safe Space?

- In an ideal world, if there were no barriers to a Safe Space fulfilling its full potential, what would a safe space look like to you?
    - What kind of staff would you have?
    - What would the space physically look like? What kind of vibe would it have?
    - What services would the space provide?
    - What would the safe space's relationship be to the event organisers? Prompt: Who would be the key people responsible for it?

Appendix D: Introductory Email

Subject line: Safe Space Research - an invitation to *Festival name*

Kia Ora *Participant name*

Big thanks to you for being open to taking part in my research, I really couldn't do it without people like yourself. I'm excited to talk to you, and to hear about the ethos of *Festival name*

In a nutshell, I'm interviewing festival organisers and safe space managers about the form and function of safe spaces at festivals in Aotearoa. Everything is anonymised and you will also have the opportunity to edit the transcript we produce yourself. You don't need to have a safe space at your event/s, or know anything about them to participate.

Attached is a more detailed information sheet and a consent form. We can talk a bit more about this at the start of the interview (or before that happens if you prefer, just let me know). Don't let the information sheet / interview questions overwhelm you, there's a lot in there but much of it is notes for myself.

Please let me know if you are interested in hearing more, we could arrange a time for a quick phone call if you like? Alternatively I've also created a booking schedule if you would prefer to just pick a date / time over the next couple of months that suits you and it will automatically book it in with me.

https://calendly.com/safespaceinterviews/safe-space-interview

Very much looking forward to hearing from you.

Appendix E: Reasons for Seeking Help from the Safe Space Described by Participants

Reason for seeking help	Participants
Side effects from drug use	All
Relationship fall out (friends and partners)	Spencer, Fynn, Mia, Shannon, Freya, Cindy, Alison
Sexual harm and consent breaches	Jacob, Steph, Ruby, Dexter, Shannon, Alison
Mental health or trauma	All
Exhaustion	Fynn, Charlotte, Steph
Cannot find their friends	Fynn, Steph, Cindy
Sleep deprivation	Charlotte, Luca
Overheating / sunstroke	Fynn, Felix
Dehydration	Francis, Mia
Feeling generally overwhelmed	All