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**No Time to Say Goodbye:
the Personal Journeys of Whānau
Bereaved by Suicide**

The experiences of four parents bereaved
by suicide.

A dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Social Work

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2013

ABSTRACT

Nominal literature exists concerning the experiences of Māori whānau bereaved by suicide. Māori are vastly denoted in the suicide mortality statistics. The sudden and unexpected loss of a whānau member to suicide is an overwhelming occurrence for peoples of various different ethnic and cultural milieus.

Informed by means of a Māori paradigm; Māori research procedures are merged alongside each other to become the keystones to this study. A Case Study approach to research was applied in conjunction with Māori methodologies and which also provided the researcher with the course to circumnavigate the research procedure. These four whānau who contributed to this research are the manawa or core of this study and in the course of sharing their stories, they proffer knowledge and describe experiences of their bereavement as a consequence of the suicide of their young adult child.

Different sources of evidence were gathered together and included participant interviews, researcher observations, and literature that documented the experiences of whānau bereaved by suicide. The four Māori whānau identified several iwi (tribal) connections and came from a variety of small rural communities, took part in the interviews. These participants experienced losing their young adult child to suicide within the last 9 years. The interviews were all audio taped, each transcribed and analysed thematically.

This research found, that whānau bereaved by suicide undergo various emotional responses. Shock, anger, denial, helplessness and guilt were some of the responses identified by the whānau. Coping in response to suicide entailed seeking and gaining support, psychological and social isolation as well as searching for reasons as to 'why' the suicide occurred. Self-blame or blaming others for the suicide were also imperative factors in how whānau coped in response to suicide.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ko Horouta te waka

Ko Hikurangi te maunga

Ko Waiapu te awa

Ko Tu Au Au te Marae

Ko Ngati Rangi te me toku Hapu

Ko Ngati Porou me Te Arawa me Tuwharetoa toku Iwi

Ko Caroll Aupouri-Mclean ahau

I would like to acknowledge the various people who have shown me support throughout this journey in finishing my thesis.

To Fiona Te Momo, my supervisor, thank you for your guidance, support, and belief in me.

To all the whānau who participated in this study. It is with warmth I humbly am grateful to you for giving me the time and space into your lives. Letting me sit in your homes and listen to your stories of pain and anguish, of heartbreak and of resilience, and kaha.

To my own whānau, daughters, mother, and mokopuna, who believed in me. Your belief that I could accomplish the mahi gave me the kaha to see this through.

To my colleagues, who have been my sounding boards, and on-going support. I thank you for your valuable advice, willingness to listen, and encouragement to finish what I started.

Nga mihi aroha ki a koutou

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GLOSSARY

A

Awhi to embrace

H

Hapu sub tribe

Hui a gathering or meeting

I

Iwi tribe

K

Kai food

Karanga ritual call of welcome

Kaumatua elder

Kaupapa purpose, reason for meeting, Māori philosophy and practice

Kawa natural order of things created by Te Atua

Korero speak

Kuia elderly female

M

Mana prestige, authority, privilege, responsibility

Manawa heart

Manaaki to give, to share, hospitality

Mihi greeting

P

Pōwhiri ceremony of welcome

R

Rangatahi youth

Rohe boundary

T

Tapu sacred, sacredness

Tautoko support

Tikanga behaviour, customs, habits, rituals, etiquette

W

Whakamomori suicide

Whakapapa genealogy

Whānau family

Whānaungatanga establishing family connections