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Past, Present and Future Perspectives on the Role of Counselling in Social Work in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Abstract

Since the profession of social work began, there has been debate about whether it should be involved in helping individuals make change, or in encouraging societal change. Towards gaining an understanding of how this debate has played out in Aotearoa New Zealand, this research explores the question “What are the past present and future perspectives on the role of counselling in social work in Aotearoa New Zealand?”

A mixed methodology format was used in this research. Qualitative interviews with individuals who had helped create the professions of social work, counselling and psychology were conducted to help understand the historical development of counselling within social work, and the factors which had impacted upon it. Questionnaires were then sent out to 985 members of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers that asked about members’ current views on, and practice of, counselling within social work.

The research shows that social work developed late in New Zealand within a welfare state where governments questioned the need for it. With social work education not widely available until the 1970s there was limited training in counselling type approaches. The drive for professionalism (often aligned with those doing counselling) was tempered by those mindful of community and bicultural commitments due to differing ideologies and lack of access to education. Tangata whenua have had a major impact on the development of social work, and counselling within it.

Respondents in this research were clear that aspects of counselling fell within their definitions of social work and that counselling in Aotearoa New Zealand should hold a strengths-based, collaborative stance that recognised the importance of a bicultural perspective. Most respondents indicated that they did some amount of counselling within their practice, but only 34% of respondents felt that their basic social work qualification had prepared them adequately or really well for their counselling role. The majority of questionnaire respondents had undertaken additional training to help them with their counselling role and over two-thirds indicated a strong desire to engage in further study in counselling.

Registration of the helping professions presents challenges that include the potential for unhelpful competition between them. The thesis concludes that there is a need for more counselling education options for social workers and that there is a need for the profession of social work to formally define its scopes of practice.

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Glossary of Māori Terms

Ake ake	Forever
Aroha	Love
Awhi	Help or embrace
Hapu	Sub-tribe or clan
Hui	Meeting
Hui taumata	Meeting to determine the vision
Iwi	Tribe
Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi	Social services training organisation
Kaimahi tautoko	Support worker
Kaiwhakahaere	Leader
Karakia	Prayer
Kaupapa	Ideology
Kaumātua	Elder
Kawa	Protocol
Kete	Basket
Kupu	Word
Mahi	Work
Mana	Prestige, status, spiritual power, charisma
Manaaki	Care for
Mauri ora	Be
Noho	“Live in” style
Pakeha	European or Caucasian
Poutama	Steps pattern
Puao-te-ata tu	Daybreak
Pūhā	Sow thistle eaten as green vegetable
Raranga	Weave
Rōpū	Group
Takawaenga o Aotearoa	Māori caucus of ANZASW
Tangata whaiora	Consumer of health services
Tangata Whenua	Native people of the land
Taonga	Treasure
Tauīwi	Foreigner
Tautoko	Support
Te ao Māori	Māori world view

Te Pae Mahutonga	Constellation of stars known as Southern Cross.
Te Wānanga O Aotearoa	University of Aotearoa
Te Wheke	Octopus
Te taha Māori	Māori dimension, aspect
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	Treaty of Waitangi
Te whariki	Mat
Tikanga	Rules for living
Tino rangatirota	Chieftainship
Tohu	Degree
Tumeke	Exclamation
Wahine	Woman
Wairua	Spirit
Wairuatanga	Māori spirituality
Waka rua	Two-hulled canoe
Wananga	University
Whakapapa	Genealogy
Whānau	Nuclear or close family
Whanaunga	Relative by blood
Whanaungatanga	Relationship, kinship
Whare tapa wha	Four-sided house. Model of Māori health.