

Book review



Moemoeā: Māori Counselling Journeys. (2017).
Editors: Kathie Crocket, Eugene Davis, Elmarie Kotzé,
Brent Swann, and Huia Swann. Dunmore Publishing Ltd,
Auckland, New Zealand.

Reviewed by Dr Helene Connor (Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Ruanui
iwi; Ngāti Rāhiri and Ngāti Te Whiti hapu)

The preface to *Moemoeā: Māori Counselling Journeys* begins with a quotation by Princess Te Puaea Herangi (1883–1952) which aptly encapsulates the whakapapa (genealogy) of this publication, together with its title, *Moemoeā*, meaning to dream:

If I dream alone, I alone will achieve,

If we dream together, we will achieve

The editors of this pukapuka (book) all whakapapa to the Master of Counselling (MCouns) at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, Aotearoa New Zealand. Dr Elmarie Kotzé is currently the Director of Counsellor Education, Dr Kathie Crocket is the previous Director of Counsellor Education and has been a member of the counsellor education team since 1993, and Brent Swann (Ngāti Porou, Rongowhakaata), Huia Swann (Ngāi Tahu, Ngā Puhī, Ngāti Wai) and Eugene Davis (Ngāti Hauā) are all graduates of the programme. Their shared whakapapa and their dream to create a new counselling paper, “Whānau (family) and Narrative Therapy,” eventually led to the genesis of the pukapuka. Given the background of the editors, the text will no doubt be a practical resource for counsellor educators and counsellors in training, as well as practising counsellors, social and community workers, and teachers in guidance-related roles.

The University of Waikato's Master of Counselling programme has actively promoted narrative therapy for over twenty years. The pukapuka resonates with a strong narrative theoretical perspective, skilfully woven together with narratives of whakapapa and whānau therapy. One of the core elements of narrative therapy is its positioning of the individual as an expert in his or her own life. It assumes that everyone has the skills and competencies, values and abilities to assist them to address and change problems within their relationships and other aspects of their lives. Narrative therapy uncovers the narratives or stories of our lives in a respectful and non-judgemental manner, and the person consulting a narrative therapist has a significant role to play in determining the direction the therapy will take.

An enduring kaupapa (philosophical platform) of the pukapuka is its stance that narrative therapy dovetails effectively and ethically with whakaaro Māori (Māori understandings), and that counter-narratives and alternative stories can be constructed, unobscured by a focus on failure and shortfall. Indeed, throughout the chapters, there appears to be an intentional "blueprint" to create counter-narratives to the "deficit approach" which frequently constructs whānau Māori as being problematic and challenging.

Whakaaro Māori and the importance of mana-enhancing (enhancing one's status and prestige) counselling practice with both individuals and Māori whānau permeate each chapter, giving shape to therapeutic encounters that are strengths-based along with a distinctive kaupapa to assist whānau in realising their potential.

Another attribute of narrative therapy that is compelling for whakaaro Māori and work with Māori whānau is the emphasis on collaboration and the collaborative relationship. In practical terms, this emphasis opens a space to develop a therapeutic relationship which has a decidedly appropriate cultural fit, a factor that is reiterated throughout the pukapuka.

Moemoeā: Māori Counselling Journeys is divided into five distinct parts on a range of topics, authored by both Māori and tau iwi counsellors and educationalists. Part One of the pukapuka provides a historical and cultural context by delving into traditional knowledges such as whakapapa, pārakau (stories), and te wā (stories about and in time) and then highlighting their relevance within contemporary practice.

In Part Two, the chapters are centred around the concept of mana, including a chapter on mana wāhine (the status of Māori women). Part Three focuses on whānau and Māori-centred practice, where the authors draw on stories from their experience and explore some of the dilemmas and difficulties that whānau bring to counselling.

In Part Four, learning, teaching, and supervision are the primary foci, with discussion on the ways in which Māori cultural ethics can both inform and clarify practitioner learning and their mahi (work) within these fields of practice. In Part Five, the pukapuka concludes with two brief chapters expressing the hope that the work of developing a mana-respecting and mana-enhancing practice will continue to expand and progress, and that social service practitioners will be prompted to engage in critical self-reflection and begin to reimagine contexts where the mana of all people, both Māori and tau iwi, is valued and cherished.

Despite the differences in author backgrounds, experience, and approaches, there is a synergy and sense of whānaungatanga (connection) and collaboration across each of the parts and chapters, and ultimately the book as a whole, in order to give a nod to the first chapter title: “Comes together, apart.” Certainly, the whakapapa connection to the MCouns programme has provided a common ground from which to build the stories of counselling practice and knowledge, but it is the commitment to narrative therapy as a non-colonising, respectful, and mana-enhancing therapy which provides the glue to hold it all together.

As with the recently published *Collaborative and Indigenous Mental Health Therapy: Tātaihono—Stories of Māori Healing and Psychiatry* (2016) by Wiremu NiaNia, Allister Bush and David Epston, *Moemoeā: Māori Counselling Journeys* offers a significant contribution to the literature on Māori identity and Māori-centred therapies within a narrative and bicultural framework. Professor Sir Mason Durie graciously wrote the Forewords for both pukapuka, and commends both for their bicultural practice and ability to combine indigenous knowledge with contemporary therapeutic approaches where Māori culture and philosophy are valued and respected.

Moemoeā: Māori Counselling Journey is an essential text for both Māori and tau iwi working with and alongside whānau Māori within a counselling, guidance, supervision, or educational context. A practical and accessible resource, it will be of particular benefit to counsellors, therapists, educationalists, and other social practitioners who want to sustain Māori-centred practices where the voices of Māori are not only heard, but privileged.

*Te ohonga ake i taku moemoeā,
Ko te puawaitanga
o nga whaaro
Dreams become reality
When we take action.*

Glossary

Māori terms	English translation
Aotearoa	Māori name for New Zealand, meaning the land of the long white cloud
Hapu	Sub-tribe
Iwi	Tribe
Kaupapa	Philosophical platform, agenda for discussion
Mahi	Work
Mana	Status, prestige
Mana wāhine	Status of Māori women
Māori	Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand
Moemoeā	To dream
Pārākau	Stories
Pukapuka	Book
Tau iwi	Non-Māori
Te wā	Time
Whakapapa	Genealogy
Whakaaro Māori	Māori knowledge
Whānau	Family
Whānaungatanga	Connection

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