A Worldview of Social Work in Contemporary Society: My tacit knowledge of Social Work Practice

Introduction

This paper will look at the intricate design of Modern Day Social Work and look at Māori philosophy as a methodologic approach to Social Work Practice specifically in my model of practice Te Manu Tui and as a social worker and supervisor. I will also look at my own beliefs, worldview and whakapapa and how I have positioned myself to align and apply Kaupapa Māori Theory in today's modern social work practice.

What has influenced me to pursue a career in Social Work? What is so great about this field of practice and to critically analyse the knowledge I have received that is not so tangle able and to apply this in everyday life. What is the epistemology behind the field of social work practice specifically my practice?

Supervision, Social Work, Supervisor and Supervisee, social worker are constant words used in today's language where Social Workers are practitioners engaging in the on-going challenge of engaging with people who have been marginalised and disempowered. The challenge in the working environment is to align with what is true to the nature of the job. Rename, reclaim and open the focus of a social work practitioner to explore values, beliefs and worldviews that can make a change in the lives of others.

Social Work dates to ancient times where charity was a practice providing for the poor. In the early European $4^{\rm th}$

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century around 580 AD the Christian churches had a system set up for circulating consumables to the poor they also established shelters, homes, hospitals and orphanages which at times served as a comprehensive social service support. During the middle ages the Christian church had an influence on European society as charity was considered a responsibility or rite of passage for one's piety (Flick, 1919; Kalantzis, 2006).

This paper will argue the Western beginnings of Social Work Practice and the effect the modern-day system has had on whanau, hapu and iwi since the modernisation of social work practice. This paper will also look at the professionalisation of social work here in Aotearoa and will reflect on early forms of welfare pre-colonisation to looking at where Māori methods of practice are placed in this changing world.

Whakapapa: Ko Wai Ahau? - The principles of my humble beginnings

For the past thirteen years I have been involved in the profession of Social Work and within the past three years I have been involved in professional supervision and recently part of a panel process with the Social Workers Registration Board which looks at the competencies of Social Workers through the complaints process.

Although this does not depict who I am, how do I discuss the epistemology behind my own truth and Ko wai ahau? Whakapapa is a word used to describe genealogy, broken down "Papa" is a flat broad surface; slab or hard flat rock surface, when paired with "Whaka" it causes the verb or thing to happen; cause to be. In the context of whakapapa and Ko wai ahau? Whakapapa exposes the layers of what is true to me, in pūrākau, whanau links, teachings, reo, waiata and is a historical and spiritual connection to who I am today.

Ko Wai Ahau? Anei te Korowai whakapapa o ōku Matua

Ko Rangiahua, Hikurangi me Nga Pae maunga o Tararua nga maunga

Ko Wainui me Waiapu nga awa

Ko Tainui me Horouta nga waka

Ko Ngai Tai, Ngati Raukawa me Ngati Porou nga iwi

Ko Torere-nui-a-rua, Motuiti me Tuparoa nga marae

Ko Vania Hotereni, Te uri

I was born in a little place called Te Puia Springs which is just past Ruatoria heading towards Tokomaru Bay on the East Coast of Aotearoa. Both my parents were teaching at the time, my mother based at Hiruharama and my father based at Tikitiki.

Even before I was the apple of my parents eyes they were always involved in the local community, always present at Marae events and hui and when I think about my extended whanau they were always there in times of need. Whakapapa has always been at the forefront for both my parents and in some way both of them were the unspoken kaitiaki for all.

Ko Wai Ahau? The beginning for our whanau starts with Torere-nui-a-rua the eldest daughter of Hoturoa, the captain of the Tainui waka and her mother Whakaotiarangi. Torere-nui-arua is the Aho Ariki of Ngaitai and Te Whanau Herewini and Te Whanau Maxwell are two of many uri that whakapapa back to Torere a little settlement just outside of Opotiki and on the borderline of Te Whanau-a-Apanui. (B.Maxwell, & A. Mio, personal communication, December 10, 2009)

Growing up around my whanau, I remember stories about my Tipuna. Torere-nui-a-rua was a strong woman and when the Tainui waka came to shore on what is now call the Torere beach, she asked her father to bless the land and asked for his blessing to settle in the bay.

The women in my whanau although strong were also there to guide us through life. Each unique whanau line was also kaitiaki to maintain the integrity and the formation of our Māori culture based on tikanga, kawa and reo and on the knowledge handed down from their tipuna this included pūrākau not only of creation but pūrākau about how Ngaitai the iwi was born. Jenny Lee (2009) explains "should not be relegated to the category of fiction and fable of the past. Pūrākau, a traditional form of Māori narrative, contains philosophical thought, epistemological constructs, cultural codes, and worldviews that are fundamental to our identity as Māori".

Taina Pohatu (2010) example of "Te Papa Tauira - The basic pattern" discusses the lived experience, the principles, bodies of knowledge and applied practice. As my journey unfolds I will look at the different aspects of my life that I believe have been engrained and are a part of my D.N.A in, informing Ko Wai Ahau? Who I am today.

Looking back through my whakapapa, the women have all been very strong leaders, in thought, in body and in their wairua. The men in my whakapapa are also strong leaders however the dominance has been through the women. Through the generations each whanau line has been unique in their own development.

In the context of social work and supervision, whakapapa is key when explored and is the beginning of relationships that are intricate in its design. Ruwhiu (2004) explores cultural connections in a way where our own stories can provide key principles. Barlow explains that "Whakapapa is commonly known as the genealogical descent from the creation of the universe by Io, to the present time" "whakapapa is to lay one thing upon another and is the basis of knowledges".

My whanau, my tipuna were there to instill and support the dynamics of the various relationships formed between each whanau line keeping the cinders of the home fires burning. Understanding my roots in whakapapa I see the beginnings of an indigenous practitioner emerging.

Western Introduction of Social Work to Aotearoa – Clash of the Taniwha and Titans

As suggested in the title, this is a clash of both western and Māori ideologies. Assimilation, integration, self-determination, what is right what is wrong and who has the right to determine the welfare of the people living here in Aotearoa?

Earlier I mentioned that social work dates back to ancient times where charity was a practice providing for the poor and in the early European 4th century around 580 AD the Christian churches had a system set up providing support to the poor. Keeping this in mind pre-contact of western influences Māori already had their own structures in place to deal with any social inconveniences, it was a support system that was ingrained in the knowledge of everything learned in whakapapa. What the colonisers introduced were western knowledge and theory systems also rules and regulations in how social work should be practiced. (A. Flick, 1919; Kalantzis, 2006; Royal, 2003; Marsden, 2003; Metge, 2003)

Ruwhiu (1999) argues these are western welfare ideologies that were laid out as the given law they were never choices "Subsequently, in terms of the 'Old English poor Law' principles of charity, benevolence, deserving / undeserving, while Tangata Whenua rated highly in need of help, our fore-bearers were often the recipients of harsh discipline (Cheyne, O'Brien and Belgrave, 1997)".

It goes without saying that in the above statement, Tangata Whenua, hapu and iwi were never considered to be in human existence. When I look at my own up bringing it would suggest that tikanga and kawa and tacit knowledge of Tangata Whenua will not even be considered.

In the early and mid 1900s Pakeha beliefs were "that Māori were indeed a 'museum commodity'" (Ruwhiu, 1999) this gave support that western views of civilization were more superior to those of our own beliefs. This thinking influences the dynamics of social work where it was evident that Māori needed western theories and ideology to improve our well-being. Was this also the thinking behind biculturalism? (Ratima, 2010; Durie, 2000; Glover, 2000)

To gain a better understanding of what biculturalism is, Schwartz and Unger (2010) in their commentary on Mistry and Wu explain that not only is this a concept of worlds crossing but where an individual is able to converse in their own native tongue and in the language of their chosen resident. Hence been able move between two worlds. Hawkins and Shohet (2006) also state that it is important to "understand cultures that are different from our own".

Early European history says Social Work derived from a need that the church saw, this was based on western religious influences in the political, economic, social environment of the time. At the turn of the 20th century the introduction of industrialization and urbanization "set off severe social disorganisation as evident in fragmentation of extended families, inadequate housing and schools" (Gitterman, 2014) hence starting a charity organization boom in the helping profession.

There definitely is a clash of the Taniwha and Titans and puts social work in a complex position, let alone where this places Te Ao Māori matauranga and practices in today's modern society of Aotearoa.

Durie (2009) also states that Māori were forced to change "from a tribal lifestyle inextricably bound to the natural environment, to a new reality dictated by the social and political inconsistencies of Victorian Britain"

In Aotearoa we have The Treaty of Waitangi however without looking at the Treaty of Waitangi and the articles in depth, it is my understanding that this document is generally accepted as the founding document of New Zealand, however it is quite profound because there are implications in how Māori or in how I should behave or participate as a fully fledge citizen in Aotearoa. Over time the aspects of the Treaty of Waitangi and although defined under the articles of the Treaty of Waitangi looks at the expectations and what is acceptable and appropriate to the current circumstances Aotearoa is facing in today's contemporary society it does not mention that my indigenous practice gives me total control over my own Tino Rangatiratanga.

The challenge I am faced with today is to critically question and recognise the unique differences and diversities within a culture and what the implications are allowing a space of opportunity and dialogue to occur moving to a space where new relationships are formed in the knowledge and understanding of our own cultural uniqueness.

Underlying principles in My belief system: Manaakitanga; Wairuatanga; Te Ahiikaroa me Kaitiakitanga

The underlying principles in my worldview start with the many teachings handed down by my tipuna. The first principle starts with Wairuatanga. As I mentioned earlier, the women in my whanau are very strong and wairua naturally sits with them. They were not only the caregivers for their own families but also held ranks within the various Haahi around the motu. Growing up under the influence of the Anglican Church this is where I thought wairuatanga was born and bred. How wrong was I when my own mother told me to go hug and talk to a tree? "What has a tree got to do with wairuatanga I asked"? my mother's insight was the acknowledgement that both the physical and spiritual worlds coexist, and it is the interaction between them that creates a sense of wairuatanga. (B. Maxwell, A. Mio, O. Hotereni, W. Maxwell, personal communication, December 10, 2009)

Growing up as a youngster the people of Ngaitai are proud to hold the principle of Manaakitanga. Manaakitanga from our perception is making sure that we are hospitable to all those we come into contact with. I am proud to be Ngaitai however over the years I have also started to question the principle of Manaakitanga. An experience I had a few years back made me question this principle as my own people closed the door to our wharenui as I brought manuhiri to stay.

The principle of Te Ahikāroa is the notion of keeping the home fires burning and the influence of remaining strong on the homelands. In today's society we have whanau members across our five whakapapa lines who currently reside in Tōrere. This also links in with the principle of Kaitiakitanga. In my reality and Ko Wai Au, I personally have never been that good at keeping Te Ahikāroa alive and kicking however the challenge for me is to explore my motivation in why I am questioning this now?

Bringing this back into the context of Ko Wai Ahau, these principles have been taught through our generations and we teach them to our own children. In my view of the social work profession and as an indigenous practioner these principles have been engrained in my life.

My Practice - Bi-culturalism A Case of Hit and Run

I currently live on the West Coast and have held various positions in the Māori Provider of Health and Social Service. Communication in my view has been a barrier hindering the movement forward for professionals both Māori and non-Māori who need to work in partnership to provide the best possible support for individuals, whanau and families.

The question around communication is how do we do it and is it done well? As a Māori Social Work practitioner, it can be a daily battle to advocate for others especially in an area where non-Māori seem to be the preferred authority and hold the key to whanau lives. As a Māori Social Work practitioner, the battles are listening to non-Māori practitioners and their stories and perceptions of how Māori should be! and the constant question of "How do you work with Māori?". A colonised view stemmed from the political climate of what was a National led nation? Perhaps?

In professional practice as an Indigenous practitioner, my experience has been just that with cross communication between Māori and non-Māori. Working in health and social services on the West Coast, Māori are targeted as high and complex coming from low socio-economic backgrounds, low employment, low incomes, low qualifications leading to a generalisation that Māori have poorer health than non-Māori.

Blaidock (2010) discusses the changing government; the restructuring and restrictions of policies which has affected the loss of contracts forcing the workforce to creatively design programs to support whanau with less financial support hence affecting whanau that are targeted and boxed in the "low socio-economic arena". (Blaidock, 2010; Durie, 1998; Henare, 1998; Labonte, 1996)

On the West Coast the words that are constantly used are "integration", "we need to be integrated into health, education and the community to fix the disparities experienced by Māori, if we can do this than the socio-economic climate will be equal alongside non-Māori" However is this the reality for Māori on the West Coast or is this from a Western perspective?

An example of a recent case, I was supporting a whanau around a young person with the issue of mental health and the attempt of suicide. The professionals and clinical team around this whanau were non-Māori. In the space of 5 days regardless of the incident this whanau was ripped apart. If the West Coast are utilizing the word and concept of integration, then with this case where was the consultation and the communication in supporting both the young person and their whanau?

Mason Durie (1998) in his book Whaiora explores the notion of biculturalism in Māori Health but also refers to the Hunn report (1961) where there are disparities, inequities and injustices in the socio-economic climate of that time targeting Māori. Although he talks about health, in the wider context Māori health and its development cannot be separated from other factors such as culture, social development and what makes up the essence of that person. Māori health is about Māori determining the outcome for their future. (Blaidock, 2010; Durie, 1998; Henare, 1998; Labonte, 1996; Laverack, 2007)

Within this case and the timeframe, the practice and decisions were based around non-Māori concepts that were task orientated and there was no consideration for Te Aō Māori or Kaupapa Māori processes. The ripple effect ended with an outcome of a whanau losing their connections and all faith in the current support system around them.

Manna (2002) looks at bi-culturalism in practice and the integration of Māori models of practice specifically "Te Pounamu" as a clinical mental health assessment process in a tradition setting. Once again, the Treaty of Waitangi is at the forefront however this time it is Te Titiri o Waitangi and the principles and how they can be incorporated into best practice that will enhance not only the practitioner but will acknowledge and demonstrate all aspects of well-being.

As demonstrated in the case presented, if Māori were able to use the model of Te Pounamu or use Māori concepts of whakawhanaungatanga, tikanga, kawa, karakia and even the use of Te Whare Tapa Wha the outcome for this whanau could have lead them down a different pathway and not down a pathway where they had to rebuild their own connections.

It goes without saying that in today's world of Aotearoa we are a thriving nation living among a variety of ethnicities. In the western world there are many theories and models of practice that professionals can follow that will constantly in form their practice. As I mentioned communication is an issue on the West Coast in the arena of Health, education and social services. The word "integration", or "we need to be integrated" is a conversational ender. Allyson Davys in her paper "The cultural dimension: that other function of supervision" (Davy's 2005) looks at the cultural dimension and recognises that western models of practice fall short. Although this talks about supervision she also mentions "recognising the practitioners' culture". How profound! as she also suggests in the following quote,

> "Recognising the practitioners' culture" legitimises and anticipates the tensions which will arise from different values bases and perspectives with the work context. By defining this activity as a function of supervision we require practitioners, regardless of their ethnicity or beliefs, to stand back and consider the interaction of their value base and world view with the theory which underpins their work, their responsibilities as an employee and their work as a practitioner. (Davy's 2005)

In another example I had the privilege of attending a hui regarding Health Promotion in Schools. The people that attended where mainly non-Māori teachers and principals. When looking at bicultural issues we concentrated on the West Coast and the themes were very similar to that of Māori Health. Now the focus was on education however education health and social issues all interlink together.

The intention of this workshop was to focus on the outcomes for whanau and what the schools, teachers and principals wanted from whanau. The outcome was to have whanau participate in their children's education and for all children to excel in their learning. However, in the middle of the workshop we had to interrogate the correlation between equity outcomes and current practice. This lead to the workshop coming to a halt.

I was asked to give a Social Workers view, in turn I gave an indigenous perspective. I mentioned two words, firstly the word

colonisation and secondly the impact colonisation has had on Māori and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. My privilege was to give an example from a Māori worldview and during our discussions and exploring these two areas the bottom line was to find a positive response where the participants were able to reframe and reconstruct the way they are working with an action framework that accelerated equity and redistributed power back to whanau. In my view, Davy's suggestion fits with this example where, as professionals our conversations and the way we communicate to each other needs to change.

Conclusion - Moving on

In my experience and living on the West Coast of the South Island, Aotearoa, the bicultural issues or the disparities experienced by Māori and non-Māori in health, in education and in the community are very similar. Child abuse, financial poverty, alcohol and drug addictions, the increase of Teenage suicide, domestic violence, parents that are separating, parenting issues, rangatahi issues with life, custody battles, mental health issues, health and disability issue, sexuality, physical abuse, housing and rent issues, unhealthy homes, relationship issues are all happening around us.

Communication as a bicultural issue in my view started with the signing of The Treaty of Waitangi and today is still misunderstood. The conversations and questions that come from a non-Māori view point such as how "do you" work with Māori? or we need to be integrated are still at the fore and it suggests that somewhere along the lines, professionals have become stuck in their own colonised thoughts. As McKenzie states in her own story is "the role and power of language to construct; language becomes centre stage and people are seen to be disempowered by dominant discourses" (2004).

The realities of biculturalism in practice and in my professional work has been to look at the intricacies of everyone,

whanau and family I support. Language or the use of korero, kanohi ki te kanohi has played a big part in the movement forward for them. Language has played a part in the korero and conversations individuals, whanau and families need to have with the many professionals they come across in their life time. Communication no matter what form, be it sign language, English, Māori or other, also needs to be clear so that each party understands the intentions of each other so that no wires are crossed ending in dispute.

Utilization of Te Ao Māori or Kaupapa Māori notions and concepts is at the forefront of this paper. As John Bradley (1998) explains "A Māori worldview has always existed. Within that worldview are diverse realities revolving around a group of omnipotent principles, which in relation to each other are adapted over time".

I conclude that there is power in the language and the way Kaupapa Māori is used in the practice of Social Work. There is no quick fix for the various issues whanau or I have faced in the professional world. There is a challenge here in Clash of the Taniwha and Titans no matter what sector of Health, Education or at a workshop like the Health Promotion Schools or alongside other professionals, the challenge is to challenge the power of those in authority who can influence those around them and reshape the way language and communication can be understood by many.

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