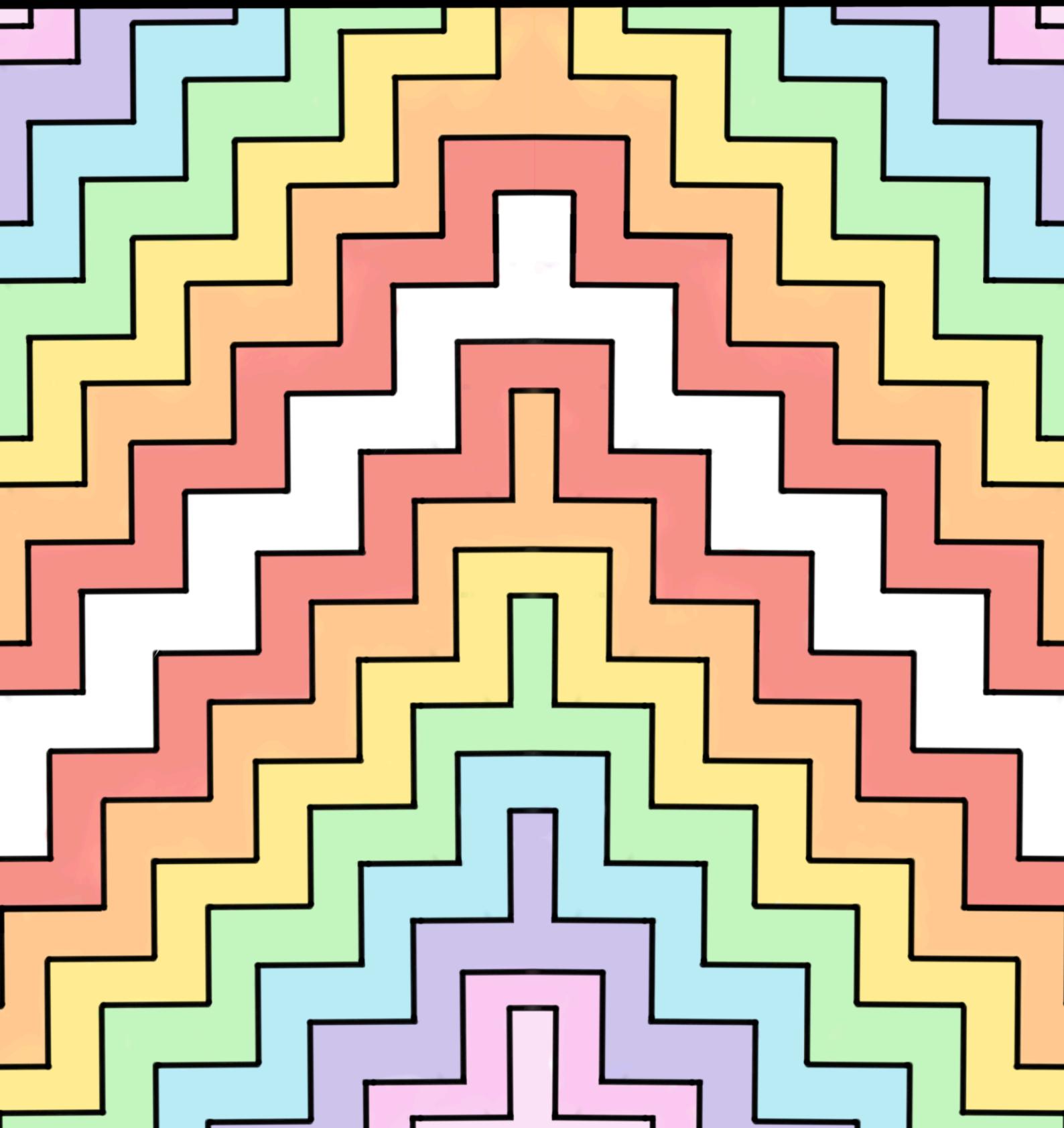


# WHAKAMANA

Mana-Enhancing Research With Rangatahi Takatāpui



This report has been prepared for Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga as part of the Raumati Internship Programme 2024-2025.

**Project: Whakamana: Empowering Well-being for Rangatahi Takatāpui - Weaving a Whāriki for Mana-Enhancing Engagement**

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This report is based on a literature review conducted as part of Phase 2 of the Whakamana Project. Its primary purpose is to make the background information and rationale for this phase of the research more accessible to rangatahi takatāpui and the communities they belong to. The intention is also to provide a platform for sharing mātauranga in a way that speaks directly to rangatahi takatāpui in ways that empower them to engage with Kaupapa Māori research. By sharing this knowledge in this way, I hope this report will help contribute to creating a space where rangatahi takatāpui voices lead the way.

**Naku te rourou, nau te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi**

With your food basket and my food basket, the people will thrive.

This internship report was produced by the author as part of a NPM internship project under the supervision of the named supervisor and funded by the Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga 2024-25 Internship Grant. The report is the work of the named intern and researchers and has been published here as provided. It may not represent the views of Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga. Any correspondence about the content should be addressed directly to the authors of the report.

For more information on Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga and its research, visit [www.maramatanga.ac.nz](http://www.maramatanga.ac.nz)

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# Ko Wai Au? Who am I?

Ko Te Tuhi o te ao Mārama me Aoraki ūku maunga  
Ko Mangapu me Mahitahi ūku awa  
Ko Oparure me Te Tauraka Waka a Māui ūku Marae  
Ko Ngāti Maniapoto me Ngāi Tahu ūku Iwi  
Ko Ngāti Kinohaku me Kāti Māhaki ki Makaawhio ūku Hapū  
Ko Shawnee Kaye Makareta Cunningham tōku ingoa

A few things about me - I am wāhine takatāpui, I am both Māori and Pākehā, I'm a university student studying psychology, and I really like research. And, although I'm not quite rangatahi anymore, I was not too long ago!

So, why am I introducing myself? Well, in Kaupapa Māori research, it's important for us to position ourselves in relation to the research we're involved in - who we are and why we're here matters. By sharing these few things about myself, along with my pepehā, I'm giving you a glimpse into who I am, where I'm from, and how I ended up here—it weaves a story about why I'm involved in this kaupapa. Through this report, I hope to share with you why research matters, why a Kaupapa Māori approach is essential for working with Māori communities, and how the way we do research—our methods, mātauranga, and tikanga—can bring us together and empower us to create the changes needed to create a better future for our communities.

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi engari taku toa he toa takitini.  
My strength is not that of one, but of many.

# Introduction to the Whakamana Project

# What is this Research About?

The Whakamana: Empowering Well-being for Rangatahi Takatāpui Research Project is about creating positive and tangible change for Rangatahi takatāpui in **Te Ranga Tupua Rohe**. Phase One of this research reviewed what support services are available to rangatahi takatāpui and what their support needs are. The findings were clear—services are scarce across this expansive region, leaving many rangatahi without access to safe and inclusive support services.



This is where Phase Two comes in – it shifts the focus from just identifying gaps to platforming rangatahi voices, experiences, and aspirations. Instead of defining their needs from the outside, this phase works alongside rangatahi takatāpui to co-create research that is identity-affirming, mana-enhancing, and grounded in Māori ways of knowing and being. This report is part of that kaupapa—it outlines how we ensure our research approach is meaningful, impactful, and empowering.

## Te Ranga Tupua Rohe

The area encompassing Whanganui, Rangitīkei, Ruapehu and South Taranaki.



**Whakamana** means to empower, uplift and affirm – this project is about doing exactly that.

## Why It Matters

Mainstream research often focuses on numbers and statistics—measuring things in a way that leaves out the heart of the story. This type of research might tell us that rangatahi takatāpui are experiencing difficulties, but it doesn't give us the full picture. It doesn't help us understand their lived experiences, their struggles, their strengths, or what meaningful support looks like.

This project is different – it recognises that it is the voices of rangatahi takatāpui that matter the most. It is about honouring their experiences without simplifying or minimising them, ensuring they can define their own needs on their own terms. Instead of simply collecting data, we are here to listen, learn, and grow together—working toward meaningful, transformative change for rangatahi takatāpui in this region.

# Ethics in Research

## Keeping You Safe



# What are Ethics in Research?

Ethics in research are about ensuring that people are treated with dignity and respect. It's about protecting their well-being, fully informing them about the research, gaining their consent, and respecting confidentiality. However, mainstream research often reduces ethics to rules and regulations, with processes like informed consent treated as a checkbox activity rather than an ongoing process. This approach creates a barrier between researchers and communities—focusing more on paperwork than on building genuine, respectful relationships. When ethics are treated as a formality, it can undermine the mana of participants, making them feel more like research subjects rather than valued contributors. This is something we want to avoid, especially when working with Māori communities like rangatahi takatāpui, who have often been silenced or harmed by past research practices. In this project, we want to do more than just follow rules—we aim to build relationships based on trust, respect, and reciprocity, ensuring rangatahi have agency and feel safe, heard, and valued throughout the research process.

## Tikanga - A Māori Approach to Ethics

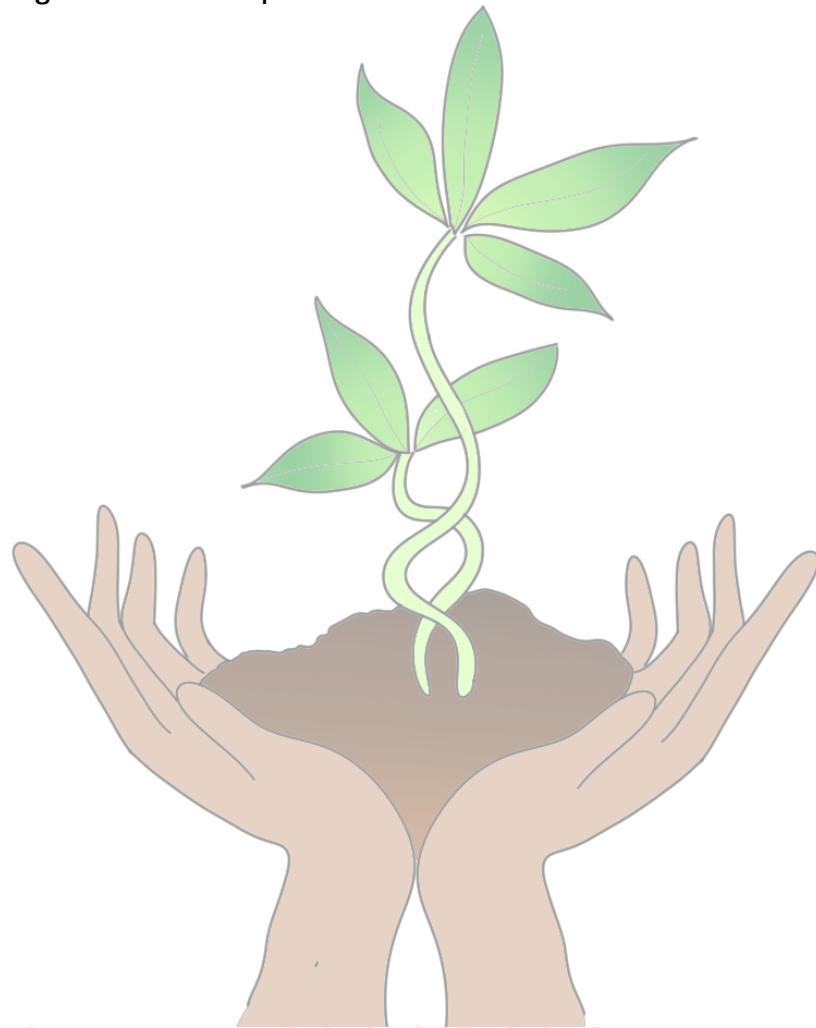
This project uses tikanga Māori as its ethical foundation. Tikanga is not only about protecting participants' rights—it's about developing genuine connections and showing care for people. Tikanga encourages ongoing conversations to ensure that the relationship between researchers and participants is built on trust, respect, and shared responsibility.

Tikanga goes beyond the technical aspects of research ethics—it's an attitude of care and responsibility that ensures every voice is heard and respected. It's not a checklist of do's and don'ts; it's a way of being. In this research, ethics isn't just about following procedures—it's about honouring rangatahi in their fullness as mana tamaiti and mana takatāpui. When we listen to their voices and centre their wellbeing, we enact an ethic of care that runs deeper than compliance. Embedding tikanga in our approach ensures that research is relational—building ongoing connections with rangatahi takatāpui not just at the start, but throughout and beyond. This approach allows us to shape the research in ways that truly benefit rangatahi and ensures that the research process itself becomes part of the empowerment.

# Why This Matters for Rangatahi

## Takatāpui

When working with communities that have historically been marginalised and excluded from decision-making processes, such as young, queer and Indigenous people, we must be particularly conscious of how power dynamics operate in research. Often, traditional research can leave participants feeling powerless, especially when the researchers hold all the control over the questions, the data, and the conclusions. This power imbalance can harm the very people it's meant to help. But tikanga shifts this dynamic. It ensures that power is shared, so rangatahi takatāpui are not subjects of research—they are active participants that shape the research itself. By embedding tikanga-based ethics, we create a space where rangatahi takatāpui lead the way, where they decide what happens. This approach doesn't just protect them—it empowers them. It respects their mana and acknowledges them as experts in their own lives.



# The Foundations What Shapes How We Do Research?



# The Big Concepts - What Are They & Why Should We Care About Them?

## Understanding Methodology

When we think about research, it's easy to focus on methods and outcomes. But behind every research project is a broader framework—our **methodology**—which shapes how we approach research and why we do it in certain ways. Methodology isn't just about the tools or methods we use; it's about the deeper foundations that guide our research choices. Think of methodology as the big picture that shapes every research decision. It includes **ontology** (what we believe reality is), **epistemology** (what we consider knowledge and how we come to know things), and **axiology** (the values that shape our research). These ideas may sound complicated, but really, they're just tools for thinking critically about research—so we can create knowledge that is meaningful and empowering for our communities.

## Ontology: What is Reality?

Ontology is how we understand reality. In mainstream Western research, reality is often seen as separate from the observer – something that can be studied objectively, measured, and proven. This way of thinking tends to ignore things that can't be easily measured – things like **mauri**, **wairua**, **mana** and **tapu**. Instead, it assumes there is only one truth, rather than recognising that multiple truths exist.

Māori ontology, on the other hand, views reality as relational and interconnected. It acknowledges that our understanding of the world is shaped by both the seen and the unseen. For rangatahi takatāpui, this means that identity, connection to community, and cultural grounding are all part of what shapes reality. By working from a Māori ontological perspective in research, we move beyond just collecting data—we tell stories, honour lived experiences, and centre the well-being of our people.

- ★ **Mauri:** Our life force - the energy that gives everything life
- ★ **Wairua:** Our spirit - the part of us that's connected to everything around us
- ★ **Mana:** Our source of personal and collective strength
- ★ **Tapu:** Things or places that are sacred

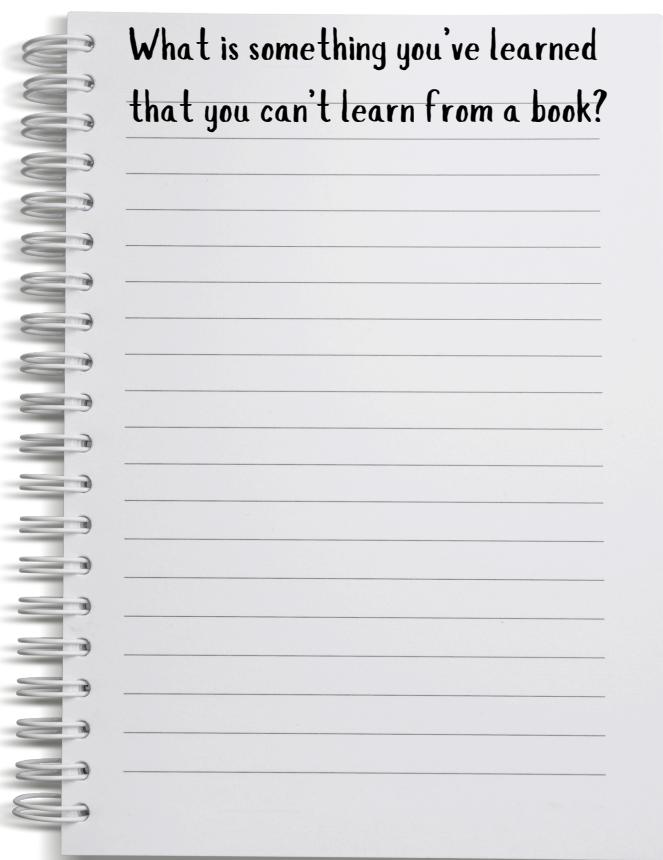
This is a simplified description of these concepts, just to give you an idea. But, as you can see, they're not things we can measure with numbers or stats—they are things we feel on a deeper level. There are many more concepts and values like these that are central to a Māori worldview - they shape how we see and experience the world.



## Epistemology: What Counts as Knowledge?

Epistemology is about what we consider to be knowledge and how we come to know things. In mainstream research, knowledge is seen as something that comes from books, universities, or scientific experiments. It prioritises things that can be measured and proven, while dismissing other forms of knowledge, such as knowledge found in our stories, lived experiences, relationships and spiritual understandings.

Māori epistemology – or mātauranga Māori – is holistic and relational. Knowledge is not treated as something separate from the people and places it comes from; rather, it is deeply embedded in our relationships, environments, and histories. This approach acknowledges that research carries responsibilities—to uplift communities, honour whakapapa, and ensure that knowledge is used in ways that align with tikanga and collective well-being. Mātauranga Māori values knowledge that comes from diverse sources— it isn't confined to textbooks; it lives in our stories and oral histories, in art, waiata, whakapapa, and cultural practices. When research ignores these ways of knowing, it erases Indigenous perspectives and continues to silence our voices. That's why Kaupapa Māori research prioritises methods that reflect Māori ways of knowing—to actively uphold, protect, and pass down mātauranga Māori for future generations.



## Axiology: What Do We Value in Research?

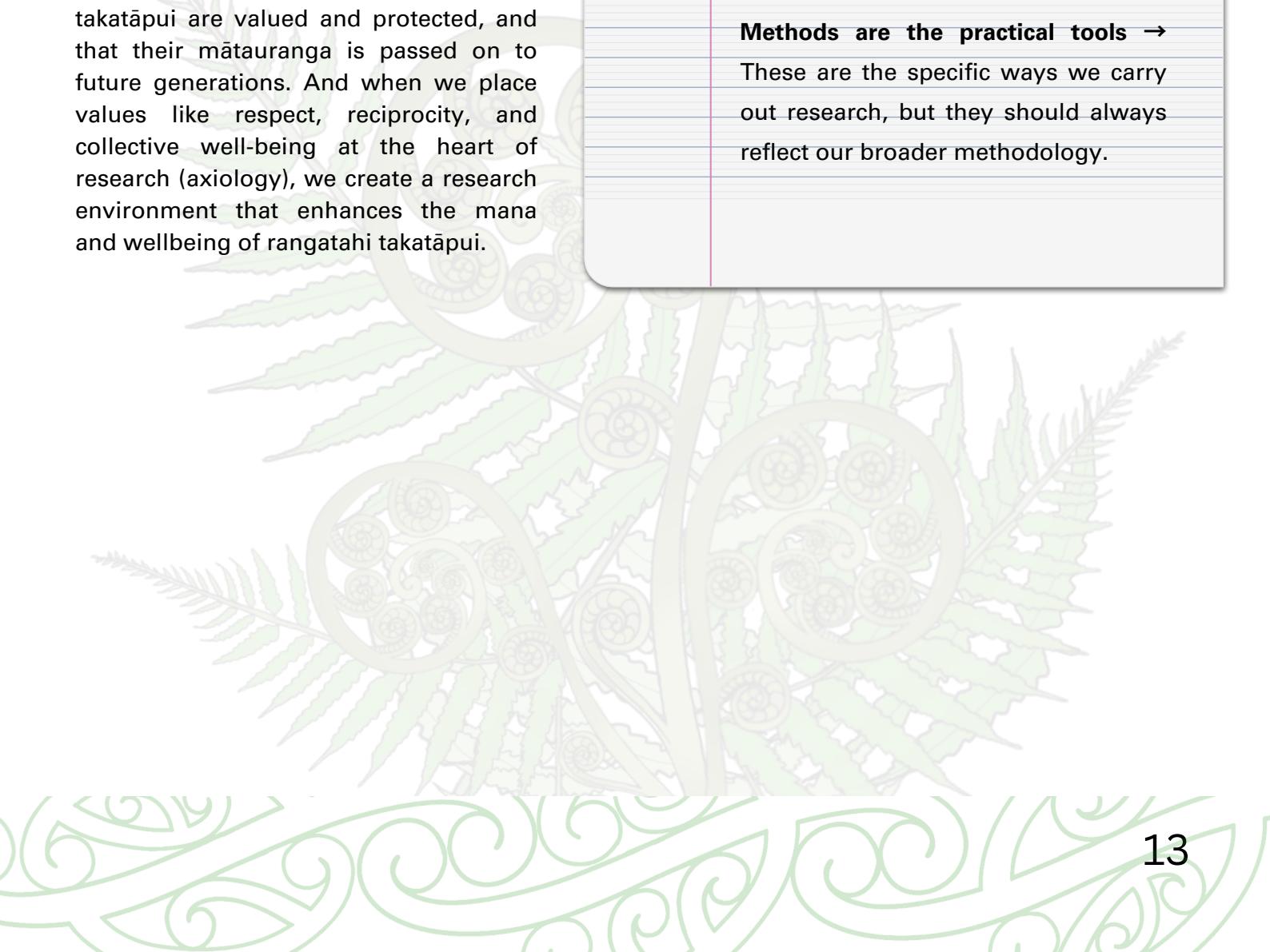
Axiology is about the values that shape research. In Western research, there is an assumption that research should be 'neutral' and free from personal beliefs. But the truth is, all research is shaped by values – whether we acknowledge them or not.

Kaupapa Māori research puts values like respect, reciprocity and collective well-being at the centre. This means research isn't just about gathering knowledge – it's about giving back. It's about making sure research is done with rangatahi takatāpui, not on them, and that the work we do contributes to positive changes for our communities.



By being reflexive about our values – that is, by actively considering and questioning how our own beliefs, experiences and values shape our research – we ensure that our work genuinely serves our people and strengthens our communities.

When we understand these concepts through a Kaupapa Māori lens, they become powerful tools for shaping research that truly serves rangatahi takatāpui. By viewing reality as interconnected and relational (ontology), we honour the lived experiences and diverse truths that rangatahi hold. Centring mātauranga Māori (epistemology) ensures that the knowledge and experiences of rangatahi takatāpui are valued and protected, and that their mātauranga is passed on to future generations. And when we place values like respect, reciprocity, and collective well-being at the heart of research (axiology), we create a research environment that enhances the mana and wellbeing of rangatahi takatāpui.



## How these Concepts Fit Together

**Ontology, epistemology, and axiology shape methodology** → They influence how we understand the world, what we consider valid knowledge, and what ethical responsibilities we have in research.

**Methodology guides method choice**  
→ Once we understand our underlying beliefs and values, we can choose methods that align with them.

**Methods are the practical tools** → These are the specific ways we carry out research, but they should always reflect our broader methodology.

# Kaupapa Māori Research Doing Research Our Way

# What is Kaupapa Māori Research?

Kaupapa Māori (KM) research is about doing research in ways that centre Māori ways of knowing, being, and doing—where Mātauranga Māori, Tikanga, and te reo Māori are at the core. It pushes back against the idea that mainstream Western research is the only valid way to understand the world. For too long, research about Māori has been done by outsiders who don't understand or respect our cultural practices, language, and ways of seeing the world. Kaupapa Māori research changes that by ensuring our knowledge, voices, and experiences aren't just included, but are centred as valid and legitimate ways of knowing and being. It challenges colonial assumptions and creates space for research that uplifts whānau, hapū, iwi, and wider Māori communities.

“ Research for, with  
and by Māori.  
Our voices, our  
knowledge, our way. ”

But it's more than just research—it's about transformation. At its core, KM research is about tino rangatiratanga—Māori having control over our own research and the stories told about us. It isn't just about identifying problems; it's about finding solutions that come from our own tikanga, mātauranga, and strengths as Māori.

## What questions should we be asking to ensure research serves our communities?

- What do we want to learn, and why?
- Who is this research for, and how will it help them?
- What impact do we want to have?
- Who should lead and shape this research?
- How do we want to carry out this research?
- How will we know it's meaningful, and who owns it?
- Who benefits from this research?

By asking these questions, we ensure that we are doing research for the right reasons and in ways that uplift the communities we work alongside.

KM research is grounded in values and principles that are deeply connected to who we are as Māori. They don't just guide the research process—they shape how we approach the world and how we relate to each other. These values are a part of what makes KM research uniquely Māori.

On the next page are some values and principles at the heart of this research, but they are just some of the many principles that can guide us. Context matters, and what works in one setting might look different in another. But in every case, these values help us create research that uplifts and strengthens our communities. So, what are these values and what do they mean for research with rangatahi takatāpui?

# Some Key Values & Principles For This Research

## Tino Rangatiratanga

### Rangatahi Lead the Way

- ❖ Autonomy & control over our identities, knowledge, and decisions
- ❖ Rangatahi are co-researchers - they decide what they share and how they share it

## Kaupapa

### Collective Vision for Change

- ★ Research centres the collective wellbeing of rangatahi takatāpui
- ★ What we do is relevant & directed toward uplifting our communities

## Mankaakitanga

### Care For Rangatahi Wellbeing

- ❖ Care, respect & generosity
- ❖ Creating a space where rangatahi feel safe, supported and looked after

## Āta

### Relational Ethics

- ★ Being thoughtful, patient and respectful in all interactions
- ★ Creating a space where rangatahi can move at their own pace - their needs are at the forefront

## Whanaungatanga

### Strength Through Connection

- ★ Building & maintaining genuine relationships.
- ★ Everyone feels a part of the collective.
- ★ Relationships are respectful, trusting and supportive.

## He Taonga Tuku Iho

### Honouring Cultural Treasures

- ❖ Upholding & sharing te reo Māori, tikanga, mātauranga & whakapapa
- ❖ Strengthening rangatahi connections to takatāpui knowledge, histories & identities

## Whakapapa

### Connection that Binds us

- ★ Our stories & mātauranga are carried forward, connecting past, present, and future
- ★ Rangatahi are supported to connect with tūpuna takatāpui, atua and te ao Māori

## Ako

### Learning & Growing Together

- ❖ Reciprocal teaching & learning
- ❖ Holding space for everyone to share and contribute - we all are all teachers & learners

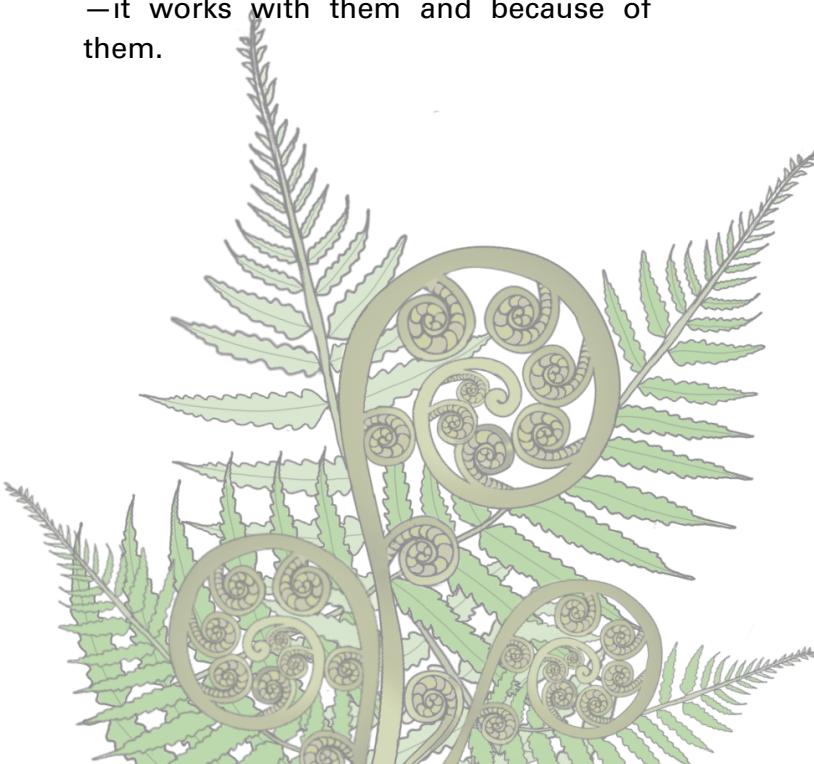
# Why Kaupapa Māori Research is the Best Fit for this Project

For too long, research about takatāpui has either ignored our realities or misrepresented us. Often, it has focused on "problems" rather than celebrating our strength, resilience, and identities. Kaupapa Māori research shifts this narrative by ensuring rangatahi takatāpui are not just included but centred—with full control over how their stories are shared and used.

Because Kaupapa Māori research is flexible, it allows rangatahi to participate in ways that feel right for them. Instead of forcing people into rigid interviews or surveys, it embraces storytelling, art, wānanga, and other creative ways of sharing knowledge. These approaches align with how mātauranga Māori is traditionally passed down—through kōrero, pūrākau, and collective learning. These research methods make space for rangatahi takatāpui to express themselves on their own terms and in ways that resonate with them most.

Most importantly, Kaupapa Māori research is decolonising in nature. It actively resists the erasure of Indigenous and takatāpui identities by making sure our stories are told in ways that honour who we are.

It acknowledges the impact of colonisation but also focuses on resistance, reclamation, pride, and the futures that rangatahi takatāpui are creating for themselves. Kaupapa Māori research is about more than just research—it's about justice, empowerment, and ensuring that rangatahi takatāpui have the space, support, and respect to thrive. It's about recognizing that your voices, experiences, and identities are taonga that deserve to be protected, celebrated, and uplifted. By centring mātauranga, tikanga, and te reo Māori, this research doesn't just work for rangatahi takatāpui—it works with them and because of them.



# Core Values of This Research

Mana Tamaiti, Mana  
Takatāpui & Mana Tinana

These values guides the way we think about how we engage with rangatahi takatāpui to ensure that research is empowering, affirming, and grounded in Māori ways of knowing and being – this helps shape the way we listen to, respect, honour and support rangatahi in exploring their experiences, challenges, needs, and aspirations.

## Mana Tamaiti: Honouring Young People

Mana tamaiti celebrates the inherent dignity, power, and worth of rangatahi. In te ao Māori, rangatahi are treasured taonga, a link to our tūpuna, and are central to the flow of whakapapa. They embody the living connection between past, present, and future. Rangatahi are viewed as powerful contributors to the collective well-being of whānau, hapū, and iwi, and their mana should be uplifted and honoured in all its fullness.

This view contrasts with some Western perspectives, which tend to undervalue the potential of young people, focusing on perceived vulnerabilities or limitations. In Māori understandings, rangatahi are not seen as passive or dependent—they are respected as knowledgeable, capable, and empowered to shape their own futures. For rangatahi takatāpui, these strengths are even more vital. In a world where gender and sexuality norms can be rigid and narrow, rangatahi takatāpui may face challenges in having their mana acknowledged and respected.

Cisheterosexism—the assumption that everyone is cisgender and heterosexual—can make it harder for rangatahi takatāpui to fully express their identities. However, when we recognise rangatahi in their fullness as mana tamaiti and mana takatāpui, we celebrate their stories and perspectives, and nurture them in their journeys.

In research, upholding mana tamaiti is about creating spaces where rangatahi can express themselves freely and authentically. It means honouring rangatahi as taonga and knowledge holders, whose voices and experiences contribute to our collective understanding. Methods grounded in Māori ways of knowing allow rangatahi to shape their own stories and decide how they engage in the research process, reinforcing their autonomy and self-determination. By prioritising mana-enhancing practices, research doesn't just capture knowledge—it actively uplifts and strengthens rangatahi, affirming their power and worth as mana tamaiti.

**This tohu represents the mana of tamaiti** –it serves as a reminder to nurture the strengths and identities of rangatahi, framing them within traditional Māori understandings as taonga to be cherished and cared for. It highlights the importance of passing down mātauranga to rangatahi, supporting their connection to whānau, whenua, and whakapapa, so they can grow and thrive to their fullest potential. The green is symbolic of growth, potential, and the flourishing of rangatahi as they evolve individually and collectively.



# Mana Takatāpui: Centring Takatāpui Knowledge & Lived Realities

Mana takatāpui is about celebrating takatāpuitanga and honouring the lived realities of rangatahi takatāpui. Western ideals, which impose a binary view of gender and sexuality, fail to reflect Māori values that embrace the fluidity and diversity of identity. By claiming their identity, rangatahi takatāpui challenge colonial narratives that seek to marginalise them, asserting that they are both Māori and queer—each part of their identity existing together, never one overshadowing the other. This act of self-determination is both a rejection of imposed limitations and a celebration of their mana as takatāpui—gender diverse, sexually fluid, and spiritually connected.

Supporting mana takatāpui in research means recognising these intersections of identity, validating rangatahi experiences, and providing methods that allow them to express their full selves on their own terms. By centring mana takatāpui, it ensures we create safe, affirming spaces for rangatahi to express their identities, challenge harmful stereotypes, and explore what a decolonised future looks like for them.



**This tohu represents the mana of takatāpui**—it reminds us of the strength and aroha we find within our communities. It highlights the importance of our voices, experiences, and mātauranga, urging that they be shared, treasured, and passed down to future generations. It also embodies our vision for the future: a future where we are free to be ourselves, to thrive, and to be fully supported and loved by our whānau and communities. The purple signifies wairua, representing the spiritual power that resides within each of us, guiding and connecting us to our roots, our identities, and one another.

# Mana Tinana: Honouring & Celebrating Our Bodies, Wellbeing, and Autonomy

Mana tinana is about recognising the sacred connection between our bodies, wellbeing, and autonomy. In a world that often labels non-conforming bodies as imperfect or flawed, it's essential to honour the diversity and beauty of all bodies. Western ideals frequently exclude bodies that don't fit the norm, whether through disability, size, or gender nonconformity, and this marginalises rangatahi who express their gender or sexuality outside the expected norms.

For rangatahi takatāpui, bodily autonomy is crucial. Expressing themselves through their bodies—whether through clothing, hairstyles, tattoos, or piercings—is a powerful way of asserting their identity and being true to who they are. Upholding mana tinana in research means creating inclusive, accessible and

flexible spaces for rangatahi takatāpui to fully engage in research on their own terms, where their bodies are respected and celebrated as integral to their identities. This could include offering resources and options that support bodily choices, diverse abilities, and neurodivergency, and ensuring that activities allow for self-expression without fear of judgment.

By upholding these values, we not only ensure that rangatahi takatāpui are respected and heard, but we also create pathways for transformation. This approach fosters research that is responsive to the needs and realities of the community, creating opportunities for positive change, healing, and collective growth.

**This tohu represents the mana of our tinana** - it reminds us of the sacred connection between our bodies, our identities, our wellbeing and our autonomy. It celebrates the diversity of our bodies—fat or thin, brown skin or white, neurodiverse or neurotypical, with disabilities or without—and everything that exists in between.. This tohu reminds us that our bodies connect us to our whakapapa, our whenua, and to everything that sustains us. It also reinforces that the choices we make about our bodies are ours to make, and we should be encouraged and supported in our decisions.

The blue is symbolic of the moana—vast, beautiful, and powerful - a force to be reckoned with.



# Putting Ideas Into Action Research Methods

# Engaging With Rangatahi Takatāpui

So, we've gone over the big-picture stuff—how we see the world (ontology), how we know things (epistemology), and what matters to us (axiology). We've also explored how Kaupapa Māori guides this research and the core values we're holding onto to make sure our research is mana-enhancing and community-centred. But how does all of that actually shape what we do when we research?

This is where methods come in. Methods are the practical ways we carry out research, making sure we stay true to the values and principles we started with. Since this research is all about rangatahi takatāpui, it makes sense to use methods that uplift rangatahi voices, centre Māori ways of doing and learning, and create space for self-expression. In this section, we'll go through some specific methods we might use to engage with rangatahi takatāpui—like wānanga, pūrākau, and creative activities—and why they work for this kaupapa.

## Shaping Our Own Space

Within these research methods, there is flexibility to establish tikanga that fits with you. This ensures that:

- ★ Everyone is comfortable with the processes and practices and how they're carried out.
- ★ Safety and consent are prioritised in every activity.
- ★ Practices like karakia, waiata or whakawhanaungatanga are woven into the space in ways that feel meaningful to the collective.

“ If you're not confident in te reo Māori, or in certain tikanga, that's OK – you're not expected to know everything. Within Kaupapa Māori research, you are supported wherever you're at in your journey. ”

## Wānanga: A Core Method

Wānanga is a uniquely Māori approach to research that centres collective sharing, learning, and connecting, with processes grounded in Māori ways of knowing and being. It is a flexible, adaptive method that can happen anywhere—whether on a marae or in a space where participants feel comfortable and connected to. Wānanga creates opportunities for rangatahi takatāpui to come together in a space where they can form relationships, engage in collective meaning-making, and dream together.

A key feature of wānanga is its flexibility—it's not bound by strict questions or pre-determined processes. Instead, rangatahi lead the conversations, focusing on what matters most to them. This reciprocal process ensures that everyone involved is both learning and teaching, breaking down the power imbalances that can arise in more formal research settings.

Within wānanga, rangatahi are in control of their participation. They decide what to share, how to share it, and whether they want to engage in any activity. Consent is an ongoing conversation, providing the freedom to choose how they want to engage at each step.

Within wānanga, a range of methods can be used to ensure practices fit the kaupapa. In this research, methods should enable rangatahi to express themselves and engage with their experiences in ways that are both meaningful and empowering.

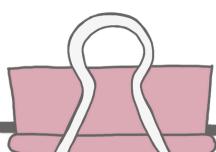
## Pūrākau: Storytelling

Pūrākau is a method that allows rangatahi to connect with mātauranga Māori through storytelling. For this research, this can involve things like:

**Sharing Traditional Pūrākau Takatāpui:**  
Reconnecting with pūrākau centred on takatāpui experiences, histories and mātauranga

**Creating and Sharing You're Own Pūrākau:**  
Rangatahi can tell their own stories, reimagine traditional pūrākau, or create new ones. These can be shared through kōrero, writing, art, or performance.

Engaging with pūrākau provides rangatahi the opportunity to shape their own narratives in a uniquely Māori way, see themselves reflected in stories, and strengthen their connection to te ao Māori.



**What stories have shaped who you are?**

If you could create pūrākau about yourself or your community, what are some key things you'd include?

How would you tell it—through writing, kōrero, art, or something else?

Wānanga is not just a research method—it is an act of tino rangatiratanga. It empowers rangatahi to dream their own futures into being, honouring the past, navigating the present, and shaping what lies ahead.

## Whakawhiti Kōrero

### Let's Talk

Whakawhiti kōrero provides space for rangatahi to share ideas and explore themes through open, guided discussions. Rather than following strict questions, kōrero is shaped by rangatahi, allowing them to focus on what matters most to them. This approach allows everyone to have their say - it also fosters collective reflection and shared meaning-making. Conversations can be casual, structured, or interwoven with storytelling, depending on what feels right for the group.

**What might this look like in practice?**

Whakawhiti kōrero can involve sitting in a circle and passing around a symbolic object (like a river stone or shell from the beach) – this gives everyone an equal opportunity to share. It could also include sharing artwork, poetry, or waiata—there's no pressure, just open and supportive kōrero.

# Te Taiao-Based Methods

## Connecting With Papatūānuku

Te taiao is an abundant and valued source of knowledge and connection in te ao Māori. Methods centred on our environment allow rangatahi to engage with mātauranga Māori in ways that are experiential and meaningful. These can include:

**Observing and Learning from the Environment:**  
Spending time in nature, noticing patterns, and reflecting on how atua and whenua offer guidance and insight.

**Engaging in Place-Based Practices:**  
Activities like walking, raranga, gathering rongoā, or performing things like karakia, waiata and mōteatea in natural spaces deepen connections to te taiao and inspire reflection and expression.

### Creative Expression Inspired by the Environment:

Rangatahi might create art, poetry, or pūrākau inspired by the landscapes around them, reflecting their personal experiences and connection to the world.

Te taiao-based methods can help rangatahi connect to the whenua, to tūpuna, and to atua, strengthening ties to whakapapa and te ao Māori.

# Other Creative Methods

In addition to wānanga and other Kaupapa Māori and Indigenous methods, there are more creative methods that can be woven into the research process, offering rangatahi different ways to explore their identity, experiences, and well-being. Some of these include:

**Visual Arts:** Methods like drawing, painting, collage, and digital art offer rangatahi a way to express their thoughts, emotions, and experiences visually. These methods can be a fun and powerful way to communicate beyond words.

### Creative Writing and Journaling:

Writing poetry, stories, or reflective pieces helps rangatahi explore their voice and affirm their experiences. Journaling can be a personal space for self-expression and reflection.

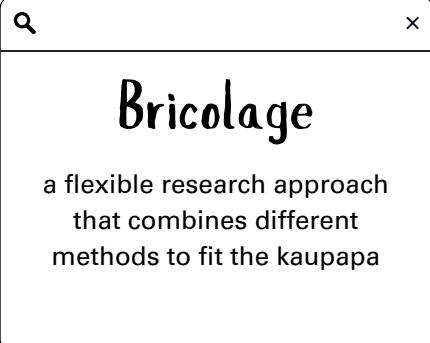
**Body Mapping:** Rangatahi create a visual representation of their body, mapping their identity, strengths, emotions, and life experiences. This method can help explore personal journeys and support healing and empowerment.

**Photo-Voice:** This method allows rangatahi to capture their experiences, stories, and perspectives through photography. The photos can be accompanied by narratives that provide deeper meaning and context.



# Summary

In Kaupapa Māori research, all of these methods are interconnected in their aim to support rangatahi in expressing themselves, exploring their identities, and strengthening their connections to their culture and communities. Rather than being limited to a single method, a **bricolage** approach allows for the weaving together of different methods. This means that pūrākau, wānanga, whakawhiti kōrero, and creative expression can be combined in ways that honour the diverse experiences of rangatahi. While traditional research often follows rigid structures, Kaupapa Māori research embraces flexibility, providing opportunities not just for knowledge generation, but for self-exploration, healing, and collective well-being. These methods offer spaces for rangatahi to grow, heal, and thrive in ways that are meaningful to them.



# Looking Ahead

## What Happens Next?

# Concluding Comments

This research isn't just about understanding—it's about action. Everything we've explored so far—the values, the methods, and the reasons behind them—exist to make sure that rangatahi takatāpui are heard, supported, and empowered. The next step is putting these ideas into practice by engaging directly with rangatahi, platforming their voices, and using the mātauranga they choose to share to create real change.

That means moving forward in ways that honor the needs and aspirations of rangatahi takatāpui. It means developing resources for rangatahi, whānau, hapū, and iwi to help strengthen understanding, connection, and advocacy. It means ensuring that whānau and communities have the tools they need to support rangatahi takatāpui in ways that are grounded in te ao Māori. And it means making sure that the knowledge shared by rangatahi informs the spaces and systems that impact them—health, education, advocacy, and beyond.

None of this happens in isolation. Change comes through collective effort—rangatahi, whānau, hapū, iwi, hapori, and rainbow organizations all have a role to play. Supporting takatāpui wellbeing isn't just about reducing harm; it's about creating environments where rangatahi takatāpui can thrive, feel seen, and know that they belong. That's the vision, and that's where this mahi is headed next.



**Te manu kai miro, nōna te ngahere; te manu kai mātauranga, nōna te ao.**

The bird that eats the miro berries,  
theirs is the forest; the bird that  
consumes knowledge, the world is  
theirs.

# He Mihi

**E koekoe te tūī, e ketekete te kākā, e kuku te kererū.**

Just as each bird brings its own voice to the forest, so too do we each bring our unique contributions to this kaupapa. This report is a collective effort, and I want to acknowledge the voices and strength of everyone who has been part of this journey.

I would like to acknowledge Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga for providing me with the opportunity to participate in this internship. The mātauranga I have gained through my involvement in this mahi is will carry me forward and continue to inspire me in all that I do. Tēnei te mihi ki a koutou katoa mō tō koutou tautoko.

To Morgan – you have been an exceptional supervisor, and I am deeply grateful to have contributed to the great mahi you lead. Ngā mihi nui ki a koe mō tō tautoko, your guidance has meant so much.

To Elyx – thank you for sharing your perspectives with me; this report would not be what it is without them. Ka aroha ki a koe, e hoa, your input has been invaluable.

A heartfelt mihi to all who have been part of this mahi, especially to the rangatahi takatāpui who will be contributing their mātauranga. Your voices and your visions are leading the way for a brighter future – not just for yourselves, but for our communities and our whānau.





# Glossary

**Ako** – Learn, teach.

**Āta** – Carefully, deliberately.

**Atua** – Ancestor with supernatural influence, deity.

**Karakia** – Prayer, incantation.

**Kaupapa** – Purpose, topic, initiative.

**Mana** – Authority, power, prestige, spiritual force.

**Manakitanga** – Hospitality, kindness, care for others.

**Mātauranga** – Knowledge, wisdom.

**Mauri** – Life force, vital essence.

**Moana** – Ocean, sea.

**Mōteatea** – Traditional chant, lament.

**Papatūānuku** – Earth mother.

**Pūrākau** – Story, legend, myth.

**Rangatahi** – Youth, younger generation.

**Rongoā** – Traditional Māori medicine, healing.

**Tamaiti** – Child.

**Takatāpui** – LGBTQ+ Māori identity.

**Taiao** – The natural world, environment.

**Tapu** – Sacred, restricted, set apart.

**Tino rangatiratanga** – Self-determination, sovereignty.

**Tikanga** – Customs, correct procedures.

**Tinana** – Body, physical self.

**Waiata** – Song, chant.

**Wairua** – Spirit, soul.

**Wānanga** – Learning, deep discussion.

**Whakapapa** – Genealogy, lineage.

**Whakamana** – To empower, uplift, give authority to.

**Whakawhanaungatanga** – Building relationships, connection.

**Whakawhiti kōrero** – Discussion, conversation.

**Whenua** – Land, placenta.



Definitions adapted from Te Aka Māori Dictionary.

<https://maoridictionary.co.nz>



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