



COLLABORATIVE
AOTEAROA

Rongoā Māori partnership with Primary Care: Manawa Ora & Te Awakairangi Health Network

CASE STUDY – FOR REFERENCE (NOVEMBER 2024)



Manawa Ora & Te Awakairangi Health Network: partnering towards healthy and thriving communities

Case Study

About this resource:

This case study was produced through the generosity of Jolie Davis from Manawa Ora and Carrie Henderson from Te Awakairangi Health Network. The content and reflections of their work together is hoped to inspire other PHOs, General Practices, community health providers and clinicians to partner with Rongoā Māori providers, and to include into their model of care.

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Acknowledgement

Collaborative Aotearoa extends their gratitude for this case study to significantly enrich our existing resources in supporting Rongoā Māori to be offered alongside mainstream services in primary and community health. By generously sharing their time, expertise, and passion, this case study aims to empower others who are considering this opportunity to further bridge the health equity gap across Aotearoa.

In the development of this document the team gives credit to:

- Jolie Davis – founder and lead practitioner, Manawa Ora
- Carrie Henderson – General Manager for Services, Te Awakairangi

Introduction

Jolie Davis (Ngati Kuri) is the founder and lead Practitioner at Manawa Ora. Jolie is a traditionally trained kaimiri and has been practicing Mirimiri and Romiromi for over 25 years. Jolie is also a trained nurse.

Carrie Henderson's career includes a background in occupational therapy, and has been in Aotearoa for 14 years, being originally from Scotland. Her current role is General Manager for Services at Te Awakairangi Health Network (TeAHN), a Primary Health Organisation based in the Hutt Valley.

The site visit to Manawa Ora took place in September 2024. All information was accurate at the time of the case study capture.



L: Carrie Henderson R: Jolie Davies



About Manawa Ora

Manawa Ora is located in Ngauranga, approximately halfway between central Wellington and Lower Hutt. Situated on the western bank of Wellington Harbour, the name ngā ūranga, meaning "the landing place (for canoes)". Jolie's team of kaimahi | staff are diverse in backgrounds, with a key theme of passion and commitment to supporting hauora | wellbeing for whānau and community across them all.

When entering the premises, the warmth and aroha | compassion is keenly experienced by tangata whaiora | a person seeking health. You may also have the pleasure in meeting Jazz, their four-legged team member!



L: Manawa Ora Team R: Jazz

About Te Awakairangi Health Network (TeAHN)

Te Awakairangi Health Network in the Hutt Valley, serving 115,000 enrolled patients across the sixteen Te Awakairangi General Practices. The purpose of the Network is to make a positive difference to the health and wellbeing of everyone in the Hutt Valley, with a clear focus on achieving equity.

The name Te Awakairangi means 'esteemed' or 'precious' and was originally given to the Hutt River in the time of the Ngai Tara settlers¹. It was bestowed on the Network by a founding Trustee, Kara Puketapu, of Te Rūnanganui o Te Āti Awa, when the Network was established in 2012². The Network offer several free health and wellbeing services, including primary mental health and outreach services, and regularly engage in community events.

¹ Courtesy of the TeAHN webpage: <https://teawakairangihealth.org.nz/about-us/>

² Ibid



An introduction to healing modalities used at Manawa Ora³

The simplest way to understand the linguistic origins and translation of both Mirimiri and Romiromi is to break each word down:

- Mi – to stimulate
- Ri – to agitate
- Ro – internal organs
- Mi – to stimulate

It follows that Mirimiri stimulates and energises blood, bone, tissue and fluids... Romiromi includes a deeper layer of healing that affects the function of the internal organs. Traditionally, both systems are practiced simultaneously and holistically, complementing one another to bring balance to the body and harmony to the mind.

A partnership develops

Carrie approached Jolie over a year ago via email, keen to understand more about providing mirimiri for TeAHN clients. Following a phone conversation, the connection begun. They collectively recognised the importance to avoid 'one size fits everyone' to a position where TeAHN could offer a range of options for supporting wellbeing and allowing the client to choose what best suited them.

The key message from both Carrie and Jolie is the importance of starting, maintaining and strengthening an on-going partnership with each other – this is not transactional in any form. As a partnership, it also means this collaboration is not the only thing they talk about – there will be other opportunities and knowledge gathering beyond the current kaupapa | topic/plan. When a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed, Carrie was clear what this meant for the two organisations.

³ Courtesy of Manawa Ora webpage: <https://www.manawaora.org/>



“The MOU was an agreement to share knowledge equally and supporting one another equally – not me imposing my goals, but what can I give Jolie to move things forward. We are trying to advance forward and mindful of opportunities and how it looks for both parties”, Carrie said.

“Establishing a connection first is important – it is important to get to know one another and get a ‘feel’ for what is the ahua, where are you coming from, and then explore if we can have a relationship after that. Too many people decide to want Rongoā and send a contract to us (at Manawa Ora). Why would I sign a contract with someone I don’t know? Kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) in this space is important to understand who we are and what we do. You can’t get that simply from a website” says Jolie.

“In te Ao Māori (Māori worldview), everything is based around trusted relationships. Authenticity is important, being on the same page about wanting to support whānau as best we can, and a willingness to work openly with one another with mutual respect”, Jolie continues.

Kaimirimiri (a practitioner of Mirimiri) requires time, energy and mentoring of two years, in practice. Sustainability is a key factor to build capacity for current and future whānau needs. A plan of growth was considered in the roll-out of the partnership – this has allowed training of kaimirimiri whilst also seeing a growing number of clients/whānau.

What Rongoā Māori offers whānau and communities

The healthcare landscape is evolving rapidly, with growing demands on General Practices to provide high-quality, accessible care to diverse patient populations. By elevating and empowering whānau to access indigenous healing practices as part of improving their hauora, a partnership with a Westernised model of health can improve patient outcomes and alleviate pressures on healthcare roles.

Prior to the MOU and partnership with TeAHN, Manawa Ora had 70% of whānau walking through the door were ACC referrals. Whilst this was great, they also recognise there were many whānau who were not on ACC. Manawa Ora regularly explored ways to create accessibility for people who wish to.

“When Carrie showed up and we had that conversation, it provided another avenue for whānau to access health services and mirimiri”, shared Jolie.

Often contracts for services are ‘tight’ – a person can receive ‘this type’ of treatment for up to ‘this many’ sessions. The partnership has meant TeAHN PHO allows Jolie, as the Rongoā expert, to determine the number of sessions a client needs; there is a wide variation from clients having two to seven sessions. Everyone’s needs are different – the flexibility and choice in the partnership means when people need more, they can provide more.



Opportunity for primary care to learn more about Rongoā

Carrie knew that there was a lack of awareness of what Rongoā was among primary health care providers. One of the opportunities Jolie and Carrie identified quickly was how to raise awareness across primary care, health care professionals, health services and the internal staff at the PHO.

“For us, this was about providing workshops to raise awareness. Jolie has a way of delivering that brings people in and increases their understanding of what is being delivered. Also, information on what to say to patients as an offering for their wellbeing”, said Carrie.

Staff at the PHO and Practices were offered an introductory mirimiri session to experience first-hand what a treatment could look and feel like. Whilst some people reflected, they would not actively seek out mirimiri at this time, they had a deeper appreciation of the practice to be able to inform future clients. Most staff found the session ‘amazing’.

Individuals who are enrolled in a General Practice supported by TeAHN have been able to access mirimiri through a simple referral system for almost a year. People attend sessions as they need for their wellbeing journey, recognising that not one thing will work by itself – a combination of approaches is needed.

Queries have arisen from health practitioners around evidence. There is clear anecdotal evidence that Māori communities want to be able to access Rongoā Māori and that the interventions of healers contribute to their wellbeing (Ahuriri-Driscoll et al., 2008; Durie et al., 1993; Jones, 2000a). There is a long list of research published over the last three decades evidencing the impact and importance of Rongoā Māori, including work to support and verify mātauranga surrounding Rongoā (healing) from a biomedical molecular scientific point of view.

One of the progress measures in Ministry of Health’s Interim Government Policy Statement on Health 2022–2024, Ministry of Health, Wellington, 2022 included embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi across the health sector (priority two) is [an increase in] geographical coverage and utilisation of rongoā Māori services. It is clear Rongoā Māori services ought to hold an equal place alongside western medicine in terms of funding, particularly with Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations.

In recent years, Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), guided by the Waitangi Tribunal’s definition from the Ko Aotearoa Tēnei report that describes Rongoā Māori as ‘a multi-dimensional form of care and healing’, have paid for Rongoā treatments since 2020. A list of ACC-registered practitioners is available on Healthpoint. The demand for accessing Rongoā Māori has doubled year-on-year.



ACC Rongoā Māori Service

The challenge

- Māori are less likely to access ACC, leading to poorer health outcomes
- 80% of Māori considered it important that their health provider offer rongoā Māori services

Bringing rongoā to ACC

- Responding to the call of the community and WAI262
- Upholding the rights and interests of Māori
- Partnering with the rongoā community
- Rongoā available for kaimahi through EAP
- Rongoā advisory panel
- Registration process for practitioners
- Monitoring framework (te ao Māori approach)

The impact

11,000 kiritaki supported by Rongoā Māori Service	58% kiritaki Māori (Māori clients)	\$13.2M Investment into the rongoā community	216 ACC-registered practitioners	400+ ACC kaimahi have accessed rongoā
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ACC He Kaupere. He Manaoaki. He Whakaora. prevention, care, recovery.



ACC Rongoā Māori Service

Feedback from kiritaki (clients) of the ACC Rongoā Māori Service

"I'm accessing treatment from my own people ... that's really important to me, and our cultural practices are respected"

"I feel like I have been cared for as a whole, my tinana, wairua and hinengaro"

"It's made me more aware of my behaviour, of how to take better care of myself. It's given me that 'light bulb' moment"

Q4 23/24 ACC managed client survey (n=70)

87% of clients were satisfied with the rongoā Māori service they received through ACC

89% said the rongoā Māori service helped them achieve their recovery goals and rehabilitation outcomes

ACC He Kaupere. He Manaoaki. He Whakaora. prevention, care, recovery.

Reference: Eldon Paea, Head of Māori Health Partnerships, ACC

Sharing insights as a lighthouse for others to explore Rongoā

Te Awakairangi Health Network showcased the partnership with Manawa Ora at The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (GP24) conference, in July 2024.

Jolie, Carrie and Koral Fitzgerald from Collaborative Aotearoa presented on "Rongoā Māori: partnering towards healthy and thriving communities", putting a holistic approach to health into action to support the Hutt Valley community, whilst providing informative insights to Rongoā Māori and other partnership opportunities that could flourish Aotearoa-wide.



The partnership, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and ongoing relationship between Jolie and Carrie alongside their willingness to support others, identifies many opportunities other areas across Aotearoa to explore a similar approach.



L-R: Jolie Davis, Koral Fitzgerald, Carrie Henderson

Resources & further reading

A 30-minute video on the case study can be accessed [here](#).

To learn more about Rongoā Māori and opportunities for primary care, check out:

Webinar: This webinar, hosted by Collaborative Aotearoa, explores groundbreaking partnerships and highlights how the health care sector can give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi by supporting, resourcing and empowering whānau Māori to access Indigenous healing practices as an option alongside Western models of medicine. Hear also about meaningful collaboration alongside contemporary health settings.

PDF: The slide pack used for the GP24 conference presentation, mentioned above.

YouTube: Manawa Ora Mirimiri and Workshops

Tiktok and **YouTube:** Porirua Community Clinic Day, Manawa Ora (October 2022)