



Te Ope Whakaora

WHANAU MENTORING EVALUATION

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Disclaimer

The information in this report is presented in good faith using the information available at the time of preparation. It is provided on the basis that the author of the report is not liable to any person or organisation for any damage or loss which may occur in relation to taking or not taking action in respect of any information or advice within this report.

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Executive summary

1. The Whānau Mentoring pilot programme was established by Salvation Army Tauranga in January 2018. The programme is designed to support whānau, strengthening their skills and resilience to be able to respond to the challenges that they are experiencing.
2. Key outcomes of the Whānau Mentoring programme are to:
 - provide a support system to grow healthy worldviews
 - develop resilience and skills to set and achieve goals
 - help whānau understand their children and participate in their lives positively
 - support positive community involvement.
3. The evaluation was a small-scale project undertaken between December 2018 and April 2019. In total 13 participants were interviewed including whānau mentoring programme participants and whānau mentoring staff.
4. The primary purpose of the evaluation was to understand the value of the programme for whānau, specifically the outcomes and changes they have made as a result of the whānau mentoring. The key evaluation questions for this evaluation were:
 - To what extent, and in what ways, is Whānau Mentoring pilot planning and early implementation working as well as expected in the time frame?
 - What is the value of the Whānau Mentoring pilot to whānau and their communities?
 - What is the value of any early progress toward whānau goals identified by whānau?
5. The evaluation concluded that the Whānau Mentoring programme is making a worthwhile and valuable contribution to the lives of many families. Whānau are successfully building more positive futures for themselves. There is clear evidence of good delivery and implementation processes.
6. The relational approach of the Whānau Mentor is respectful, empathetic and non-judgemental. Kaupapa Māori principles: whakawhanaungatanga (meaningful, reciprocal relationships), manaakitanga (genuine care and nurturing), aroha (respect and empathy) and mana motuhaketanga (recognising and upholding mana (personal essence)), are integral to the relational approach.
7. Whānau all were extremely happy and satisfied with the support and service they received. Support was given to help with parenting, relationships, employment, physical wellbeing, and custody issues. All whānau attended parenting and/or self-improvement courses dependent on their needs and the goals they had set for themselves. In all instances they completed the courses and were able to apply learnings to their everyday lives.
8. A number of positive outcomes were identified by whānau including:
 - increased resilience and a positive sense of self
 - increased confidence and self-esteem
 - more connected relationships with family and children
 - healthier, happier homes and increased wellbeing
 - increased involvement in community.

9. Key phrases and words commonly heard from whānau as they describe the changes they have made as a result of the programme are:

I am more confident to speak my mind and feel more confident in social settings.

My relationship with partner is stronger.

I can cope with so much more than I thought before. Whatever comes my way I will be all good because I am capable. I am strong.

We are closer I think as a family.

I learnt that I am someone, and I can see my worth now.

Our home was calmer, more organised, happier.

I am stronger, more positive.

10. There are a number of key success factors that have supported whānau through the change process. The Whānau Mentor provided constant and consistent support, encouraging the whānau to believe in themselves and to help them see their full potential. Regardless of what the whānau had done in the past, or the bad decisions they may have made previously, the focus of the programme was identifying personal strengths. The programme helped whānau navigate a pathway towards positive change. They led this journey and the Whānau Mentor would guide and encourage but never push whānau. It was important that the whānau could work at their own pace.
11. Whānau did not identify any improvements however several of them suggested expanding the programme and training whānau mentor participants into the role of mentors.

Background, objectives and methodology

Whānau Mentoring Pilot Programme

12. In January 2018 the Salvation Army Tauranga began their Whānau Mentoring pilot programme¹ with a vision to see children and whānau strengthened and connected to positive futures and supported to contribute positively to their communities.²
13. Salvation Army is an established provider in the community with experience in delivering social services throughout Aotearoa. They are well aware of the issues and challenges that whānau are experiencing.
14. Key objectives of the programme are to work intensively with vulnerable children and their families to:
 - provide a support system to grow healthy worldviews
 - develop resilience and skills to set and achieve goals
 - help whānau understand their children and participate in their lives positively
 - support positive community involvement.
15. The programme is firmly grounded in a model of care that acknowledges whānau (family), hapori (community), wairua (spirit) and rangapū (partnerships). Whānau will be offered opportunities to connect with their whānau and link to positive communities. They will be able to engage in activities that nurture spiritual wellbeing and work in partnership with others to reach their planned outcomes.
16. Whānau and child wellbeing will be strengthened through one or more of the following components including: family work, child centred focus, family social work and community events. The Whānau Mentor will work with whānau to design whānau goals and strategies to strengthen the whānau unit, facilitate communication and create whānau contracts.
17. Whānau will be supported to identify their immediate needs and future aspirations. They will be encouraged to develop and lead their own pathways towards positive change with wrap-around support from a number of Salvation Army services and the Whānau Mentor working together.

¹ Referred to as the Whānau Mentoring programme throughout the remainder of the report.

² Whānau Mentoring Project Update May 2018

Evaluation Methodology

Evaluation purpose

18. The evaluation provides Salvation Army Tauranga with robust evidence on 'what works' for whānau through the Whānau Mentoring programme. It identifies critical success factors and barriers for whānau as they participate in the programme and provides evidence on the extent to which it is working to support and strengthen whānau wellbeing; connectedness and positive contributions.

Evaluation objectives

19. The evaluation focused on the impacts and outcomes of the Whānau Mentoring programme including; success factors of delivery and implementation. The three areas of inquiry were:
 - To what extent, and in what ways, is Whānau Mentoring pilot planning and early implementation working as well as expected in the time frame?
 - What is the value of the Whānau Mentoring pilot to whānau and their communities?
 - What is the value of any early progress toward whānau goals identified by whānau?

Areas of inquiry

20. As defined between the evaluator and Whānau Mentoring staff, information was gathered across the following key topic areas:
 - whānau needs and circumstances
 - whānau experiences of the programme
 - if/how whānau believe the programme is helping them to develop and plan positive pathways and connections
 - if/how the pilot helps whānau (re)integrate into the community and towards positive health, education and social outcomes
 - key individual and contextual factors that contribute to success or otherwise.

Evaluation design

21. Two key methodologies were used in the evaluation; case study and kaupapa Māori. These approaches supported a deep investigation and analysis of the clients' experience. The case study approach focused on the whānau pathways and their experiences of participating in the Whānau Mentoring programme. Narratives from whānau were incorporated into vignettes to identify impacts, success factors and opportunities for improvement.
22. The kaupapa Māori methodology or methods, ensured evaluation privileged a Māori cultural world view; kept the 'trial' participants culturally safe; and promoted positive relationships with whānau. This approach included the (*Whaka*)*whanaungatanga* – making connections and building

relationships; *Whakapapa* – a process of identification including ancestry and history and, in an evaluation sense, positioning the evaluation and *Whakamana* – the affirmation and validation of whānau voice.

Whānau participants

23. In total 13 evaluation participants were interviewed; including 12 whānau³ and the Whānau Mentor. 11 of the whānau participants were mothers who were able to comment on the impact of the Whānau Mentoring for themselves and their whānau.
24. In the first instance the Whānau Mentor recruited the interest of whānau and sought their permission to pass contact details on to the evaluator. A few of the whānau were no longer involved in the programme because they had moved out of the area, or no longer needed the support. Several of the whānau were still actively involved in the programme. The evaluator then contacted the whānau to set up a time and place to meet.
25. Interviews were carried out between December 2018 to April 2019. 11 of the interviews were *kanohi kitea*, held face to face, and one phone interview occurred with a whānau who had moved out of the rohe (area) . The evaluator and whānau met either in their homes or a local café; where ever whānau felt comfortable.
26. Interviews were facilitated conversations, based on a semi-structured topic guide.⁴ Interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes. With the permission of the whānau the interviews were recorded. Comprehensive interview notes were also made during all interviews. Whānau received a *koha* (\$50 supermarket voucher) for participating in the interview and sharing their stories.

Analysis, synthesis and reporting

27. A content and discourse analysis across all whānau interviews was completed to identify the key themes. The information was analysed to identify similarities and differences across the interviews. Five vignettes were developed to illustrate the whānau narratives; focused on their experiences and outcomes.
28. The evaluation report was presented April outlining the outcomes and effectiveness of the pilot programme overall and key success factors of the pilot. A report summary was also tailored for dissemination with whānau.

Ethical considerations

29. Informed consent was obtained from all interview participants. All participants were advised of their rights and consent assured that their responses would remain confidential with no identifying information included in the report.

³ The term whānau is used throughout the report to refer to the individual clients of the programme and the evaluation participants.

⁴ Appendix 1: Whānau Interview Guide

Reporting requirements

30. Throughout the evaluation report terminology refers to numbers of participants representing a particular view or experience as follows: 'few' refers to 2-3 people; 'several' refers to 5-7 people; 'most' refers to 7 or more people; 'larger numbers are described as a proportion of the stakeholder group (e.g. 'a majority', 'more than half').

Whānau Mentoring Programme - Findings

Delivery and Implementation

31. The Whānau Mentoring programme is supporting whānau to build strong, positive futures for themselves. Whānau are experiencing a number of challenges in many areas of their lives including; relationships with loved ones and whānau, parenting, housing, employment, alcohol and drugs, mental health and physical wellbeing.
32. Many of the whānau have had children taken from their care and are working towards making positive change to get their children back. Most of the whānau are trying to make ends meet and require financial assistance through benefits. Many of the whānau struggle with addiction and the road to recovery and a few experience domestic abuse and violence. The majority of whānau, at one time or another have required emergency housing assistance. All whānau are coping with either depression, lack of self-confidence and/or low self-belief.
33. The programme is delivered by the Whānau Mentor through a whānau-centred holistic approach. A strengths based focus is being applied. At its core is the belief that people have the ability to bring about positive change for themselves, with support and encouragement. Integral to the implementation of the programme is a relational approach that is reflective of kaupapa Māori principles: whakawhanaungatanga (meaningful, reciprocal relationships), manaakitanga (genuine care and nurturing), aroha (respect and empathy) and mana motuhaketanga (recognising and upholding mana (personal essence)).
34. This relational approach is the glue that holds all the programme aspects together. The relationships between Whānau Mentor and whānau involve strong open communication based on mutual respect. The relationships are not based on unequal power relations; whānau are nurtured to develop and lead their own pathways with the Whānau Mentor, walking alongside navigating and guiding.

Whakawhanaungatanga – building meaningful relationships with whānau

35. The Whānau Mentor engages whānau into the programme in a safe, inclusive way. Whānau are made to feel comfortable and are encouraged to share their stories. Most of the whānau opened up straight away, however for a few this took a little longer. In these situations the Whānau Mentor allows whānau to move at their own pace, not forcing them to fulfil any timeframes or obligations.

“She is so patient. I was pretty hard work at the start. Had so much going on, wouldn’t turn up when I was meant to. She just kept trying, kept talking to me about how I was feeling, what I needed.” [Whānau]

36. The Whānau Mentor, first and foremost, focuses on building trust and rapport with whānau. Although the programme involves a whānau assessment, where the strengths, needs and interests of whānau are identified, this is not done in a formal way. Instead the Whānau Mentor provides opportunities for whānau to get active, and engage in positive activities. She then listens and watches; starting discussions with whānau when the time is right.

37. Developing strong, positive and trusting relationships is critical to the implementation of the programme. Whānau have had negative experiences with other services and have developed a distrust of agencies. Whakawhanaungatanga by the Whānau Mentor is helping to break down these barriers and whānau feel safe to accept the supports offered.

“I wasn’t sure what was going to happen. It’s way different to anything. She took the time; I was waiting for her to say and now you have to do this but nah.” [Whānau]

Manaakitanga – taking care of whānau

38. All whānau commented on the caring nature of the Whānau Mentor. She makes whānau feel valued and respected. Often whānau are meeting the Whānau Mentor in times of crisis and she is always comforting and affirming. Whānau wellbeing is the first priority (emotional, physical, spiritual and mental), and they are supported to become healthy and strong in all aspects of their lives.

“Honestly the [Whānau Mentor is the] kindest, loveliest thing that happened for me. I didn’t feel like a job you know.” [Whānau]

39. Whānau are responding to this generosity of spirit by trying their very best to be engaged in the programme. They see the effort that the Whānau Mentor is putting in and they want to repay that by becoming better versions of themselves.

There’s only one thing I can do to repay her kindness and that’s doing better myself. Not cos she’s asking but because it’s like I want to say thank you, show her I’m grateful.” [Whānau]

Aroha – inspiring change within whānau

40. Aroha is the basis of the relational approach. Aroha has been defined by Ruth Makuini Tai (2018), Māori language scholar and author as:

- ARO - is thought, life principle, paying attention, to focus on, to face or front
- RO - is inner, within, introspection
- HA - is life force, breath, energy
- OHA - is generosity, prosperity, abundance, wealth.⁵

41. The whānau spoke of the aroha they received from the Whānau Mentor. As in the definition given by Tai (2018)⁶ they reflected on how the Whānau Mentor focused on their needs, their dreams. She supported them to look inside themselves and see the potential in their ability to heal themselves. Whānau felt like the Whānau Mentor breathed new energy into their lives, inspiring them to take steps towards the changes they desired.

“So much love she had for me and my whānau. She is amazing, so calming, reassuring, always telling me that I could do it, I could get my son back. She made me believe in myself.” [Whānau]

⁵ <https://edspace.org.nz/news/view/51503/five-ways-to-wellbeing-ruth-makuini-tai>

⁶ <https://edspace.org.nz/news/view/51503/five-ways-to-wellbeing-ruth-makuini-tai>

42. In all interactions with whānau, the Whānau Mentor let each whānau know through her words and actions, that they were cared for and appreciated. She gave with no expectation of return. The Whānau Mentor delivered the programme by role modelling how a positive, strong whānau can operate and by listening and watching, the whānau tried to emulate that.

“I think if I can be like her, you know just the way she talks and thinks, so positive, but not in your face.”

Mana motuhaketanga – building self-belief in whānau

43. The mana-enhancing approach of the Whānau Mentor increases whānau motivation to make positive change for themselves. Whānau feel encouraged, always acknowledged for their potential not their deficits. The Whānau Mentor is explicit in her efforts to grow and nurture whānau. Whānau are supported and assisted to believe in themselves.
44. The programme was whānau-centred; and the Whānau Mentor worked with each whānau in a way that reflected their needs, the place they were at emotionally and mentally. This meant that the programme delivered slightly differently for each whānau. Several whānau required one-on-one sessions until they could become comfortable with group work, while a few of the whānau preferred an in-home service. The Whānau Mentor would do whatever was needed to show respect to the needs of the whānau, always providing consistent and constant support.

“I was worried at first, cos I wasn’t leaving my house, but she just turned up one day and then again and again. She understood.”

45. The Whānau Mentor provided a safe harbour for whānau to make changes and grow as individuals. They were never looked down on, the Whānau Mentor always worked hard for them, and never gave up trying to support them to improve their lives.

Whānau experience and outcomes

Whānau reflections

46. All whānau report that the programme is a positive experience and of great value to them. For a few whānau it was life changing and transformative.
47. Whānau are extremely satisfied with the programme for the following reasons:
- the programme is culturally responsive placing emphasis on the historical context, worldviews, cultural experiences, norms, beliefs, values, and behaviours of the whānau
 - programme support is proactive and whānau do not have to ask for help or assistance, it is given readily
 - whānau are able to get support in the areas that are important to them including parenting, relationships, preparation for employment, physical activity, and custody of children
 - whānau are learning new skills from completing the courses in the programme (e.g. Parenting, positive lifestyles and empowerment for women) which they can then apply in their lives
 - the basic needs of whānau are met through access to resources (e.g. kai, housing, clothing)
 - the whānau are provided with opportunities of support and/or activities within the wider services of Salvation Army. This includes activities for children to participate in.
- “my social worker is with Salvation Army and her and [the Whānau Mentor] are working together. It’s great I get all the services I need.”*
48. At the time of the evaluation more than half of the whānau were still involved with the programme and are committed to continuing their engagement, attending the courses that are available.

Whānau outcomes and impacts

49. Whānau identified a number of positive outcomes for themselves including:
- increased resilience and a positive sense of self
 - increased confidence and self-esteem
 - more connected relationships with family and children
 - healthier, happier homes and increased wellbeing
 - increased involvement in community.
50. The following vignettes highlight a typical scenario⁷ based on analysis of evaluation conversations recorded with the 11 whānau. Each vignette showcases the positive outcomes whānau are experiencing and ways in which the Whānau Mentor supported their journeys.

⁷ A vignette is not an exact story from one individual. It is a typical scenario which protects identities while still reflecting accurately the various accounts collected about the outcomes of the Whānau Mentoring programme.

Vignette #1: Increased resilience, and a more positive sense of self

Whānau story – Young solo mum of two children; recently left a nine year relationship; disconnected from herself.

I came to Tauranga because that's where my partner's family is from and he had found employment. At the time we moved we had one child together. We had been together for around 9 years. We were really young when we got together, I was lost in the relationship. He was very dominant and it was like I had been in a relationship and a mother for such a long time, I didn't know who I was.

We had one child together and after we had moved I fell pregnant again. I was excited about this but the relationship wasn't good. I decided to leave the relationship. We were sharing time with our first child, but things became nasty, he got mean and vindictive and went to court for temporary custody. His family got involved it was terrible.

I was desperate I had nothing, I had lost everything, my child, my home. I had to appear in court, the judge told me I had to do all these things to be able to see my child, with supervision! It was scary and soul destroying. I went to Salvation Army I felt desperate my whole life had fallen about, my heart was aching.

Then I met [the whānau mentor]. Straight away I connected with her. She was non-judgemental, calming and kind, but the biggest thing was she knew what I was going through because she had been through a break, was raising children on her own. I felt safe like I was in good hands.

Together we sat and talked, she offered some ideas, courses I could do that not only were what the court might want but things that could be good for me. So I did the parenting course, and hula for fitness. [The whānau mentor] also linked me up with lawyers, a midwife and counselling. I was thinking I don't need counselling but I went along anyway and wow it was good to off load, to talk about things, my past and everything. She also helped me into emergency housing which I'm still in today.

Everyone who she suggested that I contact and talk with have all given such good support as well. It truly was just amazing how much help and love there was from people, everyone just everyone.

*Six months later my life is so different. I feel blessed and so so grateful. The experience was terrible but I have learnt so much about myself. I am more sociable now, able to talk to all kinds of people, before I was withdrawn and not connecting with the world. **I am stronger, more positive.** I know now that that **I can cope with so much more than I thought before.** Whatever comes my way I will be all good because **I am capable. I am strong.***

*I cried and cried my eyes out but I can sit here now and say it was the best thing that happened. I am setting plans for me and my kids, not being dominated. **I have come back to myself,** it feels so great.*

*My child is being returned to my care in 4 weeks. I have had another beautiful child and although it is tough on the benefit I am doing it. **I am looking after me and my kids.** I have a little part-time job and got myself a little car.*

The courses, all the people that helped and especially [the whānau mentor] it was because of them that I am where I am today. [the whānau mentor] was there 100%, always available to me, like I said just so lucky.

Vignette #2: Increased confidence and self esteem

Whānau story – Young teenage couple with two children, one in care. Mum had low self-esteem and lacked confidence and found it hard to communicate.

We were referred by [a local kaupapa Māori provider] to Salvation Army and the Whānau Mentoring programme. Our first son was in the care of my Dad and we were wanting to have him returned. I was older, more mature but I didn't know what to do to make that happen.

[The whānau mentor] was so good. She sat with us and let us know all the things that were available to us things that would help us get our son. We started the Parenting course going to weekly sessions. We both really enjoyed it and learnt a lot about working together.

Along the way [the whānau mentor] would talk to me about our situation and started to suggest other things that she thought might be useful. She referred us to Living Without Violence and started working with me one on one doing the women empowerment. She would come to my home and spent hour and a half most times working through the sessions. It was all do with self-esteem, confidence, being able to stand up for yourself in a good way.

At one stage we were trying to move into another house and [the whānau mentor] was helping us with furniture and basic household items, we didn't end up moving but it was good to know that that kind of thing was available. She always helped us out with food which was so generous, we never asked she would just rock up with a box of food.

The courses made such a difference for me. We are getting our son back in two months. [the whānau mentor] really helped. She made me feel comfortable straight away and I don't get really get comfortable with too many people. Her soft voice, and the calm way about her. She's never stressing, nothing is a problem. It's always we can work that out, we can find a way.

She's made a big difference, if she didn't help us we probably wouldn't have had a chance of getting our son back. She wrote letters of support for us and gave them to [other agencies we were involved in], that I think was really helpful. She even attended a Strengthening Families meeting with us as well. She's seen as someone who knows what they are talking about, not enough to hear it from me and my partner.

*When I started seeing her I felt lost and didn't know what to do, to get my son back. I am different now because of [the whānau mentor] and the courses. **I learnt that I am someone, and I can see my worth now.** I am more than just a Mum, I have my own needs, dreams. **I am more confident to speak my mind and feel more confident in social settings.** I am working towards finishing my secondary school education, getting my credits. I feel proud of myself for working hard to get my son back and for giving some time to myself as well. My **relationship with partner is stronger** since we did course together and we're more on the same page about what we have to do as parents. We've learnt there is no perfect parent and we all make mistakes but as long as you learn from them it's all good.*

*[The whānau mentor] is one of my top 5 people and I am so grateful for the opportunity to be involved with her. **We're getting our son back!***

Vignette #3: Increased involvement in community

Whānau story – Married couple with two children. Mum feeling isolated and depressed.

I was told about the programme from my mother-in-law who was doing the positive lifestyles course. We were going through a really rough time as a family, me and my partner had got back with my partner and things weren't going that great.

Before starting with [the whānau mentor] I was in a really bad space. I had had surgery and gained weight. I wasn't myself, moving was painful. I had no motivation for life really. I couldn't cope with my kids. My partner and I were arguing about the kids. We were struggling to make ends meet. Because I had just come out of surgery I was not able to connect with my kids, to play with them or even care for them in the way I wanted to. I was depressed and feeling very alone. I didn't want to be around anyone.

[The whānau mentor] came to our place and spoke to us. We didn't, well I didn't want to do group stuff she was like that's fine I can come to your home and do the courses with you one-on-one. So we started the parenting course. Then I did the PLP, positive lifestyles. And then once I could get back into exercise I started Hula Wellness. Loved it! [The whānau mentor] got a nutritionist and nurse to come in as well to these sessions, we could get some medical advice, talk about women's issues.

Working with [the whānau mentor] one-on-one I slowly felt started to relax, feel calmer. My partner and I learnt heaps about what kind of parents we were – a sergeant major and jellyfish – it was funny as. What was good is it that we sorted out routines for the kids, we both were on the same page. The kids loved it. I learnt different ways of how I could connect with them and let them have fun with me.

I started to get some energy back again and then I did the positive lifestyle programme. We talked about how I was feeling. I became more aware of what I was going through and what I could do to do better. My own mental health awareness got better which and then I was able to monitor myself better.

*As my self-confidence grew I stepped outside of my comfort zone **and joined** the group fitness class, Hula wellness. It was here that I **met some other women** and started making friends. I started to lose weight and was **feeling more centred** in myself.*

*I started feeling so much better and then I started to think about **getting out there more**. I felt stronger in myself and I had more self-confidence I reconnected with a cousin that I had lost contact with years ago. That was a big booster for my social life. I then put my name down to **volunteer at Salvation Army**. I want to become a youth worker, to help out LGBT rainbow youth.*

It gave me a sense of community, I was not feeling so isolated.

Vignette #4: More connected relationships with family and children

Whānau story – Young couple with large whānau. History of violence, alcohol and drug use.

I moved down here from up North to be with my partner. It was time for me to get out. Things weren't good up there. I wanted something better for my kids. And I suppose I thought a change of scenery would you know help to change other things.

When I arrived in town I moved in with my partner but things went wrong and I had to find my own place. So I walked into Salvation Army and straight away they helped with emergency housing. I started working with a social worker there and then she introduced me to [the whānau mentor].

I needed some support around parenting. Between me and my partner we had 7 children. I was pregnant with my fourth child. It was hard to manage my youngest and so I sent him up North to be with my family.

There was things I didn't know. I had been brought up pretty rough. My family aren't all that good, drugs, gangs, violence. I wanted to give my kids a brighter future. It was easier I suppose to give them what they wanted, so there was not much routine, or boundaries.

The parenting course was 6 weeks and I learnt so much. Sometimes I couldn't make class. It was all good though cos [the whānau mentor] would do one on one sessions with me to catch up. I really liked meeting the other parents. We all shared our stories, we were all kinda the same you know, all going through tough times.

Because of what was happening with me and my partner [the whānau mentor] referred me to living without violence to get some support too. I'm going to do the positive lifestyle course next too. I'm really excited about that. It's good for me to do these courses because I don't have the knowledge, and I think how can I teach my children if I don't know a different way.

*At the moment I'm in a good space. It's not perfect and me and my partner are still living apart but I think it's getting better. When we are together **we're communicating better**, not yelling and screaming. It's good for the kids to see us getting along. **Things are definitely better with my kids**. I am trying really hard to stick to what I say. You know my eldest doesn't like going to school and I would be like okay then. Truancy officer got involved which is awful. After the parenting course I'm saying no you've got to go to school. It's hard work but I've just got to stick at it. Same as if they're not doing what I ask, it's no good just to give in.*

*I think I've learnt that giving love doesn't mean letting them do what they want. **We are closer I think as a family**. Suppose I'm happier within myself and so I can look after others better too. But I'm finding different ways for us to have fun and have a better idea of what my kids really want, time with me having some fun. So **we're doing more together**, hanging at the park, going for walks, just simple stuff.*

*I am **coping much better** now and I now have all my kids again under the one roof. **I can manage** behaviours, I **got some tools now** to deal with things.*

[The whānau mentor] has been there the whole time, she's still there now. I can pick up the phone anytime. She understood me completely and I respected what she had to say cos she has been through her own tough times. She's a solo mum and she knows what its like.

Vignette #5: Healthier happier homes and improved personal wellbeing

Whānau story – Single mum of four children, depressed, overwhelmed by responsibilities, feeling like a failure.

I was at a stage when life had become too much. I was pregnant with my fourth child and then my partner left me and all of a sudden I was working, pregnant and raising three children alone. This responsibility started to weigh me down and by the time I had baby I was exhausted.

I knew that I would have to return to work but the thought was terrifying. I don't think I had post-natal but I could have? I believed it was just a combination of finding myself alone and too much on my plate.

After 3 months of maternity leave I went back to work and things just got worse. I had lost my confidence and motivation. The kids were just getting yelled at all the time and there was no quality of life. I couldn't stay on top of what was happening with my kids at school and it was so awful because I felt like I was losing touch with everything around me. Financially things were really tough even though I was working so it just seemed like a big waste of time.

It was then that I started to work with [the whānau mentor] and it was just so wonderful. She would sit and talk with me, breaking all my worries and stress down into small bite sizes. Whenever I would say it's too much I can't do this [the whānau mentor] would say no we've got this. I didn't feel alone then with all my worries. I felt like someone had my back and that was just the most amazing thing.

With her support I learnt to start taking one thing at a time and deal with that first. My teenage girl was going through some really hard stuff, self-harming, depression and we were referred to a counsellor which was free and really good too. My work conditions were pretty bad as well and [the whānau mentor] advocated on my behalf with my employer to make these better. She also encouraged me to dream and start thinking about what I would like to be doing for work. We did a CV up and she kept showing me work opportunities in the area I was interested in.

*On my day off I would join the exercise class that [the whānau mentor] ran. This was such a good time for me, **I was doing something for myself**, meeting other mums who were also going through tough times. It felt good sharing.*

*Slowly I started to feel more in control. **Our home was calmer, more organised, happier**. I think we all felt like **we were getting a little of what we needed**. I know I was able to give more of the good stuff like the love and time that my kids needed because I was feeling better. I was back watching my boys sport, able to **focus on what each of them were up to at school**. It sounds small but it was a massive change from where I had been.*

*The other thing that was huge is that I **started to think about myself in a positive way** and the great things that my future could hold. I started to realise that **I did have choices** and that **I wasn't alone** and this helped me to shift through the mess and start to feel more positive about things.*

*[The whānau mentor] had a way of knowing me, bringing out what was important to me. She did this in such a calm, loving way. **I really hate to think what would have happened to me and family without her**. I feel like she is one of my friends now, a good friend that I can rely.*

Key Learnings

Success factors - What works for our whānau?

51. The Whānau Ora phase one analysis identified five overlapping themes essential to the implementation of a whānau-centred approach:
 - Effective relationships – establishing relationships that benefit whānau
 - Whānau rangatiratanga (leadership, autonomy) – building whānau capability to support whānau self-management, independence and autonomy
 - Capable workforce – growing a culturally competent and technically skilled workforce able to adopt a holistic approach to supporting whānau aspirations
 - Whānau-centred services and programmes – whānau needs and aspirations at the centre with services that are integrated and accessible
 - Supportive environments – funding, contracting and policy arrangements, as well as effective leadership from government and iwi to support whānau aspirations.⁸
52. All of these themes speak specifically to the Whānau Mentoring programme. The Whānau Mentor has successfully developed positive meaningful relationships with the whānau and works closely with them facilitating shifts in dependence to independence. She is highly skilled and connects through culture and shared experiences with the whānau. Whānau needs and dreams are at the centre of the programme and they are offered access to services that support them to achieve their goals.
53. The programme is based in a supportive environment which is reflected in the time that is given to each whānau. Often contracts require providers to work with whānau within scheduled timeframes, at which point whānau are required to have achieved positive outcomes and sustainable change. Often whānau are faced with many challenges and barriers towards making positive changes. These issues are often intergenerational, including; addiction, family violence, mental health, employment and lack of parenting knowledge. The Whānau Mentoring programme enables the Whānau Mentor to take the time needed to work with the whānau. This reflects the intensity of the work and the length and time needed to work effectively with each whānau. Sustainable change is more likely to occur when whānau are given the chance to work through their issues at their pace.
54. Most whānau believed that if the Whānau Mentor had not come into their lives, they would be in different places right now. For many this meant that they would be still struggling to get their children back into their care. Several mentioned that their children could have been taken from them and put into care. Relationships with partners and loved ones would have continued to deteriorate. On a personal level, they would still be experiencing low self-esteem, lack of confidence and no motivation for life. Many would still be on pathways of drugs, alcohol and violence.

⁸ Te Puni Kokiri (2015) Understanding whānau centred approaches: Analysis of Phase One Whānau Ora research and monitoring results.

55. Whānau were able to identify a number of key factors within the programme that support them on their journeys towards positive change:
- there is somebody in their lives that believes in them
 - the mentoring focuses on whānau potential and strengths; the past was there to learn from but not live in
 - a number of community services work together to support whānau
 - the whānau are guided to direct their own pathways of change through planning and goal setting
 - strong positive relationships are built with Salvation Army and the Whānau Mentor
 - the whānau are able to work in settings that suit them and work at their own pace.
56. The key success factors identified by the whānau reflect the core principles of the programme as illustrated in Table One.

Table 1. Reflection of programme principles in success of the programme

Programme principles	Success factors identified by whānau	Performance example
People have the capacity to recover, transform and reclaim their lives	There was somebody in their lives that believed in them	Most whānau were not able to see their potential so the Whānau Mentor believed for them; providing constant encouragement and reassurance. Impact: All whānau are improving aspects of their lives. Some of the changes are small but they are still significant. As they experience success through completing a course - having good conversations with their children, getting their children to school each day and/or being able to meet new people - their self-confidence and self-belief is growing.
The mentoring is on individual strengths not deficits	The focus was on potential and strengths; the past was there to learn from but not live in	Whānau carry considerable guilt and shame about past behaviour and decisions. Because life has been hard they cannot see the positive in themselves. The Whānau Mentor points out their strengths and potential, always focusing on the present and what is possible. Impact: Whānau leave their pasts behind focusing on what is in front of them. They are making plans for a better future and taking concrete steps towards achieving what they want. The journey has ups and downs for them all, but they have a stronger sense that they can achieve.
Community is an oasis of resources	A number of community services worked together to support whānau	Several whānau have experiences of negative support from services and are less trusting. The Whānau Mentor collaborates with internal staff and services ensuring that whānau receive needed. She is also linking whānau to external community and social services. Impact: Whānau are learning to have more trust in services. They are experiencing positive support from many places in the community. Whānau appreciate the

		work of the Whānau Mentor in linking them to other services and advocating for them. The credibility of the Whānau Mentor is very helpful.
Whānau are the directors of the helping relationship	The whānau were guided to direct their own pathways of change through planning and goal setting	All the whānau were finding it difficult to lead their own path in a positive way. They are facing challenges that seem insurmountable to them. The Whānau Mentor is able to gently guide and help them to navigate their paths, provide opportunities based on what their goals are. Impact: Whānau are making plans to improve their situations. As they experience success they feel more confident to make good decisions and choices. Although a few whānau take short detours, they are committing to staying the course.
Relationships are primary and essential	Strong positive relationships were built with Salvation Army and the Whānau Mentor	All whānau were vulnerable due to multiple, complex needs in mental health, addiction, finances, employment, parenting and child care arrangements. The Whānau Mentor takes the time needed to build a relationship that is based on genuine care and understanding. Impact: Whānau are opening up and sharing their fears and dreams. They trust in the Whānau Mentor because she is non-judgmental. The relationship supports them to talk and work through the challenges they are experiencing.
Preferred setting for working with whānau is in the community.	The whānau were able to work in settings that suited them and at their own pace	All whānau had preferences around where and how they participate in the programme including; group work, and one on one support in their homes. The Whānau Mentor works with the whānau where they feel comfortable. Impact: Whānau are becoming more confident and gaining a stronger sense of self-worth and control, working in ways that are important to them.

Concluding comments

57. The evaluation clearly shows that the Whānau Mentoring programme supports whānau to make positive change in their lives. The kaupapa Māori principles of whakawhanaungatanga, manaakitanga, aroha and mana motuhaketanga provide a strong positive foundation for the implementation of the programme.
58. The programme understands the challenges for vulnerable whānau who have complex multiple needs. Considerable time is taken to build trust and confidence. The programme allows for genuine, sustainable changes to take place. Although there is high expectations for whānau, there is a deep understanding that change takes time and progress is never on a straight trajectory. There will be ups and downs, the critical thing is keeping support consistent and constant.
59. The Whānau Mentor and her approach is essential to the successful delivery of the programme. As a Pacifica women and her lived experience as a solo mum she successfully helps whānau feel safe and comfortable. Whānau trust and admire her and continue to engage in the programme and do the best they can to show their gratitude for her support.
60. The programme is of great value to the whānau and they feel that without the support and guidance they would still be stuck in their negative, destructive cycles. This is not to say that they are not experiencing challenges still. Many of the whānau are still working on their change and positive development. However they feel more capable and stronger to do this.
61. Whānau did not identify any improvements however a few of them suggested expanding the programme and training whānau into the role of mentors. They believe this will work well as they have the experience of coming through challenging times, making positive changes and sticking to them.
62. To continue to build on the early successes of the programme it is important to build networks and connections with external agencies and services to ensure that whānau are able to access the supports they need.

Appendix One: Whānau Interview guide

Introduction

Walk through ethics matters, confidentiality and audio recording.

I am keen to hear from you about your experiences with the programme:

- What was most helpful about the programme (and why)?
- What was least helpful about the programme (and why?)
- What has changed for you since being involved in the programme (and why)?
- What things (if any) about the programme need changing (and why)?

Thoughts and reflections about the programme

Introduction to the Whānau Mentoring programme (engagement and motivation)

- How about we start with when you and your whānau/family first got involved with the programme and how you got involved?
- How did you first hear it? What were your first thoughts?
- Who explained the purpose of the programme to you? When and where was the programme explained to you?
- What was your understanding of the programme from the information you received?
- Did you get all the information you needed?
- Why did you decide to be involved in the programme?
- What things did you consider when you were making the decision? Pros and cons?
- What was the process of signing up for it? (e.g. forms)
- What did you expect? Do you feel your needs and circumstances were taken into account?

Programme participation (involvement and activities)

What has being in the programme involved for you and your whānau/family? Prompts:

- Goal setting and development of plan
- Parenting programme
- Positive lifestyle programme
- Walking Group
- Advocacy and advice
- Bay Swim Preschool
- Referrals to other services
- Education/training
- Relationship support
- Hula Wellness
- Employment, Housing and Accommodation support

How useful was each of the activities to you and your whānau/family?

Experiences of programme (perception)

Tell me about you and your whānau/family experience with the programme. What was it like?

In what ways did/does the programme support you and your whānau? Prompt::

How useful is/was the support you received? Was anything missing?

How pleased/satisfied are you with your experience?

What has changed since being involved with the programme for you and your whānau (and why)?

What was most helpful about the service (and why)? (Success factors)

What were the things about the programme that helped you and your whānau/family the most (and why)?

What was the most valuable thing about the service for you and your whānau/family (and why)?

What do you think are the key things about the programme that support whānau/family to build positive lives?

How would things have been different if the programme had not been available to you and your whānau/family?

Improvements

What were the things that helped you the least (and why?)

Besides the things that you have mentioned about the programme not being helpful, are there any other things that made it really difficult for you to get the most out of the programme?

Is there anything about the programme that you think needs to change or be improved? How come?

Thank and close