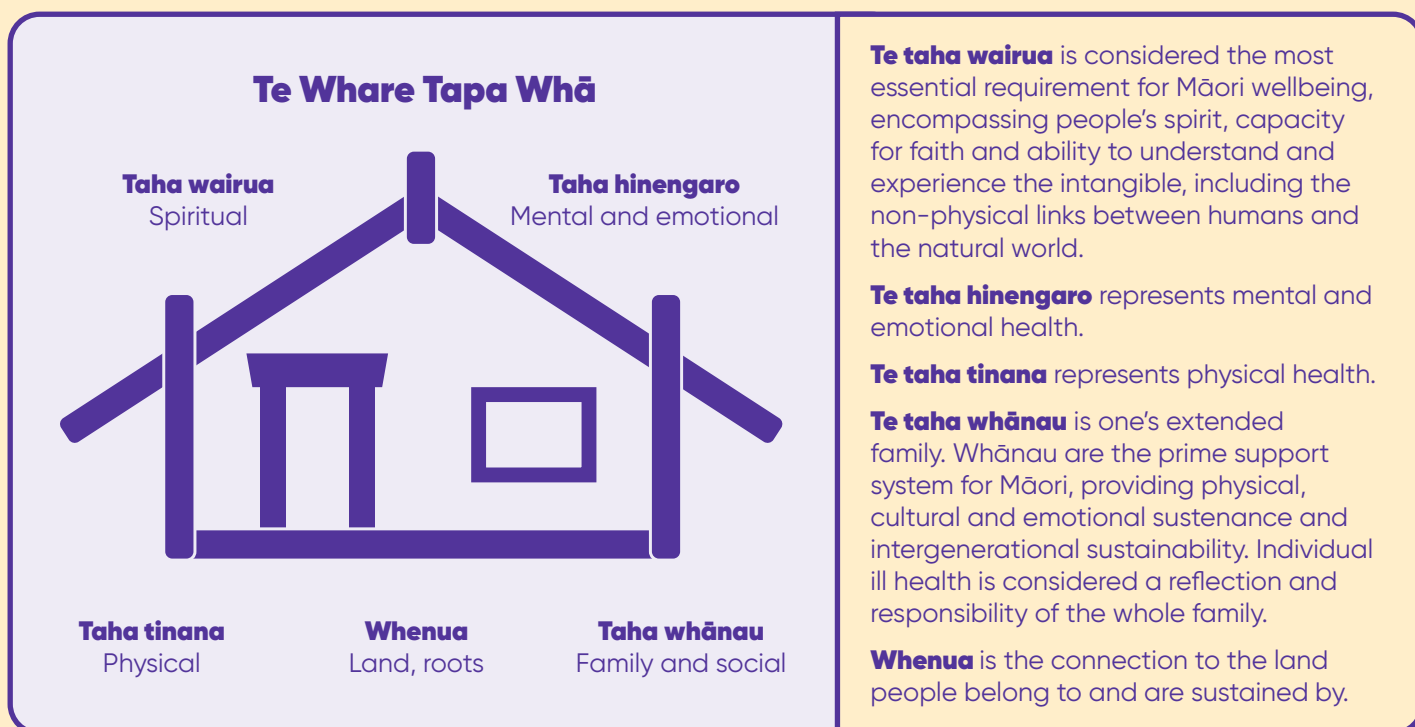


# MAURI ORA: PROMOTING MĀORI MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health promotion is a cost-effective way to enhance wellbeing for all people in Aotearoa – but what does it look like for Māori?

## Mental health in te ao Māori

In te ao Māori, our mental health or hauora hinengaro doesn't sit in isolation – it's one part of our wider hauora or wellbeing. Tā Mason Durie's model **Te Whare Tapa Whā**<sup>1</sup> (below) demonstrates five basic dimensions of Māori wellbeing, which are represented as four walls of a whare (house) sitting upon the whenua (land).



When the wharenui's walls and foundation are strong, we can achieve optimal wellbeing. Poor wellbeing is seen not as an individual problem, but as a lack of harmony between a person and their wider environment – a lack of support for one or more of the walls. A Māori worldview favours responding to the causes of distress (mental or otherwise) rather than managing the distress itself.<sup>2</sup>

You can read more about te ao Māori perspectives on mental health and wellbeing [here](#).

## Mental health promotion for Māori

Māori mental health promotion seeks to increase the factors likely to lead to **positive Māori wellbeing** or **mauri ora** by building supportive environments and strengthening people's collective skills, attitudes and behaviours. It is guided by principles like **equity, empowerment and a holistic view of health**.

Because mental health and wellbeing look different for Māori, the way mental health promotion is carried out must be different, too. To be effective and relevant for Māori, Māori mental health promotion approaches must incorporate other influences on hauora or wellbeing, like the concepts of mauri; tapu and noa; whakapapa; mana; tikanga; taonga and te ao tūroa.



## What does this look like in practice?

**Te Pae Māhutonga**<sup>3</sup> (below) is a Māori health promotion model based on the star constellation of the same name (also known as the Southern Cross). It provides a symbolic map of the key goals of Māori health promotion through its four central stars (Mauriora, Waiora, Te Oranga and Toiora) and its two pointer stars (Ngā Manukura and Te Mana Whakahaere), which represent the prerequisite for effective health promotion. All the stars align with the articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in some way.



### 1 - Te Mana Whakahaere - Autonomy

Recognition of the unique aspirations of a community, whom health promotion activity should make sense to and be controlled by.

### 2 - Ngā Manukura - Leadership

Health promotion leaders are from both community and iwi, including relational alliances between groups who can bring diverse contributions and skills.

### 3 - Waiora

Protection of the natural environment for future generations, with acknowledgement of its spiritual, material and cultural significance.

### 4 - Toiora

Healthy lifestyles – fostering skills, attitudes and behaviours that support mauri.

### 5 - Mauriora

Access to te ao Māori, e.g., te reo, mātauranga, marae, natural resources, and whānau, including the endorsement and celebration of Māori language and values in mainstream Aotearoa.

### 6 - Te Oranga

Participation in society, e.g., in the economy; in education; in employment; and in knowledge and decision-making.

## Recommendations to support Māori mental health promotion

Te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori health perspectives, while unique to Māori, are consistent with new orientations and global trends away from individual disease approaches to wellbeing and can suggest a way forward for all of Aotearoa. Below are recommendations to support Māori mental health promotion, and how these recommendations align with the four articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

### Article One: Kāwanatanga

- Establish an advisory team of experts and current practitioners in mental health promotion, te ao Māori, epidemiology, social marketing, mental wellbeing science and co-design to co-create a mental health promotion strategy that reflects Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the needs and aspirations of Māori and other priority populations.
- Ensure Māori are represented in mental health promotion-related governance and leadership structures.

### Article Three: Ōritetanga

- Develop a clear cross-sector national vision and strategy for mental health and wellbeing promotion grounded in te ao Māori and Te Tiriti o Waitangi, that reflects Māori wellbeing needs, perspectives and aspirations.
- Prioritise Māori in mental health promotion strategies and activities to increase equity.
- Address the social determinants of mental health, including the intergenerational impacts of colonisation, systemic racism, and discrimination, to reduce disparities and set Māori up to experience mauri ora.

### Article Two: Tino Rangatiratanga

- Support the development, implementation, expansion and maintenance of Māori-led mental health promotion initiatives and research.
- Support the growth of the Māori mental health promotion leadership and practitioner workforce (including tohunga and kaumātua).

### Article Four: Wairuatanga

- Increase Māori access to te ao Māori and other resources that promote strong cultural identity, including te reo Māori, cultural institutions like marae, whenua and other natural taonga by resourcing/redistributing resources to Māori communities and national promotion of mātauranga Māori.

### Want to learn more?

Visit [valuelwellbeing.nz](http://valuelwellbeing.nz) or email [policyandadvocacy@mentalhealth.org.nz](mailto:policyandadvocacy@mentalhealth.org.nz)