

Fact sheet

Mana-enhancing communication – a framework

All communication is across an unknown space – the gap between your understanding of the world and mine. Conflict, lack of clarity, and differing expectations and understandings easily occur when we assume our communication style and needs are the same.

Mana-enhancing communication is a process where we can close the space between different understandings, while building trust and mutual respect.

Workplace (Our shared space)

5. Implementation | Whakaora – Restoring wholeness



4. Decision making | Whakatau

3. Exploring the issue | Whaikōrero

2. Call/Invitation to come together | Karanga

1. Prepare | Whakatakātū

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A. My space (experiences/understandings and space in the world)

What I view as:

- Important
- Appropriate
- Acceptable
- Normal
- My role and others' roles
- How things are done

Shaped and affected by:

- Experiences
- Cultural norms
- Information available
- Expectations
- Understandings
- Interactions with others and systems in the world



B. Your space (experiences/understandings and space in the world)

These affect my whole person:

Relationships (Whānau)

- Communication styles
- Relationship values
- Expectations of reciprocity/mutuality
- Participation

Sense of self (Wairua)

- Cultural identity
- Sense of peace or contentment
- Definition of dignity and respect
- Connection to a bigger meaning or purpose

Physical (Tinana)

- Sense of capabilities
- Ability to improve health
- Access to resources

Thinking & feeling (Hinengaro)

- Motivations
- Behaviours
- How emotions are expressed
- Thinking and understanding processes

1. Prepare | Whakatakatū

Consider your intentions.

Are your intentions to understand and learn?

Do you put value on the relationship as well as your goal?

Does the way you communicate support your intentions?

Are you comfortable not having all the answers?

2. Call/Invitation to come together | Karanga

Clearly communicate the reason for coming together.

This is a back and forth communication establishing the purpose of the communication and the intentions of those involved.

Aim to create a shared and agreed purpose and method to communicate.

Consider when, where and who else should be involved.

Note that others may test you or challenge | wero you to see if your intentions are true. This lets them know how safe it is to communicate back. Be prepared to show your humility and acknowledge what you do not know.

3. Exploring the issue | Whaikōrero

This is about discussing the matter at hand.

This step establishes a relationship, so it should involve introductions and acknowledgement | mihi of those involved. All respectful communication involves personal relationships with mutual and reciprocal obligations. At the very least, basic expectations of politeness and acknowledgement are expected.

Allow time for everyone to speak and share their perspective.

Reveal the known and the unknown so there is a shared knowledge.

Listen, explore and ask questions to learn.

This is the time to seek clarification and reflect understandings – gather all the information to make a judgement and decide the way forward.

If meeting in a group, it is important that each person has the opportunity to share their perspective before a general back and forth begins.

4. Decision making | Whakatau

This is the point in the discussion where there is enough information to make a decision. There can still be disagreement but there is general consensus that it is time to move forward.

Move forward with the shared understanding of what has been decided and why.

Clarify and summarise what actions and decisions have been made.

Confirm understanding of responsibilities, expectations, and purpose of decision.

5. Implementation | Whakaora. Restoring wholeness

This happens once the discussion on next steps is complete and a way forward decided. Now is the time to restore and affirm relationships to support the ongoing work and the shared space you have created.

Reaffirm new learnings and agreements.

Acknowledge the effort made to come together and contribute.

Acknowledge any disagreements and uncertainty that remain.

This framework can be followed in short informal conversations or used to guide engagement in projects over time or run formal meetings or workshops.

ALI: “Hi Zoe, I’ve been reading the report you sent. Thanks for that, I appreciate the work you put in. I’d like to suggest a change to one section and before I do want to hear what you think, could we meet?”

ZOE: “Which section Ali?”

ALI: “The 2nd section, I thought we could highlight the recommendations more strongly.”

ZOE: “Are you looking to change them? They were well discussed. I think Sam would want to be involved.”

ALI: “Not change them, I want to change the order and pull out the ones needed this year – for urgency.”

ZOE: “That might work, I’d still like Sam involved.”

ALI: “That makes sense. You both know this report inside out and I really need your advice.”

ZOE: “Thanks, we’re a bit passionate about this. When do you need it by?”

ALI: “For the meeting next month. Yes, include Sam, I hadn’t thought to, thanks. Would Wednesday work, do you think an hour would be long enough?”

ZOE: “I’ll check in with Sam about timing and confirm, Wednesday works for me.”

ALI: “Thanks Zoe, let’s aim for Wednesday but if Sam can’t make it we’ll find a better time. I appreciate how important the recommendations are to you both so I’m keen to hear your thoughts on this.”