



Research

Social Change
& Innovation

**Whānau Ora Navigators
Initial Research for
Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu**

Ihi Research
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**Whānau Ora Navigation Initial Research for
Te Putahitanga o Te Waipounamu**

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Executive Summary

The Whānau Ora Navigator approach has been identified by the Productivity Commission (2015) as a key example of an integrated whānau-centred approach supporting seamless access to health and social services. They have been identified as 'key drivers' in the Whānau Ora system (Gifford & Boulton, 2014). The purpose of the research is to review the current approach of the Navigators and understand the impact, as well inform the future development of Navigation across Te Waipounamu.

We interviewed 27 Navigators, seven chief executives or managers from Navigator host agencies and two whānau who had worked alongside a Navigator. The interview data was transcribed and analysed through NVivo using an inductive approach. The evaluation was designed to be conducted in a way that is consistent with kaupapa Māori research principles (Pihama & Southey, 2015; Cram, 2010). The work was intended to be mana-enhancing and carried out alongside Navigators and whānau to understand how they perceive the successes and challenges of the role.

Navigators describe their role as 'walking alongside whānau', the work is led by whānau with their dreams and aspirations leading the way. The freedom to respond to whānau in a way that is not constrained by western constructs of support allows the Navigators to work in more naturalistic ways. Navigators identified a variety of challenges they faced in their role, including their safety, challenges with whānau who had addiction and anger issues, Government agencies, schools and employment related concerns. Similarly, they identified enablers including the support of the marae and other Navigators, job satisfaction, leadership and the network. Whanaungatanga is the foundation of the approach.

There is evidence the Navigators are having a significant impact in Te Waipounamu, particularly for whānau with complex needs. Case narratives demonstrate how whānau, with the support of a Navigator, made positive progress by taking small steps toward a larger goal. Analysis of the cases described by the Navigators indicated many of the whānau were experiencing challenges that required them to focus on their immediate needs. Whānau case stories describe the strengths based approach they experienced working with Navigators, to make positive changes for themselves. The relationship between the Navigator and the whānau was clearly the most important enabler for change. It was authentic, ongoing, and as an equal, walking alongside whānau.

The host agencies described successes and challenges of the Navigator model. Agencies that were located further from Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu appeared to be more concerned about communication, uninformed changes and the roles and responsibilities of the host agent and the commissioning agency. There are positive relationships between the Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu staff and the host agency staff and host agencies are complimentary about the efforts to support the Navigator network, training and workshops. There are tensions that exist around the provision of Navigators, management and expectations around reporting.

There are a several opportunities for Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu to continue to strengthen the Navigator network in Te Waipounamu. There is an opportunity to improve communication around continuous improvement, Navigator induction, Navigator pathways and progression. There is a shared understanding between Navigators, the host agencies and Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu, and passion for Navigation and Whānau Ora, which appears to be the foundation of strong working relationships.

There are four recommendations to continually improve the Navigator network; creating a foundation of reflective learning, introducing an induction process, investigating qualifications and recognition, developing a whānau outcome progression framework and strengthening relationships with host agencies.

Introduction

Whānau Ora Navigators work with whānau and families to identify their needs and aspirations, support their participation in core sectors such as housing, education, primary health and employment and link and coordinate access to specialist services. They have been identified as 'key drivers' in the Whānau Ora system (Gifford & Boulton, 2014). Most importantly, Navigators are instrumental in consolidating links of whanaungatanga; strengthening and revitalising whānau connections to natural supports.

Navigators have the geographic and cultural proximity necessary to understand whānau situations and build relationships of trust and confidence with whānau members. They take a unique approach that is responsive to the needs and circumstances of each whānau. The Navigator approach ensures whānau rangatiratanga is at the forefront by providing a voice to articulate their aspirations.

Navigators assist whānau to set long-term goals and encourage them to take charge in working towards them. They help whānau connect with services and advocate on their behalf to service providers. Once whānau have dealt with their immediate needs, Navigators continue to help them build their capability to be self-managing. For many whānau, working with a Navigator will be their first experience with social service delivery focusing on their strengths and aspirations rather than on their needs as perceived by others (for example, Government departments or case workers). The aspirational rather than deficit focus empowers whānau to think long-term about their goals and draw from their strengths in planning to achieve them.

The Whānau Ora Navigator approach has been identified by the Productivity Commission (2015) as a key example of an integrated whānau-centred approach supporting seamless access to health and social services. Reports from whānau and providers, as well as research, shows that when whānau work with Navigators they experience significant benefits including improved outcomes across education, employment and income (Gifford and Boulton, 2014).

In Budget 2015, almost \$50 million was secured to fund approximately 230 Navigators to 2019 so they can continue to support thousands of whānau. The funding is allocated through the three Whānau Ora commissioning agencies. At the time of this research Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu has 46 Navigators across 25 host agencies.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of the research is to review the current approach of the Navigators and understand the impact, as well inform the future development of Navigation across Te Waipounamu. For this reason, the research questions are designed to build knowledge which will support the development of the Navigator role.

Research questions

This research was driven by three research questions:

1. What impact are the Whānau Ora Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu Navigators having for whānau?
2. How do whānau perceive and experience navigation?
3. How can Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu support the Navigator network in Te Waipounamu?

Participants

We interviewed 27 Navigators. The Navigators were spread across Te Waipounamu and worked for a range of host agencies. Navigators were invited to participate in the research by the commissioning agency. Seven chief executives or managers from Navigator host agencies were interviewed to gain the perspective of the host agency. Two whānau were interviewed to gain an understanding of the role from their perspective.

Analysis

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using NVivo. An inductive approach was used to build categories out of the data. The findings were organised into four categories; the role of the Navigator, the impact of Navigation for whānau, identifying the Navigator approach, and focusing on how Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu can support the networked community. We interviewed two whānau, one had worked with a Navigator for two years, the other for four months. Their narratives were transcribed verbatim and used to create a case story that represents the whānau's perspective.

This evaluation was designed to be conducted in a way that is consistent with kaupapa Māori research principles (Pihama & Southey, 2015; Cram, 2010). The evaluation work was intended to be mana-enhancing and carried out alongside Navigators and whānau to understand how they perceive the successes and challenges of the role. The evaluation team aspired to work with integrity and respect, inclusive of tikanga and kawa, with whanaungatanga as the foundation of all evaluation activity.

Limitations

This is the first research undertaken with the Whānau Ora Navigators in Te Waipounamu. The research sought to understand the role from the perspective of the Navigators and whānau to construct an understanding of the approach and the impact this has. It is difficult to determine outcomes when there is insufficient knowledge about the approach. This research is intended to lay a foundation for future investigations into outcomes for whānau. The research is contained to Navigators within Te Waipounamu.

Chapter 1: The Navigator role

The primary role of the Navigator is to support whānau to achieve their aspirations. The Navigators in this research described their role as ‘walking alongside whānau’, they agreed the work was led by whānau, not the Navigators. The role does not confine the Navigator to providing support in a certain way, time or under a particular practice construct. The freedom to work without explicit boundaries around how the support is provided to whānau enabled Navigators to respond to the needs of whānau. Several of the Navigators previously held positions as social workers and commented on the process of letting go of the restrictions that had been imposed on them by their previous roles. In particular, dropping their assumptions and expectations about making decisions for whānau or fixing what they perceived to be a problem, and allowing whānau to plan their own path and support them to achieve this.

At the heart of the Navigator role is whanaungatanga and ‘restoring the mana’ of the whānau through the process of realising the moemoea (dreams and aspirations) of the whānau. As Navigators work with the whole whānau and not just one individual, they were able to reach kaumātua, rangatahi, tamariki and extended whānau through building a trusting relationship with the whole whānau.

The Navigators described the skills they believed were essential for Navigators. These fell into six broad categories:

- 1. Life experiences** - Many Navigators had walked their own path to transformation and change in their life with their whānau and felt this enabled them to bring experiences, skills (such as budgeting, cooking) and stories to the mahi. Navigators need to be self-aware, to have healed their own mamae (hurt), and know when their experiences imposed on their ability to work with whānau.

“I know where the life is you know, I’ve seen the dark times now I’m walking in the light, ... just so whānau know that we are there with them in their journey, in their waka we’re paddling along with them as well. We’re paddling along with them. Same path, same waka, same direction, same waters.”

- 2. Ability to be reflective** - Navigators agreed they needed to be able to learn constantly as every situation was different. The importance of reflecting on their mahi, learning from their experiences and being able to know yourself was very important.

“You need to have a certain extent of self-discovery alongside (whānau) as well. I don’t go into any whare with a whānau and claim to know all the answers - because I don’t. My life is a daily lesson just as much as theirs and I like to think we’re learning together. I find it quite honourable and humbling to know I’m teaching them something but they’re also teaching me.”

- 3. Communication** - Communication was at the heart of the Navigator role, firstly to listen to what the whānau wants and then to be able to take complex information and ensure they communicate it clearly. To understand pace and not to hurry whānau.

“A key skill to have is to be a good listener, āta whakarongo to our whānau.”

- 4. Community networks** - Navigators noted the importance of being immersed in the community and to be able to pull on the resources of the community to support whānau. Navigator relationships with schools, organisations, Government services, whānau support, marae, and Māori services were all used to meet the needs of whānau.

“Many of us have very broad networks, so when we walk into the whare we’re not just walking in as one person, we are walking in with an arsenal.”

- 5. Personal values** - Navigators identified a series of personal values they felt were essential to the Navigator role; being open-minded, having empathy, showing aroha, valuing equity, having a sense of humour, having integrity, being patient, being passionate about the importance of whānau, and always acknowledging the strengths whānau have.

“(You have to be) non-judgemental, and willing to test some of their kōrero. Sometimes to see things that they don’t see because they’re just looking at the hara, where I’m just seeing potential and I’m hearing it, I’m seeing it.”

6. **Tikanga** - Navigators discussed the importance of tikanga as underpinning the way in which they provide support to whānau. Valuing the importance of 'being Māori', listening to your instinct, putting whānau first and knowing what is tika and pono, was at the heart of how Navigators conducted themselves with whānau.

“Using all those things that our tīpuna left us too, the environment, so the hui could take place beside the moana up on the maunga beside the awa you know. Those things that we do, the manaakitanga to have kai with them, to take time even if you do go to their place and they offer you a tea and a biscuit. That’s what our old people did for us because that’s where the kōrero happens that we get to know one another, we get to trust one another. It’s all those tikanga that we have to utilise as being a Navigator, get them in their own waka and begin to oar their own journey.”

Whanaungatanga as the foundation

Whanaungatanga is the foundation of the Navigator approach and the process through which whānau change and transformation occurs. The Navigators spoke about the time they took to ensure they built strong relationships with mutual respect and trust, building a strong foundation for partnership. Making connections through whakapapa, treating the whānau with respect, taking the time to meet, talk, eat and develop the trust that is needed to work together was a repetitive and constant theme in the research.

“The whanaungatanga aspect ... if you have not been able to connect with a whānau, then it’s almost like going to their whare and trying to help them from outside the window. They haven’t let you in yet ... So whanaungatanga just opens the door and the journey begins.”

The Navigators noted the importance of establishing a relationship with the whānau before they had to enter into an agreement. For many of the Navigators who had come from Government departments this was an important way of working that underpinned how they approached whānau. Rather than providing a service and an agreement, it was about establishing a relationship and shared understanding through whanaungatanga.

“I don’t put timeframes around that stuff. I think it’s really important for (whānau) to feel safe. So I have a little joke I share with everyone that I never take paperwork on a first date. In an old role, they used to try and get me to take engagement forms straightaway and I’d say, no we’ll sign those when they’re ready because I might not be the right person for them ... No marriage on the first date.”

The data indicated Navigators felt they often became part of the whānau, which also meant they didn’t discontinue or close cases. If the whānau needed to reconnect or get in touch for advice or just a talk the Navigator always maintained contact with the whānau. This did have implications for workload for some of the Navigators as they tended to build on their case load rather than turning over whānau as in traditional case service models.

“That’s the part I like, you can be there for the whānau, not actually part of the whānau, even though they end up adopting you. You become a friend for life basically because you are there with a true aroha and a compassion and a whakaaro to actually help the whānau achieve what they want to achieve as opposed to trying to tell them what they need to achieve.”

This relationship in a western model of support would be considered inappropriate as service providers are advised to keep professional distance. Navigators however viewed acceptance by whānau as an indicator that they had entered into a trusting partnership with whānau to bring about change. This occurred on the whānau terms, for many of the Navigators this relationship meant they had an ongoing responsibility to the whānau after the active case work had ceased.

Pathway planning tool

Navigators identified pathway planning as a highly effective tool for whānau to identify their aspirations, dreams and goals. Navigators described the process as empowering for whānau, it was whānau led and strengths based. The process enabled whānau to focus on their dreams and what they did have, rather than what they were lacking. The visualisation of aspirations and whānau dreams enabled whānau to think outside their current struggles and create a vision of where they wanted to be. Pathway planning provided the visual document that acted as a blueprint for positive strengths based change.

Not all whānau were ready for pathway planning as soon as they engaged with Navigators. This varied across Navigators, as some felt pathway planning was a tool for engagement while others felt time, trust and relationships needed to be built before they engaged in pathway planning. The pathway planning tool identified long term goals for whānau and short-term actions that set them on the pathway to achieving their goals.

A Naturalistic approach

There was evidence throughout the interview data of natural approaches to support whānau in achieving their aspirations. Navigators preferred to meet with whānau in their homes, at the beach, in a cafe, at the marae, not in an office or formal setting. Many of the cases described by the Navigators were about positive whole of whānau interactions, going to the beach with the whānau building sandcastles, walking in the bush and talking, or coming together over a common interest, such as singing or carving.

“For example, for a lot of my whānau our meetings might be walking along the track in the bush so we’ll walk and talk at the same time or we will go to the beach and we’ll just sit you know, or walk along the sand ... not sitting behind a desk in an office or an interview room doing face to face.”

The freedom to support whānau in an instinctual way, side by side rather than across the table, was raised throughout the interviews. Rather than having to meet timeframes and set objectives, the support was most effective because it responded to the needs of the whānau at that time. Many of the whānau accessing the Navigators are dealing with significant trauma in their lives. It appears a large part of the Navigator role is responding to the needs identified by whānau at the time, often using their networks and connections in the community to gather resources and support. Not being bound by practice guidelines enables Navigators to be responsive to the needs of whānau in more naturalistic ways.

Navigators discussed how they saw their role as a Māori practitioner. Having a blank canvas enabled them to start developing an approach they referred to as a Māori practitioner. This was deeply rooted in te ao Māori, through whakapapa, wairua, karakia, and the strength they drew on from their tīpuna.

“I consider myself a Māori practitioner Navigator ... For me the ability to practice that way in a real te ao Māori way with our whānau it’s just something way different, it’s a cut above. I’ve seen normal practitioner problem’s, with them is they’re trying to analyse, counsel them, they’re trying to even tell them what the problem is and then when they can’t fix it up as a problem, they fix it up with a blue pill or a red pill. They’re still trying to put them in a box and tick the box”.

Barriers and enablers for Navigation

Navigators identified barriers and enablers in their role. Identifying these in the data provides an indication of the challenges Navigators face and the possible solutions to these challenges.

Barriers

The Navigators noted barriers to whānau success;

Whānau were not ready for the change

Not all whānau who were with a Navigator were ready for change. Often this was due to drug and alcohol addiction or difficulties managing anger. Many whānau did not have positive social connections and were isolated due to the challenges they faced. The Navigators described how they supported and walked alongside whānau to make positive changes, but also noted their path was hindered by their addiction issues. Navigators discussed how it was important to not do too much for whānau as they developed dependency and in a very few cases took advantage of the support and became reliant on the Navigator. It was important for the Navigators to ensure whānau made the changes they could with the support of the Navigator, not the Navigator doing everything for them.

Government agencies and schools

Navigators noted there are significant challenges for whānau working with Government agencies and schools. It appears the competing interests of agencies and the view of social workers and agency workers could be very deficit and make it difficult for whānau to access the support they need to make positive changes. On several occasions Navigators discussed how whānau had become frustrated and angry with mainstream agencies, therefore making any future contact difficult. It was very important for the Navigator to mediate these appointments and support whānau to gain what they were entitled to.

Concerns for safety

Several Navigators discussed working with whānau who were in violent situations and victims of domestic abuse. Navigators discussed how they felt vulnerable when they were meeting a new whānau, often not knowing how safe they may be. In a couple of cases, such as the one described below, Navigators found themselves in situations where there was high conflict.

“The safety of Navigators ... I’ve been in a situation where going on an unannounced home visit and there’s a bit going on in the whare and I’ve had to stand in between two partners going at it and I know that my safety is first, but sometimes I think there are situations where there’s got to be two of you.”

A few Navigators felt they still had to develop their own cultural competency to feel safe in every situation they found themselves in. There are a range of cultural skills and abilities in the Navigator group from Navigators who are very skilled and experienced in te reo and tikanga, to Navigators who are reconnecting with their identity, language and culture. These Navigators expressed a willingness to learn, to connect and grow in their role and through their culture.

Navigator employment conditions

There is evidence the employment conditions create challenges for Navigators, for example the length of their contracts often remains uncertain. There is considerable variation in employment conditions amongst the Navigators which they are aware of. Some Navigators discussed how they were paid considerably less (up to \$30,000 less) than Navigators employed at other host agencies for essentially the same work. A well supported Navigator earned a salary comparable to other positions they had held previously, had a car, a phone and a laptop and/or ipad.

A lack of role definition, while positive for ensuring the Navigator approach is not restrained by boundaries, appears to cause challenges for the Navigators with the host agencies. A few of the agencies appear to have their own perception of how a Navigator works and this constrains the type of work the Navigator can do. In some cases, other contracts held by the entity impose on their role and cause conflicts of interest for the Navigators. While they know this may compromise their work as a Navigator they feel they must respond to the demands of their immediate manager and agency.

There is evidence that most Navigators work more than their 40-hour work week, often responding whenever whānau call on them, in the weekend and at night. Several Navigators spoke of using their own money to buy kai for whānau and to fund support for whānau. While there is a Whānau Tautoko fund, the distribution of the fund appeared to be variable across the host agencies. Some spoke of easily accessing the fund, others said it was very difficult and they had given up, preferring to use their own money.

Enablers

The Navigators identified aspects which enabled their work;

Whānau wanting to make change

Navigators discussed how most whānau wanted to make positive changes but didn't know where to start. They were motivated and wanted to engage with the Navigator to create a more positive future for their whānau. Several Navigators gave examples of whānau making significant changes in a very short time with the support of the Navigator. Many were inspired by the whānau as they had big dreams and aspirations and worked hard to make small steps toward a larger goal.

Connection to marae

Several of the Navigator positions are based at a marae. The networks of the marae enabled the Navigator to draw on the community and the strengths of the marae to support whānau. The marae created a focus point for whānau and enabled the Navigator to support positive social connections and provide a purpose for whānau to be a part of the marae activities.

Leadership and networking

The Navigator team and network appears to be very enabling for the Navigators. Knowing other Navigators and having the time and space to work together contributed to improved Navigator knowledge and personal wellbeing. All the Navigators we spoke to had supervision. While the quality of the supervision appeared to be variable, they reported it did contribute positively to their wellbeing.

The resources the Navigators had access to has an impact on their work. Those who had tablets could stay connected and access the Navigator Facebook page. The Navigators appreciated the paperwork and reporting was manageable and did not become the focus of what they did every day. For Navigators coming from Government departments the decrease in paperwork meant they could spend the time working alongside the whānau, not writing about them.

Several of the Navigators spoke of how other Navigators had impacted positively on their practice. Particularly those who were new to Whānau Ora, having people in leadership roles who could bring Dame Tariana's 'vision to life' had a significant impact on them. The

continued support of other Navigators and the developing network is a significant enabler as Navigators shared their learning and experiences.

Job satisfaction and personal growth

Without exception, the Navigators we interviewed loved the work they did with whānau. They talked of their job satisfaction and described the personal satisfaction from work they did with whānau. While much of the work they did was with whānau who were in very challenging situations and could be emotionally draining, it was rewarding to see the changes that whānau made in their lives as a result of positive support and encouragement.

“It’s been an incredible learning experience, not just for the whānau but for myself as well. There’s been a lot of personal growth in being able to identify specific areas of stress in myself that I didn’t realise were there initially. It’s very humbling to be able to walk alongside whānau and watch their progress, even the tiniest little steps. It really is a fantastic job ... How would I describe it? It’s a challenge but it’s an empowering challenge.”

Conclusion

Navigators describe their role as walking alongside whānau, the work is led by whānau with their dreams and aspirations leading the way. The freedom to respond to whānau in a way that is not constrained by western constructs of support allows the Navigators to work in more naturalistic ways, alongside whānau not across the table. Whanaungatanga is the foundation of the approach and Navigators appreciate the time and space they are given to ensure that trust and connection is established.

Navigators identified a variety of challenges they faced in their role, including their safety, challenges with whānau who had addiction and anger issues, Government agencies, schools and employment related concerns. Similarly, they identified enablers including the support of the marae and other Navigators, job satisfaction, leadership and the network.

Chapter 2:
Impact and outcomes of the Whānau Ora
Navigators in Te Waipounamu

Navigators are having a significant positive impact for whānau in Te Waipounamu. While the outcomes are variable and difficult to measure there is evidence the Navigators are producing positive outcomes for whānau. Both individual and collective whānau outcomes are evident in the data. The Navigators described stories of whānau facing significant life challenges and the process they went through to make positive changes.

There were over 50 case examples given in the interview data. We coded and categorised the outcomes the Navigators described. The following table demonstrates how broad these outcomes are:

Theme	Examples
Housing	Finding housing for homeless, improvement in housing, heating and insulation, supporting whānau who have relocated without resources
Earthquake support	Accessing earthquake fund, supporting whānau to access earthquake insurance, resolving earthquake related issues
Domestic violence	Support to manage anger and access anger management, supporting women and children in domestic violence situations, supporting whānau to be safe from domestic violence, support domestic violence offenders to resolve conflict and navigate the justice system
Economic	Supporting whānau to create and follow budgets, helping whānau create savings plan to achieve goals, supporting business planning establishment, accessing support for business establishment, finding business mentors, supporting applications for whānau for Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu whānau enterprise funding
Justice and court	Assisting whānau with court processes, supporting whānau through family court proceedings, post prison release support for individuals and their whānau
Drug and alcohol	Supporting whānau into drug and alcohol counselling, supporting whānau to give up smoking, supporting whānau to have a smoke/drug free environment in their home
Education and employment	Accessing education and training for whānau, supporting adults to re-engage with education, assisting whānau to gain employment, supporting whānau to develop a CV, supporting whānau through job interviews, supporting whānau to get driver licence, supporting whānau to get ID, bank accounts and to work with the IRD
School support	Providing support for whānau for school, supporting whānau to attend school meetings, resolve issues with schools, assisting whānau to get tamariki to school on time, supporting healthier lunches for tamariki, budgeting with whānau to support school expenses, supporting whānau who are relocating to get tamariki into schooling, support accessing alternative education
Mental health	Supporting whānau with mental health issues to access services, supporting whānau recovering from significant trauma, supporting whānau to access counselling, suicide prevention actions and activities with individuals and their whānau, supporting whānau to identify strengths
Whānau wellness	Supporting whānau to resolve relationships, whānau parenting support, supporting tamariki who are in a whānau placement, providing support for kaumātua, providing opportunities for whānau social connections and activities, connecting with marae, sports teams, other whānau, community events, budgeting with whānau to provide healthy kai, cooking alongside whānau
Rangatahi	Supporting rangatahi within whānau including access to ongoing education, licences, suicide prevention, wellness, access to sport, re-engaging rangatahi in school or other education, planning for future with rangatahi and their whānau
Supporting access to Government agencies	Supporting whānau to access healthcare and Government agencies including Housing New Zealand, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development, Work and Income New Zealand, Oranga Tamariki and health care (Doctors, specialists, hospitals)

Table 1 Examples of Activity and Outcome - Whānau Ora Navigators

The outcomes the Navigators are achieving with whānau appear to be multifaceted and can be difficult to categorise as they are often cumulative and encompass whānau as a collective, not just individuals.

A significant amount of Navigator support is provided for whānau to access Government agencies. All Navigators, regardless of the focus of their role, discussed how they supported whānau to access mainstream services. The descriptions from the interviews indicate that whānau who are concerned with meeting their immediate needs have low capability to find and seek additional support. Due to the stress of their situation, their relationships with Government agencies and officials can be tense and fraught. Several cases described how frustrated whānau became when they had tried many times to access services and benefits without success.

All Navigators had caseloads of at least 20 whānau, many Navigators had more than 20 whānau who they worked with at one time. The Analysis of Phase one Whānau Ora research identified on average those whānau who had 6-10 whānau members engaged experienced the most improvements (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2015). This appears to be consistent with the cases described in the interview data, a few cases described larger whānau groups with complex needs. As stated previously, relationships and ongoing need meant even though Navigators were expected to cease working with whānau, they continued to support them. Several Navigators spoke of the continuing support they provided to all whānau as part of the responsibility of the role. While this may be infrequent, maintaining connection was important to the Navigators.

Analysing outcomes under the Pou indicated the outcomes were less about cultural connection and more about meeting the basic needs of whānau. Cultural connection was implicit in the work rather than a focus, it was embedded in meeting basic needs of whānau and accessing services. For example, whānau did not go to Navigators to learn te reo or make cultural connections, but as a result of the support from Navigators, they may go with their child to Kōhanga Reo and then naturally be learning te reo alongside their tamariki.

There are challenges measuring the outcomes that whānau are achieving with Navigators. Firstly, whānau decide their own goals, and these goals are often fluid as their situation changes. Secondly, in each case the outcomes are evident for individuals within the whānau, and the whānau as a collective unit. Finally, a strength of the approach appears to be freedom to respond quickly to the needs of whānau rather than work to a set objective. This means measuring outcomes needs to be able to support the way in which Navigators work and not impose on the approach by demanding set outcomes and ways of working.

Impact and outcomes for whānau

To describe the outcomes that are being achieved by Navigators we have used two narratives taken directly from the Navigator interviews. The following narrative demonstrates how the outcomes are interwoven into the aspirations and desires of a father to see his children. While this was the end goal the steps to achieving this involved achieving smaller goals along the way.

Individual narrative

I have a Māori tane who was sleeping in the back of a car, a mattress on top of the seats parked at the back of his mate's house. He had a broken marriage and just no money in his pocket, he'd been fighting for his kids, to at least get visits. He had no bank card, no ID, so first and foremost we had to get ID. This took a while, he was going into Work and Income, to WINZ, but they wouldn't listen to him because of his anger. He had a hard time managing his anger. So, I supported him to be able to work with WINZ and get the benefit he was entitled to. I supported him to get a photo ID, first a face to a name, and assisted

him to get accommodation with the support of Work and Income, so he had a roof over his head. Through the Whānau Tautoko fund, we bought some clothes, some towels and a toaster, pots and pans, all the essentials and filled up his fridge so he could start living a normal life. That took two months, but he was able to have a healthy life.

His goal was to see his kids, the main kōrero we were talking about was “you’ve got to fix yourself first before you see your children”, before they ever have a visit or anything, they don’t want to see their papa in the state that he was. We were able to do that, communicate with the lawyer and start going to family courts to at least see his kids, after three months we got supervised visits. That’s five months from when we first met.

Then he spoke about what he wanted next, he wanted a job. He used to work over in the mines in Australia but he had to renew his licences, so we went to Polytech and enrolled him in a civil construction course for six months. I always kept a tab on him, visiting him and his tutors at Polytech to see how he was getting on. Two weeks ago, he got a job working for a civil works company, got his truck and rollers, got his HT licence, got his licence back and now he’s got his own one bedroom flat. Living good, living happy, now he’s done the mahi for himself.

His next hope is to not only take away the supervised visits but at least to have his children for the weekend, that’s our goal for the remainder of year. We’ve got six months to do that, it’s going to take time. It isn’t going to be a quick fix thing, but at least the judge will look at him now, compared to when he started the process of family court, and see that he is living comfortably. He’s completed his drug and alcohol counselling and everything the courts have asked him to do.

I don’t take the results that we’ve had, I don’t take that one, I give it all to him. I was only there to navigate him, he had to do the hard mahi. Whānau they just need whanaungatanga and manaakitanga and then they can do the hard mahi for themselves.

Collective outcomes

The following narrative demonstrates how a Navigator supported a whole whānau. Again, the outcomes are interwoven with the aspirations of the whānau, and the pressing needs the whānau had at the time the Navigator supported them. Both the action taken by the whānau, and the outcomes, are collective.

Collective narrative

A Mum and her partner they’ve got nine children, five of them are hers, four of them are his. The father of her children committed suicide. The mother of his children is in a mental health unit. So, they’ve got nine grieving children. Four of the teenage boys are trying to join gangs, their dad committed suicide, they’re just not coping. Nobody’s dealing with them because they don’t want to upset them even more. They’re just thinking their behaviour is because of the suicide in a little country town. They’re trying to join gangs, they’re starting to take drugs, they’re going off the rails. Mum does everything, absolutely everything, all the housework, working, everything, she does everything, for nine children. She decides to finish work because her kids are falling apart and so now we’ve got one income and nine children.

We did logistics because they’re all sporty kids, there’s a massive chart on the wall of where everybody needed to be. Getting everybody where they needed to go, who was responsible for what, horrendous amounts of money spent on takeaways because by the time they got everybody where they needed to be, it was easier to get chips and stuff, they couldn’t afford it and it was spiralling out of control. We got a budget advisor to come in

and meet them at home and the kids sat in on this, which was quite difficult but they sat in, and had a whānau hui with the budget advisor and he broke it all down so the kids could understand what was happening. The kids realised, they're not being mean there actually is no money and this is what needs to happen. They all had Sky in their rooms because that was the only way that she could manage the house. We did a big budget and the kids gave up their Sky, their multi rooms. All the kids wanted was a family photo so everybody knew they were one family. They wanted a table big enough that they could eat together and they wanted to go on holiday together, they wanted to go out to dinner together because usually Mum took half of them and then Dad took the other half of them.

They gave up their multi room, divided up chores. The boys didn't even wash their own clothes you know, they're 16, 15 and 14 and that took some of the pressure off Mum. Everybody started, they kind of became a team, it kind of created a cohesive team. It was so cool but they were ready, there was no other option. I went to Family Works and spoke to the CE about what they can do to help this family. So, they had two social workers who created a programme for that family. We got a grief counselling programme put together for the whole family. They were amazing, they created a programme for this family and they worked with every single one of those kids, they worked with them all together and they worked with the Mum. Her husband and her, figured out how they were going to work together to keep these kids safe because two of the teenage boys tried to commit suicide. They still work with that family.

They were one of my first families and they've just continued, they've had the specialists and they've done all sorts of stuff and they're doing really well now. I had my brother make them a dining table and it wasn't very wide ... but it's long and they could all fit and eat together. My friend's a photographer, so they took photos for her and we printed a big family portrait for them. They went on holiday, they stayed at the beach camping ground and the kids loved it.

Conclusion

There is evidence the Navigators are having a significant impact in Te Waipounamu, particularly for whānau with complex needs. The outcomes are driven by whānau aspirations, while the aspirations may be long term, the whānau identify short-term goals resulting in immediate outcomes. The case narratives demonstrate how whānau, with the support of a Navigator, made positive progress by taking small steps toward a larger goal.

Analysis of the cases described by the Navigators indicated many of the whānau were experiencing challenges that required them to focus on their immediate needs. The whānau were very clear and articulate about their goals and aspirations. While the way in which they engaged was mediated through culture, they did not access the Navigator for cultural support or connection.

Chapter 3: Whānau perceptions and experiences

An objective of this research was to understand how whānau viewed the support of the Navigator and if this was consistent with the view of the Navigators. We were seeking to understand if what Navigators did was received by whānau in the same way and if they shared a common understanding of the process.

To understand this, we asked Navigators how they thought whānau saw the Navigator role and we interviewed two whānau about their experiences working with a Navigator.

There were three key themes that Navigators identified when thinking about how whānau perceived their support;

- 1. Walking alongside whānau** - Navigators believed whānau viewed them as being on their side, supporting them by walking alongside them on their journey. Several Navigators commented that the whānau knew the Navigator had a neutral voice, which they appreciated. Often members in the whānau had conflicting views of what they should do, or how they should move forward and they knew the Navigator would offer a neutral opinion and be a sounding board for the whānau.
- 2. Importance of whānau aspiration** - Navigators believed whānau viewed them as someone who worked toward the whānau's aspirations and didn't impose on them what they thought they should do. Whānau rangatiratanga was very important for the Navigators, and they often reiterated to whānau that whānau were in charge, they made the decisions and had to do the work to make change. Navigators discussed how in the past social workers made decisions for whānau, but a Navigator supported the whānau's dreams and aspirations - they felt the whānau knew they were leading the change.
- 3. Whole of whānau** - Navigators hoped whānau viewed their approach as being inclusive of the whole whānau. This was a unique aspect of their role and quite a departure for the whānau who were used to working within a western model of social workers who worked with individuals. As the quote below describes, Navigators often encouraged whānau to bring others along, or arranged meetings where the whole whānau could come and enjoy the experience, such as at the beach or a playground.

“When I say ‘oh your babies can come’ you know or ‘absolutely your husband can come, this is about you as a whānau, you’re one piece of this whānau puzzle’.... Allowing them to feel okay being a whole whānau unit because I think over time we’ve been segregated and split up into individuals. So I think now the challenge is changing that back around.”

Whānau narratives

The following two narratives have been taken directly from two whānau interviews. The whānau shared their stories with the researchers to demonstrate how their relationship with the Navigators had benefited their lives. Aspects of the case have been changed to protect whānau identity and privacy.

Whānau story 1

Hoani believes everything in life is a privilege but what you do with it is determined by you, and when you need to, get guidance from those trained and specialised in the areas you need. “I know as a Navigator Aroha has made a difference because what makes me feel good is when I can see someone growing. I have, I have grown in the short amount of time that I’ve been here.”

After just four months in the South Island, and with the help of Aroha, Hoani has a home, is clothed and fed and now moving into making furniture. He is originally from the North Island with his dad, Ngāti Pōrou and mum, Ngāti Kahungunu.

“I was always like the black sheep in the family. I was the namesake, I was my Dad’s, that was my Dad’s name - Hoani. And the bottom line to why I believe I went off the rails, for want of a better word, you know is that things just didn’t sit right. Things just didn’t mean anything to me, I didn’t want to know nothing about Māori.” A recovering alcoholic Hoani believes the trouble for Māori is in alcohol.

“My Dad was a chronic alcoholic, excuse me for saying this, but he was. I heard someone say recently that was the culture then. I said no that’s not a culture, that’s not a culture drinking booze, beating up your wives and all that, that ain’t culture. That ain’t Māori culture.” He says instead of adapting to the colonialist ways Māori adopted them. “We adopted their ways, we said oh well we’ll try and be a Pākehā and then you become a puppet.”

Part of his journey down south is to connect with family after his wife passed away. “I feel really sad that there’s people here, been here most of their life and this Māori boy from the North Island comes down here, gets a unit from city council in four months’ time. I was looking for a place, I think that’s what it was eh Aroha? I was looking for accommodation. I don’t know whether I come here straight away or not, it’s still mixed up. I was going around looking at properties and they needed character references so I got straight back in touch with my landlord, and asked for references. So, I give the city council these references and I said yes you can tick them off. I don’t know how it got to happen, I don’t know what led me here but without this woman here, Aroha, I wouldn’t be, it must be wairua that must have led me here, and when I came here she’s done an excellent job.”

He says with a Navigator sitting in a Māori organisation it just happens. “It works. You have to have someone with you when you go into a Government department. I’ve been in and out of that WINZ so many times, this lovely lady Aroha helped me. I got emergency assistance. She came with me to get some quotes because I needed some clothes because I only come down with two sets of clothes. And she came with me and that’s first time, I told Aroha, I said, this is the first time a woman has come in to the shop with me and bought me underpants. Not even my wife did it, I had to do it myself. So, you know it’s far out. It’s just that you’re dealing with WINZ and it’s really frustrating. The last day I was in there was on a Friday and there was a threat put on WINZ and I had to be there, oh what’s going on here. They got the message that someone had a gun and they were going to come in and shoot somebody. But now with WINZ and Aroha’s help, I’m now in the system and now I’m on the cell, I can access it through my cell-phone now.”

“She’s helped me a lot with the quotes, and the emergency housing. We got the run around, I’ve been getting the run around but I knew deep down inside, I had to do it. I had to do this... you can’t keep depending on someone but Aroha and the agency.”

Hoani says he is working on a plan to move forward. “Well I’ve just been established, I’ve got like I mentioned before, about four months, and I got me a place and I’m in there. I understand our Navigator’s job - I picked up - it was too much for one person because when you are helping Māori it’s not just one thing you’re dealing with, it’s all these other things. All those other things because that’s how we are. For it to improve you have to have some form of support network to help with those other areas. It’s about accessing what’s already existing, what’s already there, just enhance these Pākehā things. Say hey man, that didn’t work that well, let me try the other way.”

“A good Navigator is a good listener, a good man. I don’t know since I’ve been here with Aroha, more or less I’ve done all the talking, just like I’m doing now. I’ve never spoken so much in all my blimen life. I’ve more or less done it myself but I’ve sort of just been guided in some areas. I know I’ve changed and Aroha’s helped me. That’s true whakawhanaungatanga.”

Whānau story 2

Terry has overcome many obstacles to carve out a new future with the help of his Navigator Joseph. After losing his home in the earthquake, battling two rounds of cancer and being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease Terry has been dealt some hefty blows. But with the assistance of his Navigator he has been inspired to push on and realise his dreams. Trust and respect form the basis of the pair's bond with the two men achieving a lot together.

Terry says Joseph gives him back up. "He helps me and I help him at the same time you know. It's a good combination because he's got the right attitude, his attitude is a hell of a big thing. Not everybody is like him. Most are so jumped up themselves." He describes Joseph as someone who has the ability to listen and see at the same time. "He has your back. He is able to see that picture - well if you do this and you do this or we can do this."

His wife Caroline recalls when Terry and Joseph first got together. "That's when Joseph came and asked me to fix this korowai and then, just one thing went to another, that's all. I was just absolutely amazed of what he did over the earthquake stuff. I saw a different side of Joe altogether over the earthquake. He's more than a people's person."

Terry is not an engineer but describes himself as having an engineer's mind. A cancer diagnosis saw him lose his business but he started again with his incentive being to rebuild what he had lost. Joseph first came to the whānau post-earthquake, as a Navigator to initiate housing support. Losing their home and Terry's health issues had left Terry with a loss of self-worth. Joseph's support helped Terry stand strong again and gave him back his mana.

After Terry was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, Joseph noticed the shakes of his hand and set out to give him a diversion to work towards. The goal was to set up a carving station in Terry's garage. Joseph carves beside Terry and says he does not shake when he is carving. For more than two years the men have worked together and Terry has progressed from wood carvings to pounamu with a strong eye for accuracy.

Terry acknowledges he doesn't shake when he's working. "When I'm working out there I'm displacing my thoughts. You see what's happening is the messages from this certain part to this hand, you know is intermittent. I can get out there on the exercycle. It's only one hand shaking. It's in this arm because it's a small portion of the brain up here somewhere."

Caroline says Joseph has just got the right attitude. Terry says it takes a certain type of person to be a Navigator. "The majority of people today are too busy, they're just too busy wanting to make a dollar instead of looking at the big picture and saying right this guy's got potential I'm going to help him in any way I can." He says it would be hard to duplicate Joseph because first and foremost you would have to have somebody that has the ability to look at someone and say he will be an asset. "I mean it was him who got me into pounamu. He could make the gear up, I had the gear, I had the bits and pieces and he just put them together. He could put a saw bench, cutting saws, tools, the drip feed is the best thing I've ever seen you know. Joe has helped me to look at what's going to happen next week and what can happen next week. I don't go out now and look at the gutter and think well where's my life going? I want to walk down a riverbank and pick up another piece of wood and say I can do this with that, you know it's another tokutoku."

Caroline says the relationship between Terry and Joseph is very strong, you can see the trust that flows between the two men, their banter for each other, also the respect. Terry speaks very highly of the support Joseph has given him throughout their relationship, the ups and downs of life's hurdles. Terry describes a good Navigator as having good listening skills, good attitude and a good work ethic. The overall impact Joseph has had on Terry has been huge. The relationship and developing of a workshop has enabled Terry to work towards his own goals from inventing tools, wood and pounamu carvings and given him the ability to market and sell his goods at open markets. It has given him a sense of purpose.

For Terry, the relationship with Joseph and a shared activity has had a significant impact on Terry and his whānau. While the original Navigation support was in response to the earthquake, the men developed a strong and enduring relationship which has resulted in improved quality of life and sense of purpose. The time taken by Joseph to listen without judgement, to find an activity that they could do together, to encourage and see the potential in Terry was life changing.

Hoani, while having quite different needs, expressed the same sense of purpose and pride through achieving things for himself with the support of the Navigator. Through his relationship with Aroha he had clearly retained his mana, and was proud of what he had achieved in four short months. Aroha, who clearly listened more than she spoke, was the necessary support that Hoani needed at a time in his life when he had found himself in very difficult circumstances. In a short time Hoani accessed emergency support, got the required paperwork to get into emergency housing, met his personal needs and made a plan for getting employment.

While both cases are quite different, they demonstrate the foundation of whanaungatanga, the importance of listening and supporting whānau aspiration.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the Navigator role from the perspective of two whānau. Navigators describe their role as walking alongside whānau focusing on their strengths and their aspirations to make positive changes. This was evident in the whānau case stories as they described the strengths based approach to supporting whānau to make positive changes for themselves. The relationship between the Navigator and the whānau was clearly the most important enabler for change. It was authentic, ongoing, and as an equal, walking alongside whānau.

Chapter 4: Navigator host agencies

To understand the perspective of the host agencies we interviewed seven host agency representatives, generally the chief executive or manager of the agency.

Relationship between host agencies and Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu holds contracts with over 25 established agencies to employ and manage the Whānau Ora Navigators in the South Island. The model of Navigator administration is essentially a devolution of administration from Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu to the host agency. There are definite benefits in having host agencies employ the Navigators including;

1. decisions are made by those who have the most knowledge about local conditions;
2. relationships with local whānau are mediated through the host agencies;
3. administration resources are managed efficiently;
4. local agencies have more control over referrals and performance of their employees.

However, there are some potential risks to the commissioning agency;

1. there is the potential for host agency goals to override the commissioning agency goals;
2. there is the potential for significant variation in how Navigators operate across the agencies;
3. obtaining data to demonstrate overall change across the Navigators becomes more challenging under a devolved model.

The relationship between Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu and the Navigator host agencies varied depending on the involvement of the agency in the Navigator decision making and geographic region. Host agencies in Christchurch reported having a good relationship with the staff at Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu, and spoke about frequent contact and visits. Those more geographically further from the centre appeared more concerned about communication, uninformed changes and the roles and responsibilities of the host agent and the commissioning agency.

The interview data indicates there is some tension in the devolved model as host agencies express their concern that the commissioning agency is 'overstepping their boundaries'. While there was significant positive commentary regarding the people at Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu and their intent, there was also a clear signal the host agencies are the employer and therefore should have the primary management role with their Navigators.

"I've been pushing back a little bit against Te Pūtahitanga in this because there's a few things, and I know everyone's just feeling their way a little bit and things like that, but they're coming in trying to direct our Navigators how to work and I'm like they work for us not for you guys".

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu has a responsibility to ensure the Navigator workforce is consistent in its approach and achieving the outcomes set down by the Government. To do this, they need to develop systems and procedures that exist for all Navigators regardless of their employer. The evidence from the host agencies suggests that while they are aware of the need for consistency, they are concerned about the impact on their individual Navigators and agency. On the one hand, they want to be included in decision making and have their Navigators included, on the other they are cognisant that time away from their core work increases Navigator stress and reduces the impact for whānau.

The Navigator provision in Te Waipounamu has grown rapidly and the infrastructure has had to grow alongside the workforce. This has caused tension for some of the host agencies as they described being done to, instead of participating in the development and change. The development of the workbook and reporting systems appears to have caused host agencies the most concern.

“Some of my Navigators are coming to me and saying we need to do digital stories right now and I said, no you don’t. They said, yes we do, we just went to this hui and we were told we need to do these digital stories.” ... It’s not in our contract so there’s all these things that haven’t been thought through that need to be thought through before you put a framework in place. If they’re sitting with the entities they need to sit with the entities. As I was saying earlier the opportunities for hui and training are all really, really great but stop changing things around and trying to tell my Navigators how to work because they feel conflicted that Te Pūtahitanga is telling them one thing and here I am telling them another. I’m telling them no digital stories and they’re told they need do digital stories”.

The complexity of the relationship between the commissioning agency, the host agencies and the individual Navigators is an interesting dynamic that causes some tension in the model. Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu must hold relationships with the agencies, but also create and maintain a network of Navigators across Te Waipounamu. Host agencies want to maintain their own organisational approach, look after the welfare of their Navigators and make independent decisions about how they manage their resources. It may be necessary to create a shared understanding across the host agencies and Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu about the roles and responsibilities each organisation has under the model. While this may be evident in contractual arrangements, there is an opportunity to develop a shared understanding of what this relationship looks like.

The biggest challenge for Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu appears to be achieving the balance of including the host agencies in decision making, while not drawing too heavily on their time and resources, and ensuring the process is nimble enough so the model can continually improve.

Demonstrating Whānau Ora outcomes

A common recurring theme was the concern the reporting system was not capturing the outcomes for whānau. Several of the agencies described cases in which whānau had made significant changes to their own lives and the lives of their extended whānau. The challenge the agencies noted, is recording the outcomes in a way that demonstrated the impact this had on the lives of the whānau involved. The preferred way of demonstrating change was to produce case stories for whānau rather than fill in the workbook required by Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu.

There is also concern around the required level of information about whānau and what is happening to the data. As the quote below demonstrates this is not exclusive to Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu, clearly the pressure from other Government agencies to produce data impacts upon the host agencies.

“Over the last few months there’s been a little bit of a thing from me about reporting. I’ve got Navigators sitting down here crying because these reporting templates are a nightmare. And it shouldn’t be like that. Why do you want this information? why do you want this level of information? where is it going? let’s understand that bit so I can tell my Navigators okay if you put this down here this is what’s happening to it. This is why it needs to go in there. I said, “they’re bloody flat out for three months and then all of a sudden, bang they’ve got fill all these bloody forms out.”. There’s the worksheets and there’s the Excel worksheets and it’s just crazy because we’ve got health reports and we’ve got MSD. Te Pūtahitanga, you know and it shouldn’t be like that.”

Reporting to Government about the impact of Navigation is the responsibility of Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu. The extent to which they can control the Government’s expectation of data needs to be communicated to the host agencies. It appears the reasons for collecting some information and completing the templates is not fully understood by all the host agencies. As a relatively new organisation, Te Pūtahitanga of Te Waipounamu is still

developing the reporting and measurement systems, this clearly has an impact on the host agencies. There were frequent reports in the interview data about the changes in reporting and templates and the impact this has on the agency and the Navigators.

One agency discussed how reporting was very short term and there was an opportunity to understand more about the impact Navigators had over the long term. They discussed how short-term change did not lead to self-determination, which was the goal of Whānau Ora, and the real evidence of outcomes would be seen long term. The point made by the agency demonstrates how important long term sustainable change is to the Navigator approach.

“To have researchers like yourself and others, who can go out and do the research and say okay so we’ve got these fifty whānau across Te Waipounamu we want to know – five years down the track what do they want to be doing. What do we want that to look like? If at this stage this is what they’re doing, they’re engaging with whānau, facilitating hui with whānau, helping whānau to establish their dreams and aspirations ... so, what does that look like five years out.”

Agency practices consistent with Whānau Ora

A shared commentary amongst the host agencies was the desire to ensure Whānau Ora and the legacy of Dame Tariana Turia was upheld by all those involved. Some of the managers in the agencies described how they were determined to ensure the Whānau Ora philosophy was evident in their workplace, that they walked the talk and cared for one another.

“The approach with the whānau, we’ve tried to do that in our tari (office) as well, so we work in that way and walk the talk, in here with each other ... I’ve made that quite clear to everybody. In here it’s whānau first and work second. If your whānau are unhappy, you stay at home, you don’t come to work because you’re no good to me. I know what that’s like if my whānau’s (unhappy), so we’ve tried to adopt that kaupapa in here, to be good to each other. To listen to each other, to support each other, all that sort of stuff. It doesn’t always happen like that but I think most of the time it does.”

There was agreement that the Navigator role can be emotionally challenging. Working with whānau who were in crisis, or in difficult situations, could be frustrating and upsetting for Navigators. All the agencies valued supervision and thought it was important that Navigators had regular supervision. In the smaller communities, whānau were often known to Navigators, some managers commented this could make the work more challenging and stressful.

The network of Navigators and Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu Navigator leadership is seen as a strength by host agencies. The host agencies were aware there was significant skill and support from within the Navigator community and appreciated how Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu was developing the network.

“Our Navigator got quite lonely over the years being the only person and the focal point for the community out there. But now that we’ve got a ring of Navigators and what Te Pūtahitanga does in bringing them together has worked really, really well. The resourcing, the backup, the seminars, all that is exceptional.”

Referral and numbers

Referrals to Navigators appeared to come through other agencies and relationships from within the host agencies. In smaller communities, the managers noted most referrals came through word of mouth and connections within their own community. This reinforces the importance of having host agencies that are connected to their community and hosting

Navigators with agencies which reside within smaller communities. In larger cities, the referrals appeared to come through a variety of channels including other agencies, whānau referring whānau and marae.

“Equally important is knowing your community, where there is a need, because by word of mouth it’s a big issue to get the community to refer and tell us where there’s an identifiable need. There’s nothing magic about it at all, it’s just hard work, you need to be persistent.”

The managers reported the Navigators worked with approximately 20 whānau, however the actual load varied across the host agencies. In some cases, this was due to the managers not limiting the number of whānau they worked with others because of the nature of the work.

“They put a target in there, each Navigator should work up to a maximum of 20 whānau. I don’t abide by that, maybe the only one in town who doesn’t abide by it because if our Navigators have the capacity to work with 30 or 40 then they do. Because some of the whānau might only have four or five people to work with, but they’re real hard families to work with, so they shouldn’t have 20 or 30 hard families. And once they’ve put that family at rest, brought them into a comfort zone, they should be able to increase their capacity again. But if you can handle 20 or 30, you handle 20 or 30, you don’t say I’ve reached my target now so I’m stopping. You don’t do that. And that’s what many of the groups do, they have a target of 20 and that’s it, I’ve reached my target, no, there is no target. Where there’s an identifiable need and some of our Navigators have only got 12 or 10 that’s heaps because they’re hard basket ones. Not everyone has the same issues.”

There is a significant variation in the type of support Navigators provide to whānau. For some, the support is connecting whānau with other services such as counselling or benefit support, however other whānau required significant ongoing support. This can influence how Navigators report on their whānau and the numbers they are engaged with.

“We used to send in reports that would show in the last quarter we’ve worked with 85 whānau and that’s when they were trickling back with comments like, “but 35 of those are just for one off kind of things or little things”. And we’re going but it’s still time and energy and resource and commitment.”

There is consensus across the host agencies that the workload of a Navigator is highly dependent on the whānau and the needs they have. One manager estimated about “75% of people who choose to engage with (a Navigator in their agency) are in a state of crisis.” Indicating most of the workload of a Navigator appears to be with whānau who are under significant stress. This is consistent with the Navigator’s descriptions of their role and their workload. One agency manager commented that they wanted to ensure their Navigators also worked with whānau who may not be in crisis but want “to move their whānau forward and don’t quite know how to do that.” There is evidence in the case stories from the Navigators that these whānau are often highly motivated and can make significant change in a short period of time.

One agency expressed concern about the number of Navigators within the region and the amount of work available. While there may be a planned approach to the provision of Navigators the agency was not aware of this. They felt their Navigator may be compromised as there were more and more Navigators without consideration of the local needs.

“What could be done better is the bigger picture could be made clearer. Where is all this going? You know is there a cap on the number of Navigators they’re looking at or is it based on coverage? I’d like to know what the end goal is here for it. We could be saturated with Navigators who then don’t have any clients because there’s too many of them. You know where is that? Has there been any research done into that saturation point and how many we really do need out there or is it just whoever asks for it or shows a need for it?”

Support for the staff at Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu

The host agencies we interviewed were very complimentary of the staff at Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu and felt they were working hard to realise the intentions of Whānau Ora. The addition of new staff in the Navigator leadership team was identified as a positive move, communication had improved and agencies felt follow up was more consistent. The Navigator coordinator was described as very supportive and consistent and responsive to the needs of the agencies. The leadership at Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu was noted as being a figure head for Whānau Ora, ensuring the messages to the community about Whānau Ora were consistently clear and strengths based. In general, host agencies described the staff at Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu as hard working and were appreciative of their support.

“Communication is key and I think they’re already well on the way now ... we do have someone we feel really cares and really responds well to requests, you know support, if we need a question answered. Communication is the key here and (they are) able to give us that confidence in the organisation.”

The relationship between the staff at Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu and the host agencies is clearly positive despite some of the tensions that exist within the Navigator model. The increase in Navigator staff at the commissioning agency has improved communication and responsiveness. It is apparent the tensions that exist are generally high-level issues such as reporting and provision of Navigators rather than personalised tensions.

Conclusion

The host agencies described some of the challenges they experienced in the Navigator model. Agencies that were located further from Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu appeared to be more concerned about communication, uninformed changes and the roles and responsibilities of the host agent and the commissioning agency. The host agencies were very positive about the increased capability at Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu and the resulting support for their Navigators including networking, more frequent contact and improved communication. The relationships between the host agency staff and the staff at Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu is positive and provides a foundation to work through some of the tensions that exist in a devolved model.

Chapter 5:
Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu
support for Navigation

The research sought to understand how Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu, as the commissioning agency, can support the Navigators within Te Waipounamu.

Whānau Ora philosophy

There was general agreement that the commissioning agency was very supportive of the Navigators and operated consistently with the philosophy of Whānau Ora. The Navigators reported they felt the work they did was valued by the commissioning agency.

“Te Pūtahitanga is full of positive affirmation and they look after us.”

The leadership staff at the commissioning agency were highly valued by the Navigators. The increase in leadership has meant communication and support has improved. The Navigators feel they can call on the coordinator or manukura and they will respond. The recent developments of regular hui, a Navigator network and communication platform have improved the communication and sharing between Navigators.

“The coordinator, he’s always on the end of the phone. If he doesn’t take your call he will flick you a text ‘will call you back I’m just in a hui’ and he always does. The essential connection with your leadership is really important because that’s your backbone.”

In general, most of the Navigators reported having a positive relationship with the commissioning agency staff. However, a couple of Navigators noted the leadership positions that were established were not advertised. Some of the more experienced Navigators felt they had been excluded, which was inconsistent with Whānau Ora philosophy.

“The manukura, they put in these jobs, I didn’t even see it advertised. I might have actually applied for it. But I didn’t even see it advertised and so how do they choose who’s going to go into those jobs if they don’t throw the net wide ... Very disappointing and I’ve been here for a long time and that’s what I found, they don’t do Whānau Ora. They have these big things here, that’s lovely, but there needs to be something that is connecting the dots. There’s no whanaungatanga for us to be able to be included. It’s really exclusive.”

While this was not a strong theme in the data these actions created a feeling of ‘them and us’ for some Navigators. There is an opportunity in the future to consider how to include Navigators in decision making, and ensure opportunities within the commissioning agency are open to all Navigators.

Outcome measurement

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu, as the commissioning agency, plays a role in collecting data across the Navigator network. Most Navigators understand the importance of collecting data and demonstrating the impact they are having, but found it difficult to use the tools provided for them. There is consensus among the Navigators that the work they do is valuable and they want to demonstrate the impact this is having for whānau but the tools they have been using do not capture the work they do.

The workbook has been challenging to adopt and is not always as efficient as the Navigators had hoped. It has been difficult to enter data and Navigators are confused about some of the measures. The training was challenging for many of the Navigators as they did not have a background in measuring outcomes or using spreadsheets. The whānau surveys used to collect data raised an issue. Navigators do not always agree with the wording in the survey and would like the survey to be more whānau friendly. The survey asks personal questions about income and emotional wellbeing, which Navigators believe are not always relevant to the work they are doing with the whānau.

“It’s questions that you probably wouldn’t normally ask in a conversation. Like what’s your income bracket? and you know questions like that. I was just amazed by the questions they wanted asked. I don’t want to ask my whānau that. .. That’s a question, what paid employment are you receiving? What non-employment are you doing? There was that and emotions, are you withdrawn from the community?”

The Navigators reported they would like some way of representing the small changes whānau make that have a significant impact on their wellbeing. There was agreement the reporting process doesn’t fully capture the work the Navigators do in the transformation of whānau. As this Navigator described, what may seem like an insignificant change is actually very significant in the life of whānau.

“Little things, like the small things just advancing, like when you first meet her and she’s in her pyjamas and won’t go out, to going out for coffee, how do you write that? The transformation’s huge. Writing it doesn’t do it justice. We went out for a coffee and your kind of like, great work. But what it means to that person, for me sometimes I think, oh it’s nothing, but for that person it is huge, it’s the start of a life.”

Many of whānau the Navigators work with are dealing with trauma and crisis. It is difficult to demonstrate effectively how small changes are big steps toward self-determination for whānau. Navigators report that because whānau are under significant pressure filling out surveys and forms can be very stressful, whānau often express concern about what will happen with the information. There appears to be a genuine distrust and suspicion by whānau about what will happen with their data. Given that many of them have very negative experiences dealing with the state this is perhaps a natural response to years of dealing with deficit focused services.

Navigators want to demonstrate the impact they are having with whānau but are aware it is difficult to measure the complexity of the journey whānau are taking. Several Navigators noted they felt the measurement system was imposed on them and they would like to be a part of developing the systems and tools.

“So back to tools ... (I’ve got) Heaps of ideas but you know what, to get those ideas you’ve got to do what you guys are doing. Go to the Navigators because we know where all the gaps are.”

The Navigators noted that Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu is constantly improving. While this caused challenges for some Navigators as changes to systems and monitoring occurred, most Navigators noted that these changes were always an improvement and made things easier for the Navigators.

“Te Pūtahitanga is always working on things to improve and to make it easier. You know just recently with the new reporting that we do, we do our own reports and they put the survey into the reporting to Te Pūtahitanga. We used to send it to the manager before, but now we do our own reporting, our own surveying, and all in the plan data.”

There has been significant development of the outcomes monitoring by Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu over the last couple of years but representing the complex activities of the Navigators, and the progress whānau make, is challenging. Including the Navigators in tool development and keeping them informed about developments will ensure there is more buy in from the Navigators.

Opportunities for induction and further learning

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu has provided training for Navigators, notably in results based accountability and pathway planning. The pathway planning appears to be well entrenched in the work of the Navigators. There is interest in further strengths based learning opportunities such as Māori motivational interviewing. There does not appear to be a plan for learning for each of the Navigators.

“The Navigators need a professional development plan from their organisations ... if you don’t understand the Whānau Ora approach you won’t be doing your job properly. You need to break all the colonised rubbish and just trust yourself, trust your heart, trust your tummy.”

The data indicates there is an opportunity to support Navigator induction. Navigators noted the first months of the job were challenging as they sought to understand their role, adopt new systems and in some cases, ‘decolonise’ from their previous roles that were problem focused. There may be a role for more experienced Navigators to mentor new Navigators through an induction phase.

There is also an opportunity to create formalised learning pathways for Navigators. Recognition of prior learning and work based learning options (see CAPABLE NZ), that allow Navigators to create their own learning plans situated in their work, would be preferable to course work (such as social work) which could inadvertently influence the role of Navigator. The production of Navigator knowledge through this process may contribute to the development of the ‘Māori Navigator’ approach, which was mentioned in the interview data.

The high turnover of Navigators may, in part, be due to the lack of a progression framework, or opportunity to learn or gain further qualifications in the role. In the future, Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu should investigate how to create a Navigator pathway, or progression system, to support skilled Navigators to stay in their roles.

Relationships between commissioning agency, host agencies and Navigators

The complexity of the relationship between the commissioning agency, the host agencies and the individual Navigators is an interesting dynamic. Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu must hold relationships with the agency, but also create and maintain a network of Navigators across Te Waipounamu. The Navigators report significant variations in the employment conditions depending on who the host is. This is problematic for the network and potentially risky for Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu.

The tension between host agencies and the commissioning agency are high level and centred around administration of reporting, the provision of Navigators and the balance between collaboration and time and resource rationalisation. For some Navigators, it was apparent they were unaware of who should be responsible for aspects of their role, such as appraisal. This needs to be clearly stated to ensure the hosts are appraising and the commissioning agency is aware this is being carried out.

“I don’t have any kind of, you know, performance appraisal, nothing about who I am, how I’m doing ... I don’t like the systemic approach but there are some pieces in the system that we could adopt to make our jobs better.”

Despite these tensions there appears to be very positive relationships amongst the Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu staff, the Navigators and the host agency staff. There is shared goodwill and passion for Whānau Ora is evident in the data that appears to bind everyone involved in Navigation together. A common understanding about the approach is shared, Navigation is a process of whanaungatanga, whānau led and strengths based. This Navigator expressed what many of the participants in this research stated, that they loved their work.

“I feel honoured and humble to be part of this initiative. Yep it’s great, I love it. I don’t think I could love my job any more than I do.”

Conclusion

There are a several opportunities for Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu to continue to strengthen the Navigator network in Te Waipounamu. There is an opportunity to include Navigators and host agency staff in tool development and improve communication around continuous improvement. Navigator induction is a priority for many of the Navigators as they reported challenges understanding their role and decolonising their approach. There is an opportunity to investigate Navigator pathways and progression to encourage skilled Navigators to remain in their roles. Finally, the relationships between the staff in the commissioning agency, the host agency and Navigators appear to be strong despite the tensions that exist structurally in the model. There is a shared understanding and passion for Navigation and Whānau Ora, which appears to be the foundation of strong working relationships.

Chapter 6: Lessons learned and recommendations

This chapter examines what we have learned about Whānau Ora Navigation in the South Island in relation to what is already known, and provides a series of recommendations based on the evidence.

Understanding the Navigator role

As the Whānau Ora Navigator role is relatively new, research on the role is still developing. However, in a kaupapa Māori action research project Baker, Pipi and Cassidy (2015) found the way in which the Navigator invested in relationships with whānau led to whānau transformation; that is, successful whānau who are working together and using the resources available to them. Further, the action research highlighted the important role of the Navigator in building quality relationships with whānau, and recognised that Navigators provided an important gateway for whānau to access services. This is consistent with the findings of this research which demonstrates whanaungatanga is the foundation of approach, developing a side by side relationship with the Navigator walking alongside whānau. During the action research process, Baker et al identified that Navigators found regular facilitated reflective discussions in hui to be valuable. This supports findings that the best approach to support Navigator practice is to develop a Navigator model of reflection and learning.

In 2014, Gifford and Boulton, identified Navigators are a key part of Whānau Ora and are more likely than other staff to work with whānau who present with complex and multiple issues and are often in crisis. The research identified the importance of getting the right person for the Navigator role. Consistent with this research the key components of a successful Navigator were identified as having strong relationship skills and whakapapa (kinship) connections as well as local knowledge of the community and available services. In this research, Navigators valued life experience, the ability to be reflective, communicating clearly with whānau by listening first, holding personal values consistent with the role and cultural knowledge that enabled them to operate in a way that was consistent with tikanga.

Gifford and Boulton (2014) identified that the Navigator role appears to be the key “driver of change” across provider collectives, sectors and regions. They described the Navigator role as;

- supporting whānau through crises and matching needs with appropriate services;
- assisting whānau to develop a plan with realistic and aspirational goals;
- brokering services and negotiating with organisations and agencies to ensure the most appropriate response to meet broader whānau needs;
- reinforcing the need for organisations to work together on addressing whānau needs in an inter-sectoral way rather than separately responding to each issue in isolation (working towards a holistic approach);
- helping whānau to develop a step-by-step approach to achieving their goals; and
- working towards developing a level of support for the required amount of time that allows whānau to take ownership of their responsibilities to achieve (pg. 14).

The case studies from this research confirmed the relationship between the whānau and the Navigator is the key driver of change. In all the case studies, the change was initiated by the whānau but the relationship between the Navigator and the whānau drove the change to occur. Trust was the key element identified by the Navigator and whānau. It appears that not having to work within a prescribed framework, boundaries or to be compromised by a western approach enabled Navigators to be responsive to whānau needs, to consistently follow up with whānau and work in a natural way.

Implementation of Navigation is consistent with the vision of Whānau Ora

The research indicates the implementation of the Navigators across Te Waipounamu is consistent with the Whānau Ora Taskforce's intentions in 2010. The taskforce identified five characteristics that gave definition and distinctiveness to Whānau Ora (Taskforce on Whānau-centred initiatives, 2010, p 30) these being;

- Recognised a collective entity (the whānau);
- Endorses a group capacity for self-determination;
- Has an inter-generational dynamic;
- Is built on a Māori cultural foundation;
- Asserts a positive role for whānau within society which can be applied across a range of social and economic sectors. (p18)

These characteristics are evident throughout this research. The Navigators in their approach to walking alongside the whole whānau toward self-determination is consistent with the vision articulated by the Taskforce. In 2015, Baker, Pipi and Cassidy noted there was a divide between the Whānau Ora Taskforce intention and how this could be enacted by Te Puni Kōkiri and the Collective. Bridging this divide required an understanding of the policy and provider environment and of grassroots whānau realities. This research indicated there appears to be a tension in the Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu model that exists particularly around measuring outcomes.

The Productivity Commission wrote that whanaungatanga is central to the Whānau Ora model, and further work needs to be undertaken to understanding whanaungatanga as social capital for whānau. They identified the potential to gain a better understanding of the specific benefits achieved for whānau through a reliance on whanaungatanga (p. 13). This research demonstrates that whanaungatanga is the change maker. The foundation of the Navigation work is through the relationship that exists between the Navigator and the whānau.

The complexity of a new organisation

It is important to note this research occurred three years into the life of Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu as a commissioning agency. When Whānau Ora was implemented the complexity inherent in the Whānau Ora framework (that is, being at once a philosophy, a model of practice and an outcome) was expected to result in an equally complex set of Whānau Ora arrangements across New Zealand, as health and social service providers re-shuffle and re-structure their practice, processes and systems to better respond to, and meet, the aims of the framework, and in particular, the requirement to demonstrate the achievement of Whānau Ora outcomes (Gifford, & Boulton, 2104). Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu, has had to establish systems and structures to run a commissioning pipeline and a network of Navigators across Te Waipounamu in a very short time. Developing an organisational structure that is lean and that can operate a complex system of administration and measurement in a very short period of time is a process of continual improvement. This focus on continual improvement was noted by the Navigators as a positive aspect of the organisation, but also has a consequence that the environment is constantly changing as the systems evolve.

While there are some tensions evident in the model, there is significant goodwill and an investment in relationships that have been built over time. The increased provision of Navigator leadership staff by the commissioning organisation has been noted by the Navigators and the host agencies as improving communications and capability. There is evidence the systems and structure need to continue to evolve, particularly the outcomes measurement, so it is likely change will continue.

The challenges of measuring the impact of Navigation

The challenges expressed in this research, capturing the impact of the Navigators and the outcomes for whānau, were anticipated by the Whānau Ora Taskforce Report in 2010. The taskforce expected Māori health and social service providers will be subject 'to a critical and unrelenting gaze from a number of stakeholders: official's eager to see a return on the budgetary "investment"; policymakers impatient for improvements in "Whānau Ora outcomes"; and whānau and community who ultimately seek a better life for themselves and their children'. Developing a measurement framework that would satisfy both central government, iwi, community and whānau has been a major challenge for all Whānau Ora agencies.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu has been charged with developing a performance monitoring system that will meet the demands of the Government, the iwi governance board, the host agencies, the Navigators and the whānau they are working alongside. The challenge of measuring complex social change, particularly in a way that is consistent with a Māori worldview, should not be underestimated. While change is disruptive to the Navigators, and difficult for the host agencies to manage, it is also a natural consequence of receiving significant Government investment, under the management of the nine iwi.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu is currently mediating the chasm between what is practical and achievable for Navigators while sufficiently complex to satisfy Government expectation. Developing measures, tools and frameworks which have the clarity and complexity required is likely to continue to be a challenge. Including host agencies and Navigators in the continual improvement of performance management systems, while beneficial, must be prudent so as not to overly inundate hosts and Navigators with the demands of collaboration.

Recommendations

There are four recommendations.

1. Create a foundation of reflective learning

The data indicates that everyone appreciates the freedom to work without the boundaries of a practice structure or framework. It has enabled Navigators to decolonise the way they work and free themselves from the restriction of western models. Navigators need to be learners who can reflect on their actions and be aware of their own personal issues and biases, and how this impacts on their decisions and relationships with whānau. Creating an approach that is grounded in reflection and learning will keep Navigators safe, promote a way of working that is transparent and ethical and ensure Navigators are aware of themselves, their strengths and limitations.

2. Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu support for the Navigator network

This research indicated the support provided to the Navigators by Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu is valued by the Navigators. There has been significant effort invested into building a Navigator network, building capability and improving communication. There is an opportunity to focus on;

Induction - A standard induction for Navigators needs to be developed by Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu. The network of Navigators and manukura are the primary source of support for Navigators, there is an opportunity to create a period of supported induction for new Navigators.

Investigating qualifications and recognition - There is a desire to learn across the Navigator network, and the potential for Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu to investigate a Navigator pathway, or progression system, to encourage skilled Navigators to stay in their role.

3. Developing a whānau outcome progression framework

There are challenges measuring the impact of Navigators for whānau. The current reporting is creating tension between the commissioning agency, the host agencies and the Navigators. Measuring outcomes is a requirement of receiving funding, and necessary to demonstrate transparency and impact for government investment. Evolving the reporting system will need to consider that:

- **Navigation is whānau driven** - Navigators don't control outcomes and creating a system that ties Navigators into delivering pre-determined outcomes is contrary to the Whānau Ora approach. Whānau need to be able to decide on their own goals and reset them as they need to. Any system will need to be fluid and flexible.
- **Progress is relative to where whānau are starting from** - The outcomes need to be able to capture progress and acknowledge that all steps forward are significant. Small steps are part of the journey to larger goals and aspirations.
- **User interface and language needs to be accessible** - The current system appears to be challenging for Navigators to access and use. Developing a system that has a user-friendly interface and language that is accessible is important.
- **The system should support change for whānau** - This research indicates whānau are suspicious of what is happening with their data. Developing a system that protects whānau identity is crucial and ensuring the data will not be misused is important. Communicating the purpose of the data collection to Navigators and host agencies may need to be revisited to ensure there is a shared responsibility for providing data.
- **Host agencies need to be included in measurement** - Host agencies expressed concern over the impact of the reporting system and that they were not informed of changes. Involving host agencies in the development of an outcomes measurement framework is important. However, as many agencies are running very lean organisations the tension between collaboration and resource availability should be carefully considered.

4. Strengthening relationships with host agencies

The devolved nature of Navigator provision in Te Waipounamu can cause tensions between some of the host agencies and the commissioning agency. Improving role clarity, communication and contractual arrangements will reduce the likelihood of friction. The research indicates the variability amongst host agencies needs to be addressed, particularly with the inequity in employment conditions for Navigators and the resources they have to do their job, as this has the potential to destabilise the network. The challenges Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu faces collecting and analysing data for central Government needs to be understood by the agencies to ensure providing evidence of outcome is a shared responsibility.

Conclusion

The purpose of the research was to review the current approach of the Navigators and understand the impact, and inform the future development of Navigation across Te Waipounamu. For this reason, the research questions were designed to build knowledge which in turn will support the development of the Navigator role. Twenty-Seven Navigators from across Te Waipounamu were invited to participate in the research, seven chief executives or managers from Navigator host agencies were interviewed and two whānau were interviewed to gain an understanding of the role from their perspective. The data was analysed using NVivo and coded using inductive sorting.

Navigators describe their role as walking alongside whānau, the work is led by whānau with their dreams and aspirations leading the way. The freedom to respond to whānau in a way that is not constrained by western constructs of support allows the Navigators to work in more naturalistic ways, alongside whānau - not across the table. Whanaungatanga is the foundation of the approach and Navigators appreciate the time and space they are given to ensure trust and connection is established.

Navigators identified a variety of challenges they faced in their role, including their safety, challenges with whānau who had addiction and anger issues, Government agencies, schools and employment related concerns. Similarly, the identified enablers included support of the marae and other Navigators, job satisfaction, leadership and the network.

This research was driven by three research questions.

Firstly, What impact are the Whānau Ora Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu Navigators having for whānau?

There is evidence the Navigators are having a significant impact in Te Waipounamu, particularly for whānau who have complex needs. The outcomes are driven by whānau aspirations, while the aspirations may be long term, the whānau identify short term goals resulting in immediate outcomes. Case narratives demonstrate how whānau with support from a Navigator made positive progress by taking small steps toward a larger goal. Analysis of the cases described by the Navigators indicated many of the whānau were experiencing challenges that required them to focus on their immediate needs.

Secondly, How do whānau perceive and experience Navigation?

Two case stories constructed from the voice of whānau described two quite different experiences of Navigation. In the case stories whānau described the strengths based approach taken to supporting them to making positive changes for themselves. The relationship between the Navigator and the whānau was clearly the most important enabler for change. It was authentic, ongoing and as an equal. The case stories indicate there is consistency between how Navigators view their support and how these whānau experience the support.

Thirdly, How can Te Pūtahitanga support the Navigator network in Te Waipounamu?

There are a several opportunities for Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu to continue to strengthen the Navigator network in Te Waipounamu. Including Navigators and host agency staff in tool development and improving communication around continuous improvement, introducing Navigator induction and investigating Navigator pathways and progression will strengthen the network. The research indicates there are strong relationships, a shared passion for Whānau Ora and Navigation and significant goodwill that will enable continuous improvement.

There are four recommendations to continually improve the Navigator network; creating a foundation of reflective learning, introducing an induction process, investigating qualifications and recognition, developing a whānau outcome progression framework and strengthening relationships with host agencies.

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