

Keynote Address: Barriers and incentives to Māori participation in the profession of psychology

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Tena ra koutou katoa

Ko Taupiri te maunga

Ko Waikato te awa

Ko Taupiri to marae

Ko Ngāti Mahuta te iwi. Waikato taniwha rau. He piko he taniwha, he piko he taniwha.

Ko Michelle Levy toku ingoa

No te hau kainga nei.

Nga mihi mahana ki a koutou

Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena ra koutou katoa.

It is well known that Māori are over-represented within the client group of psychologists. Despite ongoing attempts to recruit and retain more Māori within the discipline of psychology, the numbers of Māori psychologists continues to remain low, raising serious concerns about the ability of the profession to effectively meet the needs of its clientele.

The New Zealand Psychologists' Registration Board, in recognising the Treaty principles of partnership, participation, and protection, has identified as significant issues for psychology in New Zealand: the under-representation of Māori in the psychology workforce, and the under-representation of Māori amongst registered psychologists. The Board considers that the development of Māori within the psychology workforce (both clinical and non-clinical) is a priority. In April 2002, the Psychologists' Board, commissioned Michelle Levy* from the Māori and Psychology Research Unit, University of Waikato, to report on the barriers and incentives for Māori participation in the profession of psychology.

The objectives of this study were to identify the, barriers to, and incentives for:

- Improving the recruitment and retention of Māori in the profession of psychology
- Māori to gain and maintain registration as psychologists

The aim was to provide the New Zealand Psychologists' Board with recommendations that the Board would be able to pursue: in order to promote and enhance Māori participation in the profession of psychology. The study included a review of past literature and key informant interviews with 17 Māori psychologists, including clinical and non-clinical, registered and non-registered, practitioners and academics. This paper is based on the full report provided to the New Zealand Psychologists' Board.

Low Māori Participation: How Low is Low?

Health Sector

The health sector, and specifically the mental health sector, is a major employer of psychologists in New Zealand. Statistics from the 2000 Health Workforce Survey (New Zealand Health Information Service, 2000) show that, of the 667 registered psychologists who completed the survey, 1.35% were Māori. Data from an analysis undertaken by Te Puni Kōkiri in 1996

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indicate some alarmingly negative trends for Māori with respect to mental health. For example, Māori admissions to psychiatric hospitals in 1993 were almost twice those of non-Māori, and Māori rates of readmission were nearly two times higher than readmission rates for Pākehā and three times higher than readmission rates for Pacific Islanders (Te Puni Kōkiri, 1996).

Education Sector

Psychologists are a component of the newly formed Ministry of Education, Group Special Education (GSE), previously known as Specialist Education Services (SES). Group Special Education: contributes to the development and evaluation of policy; provides information to families, whānau and educators; assesses eligibility for services; and, with a specific focus on the provision of services to children and young people with special education needs, supports the development of knowledge and skills to ensure children and young people are supported to reach their potential (Group Special Education, 2002). On the 31st August 2001, SES (now GSE) employed 155 psychologists. Of these, 4% (6) identified as Māori (Ministry of Education, Personal Communication, 31 August, 2001).

Justice Sector

The justice sector, specifically the Department of Corrections and the Department for Courts, is also an employer of psychologists. The Psychological Service of the Department of Corrections, on the 21st May 2002, employed a total of 58 psychologists, of which one identified as Māori (Department of Corrections, Personal Communication, 21 May, 2002). At the same time, the Family Court had 132 court approved psychologists, who write specialist reports for the Family Court. At the time of writing, the Family Court was unable to provide an ethnic breakdown of those psychologists. The justice and corrections sector is of particular relevance to Māori, given that in 1997 Māori comprised 49.4% of the total inmate population, while representing 12% of New Zealand's population (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2000).

Welfare Sector

The Department of Child, Youth and Family Services (CYFS) has primary responsibility for children and young people who are at risk of being abused, neglected or are offending. On the 30th April 2002, the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services reported that they employed a total of 18.33 psychologists. Of these, 0.8 were Māori (that is, participation by Māori psychologists did not equate to one full time equivalent position) (Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, Personal Communication, 30 April, 2002).

The client base of CYFS has a high representation of Māori compared with non-Māori. Whereas Māori children and young people comprise 24% of children less than 17 years of age, they represent 45% of CYFS clients assessed as abused (Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, 2000). Māori children and young people also comprise 49% of those provided with youth social work services, 46% of those provided with care and protection family group conferences, and 52% of those provided with youth justice family group conferences (Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, 2000).

Academic Sector

On August 1st 2002 there was only one Māori full time continuing academic staff member in a psychology department in New Zealand. In addition to this it was estimated that there were five Māori who are on academic staff in psychology departments, either in fixed term, part time, or senior tutor positions.

Membership of professional organisations

The memberships of professional psychology organisations also provide information relevant to Māori participation in psychology. Requests for information relating to a breakdown of membership by ethnicity were made of the New Zealand Psychological Society, the New Zealand Psychologists' Board, and the New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists. On the 13th August 2002 the New Zealand Psychological Society reported that of a total 706 members, 16 identified as Māori: the New Zealand Psychologists Board does

not record ethnicity data, nor does the New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists' (New Zealand Psychological Society, Personal Communication, 13 August, 2002).

Barriers to Māori Participation in Psychology

The barriers to Māori participation in psychology are well identified, both in the current and previous studies. Arguably the factor which has received the most attention is psychology's reliance on western paradigms and the active resistance to the meaningful incorporation of Māori focused concepts and paradigms. Further barriers include: a lack of Māori involvement in the training of psychologists, resulting in a lack of mentors and role models for Māori; isolation, and unrealistic and competing demands which are placed on Māori psychologists; a perceived lack of relevance of psychological concepts to the realities of Māori; and a lack of commitment to issues of relevance to Māori by those actively involved in psychology, for example, by psychology departments and professional psychology organisations.

Attempts have been made to address these barriers, for example: in the development of Māori focused psychologies; research and networks; initiatives aimed at supporting Māori students through psychology training; and recognition of these issues within professional psychology organisations. However, the literature reviewed suggests that the limited developments which have occurred appear to be as a result of the sustained efforts of a few, both Māori and non-Māori, as opposed to the collective effort of the discipline as a whole.

As stated above, the barriers to Māori participation in psychology are well identified. However, what has not been highlighted before is the central importance of the relationships which exist between the barriers and the tensions characterising those relationships. It is very clear that the barriers are closely related, with each impacting on the other. Attempting to address the barriers in isolation and independently of one another, as has been done in the past (for example, increasing the support provided to Māori students

without addressing the relevance of psychology for Māori or failing to understand the tensions between the development of Māori focused psychologies¹ within western paradigms and systems) will not result in increasing Māori participation in the profession of psychology.

It is somewhat ironic that a critical barrier to Māori participation in psychology is exactly that – lack of a critical mass of Māori participating in psychology. This lack of critical mass impacts on the environments in which Māori study and practice psychology, resulting in isolation, a lack of mentors and role models, lack of Māori relevant content, and inability to progress the development of Māori focused psychologies.

The salient barrier to increasing Māori participation in psychology is the environments in which Māori students of psychology and Māori psychologists are required to participate. These environments are dominated by paradigms, frameworks, and models perceived to be of little relevance to the realities of Māori. The tokenistic inclusion of issues relevant to Māori serves to marginalise Māori paradigms: further minimising the relevance of psychology for Māori.

Incentives

The major incentive for Māori participation in psychology is the creation of environments in which Māori wish to participate. Such environments are characterised by: the presence of other Māori students, psychologists, and staff; competency to work with Māori being viewed as a core component or 'best practice' within psychological training paradigms; meaningful participation and active valuing of the contributions made by Māori students and psychologists; absence of the marginalisation of Māori into 'cultural areas'; the provision of opportunities to contribute to the

¹ This paper uses the term 'Māori focused psychologies' to refer to psychologies which are relevant to and for Māori. It is not intended to be exclusive, nor is it intended to limit the possibilities in terms of what such psychologies might include.

development of Māori focused psychologies; and the provision of effective support for Māori students and psychologists. Some of these characteristics are described in more detail below.

Meaningful participation can be described as participation which provides actual and real opportunities to influence outcomes, directions, and priorities in a given context. For example, meaningful participation may include (but is not limited to) involvement at the commencement of projects/issues, involvement in determining priorities, the provision of the necessary resources (finance, time) to participate effectively, having the necessary power with processes to influence outcomes, and avoiding the isolation and marginalisation of issues relevant to Māori. There are a number of examples of initiatives and processes which have been and continue to be successful in facilitating meaningful participation by Māori. For example, joint venture arrangements between psychology departments and Māori service provider organisations. Activity in this area appears to be relatively untapped, meaning there is wide scope for further development.

Findings from this and previous studies have highlighted the importance of supporting Māori students to successful outcomes in psychology. Such findings are not new, and a number of psychology departments have implemented support initiatives for Māori students. However, it can be suggested that given the slow progress in increasing Māori participation in psychology, such initiatives have not been exceedingly successful. Building on previous findings, this study appears to highlight the importance of Māori students being provided with multiple forms of support, including academic, social, cultural and financial. Support initiatives are unlikely to be effective if they rest solely on the provision of financial support, as without evidence of a commitment to Māori development, the environment is likely be one in which Māori will choose not to participate. Although, multiple forms of support are required to assist in the training of Māori psychologists, this does not imply that training institutions be the sole providers of such support. Collaborative

arrangements across key stakeholders, with a focus on the development of career paths for Māori within psychology appear necessary.

A further key theme to emerge, in relation to incentives for Māori participation in psychology, focused on what can be categorised as indigenous development. The development of Māori focused psychologies, and the importance of publication, were both considered crucial for attracting more Māori to the profession of psychology. Again, the salient factor appears to be the relationship between the barriers. Facilitating the development of Māori focused psychologies requires a critical mass of Māori involved in psychology. This points to the need for the development of parallel strategies, which facilitate both the increase of this critical mass, whilst at the same time enhancing the ability of those currently working in psychology and related areas to devote time to activities centred on the development of those Māori focused psychologies.

Another important component of facilitating the development of Māori focused psychologies was a mechanism by which Māori psychologists could come together collectively. The focus on this issue appeared stronger than in the past, possibly due to the higher numbers of Māori psychologists which exist now. There were differing views on what such a group might look like, who might participate, or where they might exist. However, the aims of such a group were common across participants. These were the reduction of isolation, facilitating exposure to role models and mentors, and the provision of opportunities for dialogue relating to the development of Māori focused psychologies. Such opportunities have not been routinely provided in the past, although the potential benefits of such opportunities appear to be high.

A component of creating environments supportive of Māori participation was to address the active resistance of psychology to the inclusion of Māori focused psychologies. The Code of Ethics states that psychologists recognise the boundaries of their own competence and provide only services for which they are qualified for by training and experience: yet, with respect to

the ability to work competently with Māori, psychologists' often fail to reach this ethical standard. The critical question appears to be *how can this resistance to Māori psychologies be addressed?* A number of the points made above were identified as being relevant to addressing the resistance inherent within psychology, for example increased participation by Māori, and the development and publication of Māori focused psychologies. The obvious problem is again the circular nature which characterizes the relationships between the issues. It can be suggested that a core component in addressing this circular nature is to more specifically identify the nature of the resistance and how this acts to exclude Māori participation. Guerin (2002) suggests that addressing the resistance of psychology to the inclusion of indigenous paradigms will require addressing the western bias of psychology. Removal of the western bias however, will result in the distinctiveness of psychology, as compared with other social science disciplines, also being removed. Addressing the active resistance of psychology to change may well require wholesale changes in how psychology as a whole is viewed (Guerin, 2002). This is an issue worthy of further investigation.

Addressing the resistance of psychology to the inclusion of Māori focused psychologies could also be addressed by Māori moving outside the confines of the present discipline. Suggestions of parallel development are viewed by some as coming from the radical fringe, simply because they depart from established systems. However, this is not a new suggestion, indeed it was made by Abbott and Durie (1987) 15 years ago. It reflects the ongoing serious concerns for Māori psychologists, in relation to control and safety, and frustration with the progress being made by psychology on issues relevant for Māori. Calls for alternative development should not be discounted purely on the basis of moving outside of the confines of what is currently known and accepted within psychology.

The creation of environments that support Māori participation

Active Collective Responsibility

Having identified the types of environments which will encourage Māori participation, the next question is *how can such environments be created?* The primary answer is through the concept of active collective responsibility. That is, all organisations² who have an interest in increasing Māori participation in psychology, for example psychology departments, employers of psychologists, professional organisations and government policy making agencies take responsibility for addressing and advancing the issues relevant to their own specific contexts. It is clear that without commitment from the discipline and relevant sectors to creating environments within which Māori wish to participate, Māori participation in the profession of psychology will not significantly increase. The issues are too vast and diverse for one organisation (for example Psychology Departments) or group (for example Māori psychologists) to resolve alone.

“But what do we specifically need to do?”

It is anticipated that the question of *‘but what do we specifically need to do?’* will emerge. This report and numerous others have identified specific initiatives and actions organisations can take to increase Māori participation in psychology. The information and ideas about what can be done are there to build on. Collective responsibility means the onus rests with the relevant organisations to consider the issues, think about potential initiatives within their contexts, and work to implement those initiatives. Given the diversity of contexts, it is counter productive to provide a tick box type approach. This implies the issues across all contexts are the identical and can be addressed using identical strategies. Collective responsibility stems from

² The term ‘organisation’ refers to, but is not limited to, tertiary institutions, employing agencies and providers, professional psychology organizations, and government policy agencies.

personal responsibility; individuals accepting their own responsibilities and making choices which support positive change.

Active Leadership

Building on the concept of collective responsibility is the issue of co-ordination. A number of different suggestions were provided in relation to who could maintain a co-ordination role within psychology. Of central importance is an urgent need for active leadership to facilitate increased participation by Māori. As stated above, the concept of collective responsibility is vital if incentives for Māori participation in psychology are to be provided. However, given that key stakeholders in psychology have not been overly proactive in applying the concept of collective responsibility, it appears critical that one organisation take a leadership role to facilitate the actual implementation of this concept. Facilitation in this context means providing a structure or forum within which the issues are placed on the agendas of organisations, sharing information about the various initiatives and maintaining pressure on relevant organisations to address issues relevant to their specific contexts.

Within the current context, the New Zealand Psychologists' Board is considered to be the most appropriate agency to undertake this role. It is likely that the New Zealand Psychologists' Board, given their current status as the registering body for psychologists, will be appointed as the authority for psychologists under the new HPCA legislation. This places the Board in a pivotal role as the profession's governing body. Again, leadership will require focusing on providing a structure through which issues are placed on the agendas of organisations, and maintaining pressure to ensure those issues are acted on. Undertaking a leadership role does not mean that responsibility for addressing the issues is transferred from the various stakeholders to the Board. It does not mean the Board is responsible for implementing and resourcing the necessary initiatives and strategies. Collective responsibility is quite the opposite. It also does not mean that the Board will take a leadership role indefinitely, as addressing the issues will be

a developmental and constantly evolving process. Similarly, the Board occupying a leadership role does not preclude specific indigenous developments, for example a psychological organisation for Māori or parallel processes for training. The underlying aim of the leadership provided by the Board is to demonstrate to the discipline the critical importance of actively working to create environments in psychology which Māori wish to participate in; and to provide a mechanism by which attention is focused on these issues. A component of this leadership would be to annually report on progress made to the key stakeholders across the discipline, including the Minister's of Health, Corrections, Courts, Education, Social Development, and Māori Affairs.

Some suggestions to guide this planning include the dissemination of this report to all relevant stakeholders including the New Zealand Psychological Society, New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists', Psychologists' Workforce Working Party, Health Workforce Advisory Committee, Te Rau Matatini, the National Māori Mental Health Workforce Development Organisation, heads of psychology departments, relevant major employing organisations and government policy making agencies. That dissemination should also include a request for responses to the issues raised in the report. The report can also be used as a catalyst to convene a forum(s) aimed at discussing issues such as the development of an organisation for Māori psychologists, multi-faceted career development award programmes for Māori psychology students, and research awards for Māori psychologists. Such discussions will include both Māori and non-Māori stakeholders.

A critical part of such discussions will be to ensure that some form of active progress is made or agreed to. The maintenance of pressure on organisations to continue to progress on specific issues is an important component of the leadership provided by the Board. Annual work plans identifying priority focus areas may be a useful process for the Board to engage in. The issue of the resources required to undertake such a leadership role will also

need to be considered. Discussions of this nature should involve all key stakeholder groups.

One area which appears useful in relation to the development of environments in which Māori wish to participate is the implementation of the new legislation which will govern the practice of psychologists (HPCA). The Board has taken on the role of informing psychologists about the HPCA and are seeking their input on a consultation framework to assist in the development of operational policy to administer the legislation. Given this is a significant opportunity to influence practice across the discipline as a whole, and so improve the outcomes Māori receive from psychology, it is vital that effective and meaningful participation by Māori psychologists and communities is facilitated. This will require a committed effort by the Board to determine how this can happen in practice. Considerations include what processes need to be engaged in; what resources will this require; and what timeframe is required for meaningful participation? The comments made earlier, in relation to meaningful participation, apply here also. It is also worth restating that anything less than meaningful participation can essentially be perceived as a tokenistic inclusion, further perpetuating an underlying barrier to Māori participation in psychology.

Recommendations

Based on the findings which have been described in this paper, several recommendations were made to the New Zealand Psychologists' Board.

Overall Recommendations

1. That the New Zealand Psychologists' Board take a leadership role in addressing the barriers to Māori participation in the profession of psychology. Key stakeholders the Board will need to work with include, but are not limited to:
 - i. New Zealand Psychological Society
 - ii. New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists
 - iii. Psychologists' Workforce Working Party
 - iv. Health Workforce Advisory Committee
 - v. Te Rau Matatini

- vi. Heads of University Psychology Departments
- vii. Ministries of Health, Corrections, Courts, Social Development, Education, and Māori Development

The aim of this leadership is to clearly demonstrate the critical importance of actively working to create environments in psychology which Māori wish to participate in, and to provide a mechanism by which ongoing attention is focused on addressing the barriers to Māori participation in psychology.

2. That the New Zealand Psychologists' Board report annually to key stakeholders across the discipline, including the Minister's of Health, Corrections, Courts, Education, Social Development and Māori Affairs. The report should cover:

- i. progress made in relation to increasing the responsiveness of psychology to Māori
- ii. goals to be focused on for the subsequent year

Short Term Recommendations

1. That the New Zealand Psychologists' Board disseminate this report to all key stakeholders, including but not limited to those listed under Recommendation 1.
2. That the New Psychologists' Board request from all key stakeholders their responses to the issues that were raised in this report.
3. That the New Zealand Psychologists' Board recognise the significant opportunity presented by the Health Professionals Competency Assurance Act (HPCA) to improve outcomes for Māori receiving psychological services.
4. That the New Zealand Psychologists' Board include as a priority objective, in its implementation of the HPCA, meaningful participation by Māori psychologists and other Māori stakeholders in the development of the HPCA scopes of practice for psychologists.
5. That the New Zealand Psychologists' Board highlight to the New Zealand Psychological Society the importance of meaningful Māori participation in the Accreditation of Post-graduate Programmes Committee.

Long Term Recommendations

1. That the New Zealand Psychologists' Board convene a working group of key stakeholders. The purpose of the working group would be to determine annual work plans and priorities for increasing Māori participation in the profession of psychology. This should include, but is not limited to:

- i. initiating discussions with relevant stakeholders on the development of multi-faceted career development award programmes for Māori psychology students and psychologists
- ii. initiating discussions with relevant stakeholders on ways in which Māori focused psychologies can be further developed
- iii. initiate discussions with relevant key stakeholders on ways in which the collective strength of Māori psychologists can be maximised;
- iv. initiating discussions with relevant key stakeholders on ways in which meaningful Māori participation in the training of Māori psychologists can be enhanced
- v. initiating discussions with relevant key stakeholders on strategies for addressing the conflicting expectations and competing demands felt by Māori psychology students and psychologists

Conclusion

There are specific organisations whose environments are well known for not supporting participation by Māori psychology students and psychologists; the result being that such organisations have great difficulty in attracting Māori to participate within them. On the other hand, there are a small number of organisations which are recognised for creating environments which include some or all of the characteristics necessary for increasing Māori participation. Such organisations are relatively easy to identify by the numbers of Māori psychology students and psychologists choosing to participate, or not, in them. The findings in this study clearly demonstrate that in order to attract Māori to participate in psychology, the majority of environments need to change substantially. It is simply not enough for organisations, whether they are educational,

professional, or service delivery agencies, to identify the need for more Māori psychologists, yet still fail to commit to, and actively engage in, altering long identified environmental factors that are barriers to Māori participation.

The need for more Māori psychologists is well recognised and acknowledged. However, the lack of progress made in this area indicates that simple recognition and acknowledgement has done little to improve the situation. The Board has stated that this research will assist them to provide evidence based approaches to the Health Workforce Advisory Committee (HWAC), and the Ministry of Health, who are responsible for assessing priorities for Māori health workforce scholarships. However, it is not enough that this research simply contributes to providing an evidence base. Research over the past 20 years has provided evidence of the existence of this issue, yet little attention has been paid to acting on that research. There was a clear challenge issued throughout undertaking this research that the New Zealand Psychologists' Board demonstrate commitment to effecting positive change for Māori within the psychology profession. Essentially the commitment of the discipline and those with a stake in the discipline is under question.

There is a strong desire among Māori within the profession that unless there is genuine commitment to change, and genuine commitment to involve Māori in that change, then the profession will be faced with nothing more than continued resignation by Māori people.
(Paul Hirini, Clinical Psychologist)

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