

TAKATĀPUI

Part of the Whānau

By Elizabeth Kerekere



MIHI

Tirohia mai au, he mōrehu tangata
i puta mai i Rangātea

He mihi aroha tēnei ki te whānau
whānui puta noa i te motu

Ki te hunga i tua o te arai, ki te
hunga kei te heke mai

He koha tēnei mō te whānau hei
awhi i a tātou nei mokopuna

Takatāpui is a traditional term meaning 'intimate companion of the same sex.' It has been reclaimed to embrace all Māori who identify with diverse genders and sexualities such as whakawāhine, tangata ira tāne, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer. All of these and more are included within Rainbow communities.

Many takatāpui enjoy the love and support of their whānau (family), regardless of their gender identity or sexuality. Some whānau struggle. This can result in takatāpui being disconnected not only from their whānau, hapū and iwi but also from their Māori culture. This print and video resource was created to provide information and support for takatāpui and their whānau.

Takatāpui: Part of the Whānau was written by takatāpui leader, Elizabeth Kerekere who is Ngāti Oneone, Te Aitanga a Mahaki, Whānau a Kai, Rongowhakaata and Ngāi Tāmanuhiri. Elizabeth is Founder/Chair of Tiwhanawhana Trust (2000) which was created for takatāpui to:

“tell our stories,
build our communities
and leave a legacy.”



This resource is based on Elizabeth's 35 years of activism and her doctoral research on takatāpui identity and well-being.

Elizabeth's artwork *Mana Takatāpui 2012* features with permission from Parliament where it hangs in the Rainbow Room.

Tiwhanawhana Trust enjoyed this collaboration with the Mental Health Foundation. We appreciate all those who contributed to this project, in particular Jack Trolove and Moira Clunie. A special thanks to Waka Hourua who recognised the importance of creating such a resource within the kaupapa of suicide prevention.

We acknowledge the takatāpui pioneers, leaders and activists who contributed to this project.

Ngā mihi aroha ki ā koutou!



Jennifer Edwards

(born 1950):
Ngāti Porou,
Te Arawa



Ahi Wi Hongi

(born 1984):
Ngā Puhi,
Ngāti Maniapoto



Hinemoana Baker

(born 1968):

Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Toa
Rangatira, Te Āti Awa,
Kāi Tahu, Ngāti Kiritēa

Kevin Haunui

(born 1960): Ngāti Rangī,
Te Ātihaunui a Papārangi,
Ngāti Kahungunu, Tūhoe,
Whakatōhea,
Te Whānau a Apanui



Morgan Cooke

(born 1984):

Ngāti Whātua,
Ngā Puhi



INTRODUCING TAKATĀPUI

Definitions and Meanings

The term 'takatāpui' embraces all Māori with diverse gender identities and sexualities. Within that broad definition, takatāpui has deeper meaning for those who have claimed it.

Whakapapa: As Māori we claim our identity through whakapapa – through generations of tūpuna (ancestors). As takatāpui we search for our tūpuna takatāpui amongst them as we strive to see ourselves reflected in the past. By connecting with the past we aim to enlighten our people to the discrimination we face in the present.



“It helps me
remember who I
am and where I
come from”

Kevin



Mana: As Māori our mana (authority, influence, power) is sourced from our Atua (gods). We were all born with the mana of our whakapapa and during our lives we are given mana through our actions and achievements.

As takatāpui, we combine these to uplift the mana of takatāpui communities. That gives us the authority to reject discrimination in all its forms and to advocate for takatāpui health and well-being.

“I felt like I belonged to that word and that word felt like it belonged to me”

Hinemoana

Takatāpui embraces
all Māori with diverse
gender identities
and sexualities

Identity: Takatāpui often have to choose between being Māori and prioritising our gender or sexuality. Claiming takatāpui enables us to bring all of the parts of ourselves together – to be all of who we are. While the Western world tends to classify and label identities, takatāpui offers opportunities to discover and change.



“Takatāpui just unifies everything. I am Māori. I am queer. I am here to stay. If you have a problem with that well, that’s your problem not mine”

Morgan

Inclusion: Takatāpui come in many shapes, sizes, ages, iwi affiliations, identities and expressions. Takatāpui is inclusive of all Māori with diverse gender identities and sexualities; regardless of their knowledge of te reo or tikanga (Māori language or culture). Takatāpui communities provide opportunities to learn and reconnect. We emphasise what unifies; rather than what separates and divides.



“I was quite fascinated with the word - I think it explains us exactly”

Jennifer

Being takatāpui is about whākapapa, mana, identity and inclusion

MANA TŪPUNA

\ In our DNA

Wairua: Most Māori are aware of their gender and sexuality from a very young age – it is part of wairua; the spirit, soul or essence we were born with that exists beyond death. It is not a choice. For those who identify with the gender they were assigned at birth (cisgender) or those who show an attraction to the ‘opposite sex’ (heterosexual), this is welcomed as the normal course of events.

Wairua can be damaged when whānau react badly to a child who identifies in ways that are unexpected.



“They [ask] was I born male and I say no, I was born female... the equipment might be wrong. My grandmother knew it. My godmother knew it. So I know what I am”

Jennifer

“I figured out a while ago that the best contribution I could make was to be truly myself”

Hinemoana

Mauri: As they gain confidence takatāpui will strengthen the expression of their gender and sexuality through clothes, behaviour, choice of intimate partner/s and connection with Rainbow communities. This expression is part of their mauri: the essential quality and vital spark of their being. **Mauri can be damaged when whānau cannot accept takatāpui for who they really are.**

“When I was younger, I would talk... about [how] I don't really feel like a girl but I also don't really feel like a boy so that was just always normal”

Ahi

We all inherit our gender and sexuality from our ancestors – it is part of our wairua



Tipua: Tipua were supernatural creatures who could change form or gender. Tipua can be seen today in takatāpui who embody both female and male in remarkable ways. For many takatāpui, their wairua is different from the gender they were assigned at birth. Some takatāpui identify as whakawāhine (those born with the wairua of a woman) or tangata ira tāne (those born with the wairua of a man). Other takatāpui identify as trans which is used as an umbrella term for people who are transgender, transsexual, or who do not conform to the gender they were assigned at birth. Trans also includes those who feel neither or both female/male or experience their gender as ‘fluid.’ For takatāpui who are intersex, their bodies reflect both female and male in diverse ways.

The wairua and mauri of takatāpui are trampled on when their identity is reduced to body parts.

“I have value irrespective of what anyone else says. Based on those things that I’ve been brought up with, I know what’s essentially good for my spirit and my self-worth”

Kevin

MANA TŪPUNA

Revealing the past

Colonisation: British colonisation of Aotearoa New Zealand culminated in the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. Despite rights guaranteed in the Treaty, the major loss of Māori language, culture and land occurred in the late 1800s. These were not the only losses. The open sexuality enjoyed by Māori women and men clashed with the puritanical mind set of settlers and missionaries.

They were surprised that Māori did not punish those who engaged in same/both-sex attracted practices or were perceived as gender non-conforming. We know this from diary entries, colonial records and Court proceedings from the late 1700s onwards. We also have historical examples within traditional Māori narratives and in wood carvings.

“Sexuality was enjoyed in many forms. People chose partners of either sex for pleasure, and same sex love was not condemned or vilified”

Ngahuia Te
Awekotuku

**Takatāpui are part
of the whānau –
always have been,
always will be**

Becoming Illegal: When Aotearoa inherited the British legal system in 1858, Māori inherited the sexism and homophobia that came with it. The identity terms of 'heterosexual' (normal) and 'homosexual' (abnormal/illegal) were introduced in the late 1880s. This only served to pathologise (make medically or psychologically abnormal) something which had been an accepted part of traditional Māori society.



“I had a wonderful upbringing being brought up by my grandmother...I think I was about five years old and I knew that I was totally different from everybody else. Being brought up by her I was protected”

Jennifer

Whānau Protection: Because most whānau were accepting of such behaviour they kept it hidden from public view to protect their takatāpui members. Over time however, historical takatāpui references were changed or removed from the colonial record. As the memories faded so the discrimination against takatāpui increased.



“There is that sense that your story doesn’t start with yourself it starts a long time ago”

Ahi

Visibility: It is understandable that after a century of hiding our existence, many whānau get confused about why takatāpui want to put a name to our diverse gender identities or sexualities. Colonial history repeats itself every time whānau say things like: “We like your girlfriend but why do you have to call yourself a lesbian?” or: “Why do you need a ‘Pride’ parade? Just be yourself.” However, naming and identifying ourselves is fundamental to Māori culture.

“I think whānau could be really useful by considering it’s not about them. It’s about somebody who’s on a pathway of discovery”

Kevin

Whānau don’t need to get it, they just need to be there

MANA WĀHINE

\ Colonial Legacy

Māori Women: The impact of colonisation on Māori women was dramatic. Their leadership was not acknowledged by the colonial powers who imported the British model of female obedience to the male 'lord and master.' Control of their own bodies and sexuality was taken from them and Māori women were pushed into the domestic/private domain - leaving men to rule the public domain.

“There’s lots of trauma in our family. No more or less necessarily than anybody else’s but you don’t heal those things quickly”

Hinemoana

Nuclear Family: The introduction of the 'nuclear family' concept reinforced both heterosexual and monogamous relationships while it dismantled whānau and kinship support systems. This contributed to an environment of fear or hatred of people who are not heterosexual (homophobia) or who are bisexual (biphobia) or who do not identify with the gender

Discrimination (transphobia, homophobia and biphobia) hurts all of our whānau



they were assigned at birth (transphobia) – even though much of this was an accepted part of Māori life in the past.

Mana Wāhine is the recognition of the inherent authority of Māori women beside Māori men - not below them - for the good of all whānau, hapū and iwi. It recognises that colonisation has damaged the status of Māori women. It challenges the use of domestic violence and sexual violence against Māori women and children. It encourages women to exercise tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) over their minds and bodies.



“There’s all the little ways that families expect people to fit into gender roles, or fit into certain kinds of relationships, that anything else is not normal and you should want to be normal”

Ahi

Being Real: Mana Wāhine challenges the stereotypes of gender roles and what it means to be a 'real woman' or a 'real man' in Māori society. Such stereotypes are often expressed as 'jokes' – whānau may not even realise they are doing it. Of course, they are not actually funny. Have you ever called your cousin a 'sissy' because you thought he was too feminine? Have you ever told your niece that she was not 'girly enough' because she played sport or never wore dresses? Have you made fun of anyone who does not look, dress, walk or act the way you think a 'real woman' or a 'real man' should? This is known as 'gender policing' and limits many Māori from being who they are for fear of teasing and harassment.

Issues of gender and sexuality cannot be fully resolved for takatāpui until the mana of Māori women is restored throughout Māori culture and society.

Mana Wāhine is the platform for fighting discrimination against takatāpui

MANA WĀHINE

Reclaiming Gender & Sexuality

On the Marae: Mana Wāhine opens space for takatāpui who are whakawāhine, tangata ira tāne and trans to take their place within whānau, in leadership and on the marae. Are whānau excluded from your marae because they are takatāpui? With sufficient skill and experience, are all takatāpui who identify and live as women allowed to karanga? Are all takatāpui who identify and live as men allowed to whaikōrero? Can takatāpui who are transitioning change rows in the kapa haka line?

“Some people would say you can’t come on [the marae] like this. I’d say are you telling me what I can do in my iwi? Get real”

Jennifer

Making Babies: Many whānau pressure takatāpui to have children whether they want to or not. Mana Wāhine encourages us to reconsider attitudes to having and raising children. Many takatāpui can and will have children who will grow up in safe and loving homes. We also play a special role in the whāngai of children when whānau need support.



“Thankfully I’ve learnt to accept and love who I am and in doing that have taken on challenges and worked through different things that I never thought I could do”

Morgan

Consequences: Gender and sexual stereotypes impact negatively on all Māori but have a heightened risk for takatāpui. Ideas that takatāpui can be ‘turned straight’ or could ‘choose to be normal’ are direct insults to the wairua we inherit from our tūpuna. All of our whānau are affected when disconnection and discrimination leads takatāpui to isolation, addictions, unwanted sex and pregnancies, depression, self-harm and suicide. It may be uncomfortable to talk about these things and acceptance of takatāpui might mean going against the teachings of your church. What is more uncomfortable is standing at the tangi of takatāpui in your whānau who have taken their own life because they could not be who they are.

“I don’t have an attitude of acceptance or tolerance. I have an attitude of celebration and gratitude for the things our takatāpui youth bring us. It’s incredible, it’s extraordinary, it’s otherworldly – it’s beyond tapu. Artistic, intellectual, physical, philosophical, spiritual, sexual... I don’t believe we have any conception of what’s being lost when our young people are lost”

Hinemoana



Being takatāpui
does not foster
depression and suicide,
discrimination does

MANA TAKATĀPUI

Contemporary Issues

Being Māori: As takatāpui, we experience a unique combination of discrimination, based on being Māori and having diverse gender identities and sexualities. As Māori, we share the legacy of colonisation, where systemic racism has resulted in poor outcomes in education, health, employment, social services and justice. In these contexts, takatāpui often find that our gender and sexuality is ignored, minimised or considered shameful. Even within Rainbow communities, the importance of being Māori to takatāpui and the appropriate use of tikanga or Māori protocols is not well understood.



“It doesn’t matter what anyone else says as long as you know who you are and where you come from”

Kevin

“Despite that the world tries to make you feel shame about being trans or whatever; if you don’t have another option – that is what you are and you know that – then there’s no point feeling bad about it. Shame is not useful if you’re doing something that isn’t bad.”

Ahi

Growing Resilient: The more takatāpui embrace their diverse gender identities and sexualities, the more resilience and confidence they develop. The younger takatāpui are when they begin to express their gender and sexuality, the less resilience they are likely to have. Whānau play a key role in building up their confidence; not only to withstand the discrimination they will experience; but also to become the exceptional person they were destined to be.



“I’ve been really blessed to be born into families that have a fairly radical acceptance of things and the ones who don’t – I fight with them and give them cheek whenever I can”

Hinemoana

Standing Proud: In a world that often dismisses and shames people with diverse gender identities and sexualities, takatāpui take a stand to say we are proud to be Māori. We are proud to be part of both our Māori and Rainbow whānau and we celebrate what is unique and amazing about our lives and our culture.

“The main joy I feel from being takatāpui is being proud of myself. I think if you have that you can do anything.”

Morgan



Takatāpui identity
proudly celebrates our
unique Māori selves
without apology or shame

Being Rainbow: As takatāpui, we share a racist version of the discrimination, stigma, and open hatred that leads to violence against members of Rainbow communities. Our intersex babies and children have unnecessary surgery to make them appear ‘normal.’ Our queer and trans youth face unprecedented levels of bullying in schools. Our whakawāhine, tangata ira tāne and trans whānau often lack access to essential health care. Our lesbian, gay and bisexual kuia kaumātua (elders) find their sexuality and relationships become invisible as they age. Takatāpui of all ages with queer and fluid gender identities and sexualities are pressured to ‘make up their mind.’



“Gender stuff and sexuality stuff has been a much easier journey than being Māori...part of that is actually because racism is a huge enormous thing. I mean there was structural disadvantage and there’s discrimination and stigma on being trans and on being non-straight”

Ahi

Feeling Connected: Being visible allows takatāpui to find each other. We claim takatāpui to feel connected and included - to belong. Within whānau and in safe spaces where takatāpui are accepted for who we are; we can support each other. With a place to stand, takatāpui can organise, advocate and address the discrimination that impacts on our tinana, hinengaro and wairua - our bodies, our minds and our spirituality.

“Being Māori is about whānau. Being Māori is about love, aroha. Being Māori is about accepting your indigenous heritage and being proud of that; working against the stereotypes that are there for Māori and doing what you can to support the Māori community and your extended whānau”

Morgan



Going National: Because whānau is central to Māori culture and identity, takatāpui have recreated whānau through local groups and national networks. Every two years we come together at the Takatāpui Hui-a-Motu. The takatāpui movement strives to reflect the best of Māori culture: honouring our ancestors, respecting our elders, working closely with our peers and looking after our young people.

Whanaungatanga is the principle of relationships and responsibilities where takatāpui work together to strengthen each other and our communities.



The takatāpui movement honours our ancestors, respects our elders, works closely with our peers and looks after our young people

MANA TAKATĀPUI

Being Who You Are

Gender: You will probably know you are a girl, boy or neither at a very young age. This may not match the gender you were assigned at birth.

Trust your instinct – this is your wairua telling you who you are.

You could affirm your true gender identity by the clothes you wear. You may change your name and pronoun – from ‘him’ to ‘her’. If you feel neither or both female/male, you may prefer to use ‘they.’ You may want to prevent puberty, take hormones or have surgery to further align your body with your wairua. You may feel okay to live as you are.

Sexuality: You may realise you are attracted to someone of the same sex at a young age, as a teenager or as an adult who is already married with children. You may be attracted to women and/or men and/or genderfluid people. You may not feel sexual at all. All of this is healthy and normal – it is just who you are.



“You’re a really amazing human being with gifts and talents and lessons that maybe even you don’t understand”

Hinemoana

Intersex: If you were born not typically looking 100% female or 100% male, you may be intersex. Doctors may have operated on you when you were really young to try and ‘normalise’ you as one gender or the other. You did not then and you do not now need to be ‘normalised.’ You are a taonga as you are. There are more than 2000 other people in Aotearoa like you.



“There are people that love you irrespective of who you are, where you are, what you’re doing. They could be family, they could be friends”

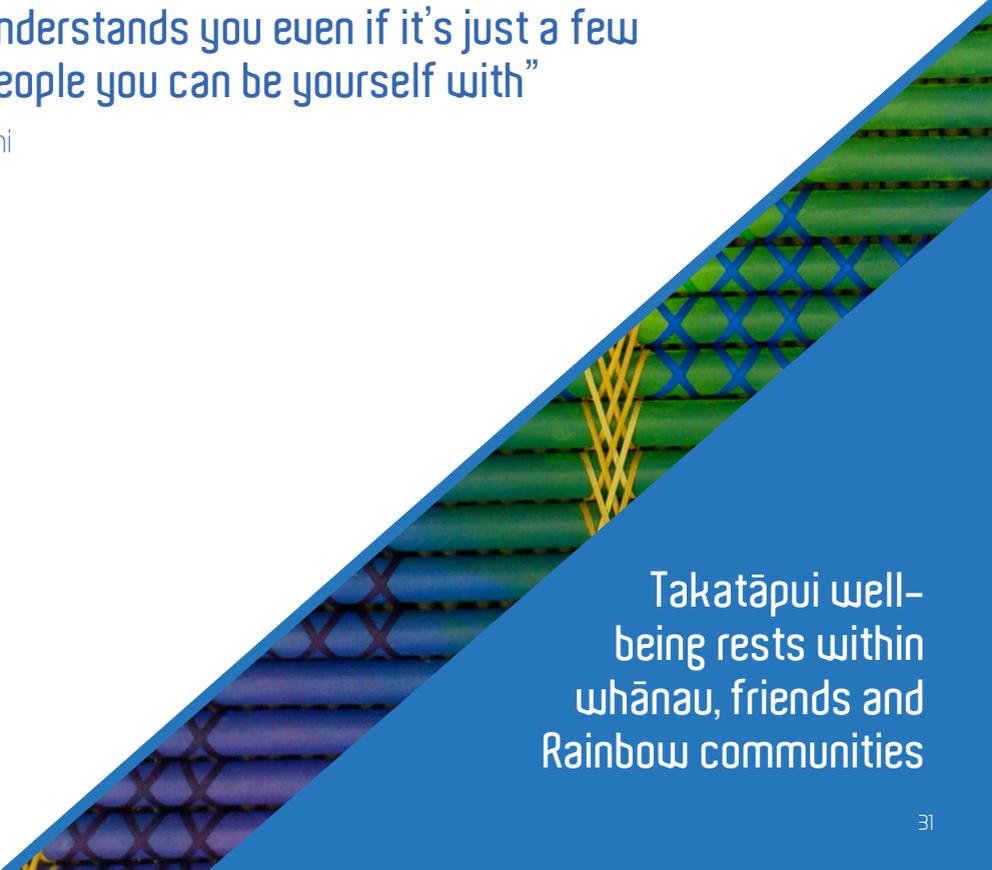
Kevin

Whānau First: If you are feeling unloved, unsupported or depressed, look for the support you deserve from whānau you trust. Then look for someone in your whānau to step in on your behalf. You might think everyone is talking about it, but most of the whānau probably do not even know and would be willing to help. Being takatāpui is a journey. Give your whānau at least as much time as it took you to figure things out. Their first reaction may not be their last one.

Friends & Community: Even the most loving whānau cannot give you everything you need so be prepared to seek outside help. You can tell friends things you would never tell your parents or caregivers. Friends are essential! Talk to them. Within takatāpui and Rainbow communities are people who have gone through the exact same things you are experiencing. They can offer support and advice.

“You need to have a community who understands you even if it’s just a few people you can be yourself with”

Ahi



Takatāpui well-being rests within whānau, friends and Rainbow communities

MANA WHĀNAU

\Being Supportive



“Your job is to look after each other so that means standing up and saying this is a person who deserves respect and having their back, and making sure that person knows that they’re alright, that they’re normal, that they’ve got acceptance from their family. Then they can worry about the rest of the world”

Ahi



Whānau at our Best: It is the fundamental job of whānau to look after each other and especially their children and young people.

The reaction and support of whānau is critical to the well-being and mental health of takatāpui.

‘Coming out’ by telling parents and loved ones about their gender or sexuality are pivotal moments in takatāpui lives. If someone in your whānau comes out to you, will that moment be one of displeasure and anger or will it be one of unequivocal love and acceptance?



“Get over it. This is blood. You’ve got to support them, no matter their gender, their identity. Help them live life”

Jennifer

Don't Panic! You might find yourself worrying about the future. What if someone tries to hurt them? What about grandchildren? These are distractions. Focus on the present. You can show your support in many simple ways:

- Listen and ask questions
- Let them know you love them even if you don't initially understand or agree
- Use their chosen name and pronoun/s (she/her, he/him, they/them)
- Understand it is a process you will go through together
- Treat them and their partner the same way you treat their siblings
- If you're struggling to come to terms with this, find other support for yourself.

“Dad hasn't got a clue what I'm talking about when it comes to being gay and stuff like that. What I do know is that he loves me and that's all I needed to know”

Kevin

Be an Ally: Stand up for takatāpui especially if you know they are experiencing discrimination from the whānau or their school, workplace, marae or church. Whether they come to you or you become aware of issues, step in and say something. You may be saving their life.



“Having my (Great) Auntie as an ally has made a huge difference in my relationship with my mother”

Morgan

Takatāpui allies promote acceptance and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs

RESOURCES

- www.mentalhealth.org.nz/get-help/resources/
Takatāpui: Part of the Whānau print and video resource
Tīhei Mauri Ora: Supporting Whānau through Suicidal Distress
- www.ry.org.nz/resources
You, Me, Us: Ko Koe, Ko Au, Ko Tāua, Ko Tātou on healthy relationships
Queer & Trans: A Super Simple Comic Guide for definitions
- familieslikemine.beyondblue.org.au
Families Like Mine multimedia guide for families
- www.tapatoru.org.nz
Tātou bi-monthly e-zine promoting positivity and wellness
- **Facebook**
Join *Hui Takatāpui* on Facebook to receive updates

Mana Tūpuna History Notes

The term 'takatāpui' appears in the first Māori dictionary printed in 1832. Its meaning was explained in the manuscripts of Te Arawa scholar, Wiremu Maihi Te Rangikāheke (c1840s) in reference to the intimate relationship between Tūtānekai and Tiki. It was found and promoted for contemporary use by takatāpui academics Ngahuia Te Awēkotuku and Lee Smith from the mid 1980s.

*All previous evidence of takatāpui behaviour in Māori narratives and wood carving was researched by Ngahuia Te Awēkotuku. It is summarised in her chapter "He Reka Anō: Same Sex Lust and Loving in the Ancient Māori World" in Laurie, A.J. and L. Evans (eds) (2005) *Outlines: Lesbian and Gay Histories of Aotearoa*. Wellington: LAGANZ. p6-9.*

ORGANISATIONS

Tiwhanawhana Trust, *Wellington*

For takatāpui to “tell our stories, build our community and leave a legacy”.

Email:

tiwhanawhana.com@gmail.com

Website:

www.tiwhanawhana.com

RainbowYOUTH, *National (Auckland-Based)*

Supports queer and gender diverse youth.

Phone: 09 376 4155

Email: info@ry.org.nz

Website: www.ry.org.nz

OUTLineNZ, Auckland

Counselling service for Rainbow communities and their friends and families.

Helpline:

0800 OUTLINE (0800 688 5463)

Website: www.outline.org.nz

Intersex Trust of Aotearoa New Zealand (ITANZ), Wellington

Provides information, education and training for those who work with intersex people and their families.

Phone: Mani 04 472 7386

Email: mani.mitchell@xtra.co.nz

Website: www.ianz.org.nz

Mental Health Foundation, National (Auckland-based)

Towards a society where everyone enjoys positive mental health and well-being.

Phone: 09 623 4810

Email: info@mentalhealth.org.nz

Website: www.mentalhealth.org.nz



Elizabeth Kerekere's

TOP TAKATĀPUI TIPS

- Takatāpui **embraces all Māori** with diverse gender identities and sexualities
- Being takatāpui is based on **whakapapa, mana, identity and inclusion**

- We all inherit our gender and sexuality from our ancestors – **it is part of our wairua**
- Takatāpui are **part of the whānau** – always have been, always will be
- Whānau don't need to get it, **they just need to be there**

- Discrimination (**transphobia, homophobia and biphobia**) hurts all of our whānau
- **Mana Wāhine** is the platform for fighting discrimination against takatāpui

- 
- **Being takatāpui** does not foster depression and suicide, discrimination does
 - Takatāpui identity **proudly celebrates** our unique Māori selves without apology or shame

- **The takatāpui movement** honours our ancestors, respects our elders, works closely with our peers and looks after our young people
- Takatāpui well-being rests within **whānau, friends and Rainbow communities**

- Takatāpui allies **promote acceptance** and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs



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