

Atawhai: What matters to whanau? Optimising health in integrated family violence services

Participant Information Sheet, 27 August 2024

Kia ora, we are a research team dedicated to preventing family violence. We invite you to join us in a project aiming to understand what matters to families when accessing family violence services. This study is funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand ([23/672](#)).

This information sheet will help you decide if you want to take part. It explains why we are doing the study, what your participation involves, the benefits and risks, and what happens after the first stage. We will go through this information with you and answer any questions. You can choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage.

Purpose of Research

Family violence affects the health and wellbeing of all family members. Given limited support from the health system, our research aims to help make it easier for health care providers to respond to family violence. '[Atawhai](#)' focuses on building trusted relationships between providers to share information and skills, ensuring safe, effective responses to families with complex needs.

People assume that integrated family violence services improve safety and wellbeing, but there is little evidence to support this. Understanding the experience of accessing services is crucial to avoid repeating harmful practices. We want to work with families to understand *what matters to you* when accessing care to improve health and wellbeing.

We would like to hear from families (16 years of age and older) interested in contributing to change in this area. You can choose how to participate, from helping design the research to being interviewed or acting as an advocate. During the study, we aim to offer healing spaces, support and an education and advocacy platform to promote change.

This research does not ask about experiences of violence, but rather your experience accessing services. All research team members are skilled in holding safe, respectful and trauma-informed conversations about family violence.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate?

We shared information about this research through the Atawhai Network. Someone you know thought you and your family might be interested and offered to connect you with us. We invite you to meet with us to discuss how you may like to participate and to address any concerns or questions.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Your participation is voluntary. If you want to participate, please fill out the attached consent form. You can withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw, you can choose to have

your data removed or allow it to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

There are four stages to this research:

1. We would like to meet with you and your family in a comfortable space to get to know each another and explain more about the research and how you can participate.
2. If you choose to take part, you might decide to be interviewed about your family's experience with family violence services and its impact on your health and wellbeing.
3. The data collected will be used to create anonymous collective stories of what matters to families and what changes are needed to improve health and wellbeing. You will not be identifiable within these stories.
4. You will be invited to attend two one-day workshops where we plan to bring together families and health care providers to present findings and build mutual understanding of what is needed to improve services.

You can indicate what you part(s) you would like to be involved in on the Consent Form. We will revisit your privacy needs and how you would like to participate before each stage.

What are the discomforts and risks?

We understand taking part in research about family violence can be difficult and sensitive. Family violence affects us as individuals, family members, community members, and in our work roles. **Your contribution to this issue is highly valued.**

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

The first stage focuses on getting to know each another and building trust to ensure your comfort and safety if you decide to participate. We provide opportunities for you and your family to voice any discomfort or concerns. As researchers, we are ethically obligated to support your safety and wellbeing. If we have concerns, we will work with you to discuss safety plans and referrals. Please see attached resources that may be useful to you.

Additionally, AUT Student Counselling and Mental Health offers three free confidential counselling sessions for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions address issues arising directly from participating in the research and are available in person, by phone or via video-conference. To access these services, call (09) 921 9292, mention you are a research participant and provide the title of the research along with Dr Claire Gear's name. More information is available at: <https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-mental-health>.

If these options do not suit you, we have limited funds to help you access a culturally appropriate counsellor. Please contact a member of the research team for assistance.

What are the benefits?

This study gives your family a chance to be heard and help improve the system for others. If your family continues in the research, you will be offered opportunities for education, healing, connection and advocacy.

How will my privacy be protected?

We value your confidentiality. When you first contact our research team, your family will receive aliases that we will use in all study documents. Only the researcher(s) you have been in touch with will know your identity. We will be responsive to your privacy needs as they shift and change throughout the research.

Interviews: If you and/or your family choose to be interviewed your identity will be known to the members of your family you choose to include and the researcher(s) you are working with.

Group activities: If you and/or your family choose to participate in workshops your identity will be known to others who are part of the study, limiting your confidentiality.

We will not report or present any details that could identify you. All data will have identifiable information removed and protected on secure AUT cloud-based servers. Electronic consent forms will be kept separate from data files, hard copies will be destroyed. All hard copy and digital records will be destroyed six years after publishing the study findings.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

You will spend about two to three hours in getting to know us and having your questions answered. If your family decides to join, you can choose how much to contribute to future stages. We can offer you koha (gift) reflecting the activity you have participated in (valued up to \$100).

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You can take as long as you need to decide whether to participate. We anticipate this opportunity closing in July 2025.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Whether or not you choose to participate, you can choose to receive research updates. We will post research news and events on the Atawhai website (www.atawhaitia.co.nz).

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

For concerns about the project, contact Dr Claire Gear, Principal Investigator at kiaora@atawhaitia.co.nz or 0800 WHAANAU (0800 9422628). Research conduct concerns should be directed to the AUTC's Executive Secretary, ethics@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 x 6038.

Who should I contact for more information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your records. Contact us at kiaora@atawhaitia.co.nz or 0800 WHAANAU (0800 9422628).



Taking care of your wellbeing

We recognise the challenges in taking part in research that addresses the difficult and sensitive topic of violence within families or whānau. Should you need to talk with someone, the following resources may be useful:



Shine provides a free confidential 24/7 helpline 0508 744 633 and webchat, as well as safe housing, advocacy, safety programmes and whanau resilience services. Visit www.2shine.org.nz



Tauranga Women's Refuge provides specialist domestic violence crisis intervention and support services including 24/7 Crisis Line 0508 744 633, temporary safe housing, counselling, and living without violence education for women and children. Visit <https://taurangawomensrefuge.co.nz/>



Need to talk? Free call or text 1737 (or phone 0800 1737 1737) any time to talk with a trained counsellor or peer support worker.



The **Are You OK?** website provides steps and support and safety for you or someone else who is experiencing family violence. Visit www.areyouok.org.nz



Puāwaitanga is a phone and web-based service to support Kiwis to improve their emotional wellbeing – their hauora. Visit <https://puawaitanga.nz/>



Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura provides helpful resources for building Rainbow communities free of partner and sexual violence. Visit www.kahukura.co.nz



Pasefika Proud provides a list of Pacific Family Violence Support Service Providers. Visit <https://www.pasefikaproud.co.nz>



He Waka Tapu host the 24/7 0800 Helpline HEY BRO (0800 439 276) providing support for men who feel they may hurt a loved one or whānau member. Visit <https://www.hewakatapu.org.nz/>