

FACT SHEET 1 – Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQI+: Our experience of health

The Honour Project Aotearoa study explored how Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQI+ people keep healthy and well in the face of many challenges. There were 368 survey participants, and 51 people contributed in-depth interviews for the study.

At consultation hui in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch, Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQI+ people asked for information from the interviews and survey for their specific population group.

Fact Sheet 1 gives a general overview of Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQI+ people's experience of health, outlining some components that they consider important for their personal health and how they meet these needs in their daily lives.

What components are important for your health?

Most participants (91%) reported that kāinga (having a home to live in) was important to maintaining health. This suggests that Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQI+ people who do not have a home may face challenges to achieving and sustaining health. Tuakiri (identity, 87%), whānau (family, 84%), and te reo Māori me ōna tikanga (Māori language, values, and culture, 75%) were also reported by Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQI+ participants as important for maintaining their own health.

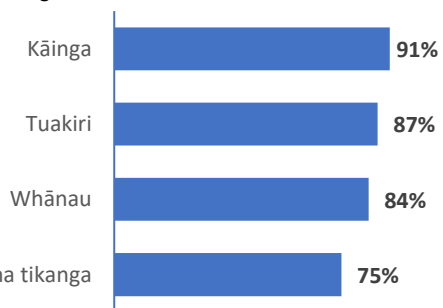


Figure 1. Percentage of participants who reported kāinga, tuakiri, whānau, and te reo Māori me ōna tikanga as important for their individual health.

“... you can just take a step back and actually look at everything and just be okay with it all. You aren't constantly worried ... about all your bills or what people are thinking of you or what your friends are doing without you. It's just kind of being at peace with yourself.”

How would you rate your overall health?

Three-quarters (76%) of all participants reported that they rate their overall health as good, very good, or excellent, and 24% rated their overall health as fair or poor. Available comparative data suggest that Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQI+ people are about as likely as the general Māori adult population (77.3%) to report their overall health as good, very good, or excellent.¹

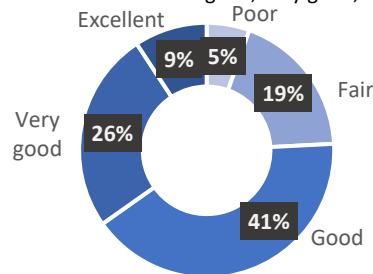


Figure 2. How participants rated their overall health.

Kāinga

Do you have a place you think of as home?

Most participants (90%) reported that they had a residential dwelling they thought of as home, while a tenth reported that they did not. Two percent of participants reported they were currently homeless.

Research suggests that *homelessness* can range from the absence of a residential dwelling to insecure housing.² Our survey did not include more complex measures of homelessness. However, other researchers may wish to include these in future research involving Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQI+ people.

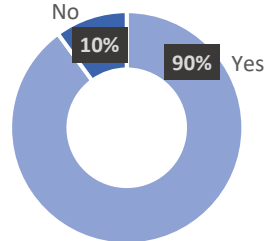


Figure 3. Percentage of participants who reported that they had a residential dwelling they thought of as home.

“My main ... ambition was to become a dancer so ... I moved up to Auckland, I went to an audition, I got sabotaged and I ended up homeless ... I ended up roaming the streets and ... I had to learn how to survive very quickly.”

“We don't have the money and I think shall I pay the power bill or go and get my health checked?”

How well does your total income meet your everyday needs?

A narrow majority of participants (55%) reported that they have not enough or only just enough total income to meet their everyday needs. In contrast, 45% of participants reported that they have enough or more than enough total income to meet their everyday needs.

Other research suggests that the general Māori adult population fares slightly better than Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQI+ people in terms of income.³ Our study found that Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQI+ people are more likely to be unemployed (27%) than other Māori adults (10.8%), which may impact their total income.⁴ Therefore, we suggest that further research is required to explore barriers to income for Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQI+ people.

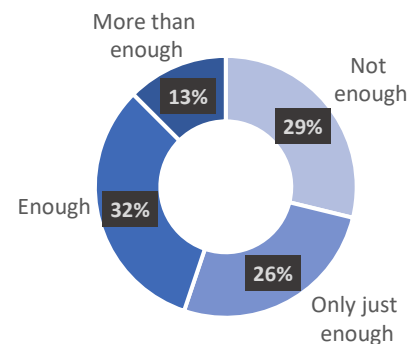


Figure 4. How well participants' total income meet their everyday needs.

“[My household's] hot water cylinder ... [is] expensive to run, the gym membership is cheaper. They also have Wi-Fi Internet and I can download my apps and they provide moisturiser. It sounds so tin-arsey ... but it got me to the gym and it was cheaper cause ... I was trying to save money.”

When you are at home, how much reo Māori do you speak?

Having access to te reo Māori contributes to the development of a secure cultural identity.^{5,6} Because people tend to spend much of their time at home, the amount of access people have to te reo Māori at home can contribute to their overall health.

Over half (53%) of all participants reported that they spoke some reo Māori when they were at home. Eight percent of participants reported that they spoke mostly or all reo Māori when they were at home. However, 23% of participants reported that they spoke no reo Māori when they were at home.

Our data suggest that Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQI+ people are more likely to have reo Māori as the main language in their home than the general Māori adult population (3%).⁷ For the 23% of participants who speak no reo Māori at home, resources will be required to support them to strengthen their use of te reo Māori at home in order to enhance their overall health.

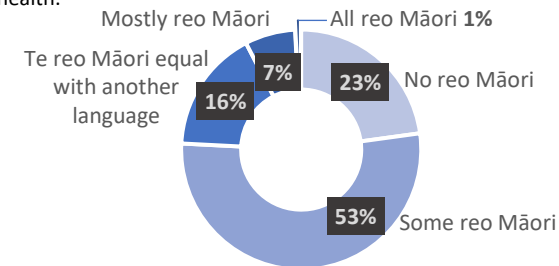


Figure 5. How much te reo Māori participants spoke at home.

“I'm not fluent in te reo ... but I don't feel like I'm any less Māori because I don't speak the reo. ... there is not something in me that's empty.”

Tuakiri

In general, are you happy to be Māori?

Most participants (71%) reported they were happy to be Māori all of the time. About a fifth (19%) of participants reported they were happy to be Māori most of the time. Two percent of participants reported they were only happy to be Māori a little or none of the time.

Māori frameworks of health assert that a secure cultural identity is a critical component of health for Māori.^{6,8} Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQI+ people should be supported to build strong Māori identities in order to enhance their overall health.⁹

“When I came home [from overseas] and connected with my taha Māori and read some of the karakia ... [I got] that sense of the oneness of everything ... Standing in my taha Māori [is] a place where I feel my wairua is nourished.”

“I was brought up by my Pākehā grandmother ... my queerness was a way ... to start to legitimise myself as a Māori person.”

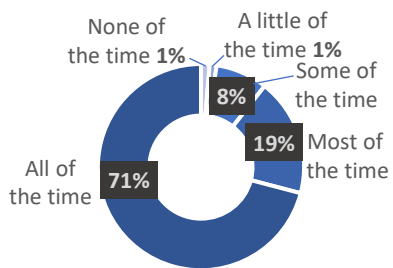


Figure 6. How often participants were happy to be Māori.

In general, are you happy to be a Takatāpui or Māori LGBTQ+ person?

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of all participants reported that they were happy to be a Takatāpui or Māori LGBTQ+ person all of the time. Over a fifth (21%) reported that they were happy to be Takatāpui or Māori LGBTQ+ most of the time. Of concern were the 6% of participants who reported that they were only happy to be Takatāpui or Māori LGBTQ+ a little or none of the time.

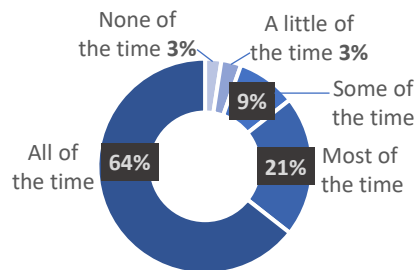


Figure 7. How often participants were happy to be a Takatāpui or Māori LGBTQ+ person.

Whānau

Who do you include as part of your whānau?

Friends (88%) were most often considered whānau for participants, followed by whakapapa whānau (people who shared genealogy, 83%) and kaupapa whānau (people who shared a common interest, 81%).¹⁰

Our findings suggest that Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQ+ people are more likely to include friends as part of their whānau than do the general Māori adult population (12.4%).⁷ Research posits that friends are important whānau members for Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQ+ people, because they may share experiences related to gender and sexual identities.¹¹

“I would tell [young people] to ... make sure they’ve got a good network of friends and support people around them, someone they can rely on and talk to when things aren’t going ... smoothly.”

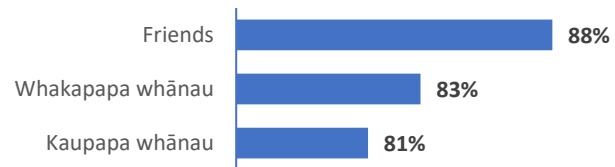


Figure 8. Percentage of all participants who considered friends, whakapapa whānau, and kaupapa whānau as part of their own whānau.

How connected do you feel to your whānau?

For Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQ+ people, connection to whānau may help mitigate negative effects associated with not being Pākehā, heterosexual, or cisgender.⁹ Most participants (83%) reported that they were connected or strongly connected to their whānau. However, 17% of participants reported weak or no connections at all to their whānau.

Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQ+ people who are not well-connected to their whānau may require support to strengthen their connections in order to enhance their overall health.^{9,11}

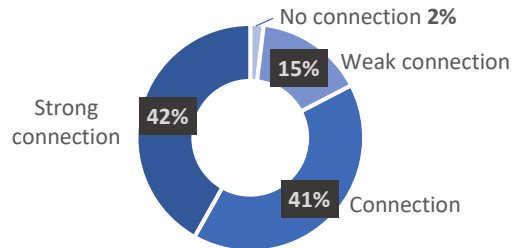


Figure 9. How connected participants were to their whānau.

How often does someone in your whānau say something positive about Takatāpui or Māori LGBTQ+ people?

Thirty percent of all participants reported their whānau saying something positive about Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQ+ people monthly or more often in the last 12 months. However, 44% reported their whānau as saying something positive monthly or less, and of concern, 26% reported their whānau as never saying anything positive. This suggests that while many whānau are able to offer support, others may struggle to talk about Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQ+ people in positive and affirming ways.¹² It may be important to support whānau to access information celebrating diverse gender and sexual identities, to enhance the overall health of Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQ+ people.¹¹

“... my sisters were outing me before I outted myself ... [they’d say] “what’s the big deal, you’re our sister” ... and I thought that was awesome but a bit scary.”

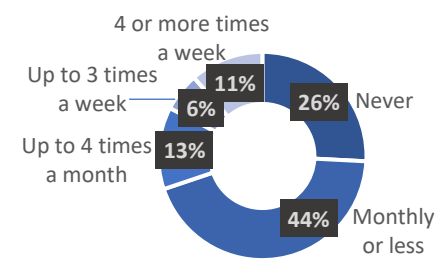


Figure 10. How often participants’ whānau would say something positive about Takatāpui or Māori LGBTQ+ people.

Te Reo Māori me ōna Tikanga

How important is it for you to be involved with te reo Māori me ōna tikanga?

Over 80% of all participants reported that it was very or quite important for them to be involved with te reo Māori me ōna tikanga. A quarter reported that it was somewhat or quite important for them to be involved, and 8% reported that it was a little or not at all important. Our findings suggest that Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQ+ people are more likely to report te reo Māori me ōna tikanga as an important part of their lives than are the general Māori adult population (46%).⁷

Research suggests access to te reo Māori me ōna tikanga is an important protective factor for Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQ+ people.⁹ Māori knowledges (conveyed through te reo Māori me ōna tikanga) empower Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQ+ identities and enhance overall health.¹¹

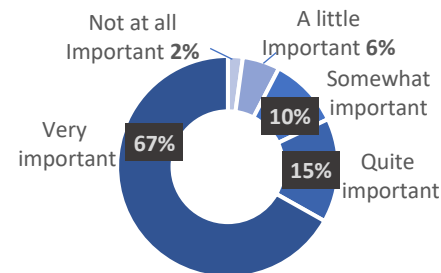


Figure 11. How important it was for participants to be involved in things to do with te reo Māori me ōna tikanga.

“Tōku rongoā ko te reo. That’s my passion, is our language ... for me to be able to get that level of competency ... I’ve got to step up there ... it’s a beautiful language. I’m an advocate for our language.”



How well can you speak te reo Māori in conversation?

Forty-one percent of all participants reported that they speak te reo Māori fairly well, well, or very well in day-to-day conversation. Our data suggest that, overall, Takatāpui and Māori LGBTQ+ people are more likely to report speaking te reo Māori fairly well, well, or very well than are the general Māori adult population (23%).⁷

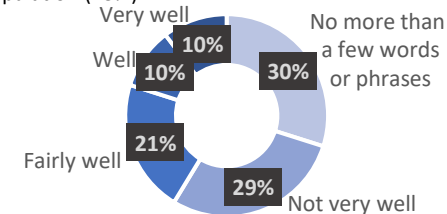


Figure 12. How well participants felt they spoke te reo Māori in day-to-day conversation.

Te Whāriki Takapou provides Kaupapa Māori, Māori sexual and reproductive health promotion and research services.

Te Whāriki Takapou thank all of the participants who contributed so generously to Honour Project Aotearoa. Further, we acknowledge the Honour Project Aotearoa research team and Te Kotahi Research Institute, University of Waikato, who hosted the study. You can find out more about us and Honour Project Aotearoa at <https://tewhariki.org.nz/>

¹Ministry of Health. (2019, November). Annual Data Explorer 2018/19: New Zealand Health Survey [Data File]. <https://minhealthnz.shinyapps.io/nz-health-survey-2018-19-annual-data-explorer/>

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³Statistics New Zealand. (2015, May 26). *New Zealand General Social Survey: 2014*. http://archive.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/Households/nzgs_HOTP2014/Tables.aspx#gsc.tab=0

⁴Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment. (2020, September 7). *Māori labour market trends*. <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/employment-and-skills/labour-market-reports-data-and-analysis/other-labour-market-reports/maori-labour-market-trends/>

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⁶Durie, M. H. (2006). Measuring Māori wellbeing. *New Zealand Treasury Guest Lecture Series*, 1, 2007-2009. <https://treasury.govt.nz/news-and-events/our-events/measures-m%2681ori-wellbeing>

⁷MacPherson, L. (2014, May 6). *Te Kupenga 2013 (English)*. Statistics New Zealand. http://archive.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/maori/TeKupenga_HOTP13.aspx#gsc.tab=0

⁸Durie, M. H. (1985). A Māori perspective of health. *Social Science & Medicine*, 20(5), 483-486. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536\(85\)90363-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(85)90363-6)

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¹¹Laurence, R. (2020). *“You’re not coming out – you’ve been there all along and just no one’s looked”: Māori LGBT+ youth and identity exploration* [Unpublished Master’s thesis]. University of Waikato.

¹²McBreen, K. (2012, September). *It’s about whānau—oppression, sexuality, and mana* [Conference session]. Kei Tua o Te Pae, Ōtaki, New Zealand. https://www.academia.edu/4052281/Its_about_whānau_oppression_sexuality_and_mana