

The logo for Auckland University of Technology (AUT) is displayed in the top right corner. It consists of the letters 'AUT' in a bold, white, sans-serif font with a black outline, set against a solid black rectangular background.

# Reframing Whānau Violence

Mana Ririki Kaupapa Māori Parenting Conference

Rotorua

**Professor Denise Wilson**  
Auckland University of Technology



# Acknowledgements

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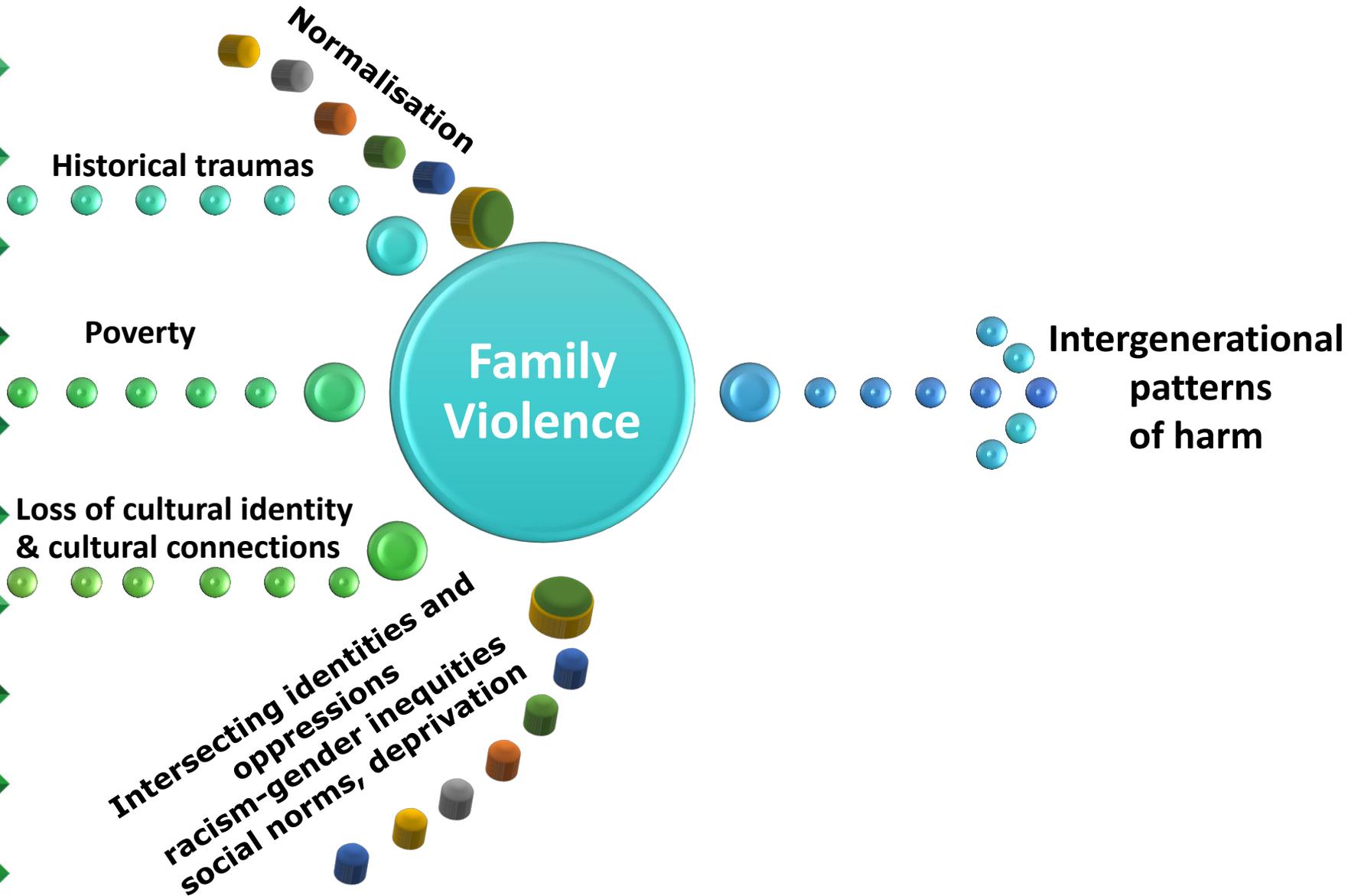
The  
**People's  
Report**

*The People's Inquiry into  
Addressing Child Abuse and Domestic Violence*

2014

- Melinda Webber

# Impacts of Family Violence



# The People's Report

*The People's Inquiry into  
Addressing Child Abuse and Domestic Violence*

**2014**

[www.glenninquiry.org.nz](http://www.glenninquiry.org.nz)

- Glenn Inquiry into Child Abuse and Domestic Violence

- Independent inquiry
- Asked:

*If New Zealand was leading the way in addressing child abuse and domestic violence, what would that look like?*

- More than 500 people came forward
  - included 113 frontline workers

# Family Violence Death Review Committee



Family Violence Death  
Review Committee



*He tao huata e taea te karo*



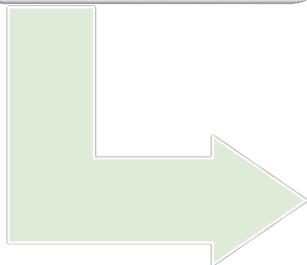
# Family Violence Death

- The unnatural death of a person (adult or child) where the suspected perpetrator is a family or extended family member, caregiver, intimate partner, previous partner of the victim or previous partner of the victim's current partner
- **Excludes**
  - Suicides and assisted suicides
  - deaths from chronic illness resulting from sustained violence
  - accidental deaths related to family violence incidents

# Death Review Process

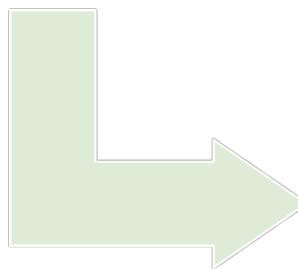
TIER 1

- Standardised data for ALL family violence deaths in Aotearoa



TIER 2

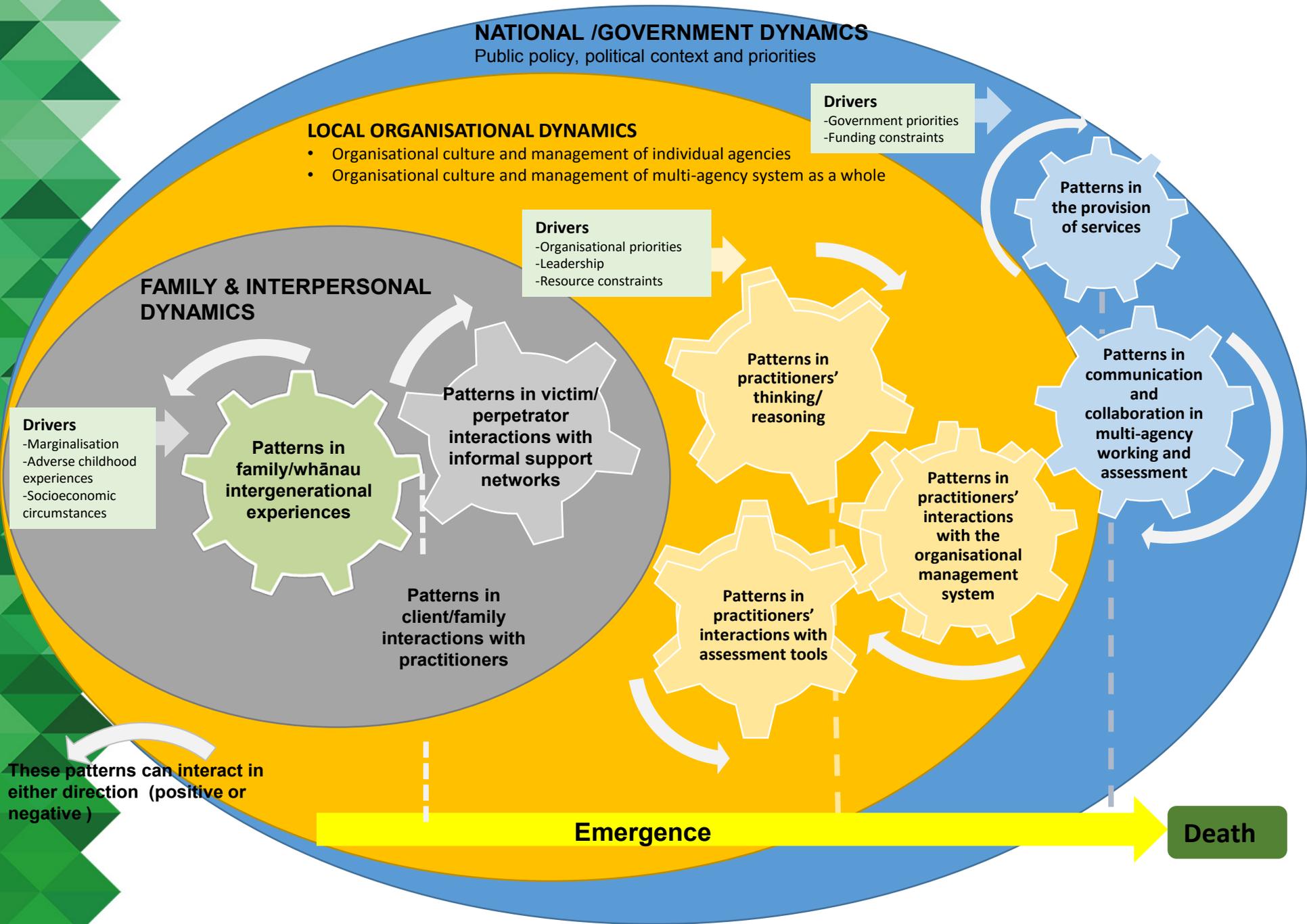
- Selected regional in-depth reviews



OUTCOME

- Inform service provision & practitioner practice

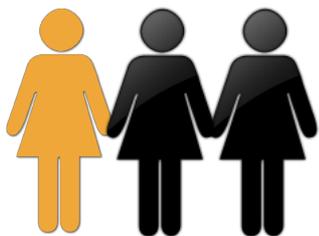
# A 'Systems' Model for Family Violence Death Review



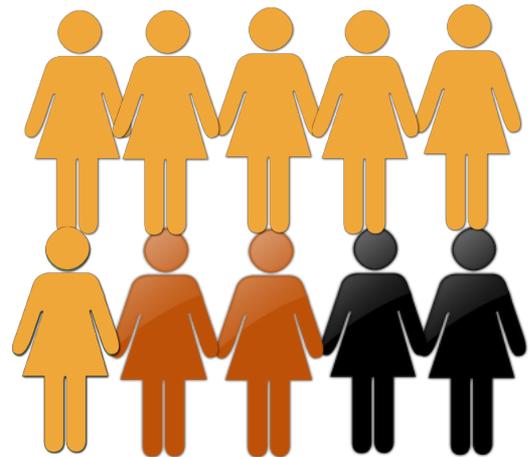


**What Do We Know?**

# What do we know about family violence?



**1:3** New Zealand women experience IPV in their lifetime  
(Fanslow & Robinson, 2011)



For Māori women – **57% to 80%** experience IPV in their lifetime  
(Koziol-McLain et al. 2004; 2007)

# What do we know about family violence?



Māori women –

**3x**

more likely to be **victim** of homicide  
(FVDRC, 2014)



Māori

**4.9x**

more likely to be **offenders** of homicide  
(FVDRC, 2014)



Māori children

**5.5x**

more likely to be **victim** of homicide  
(FVDRC, 2014)



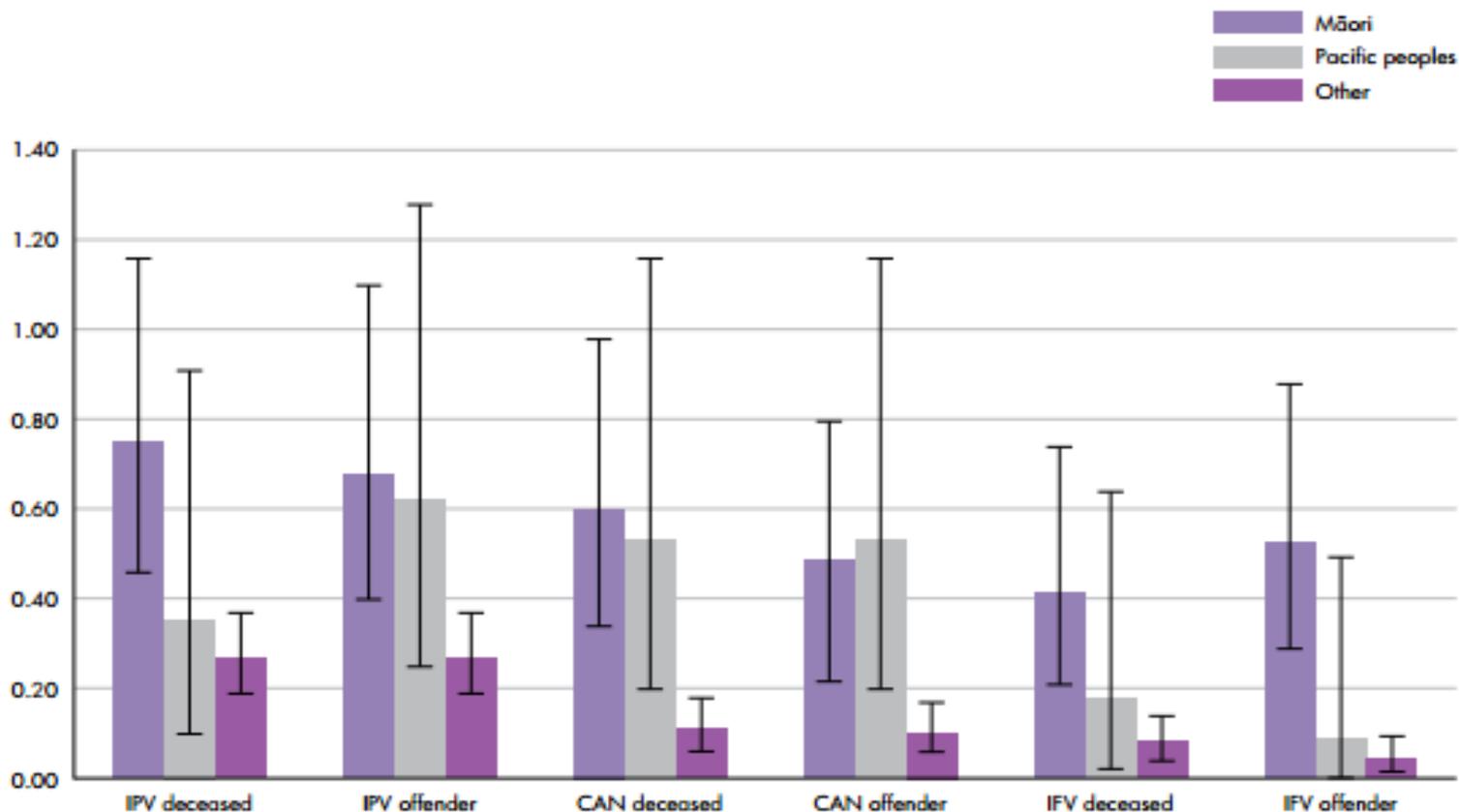
Māori

**5.5x**

more likely to be victim and  
**13x** an offender  
**intrafamilial** homicide  
(FVDRC, 2014)

# Ethnicity of Deceased and Offenders for Family Violence

Figure 26: Ethnic-specific rates (per 100,000 people per year) for deceased and offenders in family violence deaths by category of death (with 95% CIs), New Zealand, 2009–12



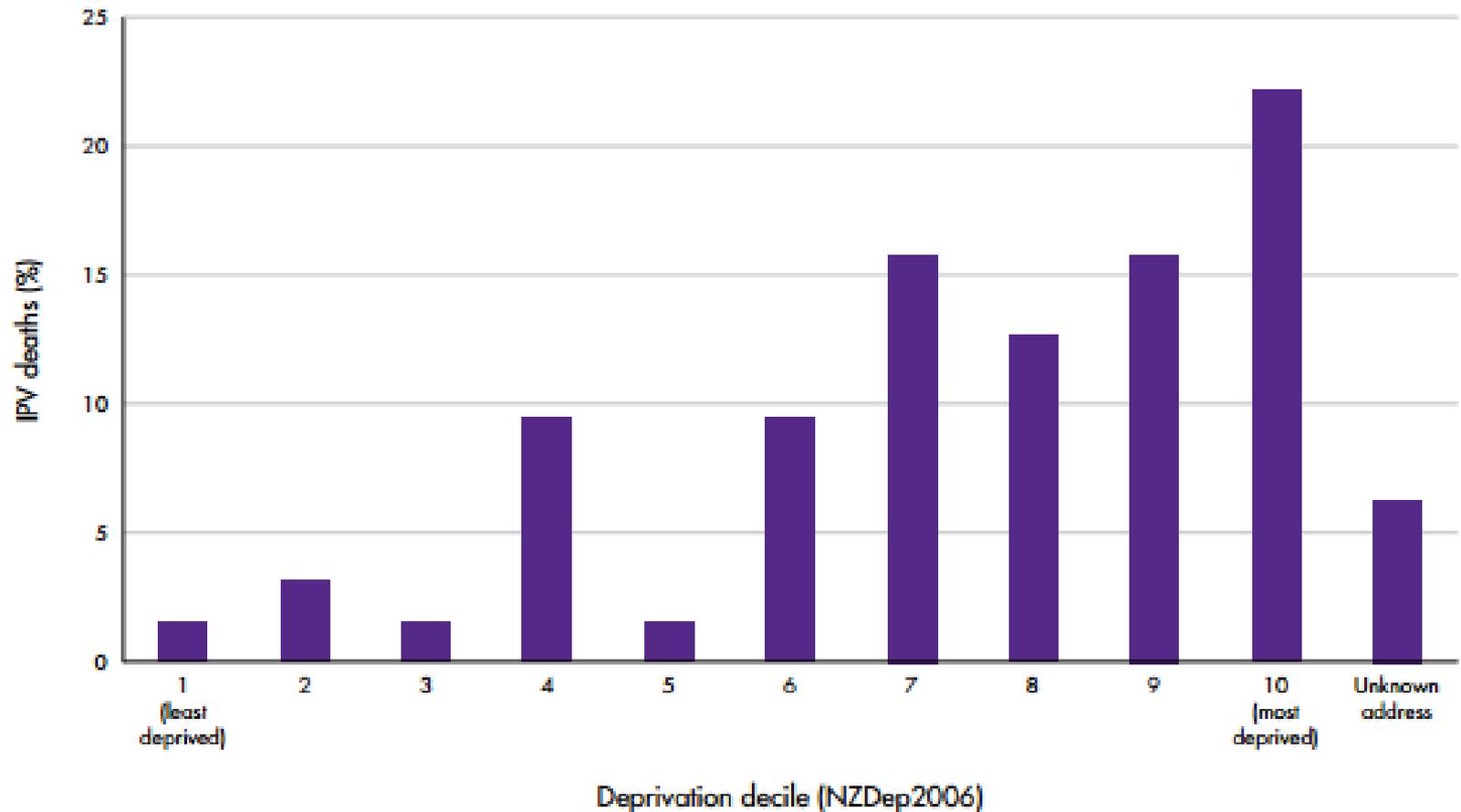
IPV = intimate partner violence.

CAN = child abuse and neglect.

IFV = intrafamilial violence.

# Deprivation

Figure 12: Deprivation decile (NZDep2006) of deceased in IPV deaths, New Zealand, 2009–12



IPV = intimate partner violence.



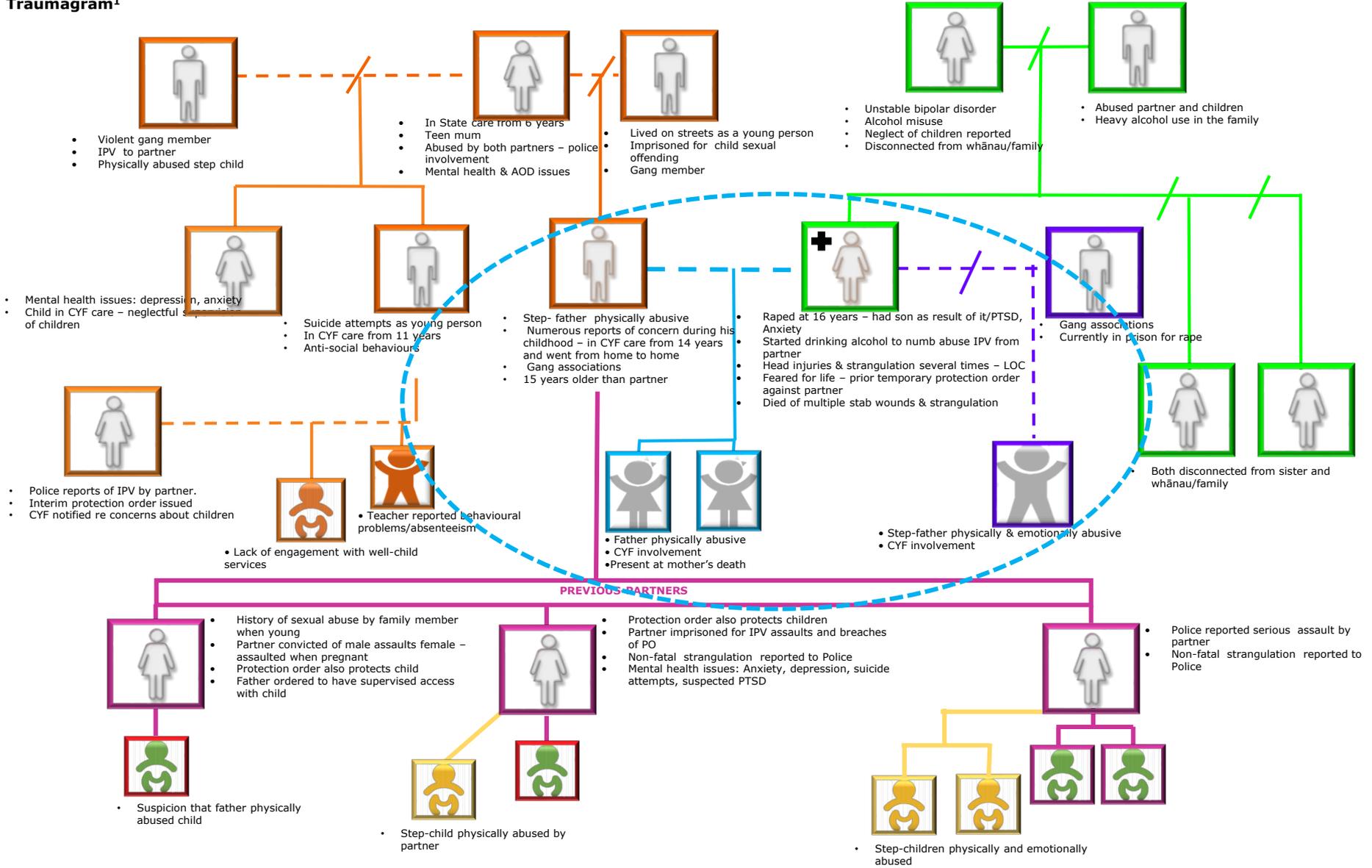
## Unresolved Trauma and Intergeneration Transmission



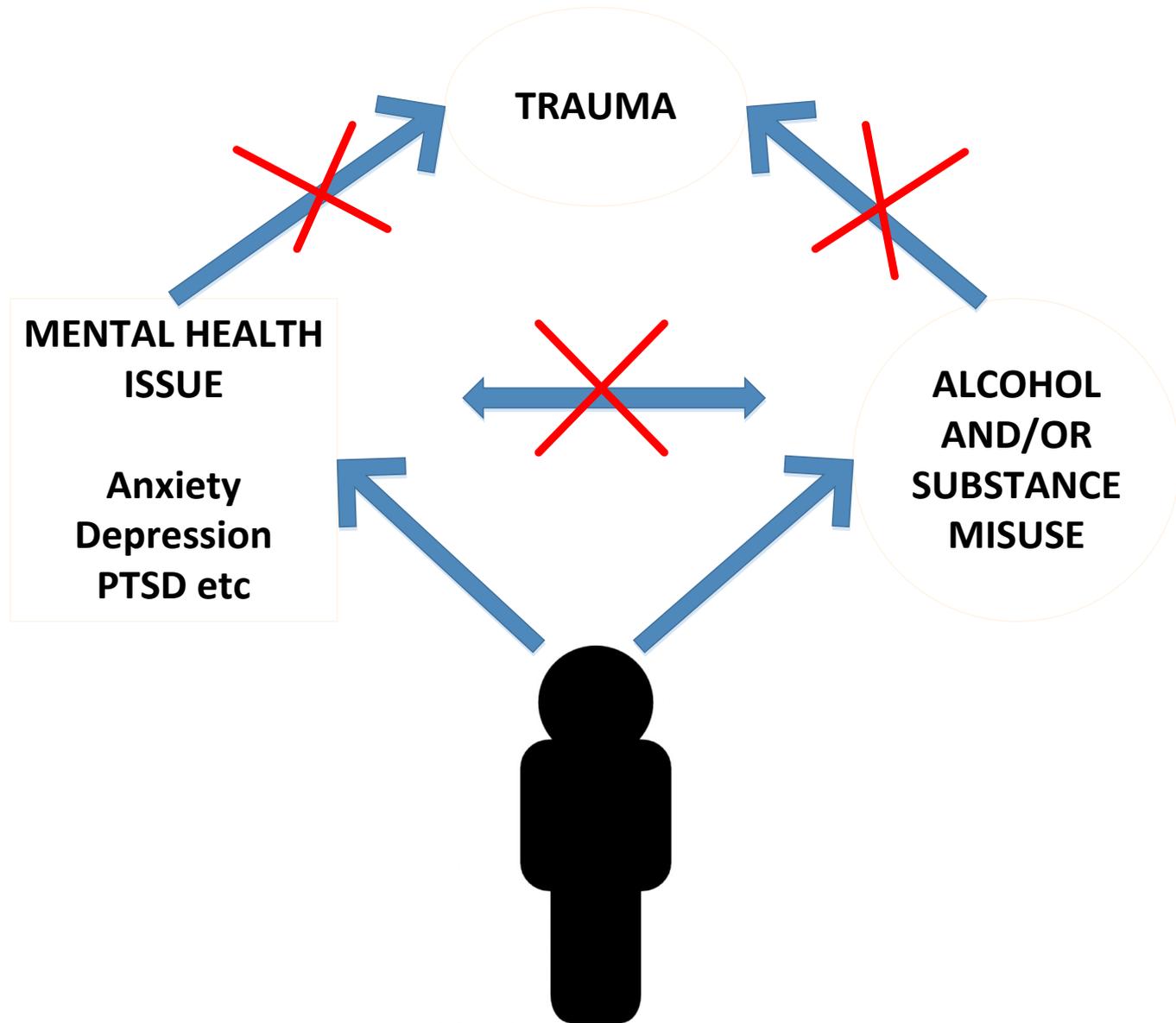
# Traumagram

- Whakapapa – family tree except it documents history of trauma and associated behaviours:
  - As a young person
    - parental abuse, mental health and alcohol and substance abuse
    - Child abuse and sexual violence
    - Social and behavioural status
    - State care/ number of homes
  - Relationship status – including step-parent/step-child status
  - Health, mental health, suicide attempts
  - Alcohol and substance abuse
  - Connection to whānau/culture
  - Criminal and family violence history
  - Non-fatal strangulation
  - Protection orders and any breaches
  - Police reports of family violence
  - Perpetration or victim status
  - Gang association

# Traumagram<sup>1</sup>

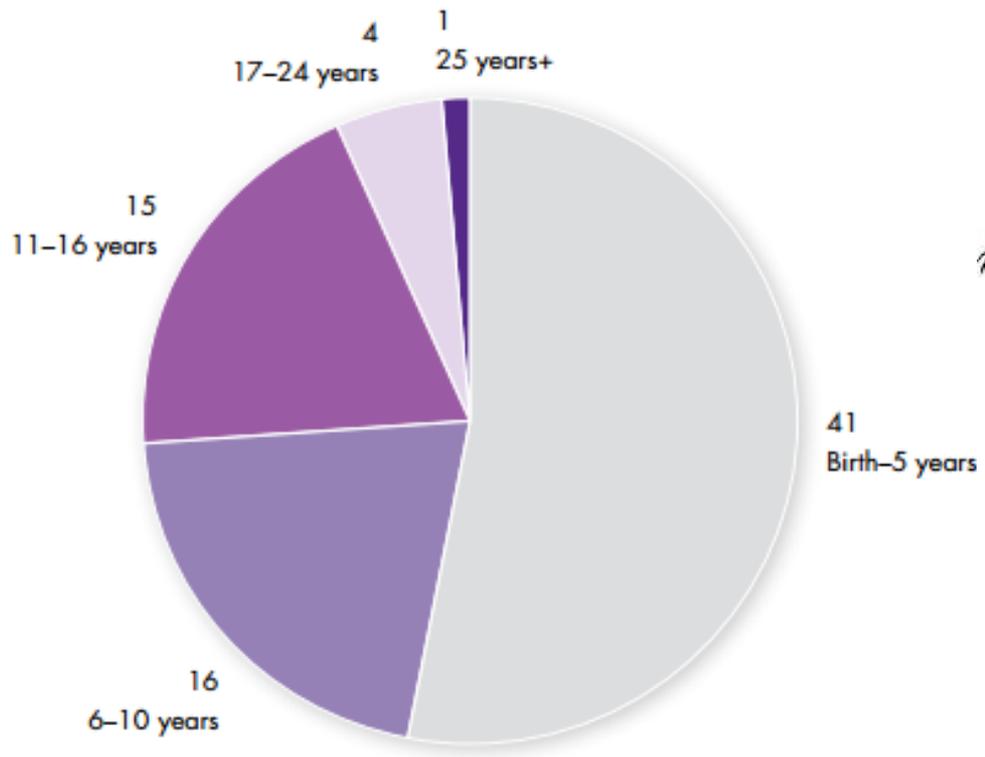


<sup>1</sup>Note: Created for the purposes of learning, reflective of similar trauma histories experienced by many contemporary whānau affected by family violence. © Denise Wilson (2015)



# Age of Children Present at a Death Event (n=77)

Figure 13: Age of children present at IPV and CAN death events, New Zealand, 2009–12



**237** child survivors of IPV and CAN death events

IPV = intimate partner violence.  
CAN = child abuse and neglect.

**SOCIETAL CONDITIONS**  
A. Disclosure of CAN or FV  
or  
B. Obvious signs of abuse

**NOT  
believed/  
Discredited  
/Ignored**

**NATURE OF RESPONSES  
(attitudes/behaviours)**  
Reinforce violence or  
abuse in whānau is  
**NORMAL**

**ADULT RELATIONSHIPS  
+/-  
CHILDREN**

Maintained by negative  
whānau/social responses:

- Whakamā (Shame)
  - Stigma
  - Secrets
  - Silence
  - Denial

**NORMALISATION**

- A. Violence
- B. Ways of interacting
- C. Becomes 'imposter tikanga'

**INCREASES LIKELIHOOD:**  
Being a VICTIM  
and/or  
a PERPETRATOR

**SHAPES EXPECTATIONS OF  
FUTURE RELATIONSHIPS**

**Some  
want a  
different  
life**

*Don't know what  
you don't know*



# Intergenerational Transmission of Violence

**NEED TO STOP THE BLAME GAME!**

When you don't know what you don't know,  
you do what you do know, and  
what you do know  
may not be safe or right, but  
you don't know any other way.

# CAN Death Type and Relationship of Offender to Deceased

**Table 12: Associations between death type and relationship of offender to deceased in CAN deaths, New Zealand, 2009–12**

DEATH TYPE	Number of CAN death events n=34	Number of CAN child deaths associated with death events n=37	Offender role n=34				
			Mother n=13	Father n=7	Step-father n=9	Female caregiver n=3	Unknown n=2
Fatal inflicted injury	19	19	1	4	9	3	2
Filicide and parental suicide*	8	11	5	3			
Neonaticide	4	4	4				
Fatal neglectful supervision	3	3	3				

CAN = child abuse and neglect.

\* Includes one filicide and suspected attempted suicide.

# Is Anybody Listening or Seeing?



- Whānau/family members often aware of violence and abuse
- Multiple agency involvement  
BUT...
- Lack of understanding
- Poor interagency collaboration
- Generally absence of safeguarding



# Family Violence Death Review Committee's 5th Report

- Thinking differently – changing our collective story about family violence
  - Pattern of harm
  - Form of entrapment
  - Reframe empowerment and safety as collective endeavours
- STOP ASKING VICTIMS WHAT THEY ARE DOING ABOUT THEIR PARTNER'S VIOLENCE, AND HOW THEY ARE KEEPING THEMSELVES AND THEIR CHILDREN SAFE
- SHIFT THE FOCUS ON TO THE OFFENDER AND WORKING WITH THEM TO STOP THEIR VIOLENCE
- Child protection is about the protection of their mothers – the abuse of a partner is a parenting decision

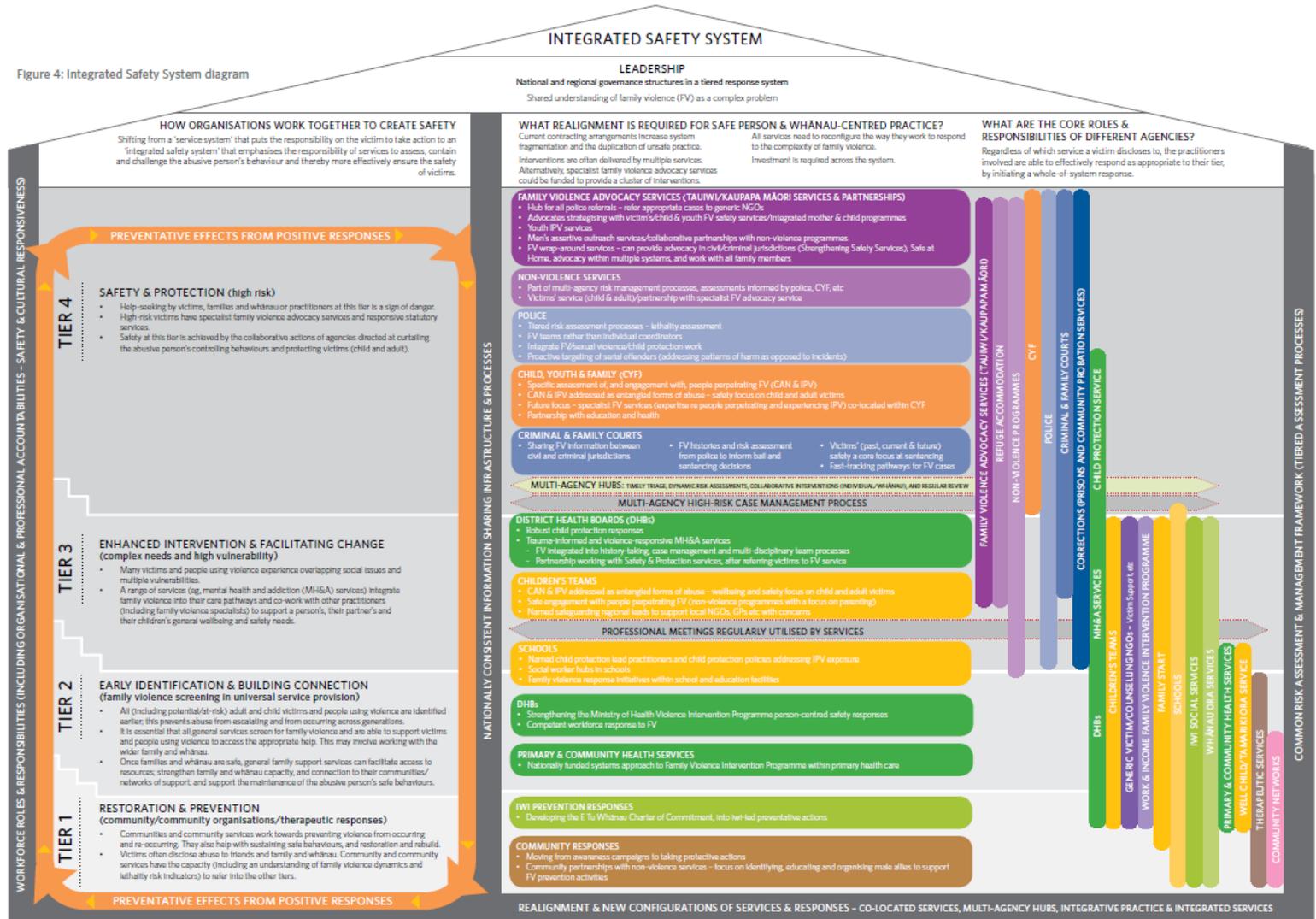
# Map of the Current System – Fragmented Islands of Practice



Note: This figure is taken from pp24-25 of the *Fifth Report of the Family Violence Death Review Committee*, available to download at: [www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/mrc/tvdr/publications-and-resources/publication/2434/](http://www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/mrc/tvdr/publications-and-resources/publication/2434/).

# Acting Differently – System integration necessary for transformation

Figure 4: Integrated Safety System diagram



Note: This figure is taken from pp66-67 of the Fifth Report of the Family Violence Death Review Committee, available to download at: [www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/mrc/twrc/publications-and-resources/publication/2434/](http://www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/mrc/twrc/publications-and-resources/publication/2434/).



**Changing Our Conversations**

# Successful Whānau



Johnny and Hikurangi Ngauamo  
Courtesy of Taima Campbell

# It is **NOT** an incident of family violence



Domestic violence is **long-term** patterns of **cumulative harm** with compounding effects

Involves **coercive control** (strategies include threats, control, surveillance, manipulation, social isolation)

# It is NOT “just a domestic”



Minimises & normalises serious and potentially life-threatening issues

– people don't feel they have to respond

# Family violence is **NOT** mutual acts of violence

**Deliberate acts of abuse/violence** (physical, psychological, sexual, financial, and/or spiritual) **by one person** onto another or others

“Mutuality” comes when a partner resists and tries to protect themselves

Work out who is the **Primary Victim** & who is the **Predominate Aggressor**



# Women CANNOT simply leave



They are **entrapped** in their relationship

Victims **do not have** the necessary **autonomy and agency**.

They navigate potentially volatile and dangerous contexts of **coercion, threats and control**

# Alcohol and substance misuse is a symptom of trauma



Used to **block out the trauma and violence** experienced on a daily basis – often without help or support

We need to recognise the **trauma – mental health – alcohol and drug misuse connection** not dismiss these

# Contrary to popular belief victims do ask for help



Women who are killed have asked for help of multiple agencies and people – no one listens or acknowledges the seriousness of the violence they live with.

# Partner violence and child abuse & neglect are entangled



If women are being abused,  
likelihood children as well,  
and

if children are being abused  
their mothers are probably also  
being abused



# Calling it for what it is!

- No impartial account
  - Misrepresentations :
    - Hide perpetrator's action(s)
    - Over-focus on what victims are not doing/should be doing
    - Conceals victim's acts of resistance (counters notions of learned helplessness, passivity, etc)
- What are the systemic issues and the interactions between people?
  - Language used
  - Colonial discourses
  - Functional links between colonialism and western mental health traditions
    - Medical model – pathologizes responses to violence
    - Trauma-based versus violence-based approaches



Hine and Tane have a **volatile relationship**, which is characterised by lots of arguing, drinking and fighting. **They both get physical**. Last night there was a domestic incident and Hine got hurt. While agencies are aware that **Hine can give as good as she can get**, she is **failing to protect her children from witnessing violence in their home**. **Hine needs to leave Tane and stop drinking**, so her kids can have a stable home environment that is violence free. Lots of agencies have been involved but **Hine keeps choosing to stay** with Tane and **continue drinking**, rather than make the changes needed for her kids. **Hine needs to put her children needs over hers** and her partner's.



# Response Based Practice

- Questions accepted (and unquestioned) concepts and understandings
- Counters deficit-based approaches ... instead focuses on potentials and existing abilities
- Focuses on contexts within which interactions and actions occur
- Acts of resistance

[www.responsebasedpractice.com](http://www.responsebasedpractice.com)

Richardson, C., & Wade, A. (2013). Creating islands of safety: Contesting failure to protect and mother blaming in child protection cases of paternal violence against children and mothers. In R. Carlton & C. Richardson (Eds.), *Failure to protect: Moving beyond gendered responses* (pp. 146-166). Black Point, NS, Canada: Fernwood.



# Misuse of Language

- Hides violence
- Confuses & diminishes offender's responsibility
- Hides victim's resistance
- Blames & pathologizes victims



Tane has a **known history to multiple agencies of using coercive controlling behaviours towards Hine**, as well as his previous partners. Hine and Tane have been in a relationship for ten years. Tane is 15 years older than Hine; they **met when Hine was 16 and a young mother** of her first child, Jason, who was **conceived as the result of rape**. Hine has had two children, both daughters, with Tane. Tane has **strangled Hine before to the point that she has lost consciousness**, and he has **threatened to kill her if she leaves him**. Hine's use of alcohol has **increased over the years as a way of numbing and blocking out the abuse**. Both her **parents were alcohol dependent**. Hine **violently resists Tane's abuse**, she has **armed herself with a knife to try and stop him assaulting her**. Last night Tane was **verbally abusing and threatening to beat Arapeta** for truanting from school. Hine **grabbed a broom and stood in front of Arapeta**, she **threatened to hit Tane** with the broom if he approached them. **Tane grabbed a bottle of wine and smashed it onto Hine's head**, causing her to fall to the ground. Tane then **kicked Hine repeatedly in her back and head**. Arapeta was screaming and ran to his mother's aid. A **neighbour heard Arapeta's screaming and called the Police**. This was an **opportunity for the Police to intervene and put in place a plan to curtail Tane's ability to continue abusing his partner and three children**.



# Realising Potential and Promoting Safety and Wellbeing

- When victims ask for help – they have recognised that they can no longer ‘fix’ or live with the violence. They ask for help or disclose because they NEED HELP
- Requires:
  - Responsive services and people working in them.
  - “Helping” services to understand people’s stories and contexts of their distress

# Need to Rethink Safety Planning to Empower



- A **dangerous praxis mismatch**  
Places burden onto already burdened women to keep themselves and their tamariki safe
- Absolves perpetrator accountability
  - Prior help-seeking has been ignored/not acted on
  - Live in contexts of entrapment
  - Under coercive control that obstructs autonomy
  - Threats against their and their children's lives (and pets)
  - Acts of resistance are anticipated and thwarted



**Changing Our Conversations**



# Impact of marginalisation on whānau

- More than coercive control
- Often not just violence but multiple stressors
- It is tangled with the negative outcomes of colonisation
- Those living with harmful family violence are also facing daily stressors associated with poverty and unemployment
- E.g. many Māori women are young:
  - with children
  - low levels of education
  - little money
  - live in poor housing
  - more likely to get negative responses like discrimination when seeking help,

*Must not forget that while Māori are over-represented in the family violence statistics, it occurs across all sectors of our communities*



# Thinking differently: Māori Tane

- We need:
- to focus on perpetrators and working with them to stop their violence
- to focus on perpetrators and working WITH them to stop their violence
- Need a range of ways to work with Māori tane, such as kaupapa Māori offender rehabilitation to learn new ways of interacting and how to sustain non-violent behaviours

*The Family Violence Death Review Committee is advocating for collective responses that involve agencies, whānau and communities*



# Prevention and restoration go together

- Many pepi are born into whānau where violence has been common across the generations
- Need to focus on helping tane to stop their violence, we need to also work with whānau - prevention is about interrupting intergenerational patterns of violence
- Practices that are based on Māori cultural traditions that provide alternative and mana-enhancing ways of interacting are likely to transform whānau

*Te Whakaruruhau Whānau Ora  
Service offers a promising kaupapa  
Māori approach – they work on the  
notion that keeping children safe  
involves helping women to be safe –  
this also means working with tane  
to stop their violence*



# Integrated system with whānau-centred responses

- Deficit approaches unhelpful for understanding Māori whānau experiences of violence
- Offer better support to whānau
- We need a safety and whānau ora approach
- Safety is about:
  - Ongoing support by agencies, safe whānau, and communities
  - Addressing multiple issues for victims, users of violence and whānau
  - Upholding the mana and dignity of whānau and its members, and their cultural identities
  - Providing opportunities for healing from trauma and violence for all whānau members

*Whānau need a range of responses, ideally from one service that can be easily accessed.  
Kaupapa Māori services are essential.*