Reaching Out:

Developing a framework to engage whānau with multiple and complex needs.

A SUMMARY REPORT OCTOBER 2018

What it Takes

Acknowledgement

A wholehearted thanks to the practitioners who participated in this project while continuing to do the everyday mahi with whānau. Thank you for your warmth, courage, willingness to 'give things a go' and reflect with candour and tenacity. Through our korero, reciprocity and the Reaching Out Framework has grown and developed – we have learned an enormous amount. We listened to your feedback and practice experiences and wove them into the Reaching Out Engagement Framework throughout this projects journey. We hope you will continue to adapt and share it with your colleagues. Maintaining relational priority is essential, especially when the mahi is tough. You shared your practice with us warts and all, we celebrated, we tried to understand and then you rolled up your sleeves and took action. Your commitment to the whānau you work with is inspirational.

Poipoia te kakano

Kia pua wai

Contents

Executive Summary

Engaging whānau[i] with multiple complex needs is an on-going challenge for social and health services (Barlow et al. 2005; Lindahl, Risser & Lovejoy, 2006, Ellis, 2014). There are a small, but significant number of whānau across Aotearoa who have grown up with chronic toxic stress (Appendix 1). The burden of this continues into their adult lives and with their whānau. This makes raising their tamariki[ii] in different circumstances and environments very difficult.

It's essential to be able to engage these whānau to support them to tackle some of the root causes of toxic stress. This can happen by building capability, increasing bandwidth, emotion regulation and executive functioning (Centre on the Developing Child, 2017). These capabilities can best be nurtured and grown in a relationship. This leads to whānau mirroring these new relationships and learnings with their tamariki, reducing the damaging effects of chronic toxic stress and improving the outcomes (Ellis M., 2012).

There is significant evidence that any service or programmatic approach needs to incorporate explicit and specific models for developing and maintaining effective relationships with families. Some examples are the My Working World Framework (Ellis, 2016), Family Partnership Model and the Helping Families Programme (Davis & Day, 2010; Day et al, 2011; Day, Ellis & Harris 2011, 2012, 2015; Ellis & Day, 2012, 2018).

Improving engagement to reduce toxic stress in whānau is a key focus across Aotearoa at policy level and with community and organisation leaders. Practitioners agree, consistently identifying the relationship as central to helping whānau make positive change in their lives and with their tamariki. This aligns with practice conundrums and priorities internationally.

Evidence suggests that around 85% of positive outcomes are predictive on the quality of the relationship. A review of 151 clinical studies carried out in 2015 (Sampio, Sequeira, & Lluch Canut, 2015) consistently "found that the relationship was the most important positive predictive factor, regardless of the intervention".

An intervention can be thoroughly researched, manualised, apps developed, online resources developed and usually these all come with an endless supply of fashionable tools. What remains critical to successful change is *'how'* the whānau experiences and sees the practitioner. This determines whether they will let them through the front door or not. *How you are,* **not** *what you do* is an essential first test for whānau who have largely found services to be at best 'useless' at worst 'harmful'.

This summary report briefly outlines the process involved in developing and testing an engagement framework to support practitioners[iii] to engage whānau in sustainable partnerships for change, the changes this has made to practice and the effects this has had on whānau engagement. Included in Fig 1 are the changes to engagement practices identified by the practitioners in their stories of change. The changes and outcomes they either noticed in whānau or were told by whānau, including changes for parents and their tamariki. (Fig 2)

A core principle underpinning the development and testing of all components of the framework was to maintain relational priority[iv] with the practitioners. No programme content was included, ensuring the framework solely reflects *how* to theoretically and practically support sustained partnerships for change – *with any whānau using any helping service*. The theories of change and relationship have been central to retaining practitioners in the framework development. These have been modelled developing relationships across the sites, with approximately 78 practitioners throughout the life of the project.

We explored practice with them, created initial prototypes, introduced and practiced these in workshops, invited practitioners to test these out with 'hardly-reached' whānau, invited purposeful reflection and adapted the components iteratively.

Section 1 outlines the development process and the content of the prototype. The artefacts or the *Reaching Out: Navigating the journey for change* Engagement Framework (summary p14) is a synthesis of the most important factors described by practitioners about engagement, whānau lived experience, previous experience in successfully engaging 'hard to reach' families in the UK and the best literature available. We have included a broad picture of how the Reaching Out Framework was implemented. These have been categorised:

Green – easily adopted into relational practice without adaption

Orange – adapted by practitioners with whānau, or require support and permissions from supervisors, managers and/or organisations

Red – largely not adopted or adapted

Section 2 expands on four core insights. These are discussed with integrative stories from practice and quotes to highlight. These include:

1. **Kaupapa needs to be seen and lived**

2. **Respecting small steps leads to engagement for change**

3. **Changing Constructs to achieve sustainability**

4. **Tools make collaboration and change feel simple and easy**

Whānau living under toxic stress require the practitioner and services to maintain relational priority. The Reaching Out Framework offers an evidence informed, culturally appropriate, practical framework that supports practitioners' relational practice. In particular, engaging whānau in a partnership for change. The framework offers a shared 'common sense'. The tools help build and maintain a partnership for change, increase executive function, emotion regulation and problem solving, resulting in increased capability and

confidence in reaching hardly-reached whānau. The tools are founded on an explicit kaupapa and a theoretically robust relationship. When expressed practically, the positive effect is experienced by both the practitioner and the whānau. A new, more helpful narrative emerges, where practitioners know how to establish and maintain an effective relationship and whānau build their capabilities within a positive relationship that leads to positive changes that enable them to raise their tamariki to grow and flourish.

FIG 1

What changed on the journey for the practitioner
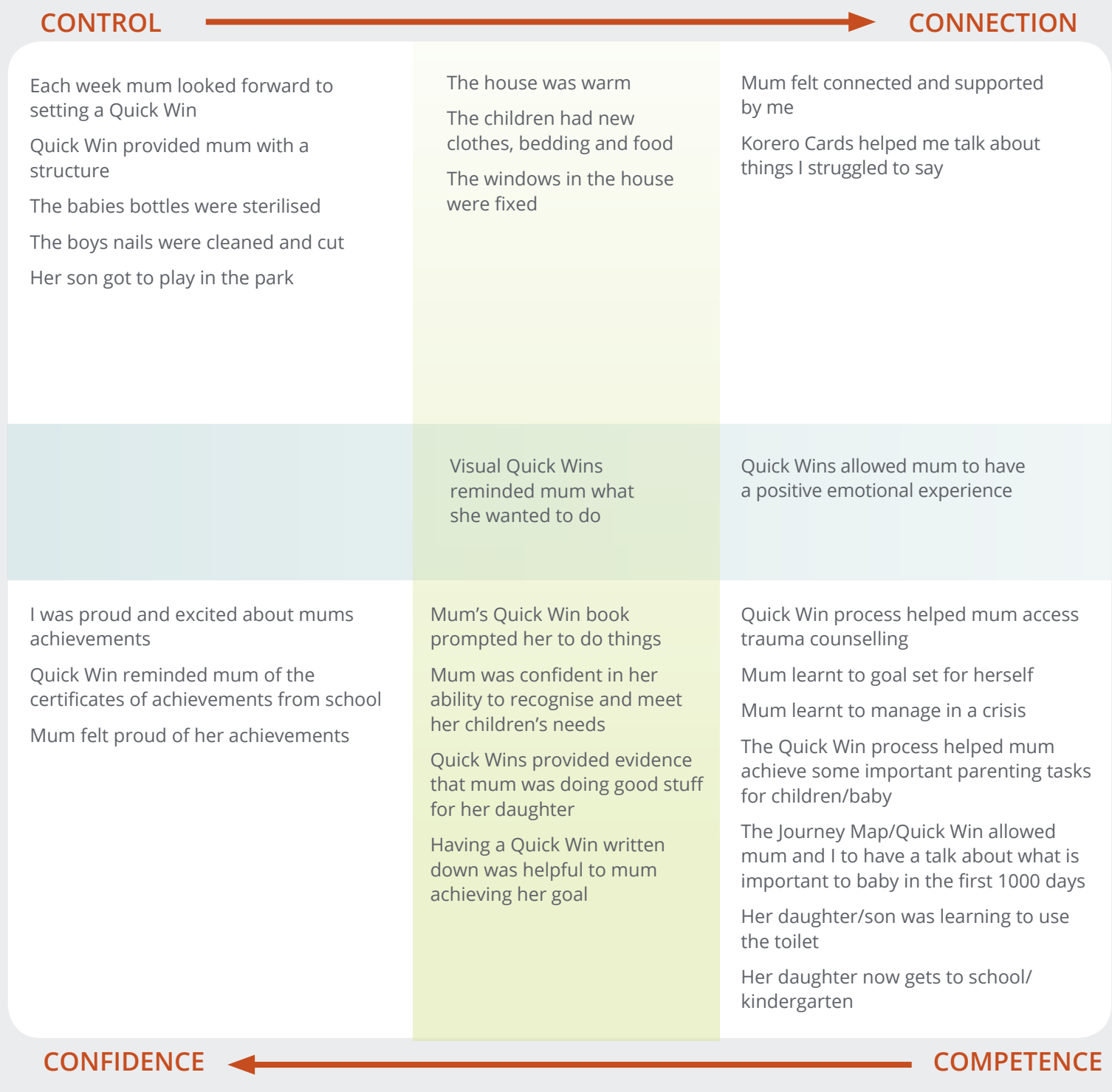
CONTROL → **CONNECTION**

I gave parents a chance to think about things for themselves

I stopped trying to fix things

I let whānau come up with their own decisions

I worked at clients pace eg. 15 min visits

Quick Wins provided a clear plan for me and the whānau

The journey map helped parents see I'm working with them, not against them

The waka image helped me work in partnership with clients

I liked the visual tools

I used empathy in my everyday practice

Being empathic helped build trust and rapport

Korero Cards got conversations happening

I've learnt not to minimise parents thoughts and feelings

I've learnt to construe parents positively

Quick Win gave us a time-frame for achieving the work

Quick Win helped parents to problem solve themselves

I've learnt to let whānau come up with their own plan and decisions

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I respect small steps parents make

Korero cards created a space to have a conversation with 'hard to reach dads'

Korero Cards helped me ask open questions

Korero Cards gave me a set of questions to ask 'hard to reach' whānau

I respected whānau lived realities

I had more confidence to stay in the moment when mum was in a spin

Quick Win helped me complete my assessments and Child Family Plans

Quick Win process increased my motivation to work with mum

Quick Win helped the parent achieve and make the Child Family Plan realistic

The grand goals can be broken into Quick Wins

I got really excited when there was small meaningful change for mum

Storm Riding tool would give parents something tangible to hold onto

The changes from using tools with mums was so exciting, but yet so simple

The visual tools explained how I want to work with parents

The Visual Quick Win helped whānau understand what to do

I go for goals

I have learnt to be in the moment - more present – be more empathic, reflect back what I hear her saying

Quick Wins are short, sharp and simple

I've noticed that talking about riding the storm brings clients down from their stress

Tools helped provide a frame for the work

Quick Wins form makes the goal more concrete

I'm going to use the breathing and relaxation sheet – lets take a moment and breathe

CONFIDENCE ← **COMPETENCE**

FIG 2

What changed for the whānau and their tamariki

CONTROL → **CONNECTION**

Each week mum looked forward to setting a Quick Win

Quick Win provided mum with a structure

The babies bottles were sterilised

The boys nails were cleaned and cut

Her son got to play in the park

The house was warm

The children had new clothes, bedding and food

The windows in the house were fixed

Mum felt connected and supported by me

Korero Cards helped me talk about things I struggled to say

Visual Quick Wins reminded mum what she wanted to do

Quick Wins allowed mum to have a positive emotional experience

I was proud and excited about mums achievements

Quick Win reminded mum of the certificates of achievements from school

Mum felt proud of her achievements

Mum's Quick Win book prompted her to do things

Mum was confident in her ability to recognise and meet her children's needs

Quick Wins provided evidence that mum was doing good stuff for her daughter

Having a Quick Win written down was helpful to mum achieving her goal

Quick Win process helped mum access trauma counselling

Mum learnt to goal set for herself

Mum learnt to manage in a crisis

The Quick Win process helped mum achieve some important parenting tasks for children/baby

The Journey Map/Quick Win allowed mum and I to have a talk about what is important to baby in the first 1000 days

Her daughter/son was learning to use the toilet

Her daughter now gets to school/kindergarten

CONFIDENCE ← **COMPETENCE**

KAUPAPA

Section 1

Developing an enagagement framework

Introduction

We developed an engagement framework that represents the principles and practices needed to engage and sustain a relationship with whānau in the context of the journey of change. The skills and techniques involved in targeted reduction of toxic stress across whānau lives was beyond the scope of this project. We worked on the assumption that services and practitioners had this expertise, but with a poor or ineffective relationship, are unable to bring their expertise to whānau. However, there was overlap.

For example, when faced with a mum who is *'spinning out'*, the *Storm Riding*ᵛ process for helping her manage this and stay engaged with the practitioner involves emotion regulation skills and/ or practical problem solving. This strengthens the engagement and builds capability in the parent and reduces toxic stress.

> "She was spinning, bubba was upset, and I can get really stuck with this mum. I used the whirlpool idea (Storm Riding) and just stepped through the questions – 'what do you need to do?' and we did it. We went for a walk instead of sitting. It (tool) helped me with what questions to ask and then think about how I could help her. It brought her back down and it brought me back down. I usually go to 'fix it' mode or am focussed on finding a solution. But this was me just being in the moment with her and her paddling through the whirlpool. It worked, it was a nice visit, a really nice visit. It changed things for her and me."

Practitioners are asked to engage whānau on the journey for change, sometimes in the most difficult situations.

> "We walk into some really difficult situations sometimes. I'm sitting there trying to facilitate a conversation between people that are almost hitting each other, I've got to watch where I'm standing, I could get abused and I've got sweat running down my back and in my head, I'm going 'I don't know what to do, I don't get paid enough for this."

It's vitally important to support practitioners both practically and emotionally to confidently use tools and a relational framework to engage effectively with whānau who are often stressed and 'just' getting through their day. A relational framework needs to 'do what it says on the tin'. It needs to be sufficiently responsive to be adapted into practice. To strengthen current best practice and to invite and facilitate change in ineffective practices. This mirrors the engagement for change processes practitioners are asked to do with whānau.

> "I have to be very aware because I can run way ahead (of clients). They're the ones that have to be running way ahead of me in a way, they have to be leading it, I need to focus on staying with them. The empathy does that I think."

Often there is high anxiety in practitioners and their organisations associated with rapid response to risk and closing the risk. However, we came to this project with the deeply held principle and experience of maintaining an invitational, sticking with approach and facilitating the process so the struggling parent can define their own path, with open and kind support. This actively supports the parent to maintain the choice and control in determining their journey of change, enabling lasting change. Put another way, 'the more control the parent has the more positive change is likely to happen'. We must support practitioners and organisations to 'manage the anxiety and be courageous enough to really face the problems and to know when and how to act'. (Cottam, 2018). This is key to effective help.

> "To be truly kind, one needs to be able to distinguish a situation in which one ought to step in and help someone who is struggling, from a superficially similar situation in which one should step back and allow the struggling person to develop the requisite skills and sense of autonomy again and again, often in almost impossible circumstances." (Lear in Cottam H, 2018)

The challenge: to co-create a coherent easy to use framework that supports this complex dance.
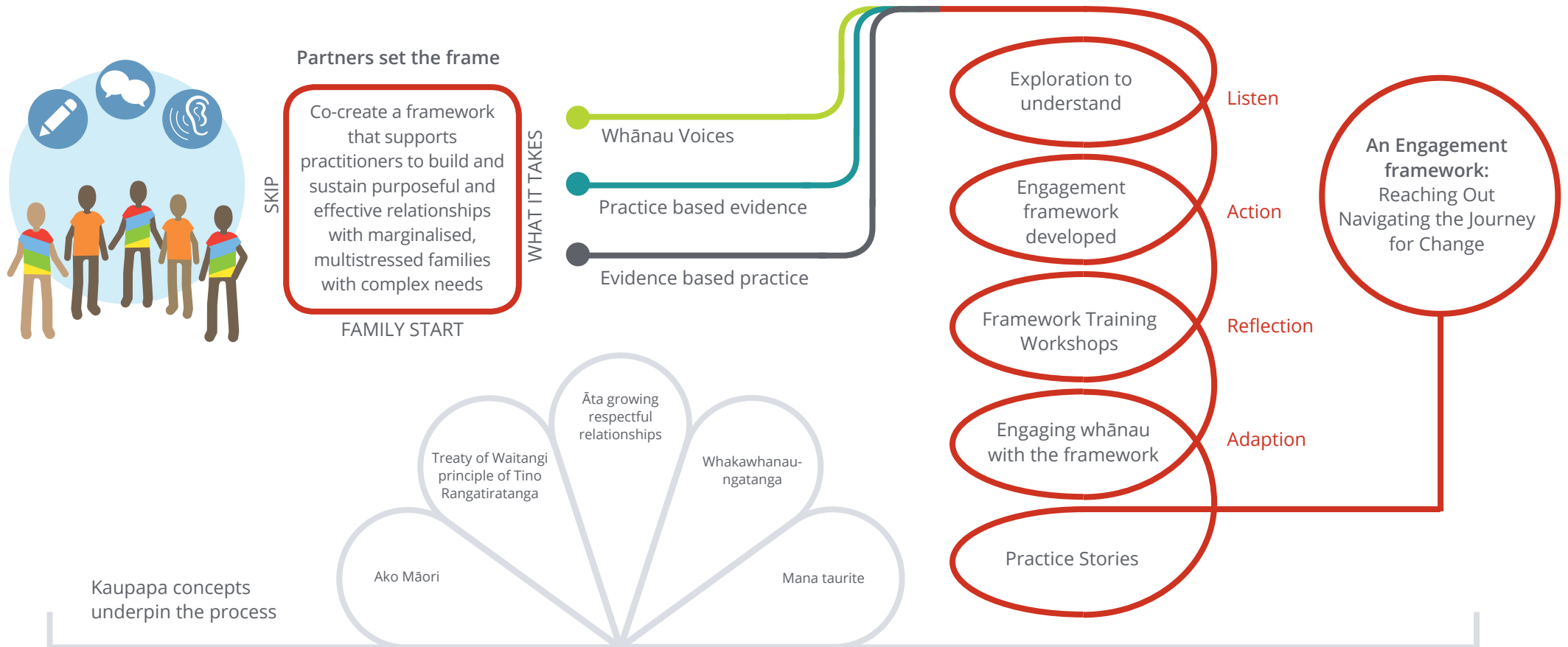
The Process of Developing an Engagement Framework

We used an integrated approach combining concepts from Kaupapa Maori research (Cram F, 2006), the principles of partnership working (Ellis & Day, 2018; Ellis M., 2017) and multiple cycles of Listening, Action, Reflection and Adaption from co-design. This combination enabled us to explicitly model the principles and processes essential to developing an effective partnership. We thought to enable practitioners to engage with this process, we needed to develop sufficient relationship where a shared purpose, connection and trust were established. We wanted to strengthen learning and change by modelling the most effective relationship for change - the *Partnership Compass* (Ellis & Day, 2018; Ellis M., 2012). We have learned from previous experiences of working in the 'relationship space' that regardless of the context, relationship is critical for success in change and learning.
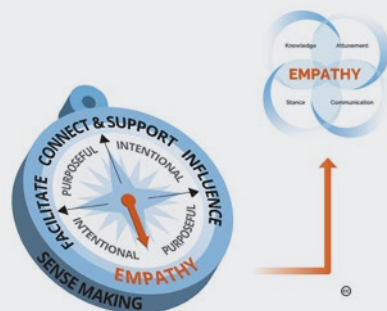
We asserted that the principles, characteristics and skills needed to engage were present in the workforce, but may be unconscious, unarticulated or under-developed. By using a partnership framework we wanted to create opportunities to develop deep understanding about the engagement processes with whānau who are most in need, but least likely to be engaged with in ways that help. We would be the navigators, attuning to the practitioners and working dynamically through the processes of understanding, co-creation and change. Finally, we thought it was important to be explicit about the kaupapa underpinning the What it Takes team.

Partners set the frame

Co-create a framework that supports practitioners to build and sustain purposeful and effective relationships with marginalised, multistressed families with complex needs

SKIP

FAMILY START

WHAT IT TAKES

Whānau Voices

Practice based evidence

Evidence based practice

Exploration to understand — Listen

Engagement framework developed — Action

Framework Training Workshops — Reflection

Engaging whānau with the framework — Adaption

Practice Stories

An Engagement framework: Reaching Out Navigating the Journey for Change

Kaupapa concepts underpin the process

Āta growing respectful relationships

Treaty of Waitangi principle of Tino Rangatiratanga

Whakawhanau-ngatanga

Ako Māori

Mana taurite

Kaupapa Concepts

How we understood and used these concepts

We used the Partnership Compass © to express Āta. Intentionally seeking and facilitating collaboration with key stakeholders (primarily practitioners and their supervisors), to work together with a shared purpose. Acknowledging and facilitating the process to include the different, but equally important roles.

It's a combination of *sense-making* through *empathic action*, dialling up and down the roles of supporter, connector, facilitator and influencer to navigate relationship across the duration of the project to achieve the outcome (develop an engagement framework).

(Please request the Reaching Out: Navigating the journey for change. Protype: version 3 for fuller detail)

Āta growing respectful relationships

Āta (Pohatu 2005) relates specifically to building and nurturing relationships. It focuses on our relationships, negotiating boundaries, working to create and hold safe space with congruent behaviours. It reminds us about how to behave when engaging in relationships with people, kaupapa and environments. It incorporates both the notion of planning and strategy.

Treaty of Waitangi principle of Tino Rangatiratanga

Holding an open invitation for stakeholders to participate when and how they wanted to. Being open and respectful of teams process and encouraging them to determine how and where the co-creation process occurred. Supporting stakeholders, particularly practitioner, to have 'meaningful control' over their participation and the processes in this project.

Whakawhanaungatanga

Making meaningful connections with all stakeholders in culturally appropriate ways. Discovering kinship through whakapapa, whānau, common experiences, shared stories, cultural values, customs and practices and collective responsibility to engage all whānau.

Ako Māori

Facilitating all aspects of the process and prototypes teaching and learning practices that are deeply embedded in the notion of *aroha mai aroha atu*, holding space that feels most nourishing to those involved.

Mana taurite

All stakeholders bring expertise to the table. We are particularly invested in valuing, highlighting and using practitioner and whānau voice and expertise to bring power into balance by holding their expertise centrally in the framework and any resources developed. Working to create equitable conditions and equality.

Partners set the frame

We drew together whānau voices from Aotearoa and the UK (Helping Families Programme (Ellis M., 2012)[vi], The Southern Initiative Early Years Challenge (The Southern Initiative & Auckland Co-design Lab, 2017), SKIP Empathy interviews[vii], A Good Start in Life – Co-designing with parents (Connect & Co Ltd, 2017, Whānau voices).

We integrated the relational expertise from practitioners working at the coalface with learnings - successes and failures – from previous relationally focussed work with complex whānau. Including A Good Start in Life[viii], High Need Families Project and the subsequent Helping Families Programme[ix] and Family Partnership Model[x] *(Practice Based Evidence)* and national and international engagement literature from a broad range of sectors *(Evidenced Based Practice).*

The national Family Start collective were identified as partners to explore current practices in engagement, to develop and try out any ideas and tools for a potential 'engagement framework'. We extended the invitation to participate at different stages of the project to front line practitioners, supervisors, managers, quality and service design and support personnel in Oranga Tamariki associated with Family Start and SKIP.

We cycled through a process of LISTENING-ACTION-REFLECTION-ADAPTION throughout the project using journaling, peer debrief, analysed notes and an external 'reflector' partner.

Exploration to Understand

Whānau voices[xi]

Whānau who live with chronic toxic describe feeling *'isolated and lonely, judged and overwhelmed'* (The Southern Initiative, 2018). They want relationships where they are treated with

"RESPECT / PROPERLY LISTENED TO / GET ON WITH DOING PRACTICAL STUFF THAT HELPS / BELIEVED THAT IT'S HARD / A NORMAL PERSON THAT GETS ME / HELP ME STEER THE CAR /, BUT LET ME DRIVE IT IT'S MY CAR / GIVE ME CHOICE / TELL ME WHEN I DO SOMETHING POSITIVE / STICK WITH ME WHEN I'M GOING OFF / LISTEN MORE THAN TALK / HELP ME FIND MY IDEAS / WHAT SUITS MY HOUSE/

'REALLY GOOD LISTENER / KIND AND COMPASSIONATE / AVAILABILITY / FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY / DOING WITH AND FOR /, BEING HUMAN / NORMAL / DOWN TO EARTH / BEING FUNNY / BELIEVING AND BELIEVING IN / BEING RESPECTFUL / UNDERSTANDING OUR FAMILY / ENTHUSIASTIC / PACEY/ NON-JUDGEMENTAL / STICKING WITH /.

During the development and implementation of the High Needs Family Project in the UK (2012), whānau said the things that worked included:

"…FEELING LIKE I WAS IN CONTROL ALL THE TIME / JUST DOING LITTLE STEPS / BEING POSITIVE ABOUT EVERYTHING / NOT BEING FORCED / DOING STUFF HOW I WANTED TO / GIVING ME IDEAS THAT FITTED WITH ME / GETTING A BOND / NOW I'VE GOT THAT BOND WITH [CHILDS NAME / COMING BACK AND SMILING EVERY TIME – EVEN AFTER I TOLD HER WHERE TO GO /LEAVING WHEN I SAID, EVEN IF IT WAS AFTER 5 MINUTES….FOR ME IT WAS A BIT OF A TEST / HE KEPT HIS WORD, SO I KEPT MINE / I DIDN'T WANT TO LET HIM DOWN IN THE END /."

There was consistency and familiarity in 'how' whānau described both the relationship and the practitioners in effective engagement in Aotearoa and the UK.

(Connect & Co Ltd, 2017) (Ellis M., 2012) (Cottam, 2018)

Practice Based Evidence

We sent a briefing document out via the collective executive, inviting participation in this process (Appendix 2). We visited 4 regions with 8 sites participating (approx. 58 practitioners, supervisors, managers and advisors). We used 'jump start story-telling' to share stories of success from their practice with each other and unpacked these in a shared reflective process. Their stories described 'good help', help that was offered in the context of a values driven, active, supportive and connected relationship. We explicitly identified the characteristics and skills practitioners already have to build an effective partnership.

We wanted practitioners to flourish and 'unleash' positive practices, be actively supported to do this and address barriers in an attuned relational way over time, mirroring the practitioner:whānau relationship. We briefly explored the barriers through a systems lens, however, our approach was to build something that would support growth in practice and become a more attractive alternative for practitioners, rather than orientate toward the common inclination to manage and address problems identified in practice and in effect 'get off track'. Our approach was not to ignore the barriers, but identify them and where they sat in the practitioners working world and in their

sphere of influence (Ellis M., 2016). We listened empathically and we invited them to think about what they needed to do to be able to focus available time and energy on possibility and growth through developing an engagement framework to support them practically. This mirrored the Storm Riding process.

Both the enabling factors and barriers have been fully explored and reported with recommendations in A Good Start in Life Action Research Project (Ellis M., A Good Start in Life: Action Research Project, 2017).

Evidence Based Practice

We completed a restricted literature review. We focussed on 'hardly-reached' whānau, 'engagement' and 'change'. We included recent work in Aotearoa and internationally.

There was a dearth of literature identifying the negative implications for parents engaging and participating in parenting programmes when they are burdened with toxic stress (Nock M, 2005). There were numerous papers supporting the *whānau voices* of feeling judged, *stigmatised, disrespected, suspicious* of and *alienated* from services and practitioners, (Barlow J, 2005). Whānau who do engage in programmes through coercion or when they or their children are under threat of state interference have extremely high dropout rates (40-60%). As they navigate the plethora of services, where several power inequities exist, a repetitive and unhelpful cycle is initiated. Blame is often located with parent/s, labelling them as *'resistant', 'lacking motivation'* and *'difficult'* (Kazdin A, 2000) (Barlow J, 2005) (Cottam, 2018) (Ellis M., 2012) (Day, Ellis, & Harris, 2010).

The same literature identifies building a relationship where trust, mutual respect and expertise, shared purpose, working together, identifying and achieving goals and sharing rights and responsibilities are effective. The recent ESR report (2016) proposed that sufficient fit between the client and service agency should be considered in relation to Culture, Framing & World views, Capabilities and Capitals and Behaviours & Attributes.

Through triangulating *whānau voices, practice-based evidence* and *evidence-based practice*, we distilled the essence of effective engagement and relational practice. These fell into three broad categories – Emotional connection and commitment (a set of values and principles that provide a foundation for relational work); Cognitive (understanding the theories of relationship and change involved in engagement); and Behaviours (the things we do or actions we take). All three categories included helpful constructs about engaging and maintain into partnerships for change with whānau.

Engagement Framework Developed

The Reaching Out: Navigating the journey for change

We developed the engagement framework to include the three inter-related components identified in the exploration. We used everyday language and respectively called these the *Head*, the *Heart* and the *Tools*. The first and second prototypes were refined between workshops and based on practice reflection. The third prototype includes a booklet describing all three components, a visual map using the waka-ama, with a river, hazards and rapid waters to represent the relationship journey, tools and guidance notes.

The framework aimed to achieve two things concurrently:

Firstly, to support practitioners to build a specific type of relationship – an empathy guided partnership for change. This involves intentionally acting to bring balance to the power imbalance that exist between a practitioner and whānau. It involves continuously facilitating give and take with whānau leading. The practitioner consciously and actively put parents in the lead position on the 'waka of change'. The practitioner influences and encourages the views, priorities and expertise of the whānau to be explored and expressed. This involves intentionally building and maintaining a relationship that invites open discussion and mutually agreed purpose throughout the work together. This is likely

to happen with every contact. It involves identifying, negotiating and resolving difficulties and conflict out loud. It involves thinking about how to be complimentary, rather than expert and work as a team to achieve changes that increase the care of whānau and their tamariki. It involves building trust by being honest and doing what you say you will do and being respectful by meeting the whānau where they are at throughout the journey.

Secondly, the relationship itself becomes a vehicle for change and growth to flourish. Emotion regulation and executive function are increased by working through the crisis and daily problems they face, learning can be nurtured, and parenting skills can be developed. Parents who are engaged in a partnership process learn to trust that someone has their back. hat someone will proactively support them to increase their internal and external resources to make a good life for themselves and their whānau. Consistently prioritise the wellbeing and development of their tamariki.

The following briefly outlines the contents.

Kaupapa

The **Kaupapa** underpins the 'Reaching Out' engagement framework. Holding onto core principles and reflecting on them helps practitioners stay dynamic in 'real life, on the ground practice.' It focusses on a set of principles that are particularly important to sustaining successful engagement of whānau who are 'hardly-reached' in Aotearoa.

Who's paddling the waka – intentionally navigating the work. Building a give and take relationship with choices that promote whānau leading (tino rangatiratanga).

Whanaungatanga & whakapapa – inviting whānau into relationships and establishing meaningful connections that are both culturally and professionally appropriate.

Mana tamaiti (tamariki) – building relationship capability with whānau to improve connections and provide a foundation to increase parenting capacity with tamaiti (tamariki).

Empathy: Habits of the heart and mind – using empathic action (a consciously used process of attitude, listening and sensing; communication), to see the world from the parent's perspective and dialling up the skills needed in a moment.

Keep it real: Upfront and out loud – demonstrating a deep respect for whānau, by having realistic, clear conversations about what's happening now and what can change immediately to reduce distress and take action.

Keep it Dynamic – intentionally developing an emotionally and practically supportive and connected relationship, as well as facilitating and influencing the change process. All guided by empathy.

Go for Goals – making a real and practical effort to identify and value whānau capabilities, resourcefulness and capacity for change.

"Wherever I go I am manuhiri" – showing respect by being curious about the kaupapa of the whānau and following their lead. Having open conversations about how you work together including, but not led by, your purpose and professional role.

Keeping Courage – maintaining a stance of humility and wholeheartedness. Demonstrating grit, perseverance and patience to co-create and move through change.

Tools

The Map offers a visual representation to help share the process with whānau. Few words are used. This encourages the practitioner to use it as a conversation prompt with the whānau. The map offers visual cues to stimulate conversations about the realities of life under the burden of toxic stress; what a collaborative relationship might involve; how change and opportunities for early success may occur and when whānau are in turmoil and how the practitioner might help them out of it.

The Partnership Compass helps the practitioner to engage and navigate an effective relationship through the journey of change. It represents the combination of sense-making (construing), through empathic action (mindset-how empathy works – sensing hearing – feeling – verbal and non-verbal communication) Empathy keeps the practitioner purposeful, while increasing bandwidth, emotion regulation and executive functioning in the parent. Empathy guides the practitioner to dial up and down the roles of supporter, connector, facilitator and influencer to navigate the relationship and maintain 'relational priority' over time.

The 4-C's Theory Of Change pays attention to specific relationship issues that increase the likelihood of engaging whānau who are under toxic stress. These include:

- Control – choice, power and autonomy
- Connection – whanaungatanga, whakapapa and mana tamaiti (tamariki)
- Competence – early skill building to enable more complex capability building
- Confidence – authentic development of confidence resulting from active participation in a relationship that increases executive function, emotion regulation and parenting skills

The Map
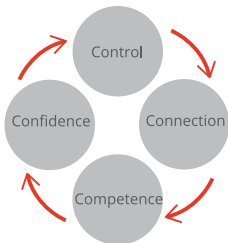
Korero Cards

Quick Wins

Storm-Riding

The Partnership Compass

The 4-C's Theory of Change
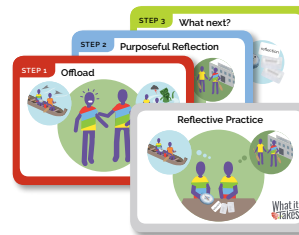
Thinking Caps

Reflective Practice Cards

Korero Cards help maintain relational priority. They offer prompts to start conversations about the relationship – the interpersonal space between the whānau and practitioner. They encourage whānau to be active and confident partners in this conversation.

Quick Wins are a high-speed problem management process. They're designed to strengthen the relationship, practically identify, harness and mobilize motivation and instil hope. They offer a practical way that gathers hard evidence to help build a picture of capacity for change with whānau. They help prevent drift and bring whānau-led purpose into the picture very early on.

Storm-Riding uses an explicit, facilitated process to work with whānau when they are in crisis, chaos or stressed out. It provides whānau with choice to 'suspend' the planned focus of a session and for how long. It supports whānau to cope and regulate their feelings, problem manage, or a combination of both. It contributes to the bigger picture of the work over time.

Reflective Practice Cards guide reflection and maintain 'relational priority'. How effective is the relationship? It keeps practitioners out of 'autopilot', keeping them closely connected to the whānau experience, encouraging celebration, adjustment and recalibration. It includes 3 steps:

1. Offloading
2. Purposeful reflection
3. What next?

Thinking Caps helps teams get things done with a structured, managed and safe process. It helps support and contain anxiety and stress in a team, establish purpose and partner with team mates. It provides a frame to explore new ways of doing things and mobilize expertise across the team. It involves 4 steps:

1. Mark the Task
2. Paint a Picture
3. Empathise the Moment
4. Return to Purpose

Both Reflective Practice and Thinking Caps offer support to practitioners away from frontline practice. These aim to keep the practitioner connected, reflective and agile in their work.

Section 2:

Framework Training Workshops and Practice Stories

What we did	Who they were
Two-day workshop (Introduction to the engagement framework using the teaching model – Explore – Demonstrate – Imitate – Practice EDIP)	78 practitioners, supervisors & managers across 5 sites One group withdrew after exploration and two new sites joined
Invitation to participate in interviews and collection of Stories of Change using a guide (Appendix 3) 2-3 months after the workshops. Additionally notes were taken for 13 participants who used the time to provide feedback and plan forward. These were analysed with 37 recorded interviews, of which 24 were transcribed.	51 participated One group of 11 Individual face to face or phone interviews (40)

The Reaching Out Framework offers a kete and tools to build relational capability. The kaupapa underpinning the framework supports wholehearted use of the unique characteristics, skills and expertise 'in' each practitioner. It provides guidance, inspiration and a benchmark to reflect upon. It offers a set of relationship and change principles that are most relevant when working with whānau who live in chronic toxic stress. It describes a relationship that is navigated using empathy, staying 'in the moment' and taking up roles that connect, support and facilitate to bring about change with whānau in a dynamic and agile way. The tools are underpinned by the theory and the kaupapa. They were designed to look 'ordinary' and 'informal' and be practical and easy to use with whānau. The practitioner actively and explicitly facilitates a relationship that keeps whānau in the driver's seat, a number of tools support this. For example, the map provides a tool to invite the parent to korero about the purpose of the work and the nature of their relationship in an 'ordinary' way.

The framework builds on previous relational capability building work undertaken in this space in both Aotearoa (Ellis M., 2017) and the UK (Ellis M., 2012; Day, Ellis & Harris, 2010; Ellis, Harris & Day, 2012).

During this stage of the project, we wanted to give the practitioners enough theory and practice to be able to take the framework into their work and try it out. Doing this in two days was ambitious and as a result, we saw wide variation in implementation. Practitioners were keen to give feedback without trying it out with whānau. We encouraged ACTION then REFLECTION then ADAPTATION. This mirrored the design of the framework, where building a relationship in action and demonstrating kaupapa through action, then reflecting together are central.

The following offers an approximate picture of how the Reaching Out Framework was implemented:

KEY:

Green – easily adopted into relational practice without adaption

Orange – adapted by practitioners with whānau, or require support and permissions from supervisors, managers and/or organisations

Red – largely not adopted or adapted

Green – easily adopted into relational practice without adaption

The practitioners had 2-3 months to experiment with the prototype and tools. When they had an opportunity to try them out with whānau and then reflect on this experience, they were more inclined to integrate them into their practice with adaptions that suited their ways of working.

The Journey Map and the Quick Wins featured frequently in the practitioner interviews and stories reflecting their expression and integration of the Kaupapa and the Partnership for Change.

One team fed back as a whole saying:

"Quick Wins and the map are really easy to pick up and the relationship compass and the paddling waka fits with how we work so just a bit more listening before action. The korero cards are great, each family should get a set, they gently bring focus and structure that's not intrusive in the chaos. Helping us maintain purpose and giving us a chance to calm down and refocus, tune in and listen without assuming things are going well or badly. We think there should be fridge magnets and an app."

"The practitioner in the waka image has stuck with me. Walking alongside, which is what I was trying to do, it's real easy to step forward, right? So picturing the practitioner in the waka, where there's actually physically no way to take charge, has helped me in my mind."

"The wonder of the Quick Wins is that I'm able to have conversations about how to keep baby safe with mum without overwhelming her – it matches where she's at, I just slip it in and then she's listening."

"She was telling me how her mum and the Dad (of the baby) hate each other, they can't be in a room together and I said, 'Oh that must be real hard on you?' she started crying and said 'Yeah it is'. I think through that she felt like she had support and that finally someone understood that she was stuck in the middle. I said to her 'Maybe we can look at healing some bridges, maybe they're never going to get on really well, but everyone wants to make a nice environment for baby'. She was really excited about that. She's like 'Oh yeah that would be good.'"

"I get really excited because these families have been so hard to engage and meaningful change has been so hard to achieve, but once something small is achieved it's really exciting for me. I say 'Well done! That's amazing!' They can actually see we're excited for them. I think that helps the relationship because they can see that it's genuine that we are really proud of them, so that's quite cool."

The Kaupapa clearly foundational in all the stories of change. The practice tools were easily used and Quick Wins were both highly significant in whānau engagement and in changing unhelpful constructs. These are all discussed in the insights section.

Orange - adapted by practitioners with whānau or require support and permissions from supervisors, managers and/or organisations

There were several tools the practitioners described adapting 'on the job', using them to guide their practice, or easily adapting their use to suit the whānau.

The Storm Riding tool was cumbersome, the practitioners used parts of the process. The concept of 'pausing' and thinking about practical techniques to reduce stress were taken up.

"I use the breathing and relaxation sheet. It's basic and simple, I might laminate it. Today just breathe, take a moment and breathe. 'It's really basic, but where there are 10 pages of mindfulness in resources, it's just too intense for families."

Or the korero cards which were used in several different ways to develop connection.

"I'm adapting the korero cards for fathers who don't talk and prefer to look at things. They are more likely to talk if they are writing too, I'll throw a few Māori words in. They gave me an idea, a foundation of what sort of things I can ask to engage fathers. They help me to practice more open questions. I have been mostly asking closed questions, especially when you're in the moment with a family…"

"I'm not getting them all out every time, I'm reading them and thinking about how to have more open conversations guided by the words."

Using the partnership compass with agility to engage was challenging for many. At times, actively trying to stay connected was beyond what was available in the practitioners kete of skills and qualities.

"Sometimes I just can't face another session full of swearing and sarcasm, I just get worn down."

"Sometimes, I just go down the whirlpool, I'm so thrown by what I have to do I can't just stop and breath let alone help mum do that."

"I dread going there, if I'm honest I get through my list of things I have to say and I get out of there. I know it's not great, I can't fit all this in too."

Keeping Courage was often expressed where practitioners described feeling well supported by their team and their supervisor or manager.

"I just kept knocking on the door and she would yell 'f..k off' through the door, but I kept going back, maybe 11 or 12 times. I just kept her in mind all the time and kept popping in. It takes a lot of patience, but eventually she opened the door and I smiled and said 'hello, it's nice to see the face of the person swearing all the time at me.' She smiled, and we could start."

Thinking Caps was not adopted into any of the teams for various reasons described below, but there were some practitioners who described partial use to support their practice and their peers.

"One of the things I took away is treating my colleagues the same as I would a family. So, I've been using the Thinking Caps, but not properly."

One group of practitioners expressed intention with Reflective Practice and asked their manager to actively encourage the use of the process.

"It's a big deal to sit in these family's lounges, it's so important to be respectful about everything; who they are, where they are from, where they sit in their family. The reflective cards help me think about that. It's a respectful thing of the families to reflect, it needs to become part of what we do, more disciplined."

Some of the concept and tools were misconstrued, or their inter relationship was not understood. For example, one practitioner said of the Korero Cards:

"I don't like the cards, I won't use them. I think it feels like maybe I'm trying to get the family to say I'm great…but maybe I'm not using them right?"

Red – largely not adopted or adapted

Several practitioners said it felt 'really hard' to use the tools when supervisors, managers or service requirements were not 'supportive or encouraging'. Facilitating engagement in an effective partnership for change requires teams and services to actively hold 'not knowing' where the work will go and the 'risks' that are present if there is no change. Making decisions about how they engage needs to be driven and located in the culture, policy and supervision processes in their service. If these are not robust and explicit, practitioners either have to hold the risk themselves, which may lead to 'cowboy' practices with whānau, or stretching their practice until it impacts on the practitioner's health and well-being. For example, working long hours to complete work because time has been given to establish engagement with a 'hardly-reached' whānau. Alternatively, practitioners may compromise engagement, doing what they are told to serve the service as a survival strategy. This leads to dissatisfaction and deskilling of practitioners in relational work. These system issues have been explored and described in previous recent work in Aotearoa (Ellis M., 2017).

"The KPI is punitive if targets aren't met. Engagement is sacrificed for volume."

"The service decides what I do and the pace and timing – I can't be whānau led and do my job."

"Managing risk gets in the way of building capability in parents – we just get left with it all."

They described experiencing judgement about their novice skills in the application of the Reaching Out Framework.

"Too much change is being asked of me and not enough relationship to support this."

"It feels like they think this is the same, it's not, it's harder and it takes longer and it's exhausting."

"I thought this was great, but not enough. I suggested practicing, but that was scoffed at – I felt dumb."

The tools that were experimented with much less were tools to support practitioners in the engagement framework – the Reflective Practice cards and the Thinking Caps. During the exploration phase: teams had clearly voiced a need for adequate support to work effectively with disengaged and disaffected whānau. They described finding it very stressful, time consuming and overwhelming, as they did everything that was known to them and faced failure and criticism regularly.

We thought about the disjunction between what was identified as necessary to support working effectively in this relational work and what was taken up. There were several explanations explored with the teams:

1) Some said they were sort of using them, but not everybody understood their purpose, some said they already had team processes that they used. Reflective practice was discussed. However, the processes described were more aligned to Step 1 of Reflective practice 'Offload'.

"Communication skills need to be practiced and supported, supervisors need to walk the talk too."

'We all reflect all the time."

2) We noticed that feedback at the end of Day 2 was fairly consistent – that there was too much to take on in 2 days and they were in cognitive overload.

"We were just full up, we would like to do some work learning about the reflective cards and thinking caps now."

3) Implementation of the protoype and tools was experimental, that is both the framework and its tools and the ways the workshops were facilitated and some wanted more sessions to practice and more time to reflect and staggered over a longer timeframe.

4). The implementation and timeframes were largely shaped by the teams to mirror partnership practices, however, there was little negotiation with What it Takes and multiple diverse understandings about the purpose of the project. This meant, at times, the exploration, co-creation and experimentation phases were derailed.

There were a number of problems that were often located in unhelpful constructs, or in unconscious, unexpressed and under-developed practice skills, through team conflict, service culture and delivery or unhelpful relationship styles. For example, practitioners describing relationships that were characterised by taking up an expert, pseudo-friendship, avoidant, antagonistic or dependent approach to building a relationship with whānau (Ellis & Day, 2018).

Given the developmental nature of the project, there was substantial adaption and adoption of the engagement framework. Throughout the project, practitioners described moments where something 'clicked', or they had a 'lightbulb moment', or something was 'transformational' in their practice, or with a parent. It's important to see this as a change process and not something magical that can be done to either practitioners or whānau.

"Change is a gradual process, small steps that lead to something bigger, a bit like the invention of the light bulb itself. The light bulb was not invented in a moment of inspiration. Thomas Edison worked with a team of thirty assistants and fellow scientists through a slow web of experiments. There were moments of triumph and of failure. Each time something was learnt and the learning was incorporated into the process, which eventually led to success." (Cottam, 2018).

Section 3:

Four Key Insights

The previous section highlighted the breadth of learning about what supports effective engagement for change. This section expands on four key insights from across the project. We have included either full integrative stories or quotes to highlight the effect of using an engagement framework that actively seeks to support and drive relational capability at the coalface.

1 **Kaupapa needs to be seen and lived**

2 **Respecting small steps leads to engagement for change**

3 **Changing constructs to achieve sustainability**

4 **Tools make collaboration and change (Theory of Change) feel simple and easy**

Kaupapa needs to be seen and lived

Kaupapa are the principles and values that offer a foundation for action. Yet, too often they are seen as a dry and lofty set of words consigned to the lifeless black and white pages of policy, or flashing on aspirational screensavers and posters. They often have little resonance with what happens at the coalface.

When practitioners are faced with engaging whānau in a change process – whānau who are 'angry, rejecting, stuck, chaotic' and have been 'on the books' for a long time – it is daunting. It's essential that whatever they do is guided by kaupapa that resonates and offers guidance and inspiration for their actions or how they engage.

Practitioners who have engaged many whānau over their working lives - often in unconscious, 'natural' and 'common-sense' ways - find it hard to be conscious and intentional when building and sustaining a relationship for change. Kaupapa comes into its own here, providing key ingredients for success. Stories of successful change are always saturated with kaupapa. This was demonstrated in the exploration phase.

Practitioners described: 'sticking in there', 'following their lead', 'I found a connection', 'I really listened and followed my gut', 'keeping it real', 'aroha mai aroha atu', 'I felt compassionate to her', 'acknowledging them builds respect that builds mana', etc.

Often these were described as 'ordinary', 'just who I am' and somehow unnecessary to pay attention to and make conscious.

However, when talking about whānau who they struggled to engage, the narrative was devoid of kaupapa. Kaupapa is particularly important in intentional relationship building where a practitioner's core values may be challenged by the circumstances of whānau life. The hostility and suspicion they may experience from whānau who are pre-loaded with high negative emotion about services.

> "I went to the house, it was in the middle of nowhere, he called me sis and swore casually. I stopped and said I'm not your sister and please don't swear, I wasn't aggressive I felt really sad and wanted to make sure we were both safe in our wairua. I spoke with him in te reo and we sat on the porch, it wasn't right to barge into his house. I showed him respect and asked for respect as well. He invited me in and gave me baby and asked me to help him out. It wasn't much, but now we've got Plunket in too so mum and baby can get support."

This can result in practitioners being highly anxious and stressed, their own bandwidth reduced and their ability to tune in and work dynamically compromised. Consciously pre-loading their approach offers a strong foundation to support action that builds relationships and facilitates change. When practitioners held these to the fore of their minds and deliberately reflected on what their unique expression of these were in each interaction, it made a difference to the way they approached

whānau. They were more conscious and active about what qualities and skills they needed to have to the fore. Weaving these together to develop an effective relationship in a tailored and respectful way.

Practitioners described congruence between the Reaching Out Kaupapa, their personal kaupapa and the tools that helped them to express these with whānau. It was important to co-create the kaupapa. The artefacts or the Reaching Out framework are a synthesis of the most important things they described in engaging 'hardly-reached' whānau, lived experience and best literature available.

> "The kaupapa fitted for me straight away and the tools were like oh yeah I can use these. Mana is huge for me and I think a lot of our women have lost a lot of their mana through unhealthy relationships. So, I work to try and uplift the mana of the child and the parent, and that's in the booklet."

Practitioners described engaging whānau for change wholeheartedly, allowing effective practice to be expressed combining their expertise and whānau expertise. The Reaching Out Kaupapa keeps whānau and their tamariki at the centre of everything. They are the pou that keeps the practitioner in their practice as the best version of themselves – connecting, supporting, growing, coaching and facilitating the whānau to build their capabilities and make good lives.

The following story demonstrates how one practitioner expressed the Reaching Out Kaupapa to engage and sustain a relationship and change with a whānau who have been identified as 'hard to reach' in Aotearoa.

Pam uses the kaupapa to engage Hiria and Stan in change

Pam got explicit permission from Hiria and Stan to share this story for this report.

Hiria and Stan are in their mid-twenties and Maori. Their daughter Paula is two. Hiria works two jobs, the house is 'very very very full, but her daughters' room is always immaculate with the bed beautifully made'. This is important to Hiria and she believes this shows she's a good mother.

Hiria is very suspicious of services and hasn't engaged with any. She is 'very puffed up and very protective', she's forceful and very big in stature. She asks Pam abruptly and with distrust - 'What is it you're going to do? What's going to happen?" Pam is unsurprised by this response, most people coming to Hirias house are up to something.

Hiria associates services with bad news, she knows people get their kids taken away. Stan's in prison for dealing class A drugs. Stan's been in prison several times and is involved with a gang. Pam has worked with Stan in other settings and Stan has given Pam the 'ok' with Hiria.

Initially, Pam goes in for short 15-minute appointments, this feels risky in regard to her service requirement, but she decides to carry this risk.

Pam describes Hiria as being 'very hard working, very strong, very capable and very independent, but underlying that she desperately needs support.' Pam tells Hiria how amazing she thinks she is when she does something positive, but Hiria rejects this praise and says "Well that's what a f...n mother does."

In relation to Stan, Hiria has said 'This is it, it's the last time'. She tells Pam that Stan needs to take more of a role in Paula's life when he comes out of prison. Pam's spent a lot of time talking with Hiria about what 'more of a role' would look like, they've talked with Stan about this too.

A second prison visit is arranged, and Pam takes the opportunity to remind Hiria that one of her issues is always having to set 'boundaries' with Paula when she is throwing her toys around.
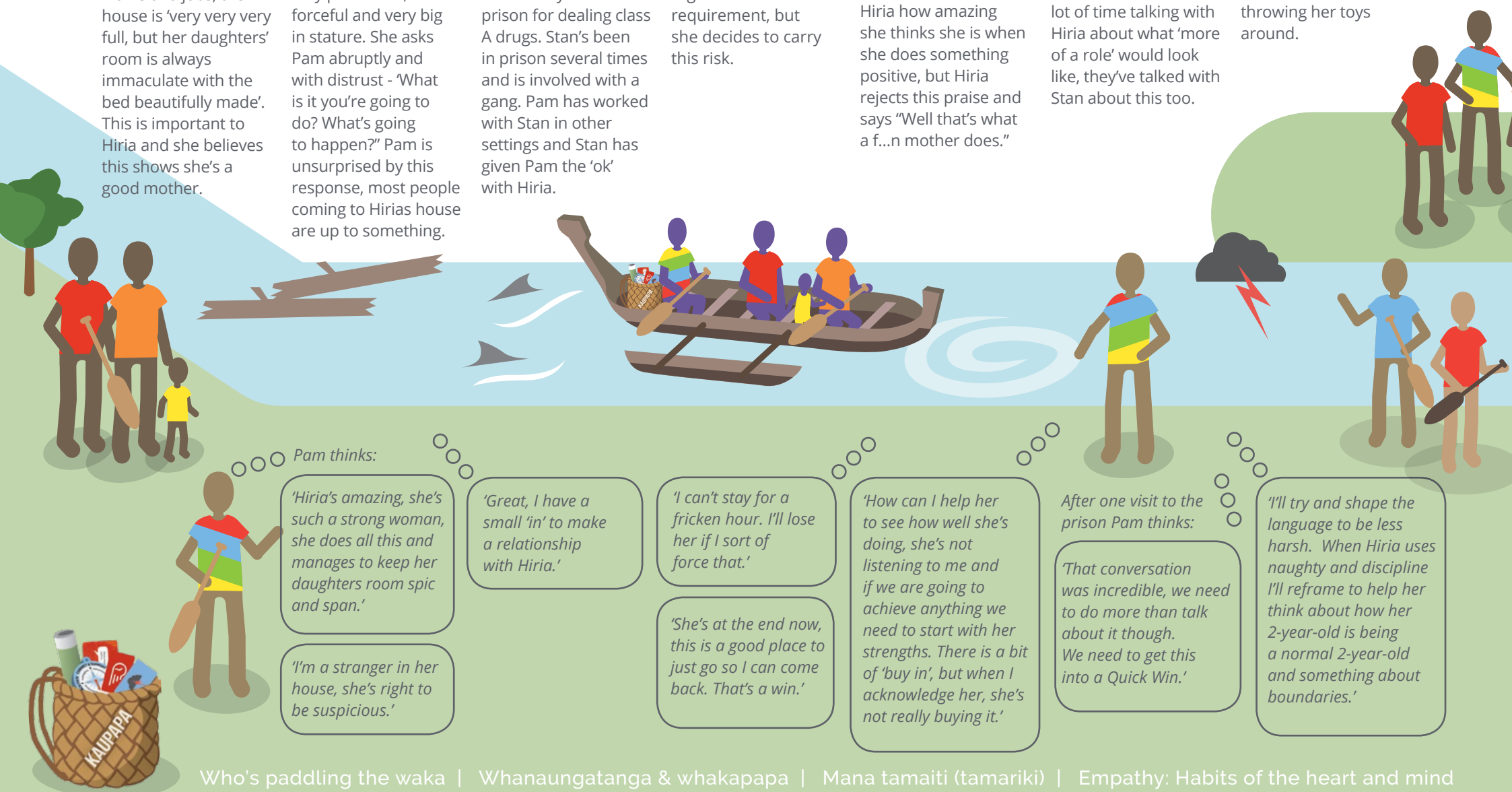
Pam thinks:

'Hiria's amazing, she's such a strong woman, she does all this and manages to keep her daughters room spic and span.'

'I'm a stranger in her house, she's right to be suspicious.'

'Great, I have a small 'in' to make a relationship with Hiria.'

'I can't stay for a fricken hour. I'll lose her if I sort of force that.'

'She's at the end now, this is a good place to just go so I can come back. That's a win.'

'How can I help her to see how well she's doing, she's not listening to me and if we are going to achieve anything we need to start with her strengths. There is a bit of 'buy in', but when I acknowledge her, she's not really buying it.'

After one visit to the prison Pam thinks:

'That conversation was incredible, we need to do more than talk about it though. We need to get this into a Quick Win.'

'I'll try and shape the language to be less harsh. When Hiria uses naughty and discipline I'll reframe to help her think about how her 2-year-old is being a normal 2-year-old and something about boundaries.'

Who's paddling the waka | Whanaungatanga & whakapapa | Mana tamaiti (tamariki) | Empathy: Habits of the heart and mind

KAUPAPA

Pam works through the Quick Win Process. Pam introduces the tool to Hiria, but she doesn't want to use it, she said 'it feels a bit like school'.

She asks Hiria what she wants to call it and asks if she can talk through the steps. Hiria agrees, saying 'Let's call it My Quick Goal.'

Pam, Hiria, Paula and Stan are having the visit and Paula gets the toy blocks and throws them around the room. Hiria goes to stand up and yell. Pam puts up her hand in a STOP signal and says:

'Remember! Remember your goal. Remember what we talked about.'

Hiria sits down, 'she has a bit of a smile coming out of her face but is actually shaking with the effort needed not to jump in.'

Stan is looking over but looking lost. Pam mouths to him 'Just do counting. Count.'

Stan is looking at Hiria who's 'shaking and literally holding on to the chair.'

Pam keeps her hand up and says 'Well done' to Hiria. They watch Stan get up and start picking up the blocks saying "Do it again, do it again. Pick up the blocks – 1, 2, 3. I can do it faster. C'mon 1, 2...".

Pam tells Hiria that she did it, she set a goal and she achieved it, she is full of praise for her.

She asks her how she feels – Hiria replies 'Oh my god that feels f....n amazing!' . She says it was '7 out of 7 hard to do'

Pam also says to Hiria 'You nearly broke the arms of that chair girl.' Hiria laughs and says 'yeah I know I was really holding on.' Pam uses this to talk through what's happening in Hiria's body when she launches into a frenzy of swearing and growling. Hiria is interested in this and gets curious about it.

Pam reflects that she would never normally put her hand up like that and say Stop, but because she had permission and it had been negotiated into her role in Hiria achieving her Quick Win, it was ok to be as 'forceful as her, but not angry', it was 'what she needed in the moment'.

My Quick Goal: I will let Stan set boundaries when Paula is doing her thing.

How will I know I've got there: Stan will have stepped up without me yelling and taking over!

What I'll do: I'll just sit in the chair and won't interfere.

Motivated: I'm 9/10

Important: I'm 9/10

I Can Do it: Not sure – can you (Pam) put your hand up, like STOP! and remind me of my goal if I can't?

'It doesn't matter I just need to use the process. I'll work it out later so she has a concrete way to build a picture of her wins. It's more important that we go through the process than use the paper.'

'Hmmm, I wonder if it feels a bit like school when I praise her too and so she's waiting to be told off as well. Something else to store away and think about.'

'I need to encourage Stan, but I need to keep Hiria from jumping up.'

'This is perfect, she did it, they did it and Hiria looks so relieved...all in the space of about 2 minutes, wow amazing what a buzz.'

'I need to get her talking about it fully, this is one of those moments she could just dismiss me.'

'Hiria is so so so proud of herself, really owning it.'

'Perhaps there's another Quick Goal in here, I'll store this away.'

'I want to keep doing this with Hiria and Stan and I really want them both to have something that celebrates these. It's such a gold star for her... and the Dad.'

Keep it real: Upfront and out loud | Keep it Dynamic Go for Goals | "Wherever I go I am manuhiri" | Keeping Courage

Respecting small steps leads to engagement for change

Engaging families drowning in toxic stress is hard. It's a priority - the costs to whānau, their children, communities and services is enormous. There are the monetary costs, the costs in human distress and the degradation of social and community cohesion. There is disconnect from relationships that could otherwise be collaborative and support capability building with whānau. There are costs to the practitioners in dissatisfaction, helplessness, care fatigue and burn-out, which in turn costs both services and the communities they too live and work in.

Respecting small steps brings about big change by using the journey map to share the process and the Quick Wins process brings precision and action in early. This means helping parents to set highly defined, outcome focussed, easy to achieve, realistic and time framed goals. Talking through the clear steps for action. Helping them realistically identify who needs to do what to reach the goal. It includes an out loud conversation about the importance of the goal to the parent. How motivated they feel and how confident they feel about their action plan.

Quick wins are not just 'goal setting', they are a tool that is imbued with kaupapa and the necessary processes to collaborate with whānau. Whānau who often find services next to useless, intrusive and judgemental. Practitioners must dial up empathy, courage, be intentional, out loud and upfront, staying connected to whānau and strengthening their mana. They must facilitate the process with tenacity and stay closely aligned to

what the whānau wants to create, to grow hope, capability and good lives for themselves and their tamariki.

It involves:

- Goal identification
- Planning action
- Action – both galvanising parents, cheering them on AND compensating – rolling up sleeves and getting things done
- Reviewing with empathy (curiosity, compassion and celebration): what worked? What didn't?

They also offer an accurate real time picture of a parent's 'capacity to change', at this point in time. Concrete evidence that is gathered together, the parent and the practitioner working together as a team, openly discussing and trying out to get a shared clear picture of what short, medium – and long-term change might be possible. This shared picture of capacity for change can be shared across the network, creating authenticity in the work and keeping the whānau in the driver's seat.

Using the Quick Wins process provides an opportunity for practitioners to actively, consciously and intentionally increase parents executive function and self-regulation. The practitioner works in a back and forth interaction with the parent (control), compensating initially and gradually handing over more and more autonomy to the parent (connection and support), increasing parents' skills at both problem-solving and parenting competence (competence), until the parent is confident to initiate and follow through the process with increasing independence (confidence) – moving through a process of dependence to interdependence to independence. This can be described as biodegradable help (The Southern Initiative, October 2017).

Cathy's small steps lead to engaging for change

The Changes:

Cathy and her whānau use the Quick Wins process to achieve several things at once.

The practitioner gains competence and confidence in her ability to facilitate the process of change. They both begin to gather a narrative that both informs and helps achieve larger, more complex goals. The practitioner begins to have negative constructs challenged through action about Cathy, seeing her as capable and able to change. The shared purpose builds Cathy's capability, rather than the practitioner trying to manage the problems and risks by controlling and containing. This builds a sense of confidence in the practitioner to facilitate an effective relationship and processes that expand bandwidth and enable her to work as a partner. Cathy and the practitioner move from a stuck, hopeless, disengaged position to a relationship with potential, connection and change happening rapidly. The practitioner initially actively facilitates this process and compensates where necessary, then moves to a position of supporting Cathy who is initiating her own change and requesting the practitioners support.

The practitioner described the following changes to her practice...

"Yep, Quick Win after Quick Win! Bang bang, it's done! Lots of little things, but it's making a big difference."

"Every week I'm doing a Quick Win with her and I have been blown away at the success of what she's achieved in a very short space of time. She's achieved more in the last six weeks to two months than she's achieved in 10 years and I'm so excited!"

"By using a Quick Win she identifies what she knows she will be able to achieve and gets the acknowledgement for achieving it and the support to be able to achieve it very quickly. She is getting the benefits of achieving it herself."

"Cathy has been able to take steps about addressing her past and I'm supporting her to get ACC counselling, this is a massive step. I'm right with her, I think she's strong enough and I'm jumping on that bandwagon. I'm right behind her, really her biggest fan, I think she really gets how stuff from her past has really affected her ability to be an effective parent, but this confidence building has really helped. I'm not sure if that's a direct result from Quick Wins and the map, but I suspect it is, she's just been doing one thing after another."

"I'm actually incorporating a Quick Win into our Child and Family Plan (CFP) and just saying 'Continue with weekly Quick Wins'. There is a lot of work that goes into a CFP, but there's no point in doing them if the family's never going to achieve it. By doing a Quick Win each week there is so much progress. By doing a CFP I'm setting her and me up for failure. I don't meet my targets and she looks at a piece of paper that she knows she's never even going to manage."

"We review using the 'Journey Map'. I did say 'I don't expect you to take a forward step every single week. Some weeks I expect you to just stand still and that's OK too. I'm here and I'm with you and we're going to do this together' and she's like 'No no no I've got something else I want to try this week' and it's like 'Yep, let's do it'. It's great, it's really exciting and yet so simple! I think that's just me not quite believing so much is changing so quickly!"

"My guess is this will get ingrained and her goals will get slightly bigger and take a little bit longer to achieve. We are growing what she can achieve, but I'm hoping that her confidence and her self-esteem will continue to grow."

The practitioner's perspective

There are currently 12 agencies involved. The practitioner has worked in different capacities with Cathy for 10 years. She describes having tried everything and nothing ever made much of a difference. Initially, she described Cathy as unmotivated, not capable of change and annoying, particularly because often Cathy simply wouldn't be home. She described herself and the other services as going in, floating around, not knowing what to do. She has worried about the children and didn't feel at all effective in the work. The practitioner was meeting service requirements and, therefore, perceived herself as a sort of safety net. There was a sense that Cathy couldn't be engaged in a partnership for change. The reasons for the lack of change were put at Cathy's door.

Small Steps

"I decided to give the engagement framework a go, I had nothing to lose. First I showed her the journey map, I talked about Storm Riding and Quick Wins – I talked about how some days are good, some are bad and sometimes we might just need to hop off on the island and have a break. She completely got it, you know the work. She understood the whole simple map, which was fantastic.

I introduced Quick Wins, at first it was hard for her, so I suggested we focus on a problem".

Cathy's story

Cathy is a 29-year-old mother of 5 children (newborn to 11 years). She parents alone, she loves her kids and talks about wanting to provide them with a stable home where her kids aren't hungry – she wants a better life for them than she had. She had limited formal education and her cognitive capacity has been questioned. She thinks her upbringing has negatively impacted on her parenting today - Cathy experienced significant early trauma and neglect in an unstable home.

The children all have complex needs. Neglect and obesity are focal problems in the network. The children do not meet thresholds for statutory intervention.

Cathy has had multiple agencies involved with her over the past 10 years.

There is pervasive hopelessness and shame expressed by Cathy. She avoids services, but is stuck in a perpetual cycle of problems, interventions and failure.
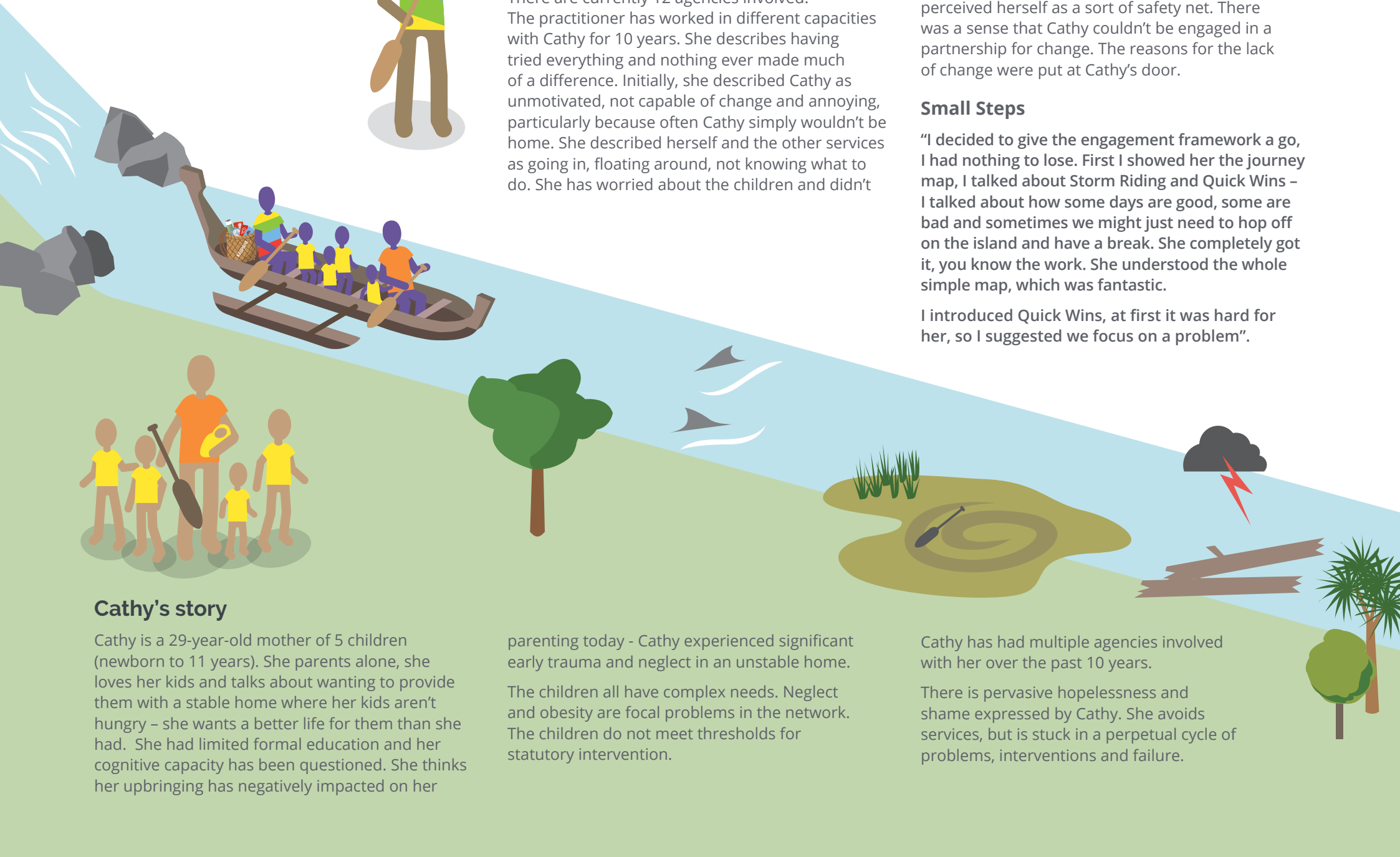
Problem: She hasn't enrolled her son with very complex health needs in school. There are heaps of barriers, but one for Cathy was that he's not toilet trained.

Quick Win goal: Who and where you could find information about toilet training. She really wanted to do it and she thought she could, she had a week.

Review: She had been onto websites, she'd talked to friends and neighbours, she'd talked to Plunket, she reeled off about 5 different things that she'd looked up about where to start toilet training, BUT she had gone one further and had started the toilet training! She got her child to sit on the toilet. She'd never even done that before. So that was really exciting and I thought this is great, probably going to be a one week wonder, but that's great that she's done that.

Cathy was keen to try another Quick Win. She had already thought about what she wanted to do and was very motivated from this first win.

Problem: The newborn (2 months) was spilling after every feed. She thought there was something wrong with him, but someone said to her 'Well you're over-feeding him'.

Quick Win goal: Feed him his bottle every four hours and in between times use distraction.

Action planning: included facilitating the rest of the conversation to focus on 'What distraction can you use with a newborn?' and 'How do we know what hungry looks like?'

Review: Cathy said 'I've been feeding him four hourly and he hasn't spilled and he's putting on weight and he's a really happy settled baby'.

Cathy was on a roll…

Problem: Her two-year-old was crying when she took her to kindergarten, so she would just say 'oh well, let's try again later' and take her home.

Quick Win goal: Take her to kindergarten, say goodbye and leave her even if she was crying.

Action planning: Included explaining to Cathy that crying didn't necessarily mean she didn't want to be there and to ask the kindy staff to ring her if she didn't settle.

Review: Cathy did this, she went back to look through the window, because her daughter had been screaming 30 seconds earlier and there she was in the playdough having a great time and didn't even know Cathy had gone.

Changing constructs to achieve sustainability

There are a number of unhelpful constructs whānau have about themselves, practitioners and services. There are a number of unhelpful constructs practitioners and services have about themselves and whānau. The engagement framework offers several theories, processes and techniques about what an effective relationship looks like and how to build and sustain one. This relationship serves as a conduit for change. One of the consequences of this are that unhelpful constructs get challenged, they wobble and shift, sometimes seismically, as new evidence emerges in the form of new experiences in relationship and on the journey of change.

❝ **"I was so deeply engrained in 'Oh God, here we go'. She even actually texts me and lets me know she can't make an appointment and ASKS to reschedule. This is completely different, 10 years and these massive changes! I'm really excited about going there now because I want to see has she done it, yes, she has, oh my God you've done an amazing job. I'm actually really enjoying working with her."**

Unhelpful constructs develop from our experiences and knowledge. Often for whānau, their experiences are littered with toxic and abusive relationships, repeated experiences of failure, power imbalances, inequity and poverty etc resulting in an overload they carry into relationships and their lives as adults and includes contact with services – 'informal, semi-formal and formal' (The Southern Initiative & Auckland Co-design Lab, 2017). These ways of making sense or construing are mostly automatic and unconscious. We find it

hard to 'see' things outside of our experience, what we know and the beliefs we hold.

Some of the practitioners unhelpful constructs included describing whānau as 'lacking motivation', 'lacking desire - if they really cared for their kids they would stop…just…do…', 'they are too 'chaotic', 'selfish', 'they don't want to change', 'they can't change', 'it's intergenerational', 'they have been given so many services and so much time and still nothing has changed', etc. These are not unusual constructs to be expressed about whānau who live under toxic stress, sadly constructs such as these held in practitioners can become another source of toxic stress. Recently the Southern Initiative (2018) reported "the very relationships that are the vehicle for reducing stress ironically increases it."

❝ **"There was such bad neglect, it was really hard to not just say 'This is not OK, but I knew she would just disengage. I had to work really hard facilitating the conversation…it was like smaller…smaller…smaller how about just a bit simpler? But also, not being condescending, we got their and mum was able to start to look for cues around the toilet, which she had never done. The exciting thing was she was brimming when I went back '…he does this and this and this and I never noticed them before because I wasn't paying attention.' It didn't stop there and mums really changed how she sees herself as a parent, she's much better and far more confident in her ability to recognise her children's needs and that's really special. I was so excited."**

It's both painful and anxiety provoking for practitioners to work relationally over time with whānau. Often, they face hostility and inertia, making no headway, getting stuck in a depressing cycle too. They talked with defensiveness and shame about not being able to engage some whānau. High levels of anxiety and distress were often present in their descriptions. It's important that this is construed through a lens of empathy, generosity and curiosity. As we know from painful attempts - over sometimes decades with whānau – judging, criticising and telling people to change and giving them a sound rationale very rarely brings about change. Nor aids the development of a relationship that provides nurture, encouragement, coaching, tenacity and awhi on the journey of change to whānau.

❝ **"I went in with a mindset 'God here's something else we have to do, I felt pretty despondent about it. I thought I might as well give it a go, I've tried everything else. It's blown me away how receptive she is and the change – the change in her mindset, the change in the way she works, the ways that she's engaging with me and the way that I engage with her."**

The good news is constructs or the narratives we have are changeable and adapt. The Reaching Out framework offered kaupapa, a theory of change, detailed relationship principles with supporting tools to engage whānau. As a result, more helpful constructs about engaging whānau living in toxic stress with their tamariki emerged. The framework

guides practitioners to intentionally help whānau to build alternative pictures. To help whānau and practitioners rewrite old narratives and make sense of themselves looking through a new lens.

> "So, it's not only motivated her, but it's actually motivated me to keep finding ways to improve the way I work with her, like I can't wait for the next time I go, which is a completely different way for me to engage with her because we are making progress. I'm not pushing them out of proportion, they're tiny tiny steps, but she's never taken a tiny step in her life."

The win:win:win is that in changing whānau constructs of themselves, win – it changes the way the practitioner sees the whānau and win – the way the whānau sees the practitioner, potentially opening possibilities for other helpful relationships not just with services, but in their families and communities – win.

> "I feel like she's really doing great now. She was feeling so overwhelmed and she experienced everyone telling her what she wasn't doing well, there are heaps of things she's been doing in between, just you know sorting stuff out with kindy, her landlord…it's like so encouraging."

> "I'm working with one whānau and she's told me she's talked to a friend about Quick Wins to sort out some of her issues."

Over and again practitioners told stories about using empathy – not the 'woolly' 'I'm sorry for you' or 'I know how you feel and I can fix you' constructs of empathy – the muscular, strong empathy that offers an accurate picture of where the parent is at and helps the practitioner identify what role they need to play next. Sharing the process, introducing the work as a journey and themselves as a navigator not the 'boss of the waka' and some tools to try out.

> "The day I used the map with mum was the most positive home visit I've had. There was a huge shift from how she was engaging right at the start to the end. She thought I was there to keep an eye on her, using the map showed her that I was there to work with her not against her. I could see it in the way that she talked and the excitement that she had for me to come and see dad. So, I was really impressed by the map."

> "I'm laminating the Journey Map, it makes it much easier to talk about my work and I can relax and just get them to paint their picture – they often use the map to talk about stuff. It feels more like team work."

> "I've been very aware that I can run way ahead (of clients). They're the ones that have to be running way ahead of me in a way, they have to be leading it, I need to focus on staying with them, the empathy does that I think."

> "I just said life's pretty s…t at the moment, she burst into tears. I don't think anyone has really listened to her for a long time, she's had (agency) riding her. I thought yes, this is good, she's only yelled and sworn at me before now. Something changed and we jumped into action mode and got beds for the kids, which I knew was really embarrassing her and it was one less thing she would be hassled about."

> "Previously I would have tried to convince her of what she needed, but this is more like letting her decide and I'm there walking alongside her and just making stuff happen when she can, you know like driving her to the counsellor, that was massive, cause she's still got lots of trauma."
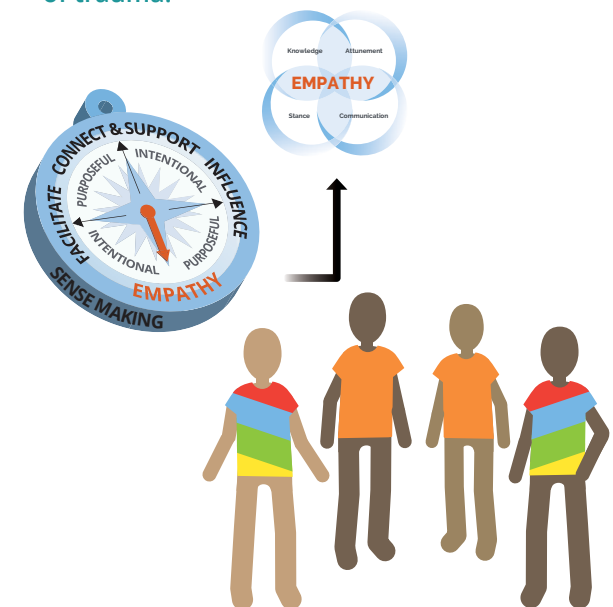
Tools make collaboration and change feel simple and easy

The Reaching Out tools encourage empathic listening AND action. Empathy offers a fast and accurate gauge for the practitioner.

'What's it like to be this person right now in this moment?'

'What's the most powerful minimum I can do right now in this moment?'

'What do I have in my kete to concretise and maximise and make it real this moment of change?'
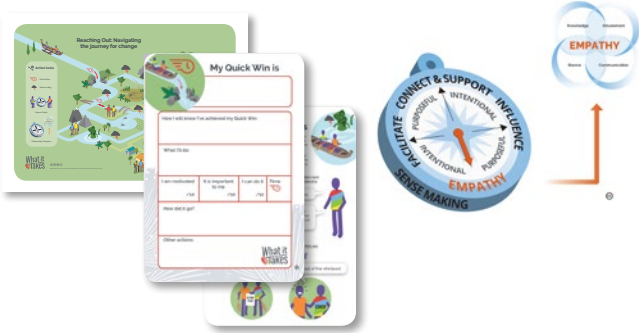
Being empathically listened to and being heard gives whānau space to make new connections and shifts in their narrative, this is uncontested in the literature (Sampio, Sequeira, & Lluch Canut, 2015). Whānau agree and practitioners largely described prioritising listening hard. Taking action, doing something and practicing building a sense of control and competence is important. Otherwise whānau can feel like they may have a sympathetic ear, but nothing changes. Often this creates frustration in both the whānau and the practitioner. This is often when a practitioner will take up an 'expert' or 'fixer role', further creating conditions for failure in the parent and potentially increasing their own sense of impotence and anxiety.

The tools were designed to be visually appealing, using everyday language and images were chosen to resonate with Aotearoa.

> "I used the word whirlpool this afternoon in a whānau visit, because that is what it was, just more of the same old, going around and around. It's not technical language, it's got be so the families can understand me when I share with them what I see. Then when we are talking about, 'ok how do we get you out of here?'- you get the family going and let them know you are going to help."

> "I think the Journey Map is a brilliant concept and tool. I've used it with a group of pregnant teenage mums and I'm going to use it with a civic group. There wouldn't be anybody, no matter what group they're in, that wouldn't be able to identify and say some time in their lives these things go on."

The tools are imbued with the kaupapa and the theory underpinning a partnership for change. They support practitioners to be invitational, intentional and work with agility and a light touch, attuning and adjusting as they go. The tools make it possible to build a partnership with shared purpose and early success. The pivot is on the idea that relationships need to be built before change can occur, to one where change and relationship can occur simultaneously.

Tools help practitioners fine tune their practice in a way that is closely aligned with the bandwidth available in the whānau and combines new things with old things from the whānau and the practitioners kete of expertise.

One very experienced and relational practitioner described the changes to her practice:

> 'I'm more flexible with these parents. I recognise there are always going to be more important things than me in their busy lives. This way of working gives me a way of being with them and what's important to them and delivering important information about safe sleeping of their new born. Using it all, the compass, that change idea and the Kaupapa (Go for Goals and Keep it Dynamic & Paddling your own Waka) really helped me achieve good engagement with these teenage parents, by creating opportunities to get early successes. Previously I would have waited six weeks until I had a bit of a handle on the situation. I did feel like I was leaping in much more and I didn't know quite what I was leaping into. But it was far more client focussed and it was an action packed first 3 visits that achieved enough that they wanted to keep working with me after being away….and they stayed in touch."

The tools offer solidity and robustness where often relationship processes with hardly-reached whānau are ethereal, reserved for the very best practitioner or taken as a given. They help to unleash practice and tweak it so practitioners are fit for purpose. One practitioner talked about an important 'tweak' that enabled him to hold onto the notion of 'facilitating the whānau to paddle their own waka.'

> **"The practitioner in the waka image has stuck with me because when I studied at Uni they all talked about you walking alongside but when you're walking alongside it's real easy to step forward, right? So actually, picturing the practitioner in the waka, where there's actually physically no way to take charge, has helped me in my mind."**

Practitioners were initially burdened with the unhelpful construct that being empathic was somehow 'colluding' with whānau. By explicitly detailing the relationship and suggesting empathic action should guide their practice, practitioners were able to move more dynamically with whānau, 'sticking with them' to actively facilitate the journey, practice techniques with them.

The practitioner who described her and a young Dad

> **"…having a laugh while he learned to put a nappy on a teddy" or "showing mum how to breathe, you know simple, but so good when she's off and it gave me time to think", or "encourage mum to expand her goals with 'wee nudge' now that our relationship is stronger."**

These scenarios were described by many of the practitioners who had described changing from practices of

> **"educating till the cows come home; giving information; pointing out; explaining things in relation to baby's development and safety" and being "ignored; rejected; shouted at; disengaged from."**

> **"I had thought I was empathic, but I can see I wasn't adding in the action bit, sometimes I would just say 'that's really hard, you are really overwhelmed by the FGC actions' and then nothing, we're both in the swamp then. I've reflected a lot with my peers. Now, I take the tools in every time and am listening for when I can get practical, so I can get something to happen, that's better for them and easier for me."**

This enables the practitioner to contain overwhelming feelings held by both themselves and the whānau about the enormity of the problems they're facing, the deep mistrust that the mum experiences as she rales and swears at the practitioner about other services.

Having a tool in hand reduces the anxiety in practitioners. Experience that often pushes them to look for 'quick fixes' or simple solutions in the face of chaos and complexity. It helps to maintain control of the process, not the whānau (executive

function). It builds connection, capabilities and confidence in often highly emotional, historically negative and complex engagement processes.

> **"I've got a mum who's really thinking about parenting now, she puts them (Quick Wins) on her fridge and she's adapted them with gold stars and uses them with her 4-year-old too."**

The tools help practitioners have conversations that are essential to maintain purpose, while intentionally facilitating the whānau to hold the lead on their journey for change. One of the practitioners said she takes 'the korero cards out in her bag all the time'. Initially she 'tried them out' using 3 different whānau and used them differently with each, tailoring the process. She says

> **"I think it's a really good impact. I felt that they brought about more and different types of conversation that I don't think I would've had until further down the line, you know? Maybe six, seven, eight months to get there. It helped to build really quickly. Yeah so what's interesting is the 3 families have asked me each time I've gone back 'Are we doing the cards again?' so obviously there's something about them that… you know, it's hands on, it's visual, I mean I get all of that – they're tactile, having the cards to touch and what not, but also it gives them a point of place to bring up feelings and emotions and stuff going on in their head that I think would've taken a lot longer to get there."**

Conclusion

The Reaching Out Framework provides some potentially helpful content and tools to support successful engagement and sustainable partnerships for change with whānau.

This project highlighted the importance of mirroring partnership processes when implementing a framework designed to influence practice change, in this case build relational capability to engage 'hardly-reached' whānau. Implementing the Reaching Out framework would involve close collaborative work 'locally' to identify and support sustainable implementation that is attuned and aligned with the culture and practices in each community.

During the process of developing and implementing the Reaching Out Framework with practitioners, a significant amount of time was spent reconnecting and listening to what was 'on top', when the shared purpose was to learn and practice the components of the framework. We propose that this could be mitigated by a planned and systematic implementation that identifies and nurtures a subgroup in teams, including supervisors and practitioners (who are not over-burdened with the work of engaging this group of whānau). Enabling the relational capability to be built incrementally and attuned to where the team is at.

This would also build capability across the team and increase cohesion and sustainability. When practitioners are overloaded, the brains ability to learn new things, solve problems, self-regulate and exercise self-control is compromised. Thinking about implementation locally would allow the process of learning and change to focus on a small number of characteristics and skills to be dialled up, applied and reflected on over a period of time. Providing both the conditions and support for practice change to occur and maintaining 'relational priority'.

Underpinning this are the insights:

Kaupapa needs to be seen and lived – Each practitioner is part of a wider ecosystem, this includes their team, their service, the community they serve and the wider systems of support. The kaupapa needs to be understood within the context of working with 'hardly-reached' whānau and what enabling factors are present in the practitioner's local ecology.

Respecting small steps leads to engagement for change – Change is painful, it is especially painful when practice is fossilised or entrenched in practices that are not helpful for engaging 'hardly-reached whānau or when practitioners may have been working with whānau who may have been 'stuck' and/or 'circular' with services for many years and are subject to system wide judgement. Change is supported through consistently facilitating a process that redresses some of the power inequities by putting the whānau in control of their journey as much as possible. The more in control a parent feels, the more change occurs (Cottam, 2018) (Ellis, Harris, & Day, 2012). Getting alongside a parent with a shared purpose to facilitate, compensate and galvanise their efforts increases their capability, builds confidence and enables them to flourish and participate in a cycle of growth. This process is mirrored throughout the practitioner's ecology.

Changing constructs to achieve sustainability – Every story that involved a construct change from one of feeling burdened, hopeless and judgemental to one where attuning, listening empathically and enjoying helping whānau bring about change, growth and hope could be traced back to the conscious demonstration of kaupapa and respecting small change and relational agility.

Tools make collaboration and change feel simple and easy – The tools need to be experienced first and then reflected on. Careful consideration is needed about how tools are introduced and sufficient rehearsal enabled so practitioners can

use them with competence and confidence with whānau when they may feel stressed and anxious. Hilary Cottam (2018) talks extensively about the 'motivation and job satisfaction practitioners experience when they are involved in capability building activities rather than problem management activities.'

In summary, relational capability building to meet and help 'hardly-reached' whānau is multi-layered. Promoting empathically guided partnership working across the system will harness and access the expertise available in practitioners and teams to engage and sustain 'hardly-reached' whānau for change. The Reaching Out framework provides a kaupapa, a relationship framework, a theory of change and practical tools to support practitioners to do this. Reflective practice tools and team consultation tools support the team around the practitioner to do this, but need to be built into disciplined daily practice that is mirrored by

managers and supervisors, thus offering consistent modelling and encouragement to practice and strengthen the skills involved in facilitating a purposeful partnership for change.

The challenge is to maintain 'relational priority' and relationship capability building with agility through an ecological lens, to build healthy communities where whānau support their tamariki to grow and flourish. We must reflect in our own sphere of influence and ask...

'How is what I'm thinking, saying and doing enabling human connection and change?'

Poipoia te kakano
Kia pua wai

"Yeah my greatest difficulty – cos I would've like to use more and do more so don't misunderstand me. It's trying to fit it all in with the expectation of what we must do and must use. So, it becomes 'on top of'. So, I change things to try and run with something if I think it's going to be really useful and do-able and workable, then I try and adapt it slightly, so I can fit it in, if you like."

Section 4:

Appendices;
References;
Endnotes

Appendix 1

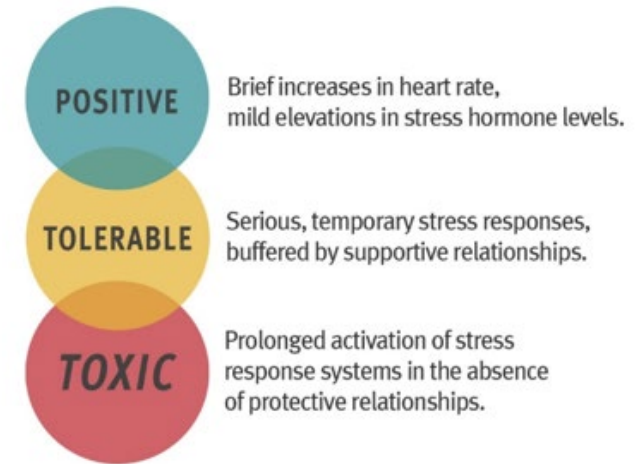**Toxic Stress https://developingchild.harvard. edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress/**

The future of any society depends on its ability to foster the healthy development of the next generation. Extensive research on the biology of stress now shows that healthy development can be derailed by excessive or prolonged activation of stress response systems in the body and brain. Such toxic stress can have damaging effects on learning, behavior and health across the lifespan.

Learning how to cope with adversity is an important part of healthy child development. When we are threatened, our bodies prepare us to respond by increasing our heart rate, blood pressure and stress hormones, such as cortisol. When a young child's stress response systems are activated within an environment of supportive relationships with adults, these physiological effects are buffered and brought back down to baseline. The result is the development of healthy stress response systems. However, if the stress response is extreme and long-lasting and buffering relationships are unavailable to the child, the result can be damaged, weakened systems and brain architecture, with lifelong repercussions.

It's important to distinguish among three kinds of responses to stress: positive, tolerable and toxic. As described below, these three terms refer to the stress response systems' effects on the body, not to the stressful event or experience itself:

- Positive stress response is a normal and essential part of healthy development, characterized by brief increases in heart rate and mild elevations in hormone levels. Some situations that might trigger a positive stress response are the first day with a new caregiver or receiving an injected immunization.

- Tolerable stress response activates the body's alert systems to a greater degree as a result of more severe, longer-lasting difficulties, such as the loss of a loved one, a natural disaster, or a frightening injury. If the activation is time-limited and buffered by relationships with adults who help the child adapt, the brain and other organs recover from what might otherwise be damaging effects.

- Toxic stress response can occur when a child experiences strong, frequent and/or prolonged adversity – such as physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, caregiver substance abuse or mental illness, exposure to violence, and/or the accumulated burdens of family economic hardship – without adequate adult support. This kind of prolonged activation of the stress response systems can disrupt the development of brain architecture and other organ systems and increase the risk for stress-related disease and cognitive impairment, well into the adult years.

POSITIVE — Brief increases in heart rate, mild elevations in stress hormone levels.

TOLERABLE — Serious, temporary stress responses, buffered by supportive relationships.

TOXIC — Prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective relationships.

When toxic stress response occurs continually, or is triggered by multiple sources, it can have a cumulative toll on an individual's physical and mental health – for a lifetime. The more adverse experiences in childhood, the greater the likelihood of developmental delays and later health problems, including heart disease, diabetes, substance abuse and depression. Research also indicates that supportive, responsive relationships with caring adults as early in life as possible can prevent or reverse the damaging effects of toxic stress response.

Appendix 2

Reaching Out: Engaging and Sustaining Relationships with All Whānau

Background

Sustaining purposeful engagement with families who have multiple complex needs is an on-going challenge for social and health services. Using explicit and detailed relationship models is essential to get the maximum use from expertise and resources available. Practice based evidence and evidence based practice consistently demonstrate that an effective relationships the most important predictive factor in positive outcomes. Given this information, it is important to identify the characteristics, skills and principles and use those to build capability in practitioners to engage and sustain effective relationships with families.

Delivery of Family Start (in particular making effective use of the Parenting Resource) requires purposeful engagement and sustained partnering between the practitioner and the whānau. Family Start is underpinned by the principles of partnership defined in the Family Partnership model (Partnership is an intentional process that is ongoing and dynamic, it is experienced and supportive, connected to the experience of the whānau, is influential toward positive change, it is facilitated and negotiated by a practitioner for the good of the families and their children).

The Project

S.K.I.P., Family Start and What It Takes – Aotearoa/ NZ Ltd are working together to build an Engagement Framework. What it Takes would like to work with Family Start practitioners and team leaders to understand what the challenges to working in partnership are, what is involved when partnering is sustained and what can be done to support practitioners to engage the hardest to reach whānau. Collaborating and developing this with Family Start will help us to develop supports that feel meaningful and accessible for practitioners and are therefore, likely to be shared widely and sustained in a lively and dynamic way. We would like to build these supports into the Parenting Resource to support its implementation under Phase 2 of the project. The supports we develop will have the advantage of being a unique combination of international evidence and practically grown in and from work on the ground.

There are 4-phases to the project:

Phase 1 is about developing a shared picture of what works, what doesn't and why. We would like as much input into this phase as we can possibly get, we will need practitioners and team leaders to be purposefully reflective, open to talking about the detail of successes and unpacking the dark corners where engagement with families has not felt possible.

Phase 2 will see a core group developing draft resources, testing these at a local level and adapting.

Phase 3 will involve piloting with 3-4 whole teams and tracking the effectiveness of the supports.

Phase 4 involves developing a descriptive plan that includes the processes in this project, the results and a plan for sustainable spread.

Appendix 3

Practice Story Prompts for exploration – please seek permission to record and facilitate this conversation. Work carefully to follow the practitioners lead using empathic action to guide you and check your understanding as you go.

- Bare bones - outline the situation (what are the problems with engagement and change), who's affected and where and when does this story start?

- What happened? What did you do that led to change?

- What did you do to make a difference? Who and what were helpful? This is being thought about in relation to the Reaching Out Framework and its component parts.

- What were the outcomes? Who did they effect? How do you know what worked well? What changed in the situation and your relationship? How do you know this change will endure?

- What components of the Reaching Out Framework did you use? How did they support good practice? What was essential to the outcomes?

- What do you want to change or strengthen based on this story? How will you do this (Adopt, Adapt both that you can do and that you would need help from your team, supervisor, organisation, etc, Drop and why)

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i. Whānau - 'Hardly-reached whānau'. This includes all families who are not in a helpful relationship with services. They may have ambivalent or hostile feelings toward services and/or practitioners and may attend appointments under duress or avoid services as much as is possible without compromising the integrity of their family unit. Early conversations the term 'hard to reach' was rejected in favour of 'hardly-reached', offering language that practitioners construed as less judgemental and indicating that there may be some service contact, but the usefulness of that contact is questionable. There was also early enthusiasm for the name of the framework to be 'Reaching Out'. Both of these terms had a fit for the majority of people involved throughout the project.

ii. Tamariki – Pepe, tamaiti and tamariki – for reader ease we have used the term tamariki throughout the document to include babies, single children, whangai children, any child in their care of whānau or whānau whānui

iii. Practitioner – includes all whānau practitioners, their supervisors and managers, practitioners from outside the Family Start programme who have worked with 'hard to reach' whānau

iv. The quality of relationship established between an agency (particularly frontline practitioners) and each client and their family has priority over the delivery of any programme content (ESR, 2016).

v. Storm Riding is an explicit and facilitated process. It helps the practitioner to show they are focussed and responsive. It gives whānau choice and control

with a supportive facilitator alongside them in crisis. It reduces distress and builds parental capability in emotion regulation and problem management.

vi. The Helping Families Programme is a manualised intervention, which improves the outcomes of children who live in some of the most complex and disadvantaged families in the UK. Children and families with such difficulties offer significant challenges to service providers and are the least likely to benefit from existing parenting programmes. Multi-stressed, high need families are particularly difficult to engage, retain and treat. The 4 C's theory of change (Control, Connection, Competence and Confidence ©Ellis, 2012) pays attention to specific relationship issues that increase the likelihood of sustained engaged of hard to reach families.

vii. Communication between SKIP and What it Takes including access to 'Empathy Cards'.

viii. A Good Start in Life (What it Takes - Aotearoa/NZ Ltd 2012) was a SKIP funded action research project which used the My Working World framework © (Ellis, 2016) to enable better partnering across the ecosystem, supporting children with disabilities. It identified enablers and barriers to partnering across the system that supports whānau with tamaiti (tamariki) with disabilities.

ix. High Need Families Programme (2012) Davis C, Ellis, M & Harris L. A development and evaluation project targeting a small but significant number of families with multiple problems, where chaotic parenting is likely to give rise to disruptive antisocial behaviour. Using a conceptual map and existing interventions, The Helping Families Programme was developed. It is a manualised intervention, which improves the outcomes of children who live

in some of the most complex and disadvantaged families in the UK. Children and families with such difficulties offer significant challenges to service providers and are the least likely to benefit from existing parenting programmes. Multi-stressed, high need families are particularly difficult to engage, retain and treat. The 4 C's theory of change (Control, Connection, Competence and Confidence ©Ellis, 2012) pays attention to specific relationship issues that increase the likelihood of sustained engaged of hard to reach families.

x. Family Partnership model (Day, Ellis & Harris 2015) The Family Partnership model uses an explicit model of the helping process that demonstrates how specific helper qualities and skills, when used in partnership, enable parents and families to overcome their difficulties, build strengths and resilience and fulfil their goals more effectively.

xi. We did not include kanohi ki te kanohi with whānau for this specific project as this has been done elsewhere. This project was designed to answer their call, not add to their burden. We shared explicit expectations, that practitioners would introduce and rehearse early tools and ideas. Enabling purposeful participation for both (practitioner and whānau), tapping into their expertise and critical analysis in 'real time' at the coal face.

xii. The purpose of JumpStart Storytelling is to quickly engage every participant in the purpose of the group (in this case to talk about engagement practices), accelerate collaboration without compromising diverse perspectives, effectively tell their story to at least 3, then chosen stories get told to entire group, deepen understanding about the essence of practice stories and develop learning through high quality peer sharing and story analysis.

xiii. The quality of relationship established between frontline practitioners and each whānau has priority over the delivery of any programme content. (ESR 2016)

xiv. This was adapted from Stephen Billett (Griffith University) Professional and Practice-Based Learning Framework(2010) and combined with FPM Facilitator skills (2014).

xv. Constructs – the ways we make sense of the world around us. These are adaptable and change and largely drive our behaviour and interactions with others.

www.whatittakes.org.nz