

## CODE OF PRACTICE

---

### Purpose

The purpose of this code<sup>1</sup> is to summarise the behavioural standards required of people engaged by Tautoko Tāne Aotearoa (TTA') or any of their accredited Member Organisations ('TMO') in delivering support services for male survivors of sexual violence and/or their family/whanau.

People engaged may include peer workers, counsellors, social workers and/or other healing services and other frontline and administrative staff ('service providers') who may be engaged as trustees, employees, contractors, consultants or volunteers.

### Context

The ambition of TTA is to provide appropriate high-quality support services that are focussed on hope and recovery and embrace a relational, strength-based approach in developing mutual, trust-based relationships that enable and support survivors on their journey towards wellbeing

Irrespective of the type of support service involved, this code recommends that all service providers should also appreciate the principles and practices of Purposeful Peer Support Aotearoa (PPSA - [refer https://PPSAa.nz/](https://PPSAa.nz/)). Understanding the focus and intent of this framework, with its emphasis on the 'lived experience' of peer workers, is important in enabling an effective alignment and integration of peer support and other support services.

The PPSA framework also includes a relationship cycle that provides the potential for a common approach to the provision of support services to engage with survivors on their journey towards wellbeing. Whether the service provided is peer support, social work, counselling or other healing services, the 'four seasons' of relationship model provides a helpful way of approaching the development of an effective relationship with survivors.

- Building connection (Winter)
- Celebrating strengths (Spring)
- Navigating challenges (Summer)
- Reflective learning (Autumn)

### Practical objectives

This code is intended to:

- educate all those involved with TTA or a TMO regarding the behaviours required of all service providers interacting with male survivors and/or their family/whanau
- encourage and enable service providers to operate purposefully, collaboratively, and professionally; and to evaluate and regulate their own practices and behaviours
- assist service providers and those managing and governing the provision of these services to address sub-standard behaviour

---

<sup>1</sup> This TTA Code of Practice integrates and replaces the TTA Code of Ethics and the TTA Code of Conduct

## Contents

1   The three TTA operating principles	page 2
2   Cultural context	page 2
3   Behaving purposefully	page 3
4   Behaving collaboratively	page 4
5   Behaving professionally	page 5
6   When behavioural standards are not met	page 8

## 1 | The three TTA operating principles

To provide effective support services, TTA relies on all service providers behaving purposefully, collaboratively, and professionally<sup>2</sup>. These three operating principles (*pou*), helpfully group TTA behavioural standards.

<b>Purposeful</b> <i>Hoaketanga</i>	<b>Always 'on purpose'</b> Putting survivors first and always acting in their best interests; always seeking ways to improve their wellbeing.
<b>Collaborative</b> <i>Mahi tahi</i>	<b>Always collegial</b> Building meaningful relationships based on mutual value, trust, and respect; working together to achieve wellbeing.
<b>Professional</b> <i>Ngaio</i>	<b>Always ethical, open, and honest</b> Acting authentically and with integrity; aspiring to the highest standards of professional practice.

## 2 | Cultural context

Our cultural context in Aotearoa New Zealand incorporates a deep respect for the status of Māori as our nation's indigenous people (*tangata whenua*, 'people of the land').

Accordingly, in Aotearoa New Zealand service providers:

- operate in a culturally appropriate manner while recognising the diversity within the Māori population
- understand that The Treaty of Waitangi (and associated legislative changes) is the basis for the principles of Māori protection and participation, and of partnership between Māori and non-Māori
- have some understanding of te ao Māori (the Māori world) and can state and use bicultural practice models
- promote the rights of Māori to use Māori service providers and/or bicultural practice models to protect the integrity of Māori as tangata whenua
- promote access to services that meet the needs of Māori survivors and their whanau
- endeavour to ensure supervision is culturally relevant if the supervisee is Māori

<sup>2</sup> It is important that these operating principles are viewed as an integrated behavioural framework = purposeful + collaborative + professional – to embrace the relational intentions of all three pou working together

Relationships with indigenous people differ across the world but given the critical need for mutual respect in the delivery of services to male survivors, it is essential that service providers operate in a manner that respects the culture and rights of all people.

In Aotearoa we have particular regard for the cultural practices of our Pasifika people while recognising that this collective identity includes several different nations, each with their own individual culture. However, we must also have an equal regard for the cultural practices of male survivors of other ethnicities that seek our support services.

### 3 | Behaving purposefully

#### Operating principle

<b>Purposeful</b> <i>Hoaketanga</i>	Always 'on purpose' Putting survivors first and always acting in their best interests; always seeking ways to improve their wellbeing.
--	--

#### Service providers are purposeful and hopeful

TTA and TMO support services are powered by the belief that everyone has strengths and the potential to build a meaningful life.

Accordingly, service providers:

- encourage and support survivors to find their own recovery goals and path to living a life of meaning and purpose
- acknowledge that life is punctuated by setbacks
- acknowledge the value of life experiences that enables service providers with lived experience to purposefully and thoughtfully sharing stories from their own lives for the benefit of survivors they are supporting
- demonstrate their belief that positive change towards wellbeing is possible for everyone by encouraging survivors to have dreams and goals that are personally meaningful
- demonstrate their belief that it is possible to develop strengths in the face of adversity by focussing on the hard-earned strengths of themselves and survivors they are supporting

#### Service providers workers act in the best interests of survivors

TTA and TMO support services are founded on service providers acting in the best interests of survivors.

Accordingly, service providers:

- act in support of the right of survivors to make free choices about their lives and care (self-determination) or, if a survivor's capacity and/or circumstances limit this right, act in other ways to protect the survivor's rights and welfare
- advocate for, and act in accordance with, the human, legal, and civil rights of survivors, including by making themselves and the survivors they are supporting aware of relevant legislation (such as human and cultural rights, privacy, and confidentiality)
- take preventative action if a survivor's behaviour is harmful to themselves or others

In situations where distress or harm to a survivor is possible, service providers examine all possible avenues to minimise harm and achieve positive outcomes.

## 4 | Behaving collaboratively

### Operating principle

<b>Collaborative</b> <i>Mahi tahi</i>	<b>Always collegial</b> Building meaningful relationships based on mutual value, trust, and respect; working together to achieve wellbeing.
--	--

### Service providers build mutual relationships with survivors

TTA and TMO support services expect the development of authentic, trust-based relationships between service providers and survivors. Close, supportive, and nurturing connections are essential in enabling and supporting survivors to move towards wellbeing.

Accordingly, service providers and survivors (and their family/whanua):

- take time to get to know each other, and to learn what is important to each other
- expect they will see some things differently and are genuinely interested in how each other has come to understand the world as they do
- acknowledge a mutual sense of responsibility for the relationship, co-creating a connection that has value to each party

### Service providers build and maintain trust and confidence with survivors they are supporting

Because trust is integral to any relationship, service providers:

- never abuse a position of trust for financial or personal gain or for any reason
- ensure that the difference between professional and personal involvement with survivors is explicitly understood and respected<sup>3</sup>

### Service providers respect the dignity and personal and cultural values of survivors

Given the critical need for mutual respect in the delivery of TTA and TMO services, it is essential that respect for a survivor's personal and cultural values is overtly practiced by service providers

Accordingly, service providers

- take time to understand the personal and cultural identity of a survivor, and take steps to develop cultural competence as required to respond respectfully in support of the survivor's *mana* (dignity) or cultural wellbeing
- consider their own identity, and take care not to allow any personal beliefs to negatively impact the quality of the support services they provide
- show respect for every survivor's intrinsic human value and uniqueness, and for the diversity between and within different cultures, including diversity of ethnicity, disability, economic status, age, sexuality, gender, faith, and beliefs

<sup>3</sup> To maintain personal and professional boundaries, service providers must not engage in or encourage intimacy, including behaviours or comments which might reasonably be interpreted as being a sexual advance, with survivors (or anyone close to them) throughout the professional relationship and for at least two years following its termination.

## Service providers embrace collaboration – with colleagues, with survivors, and between survivors

Collaborative learning enables both survivors and the service providers to grow their ability to develop and maintain meaningful relationships with others. Accordingly, service providers foster collaborative learning that enables both service providers and survivors to learn from and with each other, to learn from sharing past experiences, and to create new understandings from their interactions.

Service providers also work collegially to share knowledge and experience, and to enhance and support professional development.

## 5 | Behaving professionally

### Operating principle

<b>Professional</b> <b>Ngaio</b>	<p><b>Always ethical, open, and honest</b></p> <p>Acting authentically and with integrity; maintaining the highest standards of professional practice.</p>
-------------------------------------	--

*Behaving professionally means working responsibly, and skilfully, and diligently.*

### Integrity is at the heart of purposeful support services

Acting with integrity – doing the right thing – makes effective support services possible by fostering trust and reliability in relationships.

Service providers, and everyone involved with the provision of TTA and TMO services, must act with integrity.

In addition to treating others with respect, acting with integrity means service providers must:

- be honest
- be fair<sup>4</sup> and equitable<sup>5</sup>
- be reliable (keeping promises)
- maintain personal and professional boundaries
- avoid or declare conflicts of interest (see below)
- respect privacy and maintain confidentiality (see next page)
- take responsibility for their own decisions and actions
- work safely, protecting themselves and others from unnecessary risks including risks to relational safety
- work in accordance with the law
- do no harm

<sup>4</sup> **Fairness** recognises that all persons are entitled to benefit equally from support services, and requires service providers to operate even-handedly, showing no bias or favouritism towards any survivor

<sup>5</sup> **Equity** recognises that we don't all begin in the same place in society, and requires service providers to determine and enact appropriate responses to inequity, such as when a survivor has to expend more effort to achieve the same goals as another member of society.

**Service providers maintain personal and professional boundaries**

For service providers, recognising and respecting the mutuality of the relationship is of paramount importance.

To assure the intended equality of the relationship, service providers:

- never act in a manner that reflect a position of power in the relationship
- avoid and disengage from any coercive behaviours that could be interpreted as bullying or harassment of any kind

**Service providers avoid or declare conflicts of interest**

For service providers, a conflict of interest is a situation in which one their interests (such as commitments, obligations, relationships, investments) is 'in conflict' with their work.

To ensure their interests do not negatively impact survivors, service providers:

- avoid dual or multiple relationships and other conflicts of interest, when possible and develop the skills to navigate and manage these relationships when they are unavoidable (e.g. in peer support services)
- discuss potential or actual conflicts of interest with their peers
- discuss potential or actual conflicts of interest with their manager (or another senior colleague) to try and find ways to navigate and manage the conflict. If the conflict cannot be resolved, end the survivor relationship and appropriately refer the survivor to another service provider

**Service providers respect privacy and maintain confidentiality**

TTA and TMO service providers are entrusted with information that should normally remain private. Maintaining confidentiality shows respect for survivors and their families/whanau.

Accordingly, service providers

- clearly explain to survivors (and their families/whanau or guardians, if appropriate and consented) who will be able to access their client records, and any foreseeable circumstances in which their information would need to be disclosed to a third party
- treat information gained during the service provider/survivor as confidential information, and use it for professional purposes only
- carefully take measures to ensure that:
  - privacy during consultations, and when in public, and when on social media
  - (whenever possible) survivors are the primary source of information about themselves and their needs, and they can check the accuracy of that information
  - electronic records and other information about survivors are stored securely
- maintain confidentiality from first contact throughout the professional relationship and beyond
- do not disclose confidential information without informed consent, unless:
  - for the safety of the survivor, those associated with the survivor, or the public
  - due to diminished capacity, or legal requirement

### Service providers communicate clearly and openly

Clear communication is essential for the provision of any personal service and is essential for gaining informed consent for any proposed support service.

Accordingly, service providers:

- use clear, understandable, and respectful language when talking with and about others
- practice reflective listening to ensure that both parties understand what has been communicated
- seek the services of a competent interpreter (wherever possible) when needed to ensure comprehensibility
- discuss with survivors the overall aim, extent, and nature of intended support services (providing sufficient information to enable the survivor to make a well-informed decision)
- inform survivors, where relevant, of the availability of other relevant services
- inform survivors of how to make a complaint if they are unhappy with the service they are receiving
- keep clear and accurate records, which they make at the time events occur, or as soon as possible afterwards

#### When a survivor is unable to give informed consent

If the inability is because they are unable to fully understand and/or communicate their decision, service providers take reasonable steps to determine the survivor's views and to seek consent from a person legally empowered to provide consent on the survivor's behalf.

If the inability is due to diminished capacity, service providers ask to sight relevant legal documents, such as an enduring power of attorney and its activation document.

### Service providers maintain the highest standards of professional practice

In acting responsibly, skilfully, and diligently to provide support services, service providers also:

- end survivor relationships if the service provider and the survivor agree that a continued relationship will not benefit the survivor
- facilitate access to appropriate services, resources, and other professionals where these are of interest to, and may be useful for, the survivor, making appropriate referrals where possible
- take responsibility for their emotional, mental, and physical health by practicing appropriate self-care and seeking help if their performance, practice, or judgement is affected by health concerns
- use technology effectively and safely by developing and maintaining technical proficiency
- follow the standards applied in a face-to-face supervisory relationship if or when:
  - accessing external supervision by technological means
  - providing support services by technological means e.g., video, phone, messaging
- carry and accept personal responsibility and accountability for their practice, and for maintaining competence through professional development, and for professional affiliations

- research and publish ethically and responsibly, gaining informed consent from any survivors included in publications, and from all participants in research
- do not act in ways that negatively impact the reputation of TTA or TMO services, including when using social media and other electronic forms of communication

## 6 | When behavioural standards are not met

In all instances where the behaviour does not meet the expected standards, service providers must cooperate fully with any formal inquiries or investigations, subject to the requirements for confidentiality of survivor information.

### When the issue is with a service provider's own behaviour

The service provider should speak with his or her manager in the first instance (or another senior colleague if their manager is considered to have a conflict).

### When the issue is with a colleague

For minor issues with the behaviour of a colleague, service providers should engage in respectful and constructive dialogue with their colleague in the first instance.

If the service provider is unable to resolve the issue collegially the next step is to escalate to his or her manager (or another senior colleague if their manager is considered to have a conflict).

In escalating any behavioural matter within TTA or a TMO, it is important that the service provider and their manager (or senior colleague) consider and respect the relevant organisational accountabilities and the position of their colleague's manager who may be entitled to be aware of, and informed about, the issue.

If confronted by a colleague's professional negligence, misconduct, unethical behaviour, or any other serious behavioural matter, service providers should speak with their manager (or other senior colleague) with a view to ensuring that their colleague's manager is made aware of, and informed about the issue.

If the matter is dangerous, discriminatory, abusive, or exploitative, service providers should also report the behaviour to the appropriate authority.