



PASIFIKA PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

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Fa'afetai fa'afetai lava.

Thank you to all the participants who gave their time to share their wisdom and experience with us. We are grateful for the freedom and willingness with which you shared your ideas about family violence protective factors in our Pasifika families and communities. Your commitment to our Pasifika communities is inspiring.

Protecting our Pasifika families allows for the protection of our Pasifika children and future.

'O fanau a manu e fafaga i fuga o laau, a o tama a tagata e fafaga i upu"

"The young of birds are fed with the blossoms of trees whereas the young of humans are fed with words"¹.

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DISCLAIMER: *The views and interpretations in this report are those of the researchers.*

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¹ Tamasese, F. (2006, April 20). *Samoan custom and the rights of Children* [Conference presentation]. PIC NZ/Samoan National Women's Synod. Waitakere, Auckland. [The Head of State - Official Speeches \(head-of-state-samoa.ws\)](https://www.head-of-state-samoa.ws)

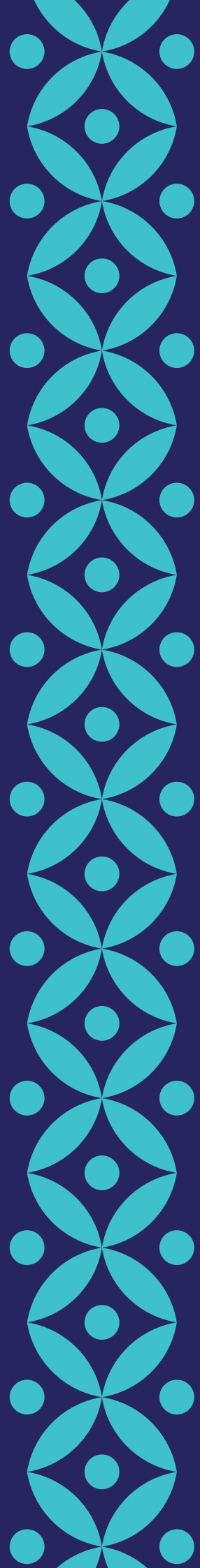
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01

**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research was contracted by the Ministry of Social Development (Pasifika Proud) in 2019. The aim of the research was to develop an initial set of protective factors from a literature review and consultation around Aotearoa New Zealand that could serve as the foundation for further work on Pasifika resilience and protective factors in the area of family violence.

To this end, three focus groups were held with Pasifika participants. Due to the restrictions of COVID-19, most of the focus groups were conducted via zoom.

RESEARCH METHOD

The literature review searched across multiple databases to locate and assess literature related to protective factors and Pasifika populations. A talanoa approach of having open dialogue and reciprocal conversations with participants was undertaken and centred around the incorporated into the research questions. Almost all the participants were known to the researcher/s either in a professional or personal capacity.

Three focus groups were held in 2020 and 2021 with 44 community and faith leaders, practitioners, researchers, and academics. Participants were recruited by the researchers given their experience and practice within the family violence sector and from the Pasifika Proud community. The focus groups were conducted via zoom and face-to-face. The ethnic identity of the participants was: Samoan, 16; Tongan, 9; Kiribati, 5; Cook Islands Maori, 3; Fijian, 2; Niuean, 2; Palagi, 1; Tahitian, 1; Multiple Pasifika ethnicity, 5. Thirty-one participants were women and 13 were men.

Ethics approval for the study was granted by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee on 31 January 2020. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, an amendment to move from face-to-face focus groups to zoom focus groups was approved on 24 July 2020.

FINDINGS

This research identified a range of factors contributing to family violence, protective factors against the occurrence of family violence, factors that mitigate the impact of family violence, and factors that can support healing from family violence. The study also noted work to be done to build Pasifika protective factors in relation to family violence.

Factors contributing to family violence:

A range of factors, including macro and micro societal, family, and personal factors combine with cultural and faith beliefs to cause family violence in Pasifika families and communities.

Macro influences include socio-economic factors, unemployment, colonisation, immigration, and the environment. Socio-economic influences relate mainly to poverty and, for some families, the stressors that arise from not having enough money. Participants highlighted that Pasifika families and communities have often been impacted by negative experiences arising from immigration and colonisation. Participants talked about Pasifika families' experiences of systemic and institutional bias in Aotearoa New Zealand alongside the challenge of adjusting to a new culture. This is not to say that cultural obligations contribute to family violence, rather it was the barriers that limited their ability to fulfil their cultural obligations that created stress and disharmony within family dynamics.

Beliefs relating to the roles of women and men, and ideas about how children should be disciplined were thought to contribute to family violence. These beliefs were characterised by men using power over women and physical disciplining of children. Focus groups also noted that religious and faith beliefs can promote physical discipline within families and can also reinforce the obligation for families to contribute financially to their church. We observed the diversity of ethnic-specific island communities and their understanding of the roles of women and men.

Family/Personal factors contributing to family violence in Pasifika families and communities included mental health issues, addiction/dependency, lack of social skills, and histories of family violence. Cultural disconnection was emphasised as a contributing factor to family violence, particularly in relation to a lack of understanding about what Pasifika values are. Additionally, cultural disconnection means that families are not able to access social and cultural support if needed.

Protective factors against family violence

Pasifika families and communities protect themselves from family violence by engaging in educational and skills development while being supported by Pasifika families and Church/Faith communities.

Education to grow financial literacy, develop workforce pathways, build knowledge about family violence, and enhance ethnic-specific Pasifika cultural knowledge was viewed as an essential component to protecting Pasifika families. Investing in these educational areas was viewed as a necessary preventative strategy for the future, especially given the causes of family violence identified above. The view was that being employed and able to support family members, having a clear Pasifika identity, and having knowledge about the dynamics of family violence, were factors that protected people from family violence.

Skills development was viewed as a necessary component of protection against family violence. Participants stated that having strategies in place to manage emotions and anger along with communication skills was critical for protection from family violence. There were suggestions that relationship skills should be taught in schools. The focus groups acknowledged that some aspects of education and skills development should be delivered using Pasifika cultural frameworks and embedding into these frameworks an understanding of the clinical implications of trauma on children and future generations. Faith and community leaders could work alongside Pasifika clinical staff, e.g. social workers and psychologists, and be resourced to provide the range of education and skills development from a Pasifika cultural base.

Family and church support were central components of the web of protective factors for families and communities. Participants acknowledged that Pasifika families may already have strong family and faith support networks that could be engaged to help protect them from family violence.

Factors mitigating the impact of family violence

Mitigation of the impact of family violence within Pasifika communities could be achieved by supporting families to learn more about family violence and encouraging families to implement Pasifika-informed family strategies.

Family and community factors that exist in Pasifika cultures, such as identifying a skilled mediator within the family to support victims and perpetrators, was promoted as a way of reducing the impact of family violence. The mediator could

be a member of the family or of the community. The family or community mediator may be able to encourage family members to come together to transparently discuss what has occurred.

Formal supports might still need to be engaged with Pasifika families. Formal supports can be considered a protective factor if the support provided uses Pasifika cultural frameworks in its work with families. There was acknowledgement among groups that the formal support needs to be aligned in terms of ethnic-specific Pasifika cultures and also in terms of gender. However, participants noted that there are not enough crisis intervention options for Pasifika.

Cultural processes, as noted, are important for protecting families. In particular, participants noted the talanoa process as a protective factor when used in families. The fact that church venues can be used to support family talanoa was also seen as a protective factor.

Knowledge/Resourcing that consists of culturally-aligned messages and modes of delivery is a protective factor against the impact of family violence when Pasifika people across their life course development know about family violence and its impacts. Knowledge about family violence and resourcing of family violence initiatives is relevant to both families and professionals. Family and community access to information about family violence via diverse platforms was viewed as protective against the impact of family violence, as was access to key knowledgeable people within the Pasifika community. Professionals who were culturally competent to work with Pasifika families and communities were a positive option that added another layer of protection.

Factors supporting healing from family violence

Pasifika people can heal from family violence if holistic Pasifika-informed education and Pasifika approaches to work with Pasifika families are used to grow the self-esteem and confidence of Pasifika communities. These protective components must be in place alongside a web of protection that makes room for Pasifika cultural processes within a family violence system that allows time for healing interventions.

Ethnic-specific Pasifika cultural processes were identified as practices that could work to heal families. Critical to the healing process was the idea that protection of the family cannot occur unless there is acknowledgement of what has happened within the family. Church and faith communities were identified as important contributors to the healing process for families and communities.



Empowerment of Pasifika people sits alongside the protective components available via Pasifika cultural processes. Participants acknowledged the protective ability of Pasifika cultural principles for empowering families and communities to heal from family violence, and fundamental to the principles for practice are Pasifika ideas about the importance of maintaining family relationships. Central to the empowerment of Pasifika people in relation to family violence are education about family violence and its impacts, and encouraging Pasifika families to talk about family violence.

Systemic factors refer to the protective capability of the family violence system. Participants expressed that a well-resourced system that incorporates Pasifika cultural processes would protect Pasifika families as they work through the process of healing from family violence. Time is needed to give effect to Pasifika principles of practice; participants suggested that the family violence system should be geared towards supporting existing and sustainable partnerships with Pasifika families and community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations have been divided into three areas according to the EPI model (Education, Prevention, Intervention) which has been developed out of the research findings.

Education

- Work within already existing Pasifika family violence programmes to co-design a Pasifika education and dissemination strategy (that includes the findings from this research) with faith based/community leaders, professionals, and families with lived experiences to enable a genuine understanding of violence on current and future Pasifika generations.
- Provide training and knowledge opportunities for key Pasifika leaders as mediators within their community for the prevention and early intervention of family harm and violence.
- Formulate a clear pathway to partner with Universities and educational institutes and incorporate Pasifika frameworks in the teaching of family harm and violence.
- Disseminate the findings of this report to Pasifika groups, though equally important will be dissemination to the mainstream community and seeking their involvement in implementing these findings.

Prevention

- Target and prioritise social and economic support to disadvantaged Pasifika groups within the Pasifika community.
- Implement and deliver culturally-designed financial literacy and employment seeking workshops in the community such as with churches, sports groups and local village gatherings.
- Work with key agencies such as Whanau Awhina Plunket, early childhood centres, and aoga amata to target Pasifika communities in early child-rearing practice so as to mitigate the risks of harm to babies and children at an early stage of their development.
- Work with primary and secondary schools to develop education about family violence.

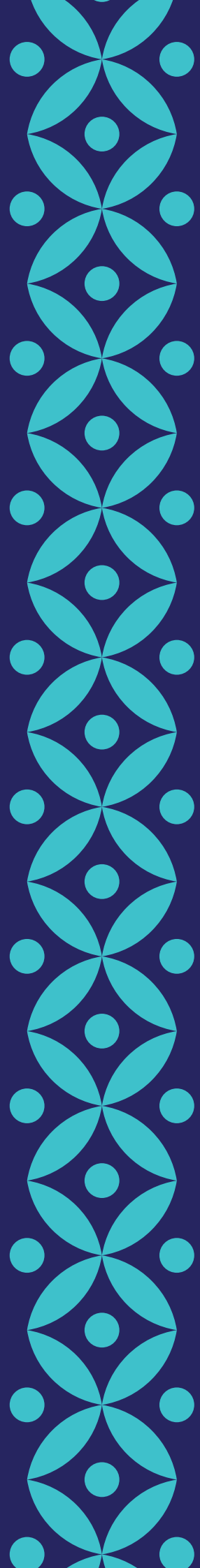
Intervention

- Review the accessibility of support services among the regions for Pasifika communities and develop an action plan to increase accessibility for family violence support services for Pasifika.
- Work with agencies providing family violence support to develop a Pasifika strategy that incorporates findings in this report for working with Pasifika communities.
- Work with agencies to provide cultural support and supervision to staff engaging with Pasifika families and communities working in family violence. However, we suggest that the content and structure of this cultural support is clearly outlined so that support is consistent across the regions.
- Develop a Pasifika family violence support network for all practitioners (Pasifika and non-Pasifika) that work with Pasifika families in the family violence field.

02



**REVIEW OF
LITERATURE**



REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Too often, Pasifika, Māori, and other groups are viewed as ‘at-risk’ and dependent on western civilisations aid (Ravulo, Mafile’o & Yeates, 2019). In fact, most academic research is focused on individual risk and adversity in relation to social problems, particularly for these populations (Timshel, Montgomery & Dalgaard, 2017). This focus on risk instead of strengths could be seen as a form of further oppression and stigmatisation. For Pasifika in Aotearoa New Zealand, this can mean falsely attributing larger social problems to cultural norms within the community. However, emerging research is challenging this focus on risk by instead utilising strengths-based approaches to analyse social issues, such as family violence, that affect Pasifika communities.

This review focuses on family violence which is a prevalent social issue in Aotearoa New Zealand, including in the Pasifika community (*Pasifika Proud, 2016*). Although it is a common social problem, very little research has been done on family violence that goes beyond risk (*Aisenberg & Herrekohl, 2008*). This review will provide a discussion of a strengths-based concept that provides the other half of the story of risk: resilience and protective factors. The overall concept of resilience focuses on strengths, prevention, and recovery (*Whitaker, 2014*). A discussion beyond risk factors highlights the strengths of communities which is both destigmatising and essential for understanding how issues can be prevented and/or adapted to (*Whitaker, 2014; Timshel, Montgomery & Dalgaard, 2017*). The review will explore how resilience and protective factors are related yet distinct. Due to a lack of research about protective factors for family violence among Pasifika, the discussion will explore general protective factors for family violence and protective cultural factors for Pasifika and other cultural and linguistically diverse groups.

The literature review enacted a search strategy, developed inclusion and exclusion criteria and critiqued the quality and relevance of the literature found. The initial literature search covered a number of areas that became the criteria for what would be included in the review and what would not:

- Focused on protective factors and family violence
- Focused on ethnic-specific literature
- Related to Aotearoa New Zealand and international contexts

Key words were used to search electronic databases and government reports. A variety of terms were used to search for literature to ensure the search was rigorous. For example, the term Pacific may also appear as ‘Pasifika’, ‘Pasefika’, ‘Pacific people’, and Polynesian and so searches were conducted under each of these terms. As key literature was found the reference lists were searched to find further search terms.

The search for literature was an inductive process. As relevant literature was found, the inclusion and exclusion criteria expanded to become more specific to the topic of research, for example:

- Focused on protective factors and family violence
 - Resilience
 - Adversity
 - Protective factors in relation to other social issues

The literature reviewed is thus focused on qualitative and quantitative scholarly work attentive to resilience and protective factors identified in Pacific cultures in relation to family violence and other social issues.

RESILIENCE

The concept of resilience has its roots in focusing on the individual and the traits that make up this individual, and very little research has been conducted around societal or macro factors involved in resilience (*Yakubovich et al., 2018; Whitaker, 2014; Ungar, Ghazinour & Richter, 2013*). However,

the full utility of resilience is often not realized when only conceptualized at the individual level, without attention to its role at the community or system level in trying to promote well-being through research or intervention. (Shaw et.al, 2016, p.35).

It is therefore important to broaden the concept of resilience to consider social factors and to incorporate a systems approach (*Aisenberg & Herrekohl, 2008*). Given that this review also focuses on a specific society, Aotearoa New Zealand, social factors must also be considered in terms of how they can promote or hinder resilience within the Aotearoa New Zealand context. Family violence is a costly social problem and social systems and resources are considered important protective and risk factors (*Aldarondo et al., 2011*).

Additionally, in order to be successful, resilience and protective approaches must acknowledge and respond to the alternative cultural frameworks that exist in non-dominant cultural and ethnic populations (*Kirmayer et al., 2011*).

For this review, it is also useful to understand the broader holistic concepts of resilience to better align with a Pasifika worldview. Resilience is a concept that is culturally and contextually bound and cultural understanding must be considered (*Sanders, Munford, Thimasarn-Anwar & Liebenberg, 2017; Mafile'o & Api, 2009*). It is important to note that Pasifika are diverse, comprising of at least seven nations, with Pasifika peoples or Pasifika being an umbrella term (*Reynolds, 2018*). Pasifika are broadly considered to have a culture built around collectivism as opposed to a focus on the individual (*Ravulo, Mafile'o & Yeates, 2019*). While resilience is often thought of as the ability to rely on your own processes of adaptation, for Pasifika, relying on others serves a similar function. Alefaio-Tugia, Afeaki-Mafile'o and Satele (*2019*) suggest that instead of the concept of 'self-reliance', the focus should be on 'family-reliance' when discussing resilience. Waldegrave et al. (*2016*) suggests the concept of 'relational resilience' which defines resilience as an interactional process within families and systems. Relational resilience focuses on the interactions between the spiritual, mental, physical and environmental elements of families or communities. For indigenous cultural contexts that would also be more focused on collective wellbeing; resilience involves the capacity to engage with networks, resources and culture both within and in the wider global community (*Walters & Seymour, 2017*). From these perspectives, it is important to pay specific attention to interactions and relationships between families and family members when conceptualising resilience for Pasifika.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

The term 'protective factors' has sometimes been used synonymously with resilience, but they are two different, although connected, ideas (*Alaggia & Donohue, 2018*). Protective factors are often discussed as a way that resilience is measured, predicted, or promoted while risk factors have a similar function for risk (*Aisenberg & Herrekohl, 2008; Ponce-Garcia, 2015*). The resilience process, as discussed above, uses protective factors to recover when adversity is experienced, but unlike resilience, protective factors can exist before adversity occurs, and can facilitate healing after adversity (*Alaggia & Donohue, 2018*). Resilience is often measured as whether or not protective factors can counteract adversity and result in a positive or a normative occurrence (*Ponce-Garcia et al., 2015*).

Protective factors interact with risk factors in a variety of ways to promote resilience or risk. Protective factors in the literature are often separated into three categories: individual, family, and social/cultural/community factors (*Garnezy, 1987; Sanders et al., 2017; Distelberg et al., 2018*). They have also been grouped into two categories: cognitive-individual factors and social-interpersonal factors (*Ponce-Garcia et al., 2015*).

However, grouping protective factors into two categories does not leave a clear place for the broader macro and community factors.

CULTURAL-SPECIFIC PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE

Pasifika

While culturally-specific protective factors are essential in understanding resilience and family violence, there is relatively little research about how cultural factors can contribute to resilience, and more research is needed (*Aisenberg & Herrekohl, 2008*). This is especially true for Pasifika who have many aspects of culture that can be seen as strengths instead of risks (*Reynolds, 2018*). For Pasifika, it has been suggested that the loss of culture is what has led to violent behaviour (*Ministry of Social Development, 2012*). While there is limited research about protective factors for family violence for Pasifika, there has been some writing about possible protective factors and resilience. According to Malatest International (*2020*), resilience was considered by young Pasifika people as one way of coping with family violence. In this study, young people viewed resilience as located within individual, family and community/society domains. The research found that cultural factors can either present risk or be a protective factor. Culture was described as a protection when knowledge existed about pre-colonial Pasifika cultural values and beliefs. This knowledge served to guide relationship behaviour and maintain social and spiritual connections.

Table 1 contains a list of culturally-specific protective factors for family violence for a variety of cultural groups. According to Crichton-Hill and Olul (*2019*), cultural protective factors can work in three ways: lowering the chances that violence will occur, building resilience after violence occurs, and mediating the effects of violence. Using a case example of a Vanuatu UNICEF programme that focuses on building strengths in communities for improved child protection, some Pasifika protective factors for family violence were highlighted: collectively-based community structures, shared childcare within extended families, certain traditional responses to cultural transgressions, and the focus on community-based initiatives (*Crichton-Hill & Olul, 2019*). Similarly, Nga vaka o kāinga tapu, which is a Pasifika conceptual framework for family violence in Aotearoa New Zealand, lists likely protective factors in relation to family violence (*Ministry of Social Development, 2012, 2015*). These include: 'reciprocity, respect, genealogy, observance of tapu relationships, language and belonging' (*p.5*). These protective factors can be seen across the eight nations of the Pacific that were a part of the Nga Vaka o Kāinga Tapu reports and serve to support family wellbeing (*Ministry of Social Development, 2012; 2015*). Pasifika Proud's Pathways for Change framework (*2020*) identifies a range of protective factors that include: healthy family relationships, positive cultural identity and



sense of self, beliefs that promote equity between genders, communication skills, knowledge of family violence and the law, participation in Pasifika cultural and faith communities, education, employment, and access to services.

Pasifika Proud's Pathways for Change framework (2020) identifies a range of protective factors that include: healthy family relationships, positive cultural identity and sense of self, beliefs that promote equity between genders, communication skills, knowledge of family violence and the law, participation in Pasifika cultural and faith communities, education, employment and access to services.

TABLE 1: CULTURALLY-SPECIFIC PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE

PROTECTIVE FACTORS	CULTURAL GROUP
Self-Belief	Māori
Internal source of strength	Immigrants/refugees in USA
Use of safety strategies	Immigrants/refugees in USA
Connection with extended family	Pasifika, Indigenous women in the USA
Supportive people/family/community	Māori, Black women in the USA, Indigenous women in the USA, Southeast Asian, Immigrants/refugees in USA, Pasifika
Family/culture affirming nonviolence	Indigenous women in the USA
Familismo	Latinx in the USA
Gender equity	Indigenous women in the USA, Pasifika
Collectively based community structures	Pasifika, Southeast Asian
Cultural Identity	Māori, Pasifika
Traditional responses to cultural transgressions	Pasifika
Presence of community-based initiatives	Pasifika, Immigrants / refugees in USA
Reciprocity	Pasifika
Respect	Pasifika
Language	Pasifika
Effective communication	Pasifika
Belonging	Pasifika
Observance of tapu relationships; Brother / sister covenant	Pasifika
Biculturalism	Southeast Asian
Wairua (spirituality) / religion / faith	Māori, Pasifika, Immigrants / refugees in USA, Black women in the USA
Elders relating cultural principles	Indigenous women in the USA, African immigrants to USA

TABLE 1: CONTINUED

PROTECTIVE FACTORS	CULTURAL GROUP
Ethnic pride	Indigenous women in the USA
Knowledge of family violence and the law	Pasifika
Laws against family violence	Immigrants / refugees in USA
Having advocates from cultural groups	Hmong immigrants to USA
Employment	Pasifika
Financial independence	Pasifika
Positive experience with education	Pasifika
Access to services	Pasifika

Adapted from Crichton-Hill & Olul, 2019; Ministry of Social Development, 2012; Malatest International 2020; Pasifika Proud, 2020; Rankine et al., 2017; Sirikantraporn, 2012; Walters & Seymour, 2017; Burnette, 2017; Sabri et al., 2018; Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2009

The concepts of respect and relationships were also viewed as protective in a study about Pasifika protective factors regarding sexual violence amongst seven Pasifika populations (Rankine et al., 2017). The study highlights the brother-sister covenant, which involves the relationship between a brother and a sister, or cousins and other relatives. In the covenant, the women are often seen as sacred and the relationship itself is sometimes considered a foundation to a way of life (Rankine et al., 2017). This covenant and the importance of proper relationships and respect were found to be protective factors against sexual violence across each of the seven Pasifika nations studied (Rankine et al., 2017).

While there is limited research on Pasifika protective factors and family violence, the literature has shed some light on possible cultural protective factors. To broaden the scope, the next section will discuss cultural protective factors for family violence that have been studied in other cultures. This may illuminate other possible cultural considerations or corroborate existing ideas for protective factors.

Other Cultural Groups

There have been several studies about cultural protective factors for family violence. Some highlight communalism and collective cultural norms as protective (Wallace et al., 2018; Aldondaro et al., 2011). Sirikantraporn (2012) emphasises the

importance of family and community cohesion in Southeast Asian communities as protective factors for youth who have been exposed to family violence. The research also highlights the importance of biculturalism in minority youth, asserting that in itself as a protective factor (Sirikantraporn, 2012). Bicultural adaptation is when youth identify with two ‘worlds’: Asian culture and Western culture. They are able to, therefore, negotiate the demands of both cultures and feel a sense of belonging to both cultures without having to give up their cultural identity (Sirikantraporn, 2012). This bicultural identity is interesting to explore as many Aotearoa New Zealand-born Pasifika also form bicultural identities that include both Pasifika and mainstream cultural norms and understandings (Ross, 2019).

There have also been several studies about protective factors in indigenous communities, including Māori. Walters and Seymour (2017) found that cultural identity, self-belief, having supportive people and wairua (spirituality) were important for the development of resilience for tamariki and rangatahi who had been exposed to family violence. In a study of indigenous women in the United States who were exposed to family violence, several protective factors were found: family support, family affirming nonviolence, extended family connectedness, elders relating indigenous principles through stories, and enculturation, which fosters nonviolence and ethnic pride (Burnette, 2017).



CULTURAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR OTHER ISSUES

While family violence is the main focus of this literature review, research about Pasifika protective factors for family violence is limited so it is useful to explore culturally-specific protective factors in relation to other issues. Table 2 lists Pasifika protective factors alongside the issue for which they are protective against.

Most literature has focused on building resilience and protective factors in Pasifika youth. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the risk and protective factors for suicidal behaviour were studied in Pasifika high school students (Teevale et al., 2016). A protective factor for youth suicidal behaviour was having a family member who was monitoring the young person's whereabouts and activities, demonstrating the importance of family connections and involvement. General Pasifika protective factors against suicide included social and family connection, having spirituality and an active church life, and community volunteering. However, for youth specifically, spirituality and religion were identified as risk factors for suicide. In addition, cultural pride was found to be neither a protective nor a risk factor for youth. In a study of Samoan youth in American Samoa and Hawai'i that explored risk and protective factors for youth violence it was found that religion and ethnic identity were strong protective factors, especially for girls (Fiaui & Hishinuma, 2009). Family support was also an important protective factor. The authors underscored the importance of fa'aSamoa, which they noted consists of aiga (family), lotu/ekalesia (religion) and aganu'u (culture). These concepts relate to the three protective factors of family support, religion, and ethnic identity, respectively. Another study about Pasifika youth protective factors for violence was conducted in the United States (Wegner et al., 2010). This study focused on whether education performance and school experiences were risk or protective factors for violence. The study concluded that doing well in school, feeling safe, high aspirations, favourable attitude toward school, and less pressure were protective factors against violence (Wegner et al., 2010).

One study about Pasifika youth in Aotearoa New Zealand focused on protective factors against depressive symptoms (Paterson, Tautolo, Lusitini & Sisk, 2018). Protective factors included positive parenting and maternal education (Paterson, et al., 2018). Interestingly, in this study, Tongan

youth were less likely to report depressive symptoms than Samoan youth despite the fact that Tongan youth have the highest rate of suicide among Pasifika youth. This could be due to culturally-specific ideas about mental health concepts (Paterson et al., 2018). In another study in Aotearoa New Zealand, protective factors for 11-year-old Pasifika associated with delinquent behaviour were studied (Paterson et al., 2016). Interestingly, mothers who were 'integrators', meaning that they had a high level of Pasifika and mainstream Aotearoa New Zealand culture as opposed to 'assimilators' (low Pasifika/high NZ), had a protective effect against youth engaging in delinquent behaviour (Paterson et al., 2016). This is a similar finding to Sirikantraporn (2013) about biculturalism being a protective factor for family violence. Other protective factors identified by Paterson et al (2016) included higher self-perception, higher teacher evaluation scores, and perceived support from friends (Paterson et al., 2016). In other work, peer support was a strong protective factor (Reynolds, 2018). This study explored Pasifika success in the context of secondary education at a school in Aotearoa New Zealand. It found that the cultural concept of 'brotherhood' and va established important friendships for Pasifika youth that helped them to achieve. In Australia, a study about the protective factors for educational access and aspirations for Pasifika youth surveyed 1385 students at primary, secondary school and university settings, teachers, parents, and community based workers (Ravulo, 2018). The study found that peer relationships along with supportive family and teachers and positive self-talk were protective. Having Pasifika role models and higher expectations from parents and teachers were also discussed as protective factors (Ravulo, 2018).

General protective factors for youth that are not focused on a specific issue have also been the subject of several studies. In Australia, general protective factors for Pasifika youth include family support, kinship network, connection to Pasifika culture, connection to the church, educational support, and Pasifika community programmes (Kamalanathan & Raman, 2019). According to Ravulo, Scanlan and Koster (2019), other possible general youth protective factors include: cultural inclusiveness in the home setting, understanding of how Western systems work, communication skills, positive attitude about learning, involvement in sports, involvement in faith-based activities, relationships with police and teachers who appreciate Pasifika cultures, engagement with cultural community activities, positive connections with educational institutions, reliable school attendance, engagement with education beyond middle years, access to vocational training, and a wish to pursue vocational interests.

TABLE 2: PASIFIKA CULTURAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR OTHER ISSUES

PROTECTIVE FACTOR	ISSUE
Social support / connections	Youth suicide
Spirituality / religion	Youth suicide, Youth violence, General youth ²
Ethnic Identity	Youth violence
Bicultural / integrator mothers	Delinquent behaviour
Role models within cultural group	Educational Access
Connection to culture / participation in cultural activities	General youth
Community programmes / resources	General youth
Cultural inclusiveness	General youth
Understanding of western systems	General youth
Community volunteering	Youth suicide
Kinship networks	General youth
Family involvement/connection	Youth suicide, Youth violence, Educational Access, General youth
Positive parenting	Depression
Less pressure from family	Violence
Maternal education	Depression
Support from friends	Delinquent behaviour, Educational achievement, Educational Access
Brotherhood	Educational achievement
Educational support	General youth
Favourable attitudes toward school	Violence, General youth
Doing well in school	Violence
Higher teacher evaluations / teacher support	Delinquent behaviour, Educational Access
Positive attitude toward learning	General youth
Access to vocational training	General youth

² General youth refers to protective factors not related to any particular issue, but seen as important for general Pacific youth wellbeing



TABLE 2: CONTINUED

PROTECTIVE FACTOR	ISSUE
Consistent school attendance	General youth
Desire to undertake vocational interest / continuing school / high aspirations	General youth, Violence
Higher self-perception	Delinquent behaviour
Positive self-talk	Educational Access
Feeling safe	Violence
Communication skills	General youth

Adapted from Teevale et al., 2016; Faii & Hishunuma, 2009; Wegner et al., 2010; Paterson et al., 2018; Paterson et al., 2016; Reynolds, 2018; Ravulo, 2018; Kamalanathan & Raman, 2019; Ravulo, Mafile'o & Yeates, 2019

In addition to studies of Pasifika peoples, several studies highlight culturally-specific protective factors for other cultural groups. While a full review of all studies related to this subject is beyond the scope of this review, the studies below highlight some protective factors that may be helpful for studying Pasifika protective factors. In a study of young African-American men in the USA, several culturally-relevant protective factors against violence were found including high ethnic/racial identification, racial pride, spirituality, and communalism (Wallace, McGee & Malone-Colon, 2018). Li and Nussbaum (2007) also studied African-American urban youth and found that confidence, supportive/helpful family, and positive neighbourhoods were protective factors. In a study of Aboriginal Australian youth, family support was also a protective factor (Young et al., 2018). Other protective factors included regular exercise and social support. Surprisingly, cultural connection was not a significant protective factor in this study, but this could be due to the way cultural connection was measured. The authors acknowledged that assessing connection to culture from a young person's Aboriginal cultural knowledge is problematic especially as the concept of cultural connection is complex (Young et al., 2018).

CONCLUSION

It is apparent that there is a variety of research that supports the idea that culturally-specific or culturally-bound protective factors exist in the context of family violence and other related social problems. These factors can have a positive impact on the reduction of violence and the improvement of social issues. Some of the most discussed protective factors in the literature include family support/connection, spirituality/religion, community/cultural connections, and access to community resources. These protective factors provide a starting point for further research into protective factors for family violence with Pasifika communities. By focusing on cultural and community strengths, Pasifika communities are better able to address issues while promoting cultural beliefs instead of being pushed to assimilate.

03

**RESEARCH
PROCESS**



RESEARCH PROCESS

The study engaged a critical research paradigm (Leavy, 2017) which values indigenous knowledge and recognises systems of inequity and the dynamics of privilege and power that affect minority groups, in this case, Pasifika communities. Critical research challenges dominant knowledge and is concerned with exposing conditions of constraint, thereby encouraging researchers to “interrogate the assumptions that underpin Western structures and institutions” (Anae et al., 2001, p.7). The research incorporated Pasifika values into the research process, showing respect to research participants, honouring the knowledge brought by participants, beginning from a place of understanding of Pasifika cultural practices and values, and taking a non-reductionist, holistic approach to understanding the Pasifika world as experienced by participants.

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

Participants were recruited via invitations sent out to community and faith leaders, researchers, and professionals from government departments, non-government organisations and social service agencies. The contacts were sourced from the Pasifika Proud team and the researchers’ professional networks. Participants were sent information sheets and consent forms that were completed electronically and sent back to the researchers prior to the focus group.

DATA COLLECTION

Face-to-face meetings were seen to be the most effective and culturally-appropriate method for engagement and data collection. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions in 2020, online meetings were held instead. As a result, two focus groups were held via Zoom and one face-to-face meeting occurred. Focus group 1 included 18 participants, focus group 2 included 18 participants, and the face to face focus group included 8 participants. Overall, there were 44 participants providing a voice to this research. We note that during the interviews, we did not highlight, nor did the participants highlight, their professional identities. Rather, their collective identity as members of the Pasifika community is what was unique to the nature of the data collected. Furthermore, it

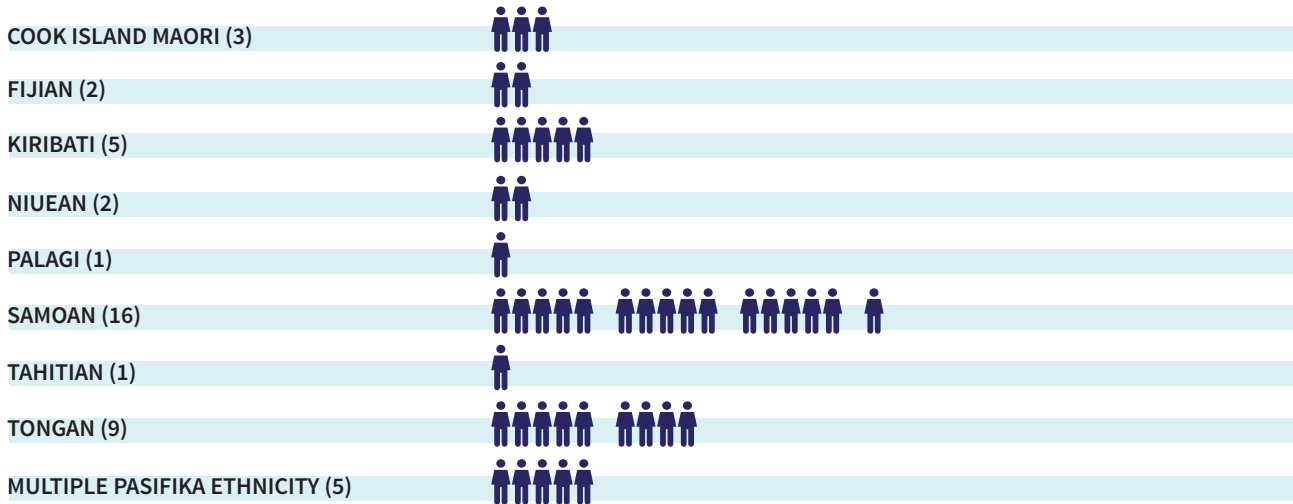
reinforces the view and identity of Pasifika people as being about where we come from rather than their professional identity that is commonly expected among western gathering techniques. The criteria for inclusion consisted of a) person self-identified as a member of the Pasifika community, and b) a person was currently/previously involved in a non-specified capacity to work among families and communities exposed to family harm and violence.

Each talanoa began with a prayer followed by a welcome by the researchers. Participants were then asked to provide a brief background about themselves. Once this was completed, participants were separated into their ethnicities and would engage in a 10 to 15 minute discussion on each question. At the end of each question discussion, participants came together as one group and a representative from each group provided an overall response to the question asked. Prior to ending the talanoa, when all the sub-groups had come together, all participants were given an opportunity to respond to a final future-focussed question regarding Pasifika and family harm/violence. The talanoa ended with an acknowledgement of participants’ time and contribution and a final prayer.

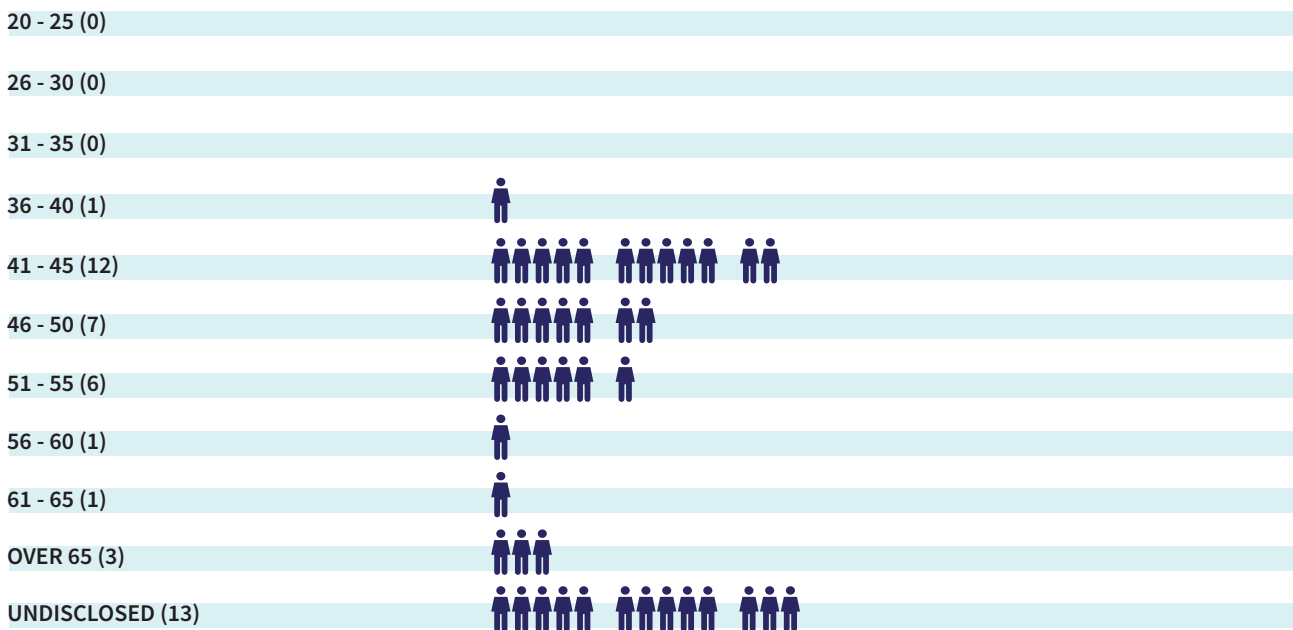
The demographic make-up of the participants according to ethnicity, age and gender is reflected in the following table:

TABLE 3: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

ETHNIC GROUP



AGE



GENDER





Within each zoom focus group, participants were divided into ethnic-specific sub-groups to discuss and report back on a series of questions. The questions were informed by literature highlighting that protective factors can be in place prior to adversity and can contribute to recovery after the adverse event has occurred (*Alaggia & Donohue, 2018*), and were:

- What causes family violence?
- How can we protect ourselves from family violence?
- What mitigates the impact of family violence?
- What helps us to heal from family violence?

The ethnic-specific groupings were Kiribati, Samoan, and Tongan, with smaller numbers of participants identifying with other Pasifika nations working together in a multi-ethnic Pasifika group. The face to face group functioned as a multi-ethnic focus group given the diversity of the participants. The ethnic-specific groupings were based on participant numbers. When there were two or more Pasifika nations identified among the group then attempts were made to form a sub-group to discuss the questions. For example, where there were larger groups (e.g. more than two) that identified themselves as Samoan or Tongan or Kiribati, a subgroup for each ethnicity was formed. Where only one person identified with a particular Pacific identity, they joined others in a similar situation, thus creating a multi-ethnic focus group. For example, in one of the zoom groups there was one person who identified with the Cook Islands, one who identified with Niue, and one who identified as non-Pacific and one person who identified with Tahiti. These participants were pulled together to create one multi-ethnic Pasifika group. This was also the case with the face-to-face group. Each zoom meeting and face-to-face focus group was recorded following consent from participants.

DATA ANALYSIS

Focus group recordings were transcribed verbatim by an independent source and analysed using a six-step inductive thematic coding process (*Braun & Clark, 2006*) informed by Pasifika research paradigms (*Ponton, 2018*). The transcripts were read, and initial ideas noted before codes were identified; the coding process captured ideas from portions of the transcripts that related to the research questions. Codes were identified on the basis of the relevance of the idea to the research question rather than by the number of times the idea was stated. The codes were then collated into a number of themes that captured recurring code patterns across the data. The themes were then reviewed against the collected data to make sure that the focus group narratives were reflected in the developed themes.

ETHICS

Ethics approval for the study and face-to-face focus groups was initially awarded by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee on 31 January 2020. An amendment to change the face-to-face focus groups to zoom focus groups as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and potential lock down situations was approved on 24 July 2020.

LIMITATIONS

A number of limitations were identified during the study. First, the restrictions of COVID-19 may have impacted on our authentic engagement with participants and this was acknowledged at the time of the focus groups. Second, the purposeful sampling used during recruitment may have influenced the generalisability of the study findings. Third, we acknowledge the over-representation of Samoans in the sample and the limited age range of participants with almost a third of participants in the 40 to 45-year-old age range. Whilst every effort was made to prioritise a diverse sample of participants, including those from the smaller island groups, the large percentage of the Samoan population among Pasifika (*Pasifika Proud, 2016*) makes it possible that Samoans will represent a larger cohort of Pasifika identity. Fourth, though there were some participants from the South Island, many of our participants were recruited from the North Island. We acknowledge the regional differences that exist and that findings may be less generalisable for Pasifika living in the South Island of Aotearoa New Zealand. Last, the findings of this research were sourced from practitioners and community/faith-based leaders. Therefore, we acknowledge that we did not hear directly from our Pasifika families engaged or previously engaged in family violence. This is an area to prioritise as research continues in this area. However, despite the limitations stated, it is important to note that the findings will be useful because it is the first ever study looking at protective factors for family harm among Pasifika communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

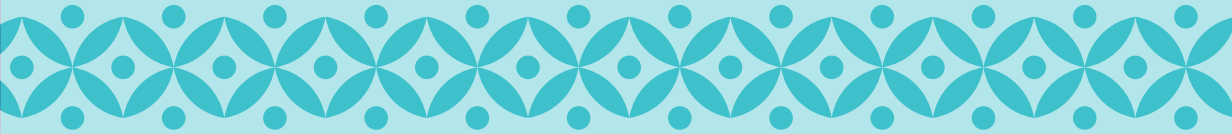
04



FINDINGS



FINDINGS



This section presents the findings thematically under each of the study's four key questions:

- **What causes family violence in our Pasifika communities?**
- **How do Pasifika peoples protect themselves from family violence?**
- **What reduces the impact of family violence in Pasifika communities?**
- **What factors enable Pasifika peoples to heal from family violence?**

The overall themes across all of the questions are depicted in the following table.

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF THEMES

WHAT CAUSES FAMILY VIOLENCE?	HOW DO PASIFIKA PEOPLES PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE?	WHAT REDUCES THE IMPACT OF FAMILY VIOLENCE ON PASIFIKA PEOPLES?	WHAT HELPS PASIFIKA TO HEAL FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE?
Macro influences e.g., socio-economic, employment	Education	Family/community factors	Pasifika cultural processes
Beliefs	Skills	Formal supports	Empowerment of Pasifika people
Family/personal factors	Support systems	Cultural processes Knowledge/resourcing	Systemic factors

In the presentation of each theme, a table is displayed with further details about the key areas under each theme. Theme areas are highlighted in the table as they are being addressed and quotes from focus group participants are included in support of each theme area. The quotes are from the feedback of each sub-group during the talanoa.

WHAT CAUSES FAMILY VIOLENCE IN OUR PASIFIKA COMMUNITIES?

TABLE 5: CAUSES OF VIOLENCE THEMES

MACRO INFLUENCES	BELIEFS	FAMILY/ PERSONAL FACTORS
Socio-economic	Cultural and family	Mental health issues
Unemployment	Religious/faith	Addiction/ dependency
Colonisation and Immigration		Lack of social skills
Environment (place)		History of family violence Cultural

Macro Influences

Across every focus group there was recognition of the influence of a range of macro issues on the occurrence of family violence within Pasifika communities. Macro issues are broader issues that arise from macro-level forces such as the production and distribution of resources which are in turn influenced by political, economic, and legal systems along with cultural ideologies. The macro influences presented here include: socio-economic/poverty experiences, the impact of immigration and colonisation, unemployment, and environment (place).

Socio economic factors were a theme across all of the groups. Not having enough money was identified as a frustration and stress for Pasifika families.

Finances or lack of finances creating tensions and the expectations within culture. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

There was acknowledgement, though, that it is too much of a stretch to suggest that poverty alone causes family violence.

We talked about, in terms of the causes, breaking it up into environment internal factors, external factors, everything's been discussed from the previous colleagues. But also wanted to point out again that, you know, just being in low socio economic and in a situation of poverty doesn't, it's not indicative of you experiencing family harm or even perpetrating family harm. You know many people live fine and have a loving harmonious family relationship without feeling like you're being poor equals family violence. (Samoan group)



Connected to socio-economic and poverty factors that contributed to family violence was **unemployment**.

We found that when we were talking that what triggers family violence is this whole pressure of not enough work, not enough money, not enough, which leads to people's frustrations and what triggers the actual violence. (Samoan group)

All the groups considered **immigration and colonization** and their impacts as macro factors contributing to the occurrence of family violence. In particular, groups highlighted isolation and loss of collective based cultural models as examples of the contribution of immigration and colonization to family violence.

So we started off with a bit of an academic explanation in terms of the Pacific diaspora and obviously coming into New Zealand ... the isolation once they've emigrated and the effects of colonization. So we also said that we don't know where to go for help. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

We had a really interesting discussion on the role of colonization and how some of our traditional models, which are really all consensus-based and have moved from a consensus-based model to an individual one. Where just one person is in charge ... and sometimes we interpret that as being a traditional model where, actually, it's probably introduced about the time that that white people entered our shores. (Tongan group)

One group, connecting with the impact of colonization, highlighted that bias exists in the system.

There are barriers that have been put up to reduce the successfulness of Pacific people but I feel there's that bias. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

Migration was noted as having an impact on families because of the stress of moving from one country to another. This stress could lead to violence in the home.

We also spoke about the impact of migration and our families migrating here. We all know the dawn raids. There's just the impact of that of approaching from one country- moving to another. And all of the stresses and pressures contributing to an explanation of family violence (Tongan group)

Groups especially highlighted the impact that migration had on gender roles and relationships noting that men who were used to employment in their home nation might struggle with feelings of inadequacy if they had migrated to Aotearoa New Zealand and were unable to find employment. One group suggested that male unemployment in Aotearoa New Zealand could create tension in the home environment, especially if women were employed.

... how we live in New Zealand versus how we live in the islands. An example was how women can easily be employed in New Zealand and men find it a little bit harder to find jobs and vice versa in the islands - the men are the breadwinners and women are the stay at home moms. In New Zealand women are able to get jobs in caregiving, picking. So therefore men feel less of a contributor or provider to families, there's then the feelings of maybe inadequacy or jealousy creating violent environments or tension. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

The multi-ethnic Pasifika group provided a statement about the various generations of Pasifika migration and identified how experiences of living in Aotearoa New Zealand had evolved from generation to generation. Even though there were different migration experiences across generations, unfortunately, family violence still persisted.

So you've got our first generation immigrants who have just arrived in the country and not understanding our ways... you have that, there's family harm in their space and what are they allowed to do or not do? So there's that experience. Then you have our usual third, fourth generation Pacific who have been here a long time - I like to think they should know a little bit better but the pressures of life, you know, tackle them so they're facing that. And then I look at the next layer and unfortunately it's even our own people who are educated and professionals who are displaying the same behaviours of family harm on their loved ones ... I always look at the different levels. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

Some groups thought that the **environment** in which Pasifika families live could contribute to the occurrence of family violence. In this case, 'environment' related to multigenerational living, but also to geographical place, which participants suggested could influence if 'place' was a protective factor or a risk as evidenced by the following two quotes.

We also talked about the environment being when you live inter-generationally which is common for our Pasifika families, you have great-grandparents grandparents, parents, children. (Samoan group)

... is your environment another protective factor because if you're living in a suburb that the neighbours keep to themselves and they don't call the police compared to a neighbourhood say Manurewa where every single neighbour gets in trouble and they are going to do tit-for-tat, there's a yell from next door they'll call the police. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

Family beliefs related to men being the head of the family. (Tongan group)

I think family violence, happens in our community due to the fact that men are considered superior and like they do everything. And they're like, the boss of the house. So that's one factor that causes family violence in our culture and community. We women, we are considered as backbenchers, like we don't have a role in everything, just cook and do whatever we're told. So that causes violence in our culture and communities - we women have to obey and to listen to our men doing all the talks and we have to do the work here. (Kiribati group)

Beliefs

TABLE 6: CAUSES OF FAMILY VIOLENCE: BELIEFS

MACRO INFLUENCES	BELIEFS	FAMILY/ PERSONAL FACTORS
Socio-economic	Cultural and family	Mental health issues
Unemployment	Religious/ faith	Addiction/dependency
Colonisation and Immigration		Lack of social and other skills
Environment (place)		History of family violence
		Cultural disconnection

The second group of factors contributing to the occurrence of family violence in Pasifika communities was beliefs. The belief systems that were relevant to the causes of family violence were cultural and family beliefs, and beliefs about religion and faith.

All the groups stated that **cultural and family beliefs** were influencers in the perpetration of violence in Pasifika families. These beliefs related to views about the different roles of men and women in family systems, ideas about how children should be raised and disciplined, and understandings about the pressures that cultural and family beliefs contributed.

One group remarked on how men, situated in cultural positions of power, could use their hierarchical position to speak in a violent way.

...in some of our cultures there are people who expect to do the talking and there are people who are expected to do the listening. And sometimes the people who are doing the talking, the way they use their voice can also be a violent act, so the hierarchy of speaking rights and men as leaders can often lead on to violence. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

Statements were made about what a traditional upbringing might mean, especially emphasising how family violence might be perceived as part of traditional Tongan culture. It was also acknowledged that there could be limited understanding about what behaviour could be defined as family violence.

So we had a really interesting discussion about the traditional upbringing with family violence as a huge part of it. In terms of what causes family violence, the lack of understanding and idea of what family violence is and that it's not just physical but also verbal, emotional, financial –there's a whole lot of communication and misinterpretation that can go around. (Tongan group)

Groups noted the stress that arose when cultural and family beliefs clashed. Groups also highlighted the pressure that came from trying to balance family and community commitments.

We also talked about a clash of cultures between the youth and their parents. The parents are really keen on them sticking to and holding on to their culture and their tradition and the youth just want their own identity and to see what is right for them. And that was the conflict. (Samoan group)



In relation to **religious/faith beliefs**, participants noted the pressure that arose from maintaining a commitment to religious beliefs and the influence religion had on the interaction between family members.

Fa'alavelave expectations that continue and mind-sets that are embedded around faith and the belief that to gain our blessings we have to contribute. (Samoan group)

The idea that smacking is better and the interpretation of the Bible, which is often taken out of context. (Tongan group)

We looked at alcohol consumption amongst our Pacific people. Men often go to work places where they're expected to drink, then they come home. So our point of difference, I think, from some of the other groups is the effect of alcohol consumption, which is expected, in the New Zealand context by, from our men. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

And the other thing we talked about is this alcohol is cheap here and of course when it is more accessible is more prone to family violence occurring as a result. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

Family/Personal

TABLE 7: CAUSES OF FAMILY VIOLENCE: FAMILY/PERSONAL FACTORS

MACRO INFLUENCES	BELIEFS	FAMILY/PERSONAL FACTORS
Socio-economic	Cultural and family	Mental health issues
Unemployment	Religious/faith	Addiction/dependency
Colonisation and Immigration		Lack of social and other skills
Environment (place)		History of family violence
		Cultural disconnection

Groups discussed how **mental health issues** were likely to be a contributor to the occurrence of family violence and that Pasifika families might feel shame when mental health is present.

Dependency on alcohol was noted as an issue for Pasifika families.

The Samoan and Multi-ethnic Pasifika groups stated that a **lack of social and other skills** could contribute to the occurrence of family violence.

Most Polynesians we're not very good at talking things through, we react physically, dominate the other person. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

The following comment was made in relation to budgeting skills.

The same thing around financial stress ... your expenses outweighing your income. It feels easy to understand. But actually, our Pasifika people are not the best at managing their money. (Samoan group)

Further narrative highlighted the possibility that a lack of social and other skills can lead to Pasifika families becoming dependent on service providers.

There's also a sense of dependency with some of our Pasifika aigas so a lot of this stuff that we do in the prevention space would be around helping them to be self-sufficient. That could be taking on professional help through service providers, our kaiawhina's and helping them change some of those mindsets. So they become reliant and dependant on us, our service providers, the system as such. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

³ Samoan word for cultural obligations that can include contributions (usually financial) for significant milestone events in families such as weddings, funerals, chief ceremonies and/or hair cutting ceremonies.

It was suggested that a lack of understanding of family violence alongside a lack of communication skills could lead to normalised violent behaviour that promoted intergenerational cycles of family violence.

If we don't have the tools to communicate or understand even what family violence is, family harm is - we normalize it and it becomes a regular behaviour, a learned behaviour that's just a continuous cycle from one generation to the next. (Samoan group)

As noted earlier, the existence of **family violence in previous generations** was a cause of family violence in the present generation.

...intergenerational cycle of family violence, what's been accepted over the generations. Now that's just the way you were raised. Now I'm going to raise you, your own children that way. So it's become normalized - the disciplining and we talked about different values and beliefs around family violence that it's okay to be disciplined in a more violent or less violent way. So having violence involved as a way of teaching and disciplining. We learn from our parents, it's embedded in our, in our cycle, in our culture. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

Family factors also contributed to family violence. One group highlighted the impact of having a disconnected family might have on young people. In the following quote, the group acknowledged the impact of being raised without a father figure may inadvertently lead to engagement in unhealthy relationships as a means to seek male approval.

Pacific young women born into families without father figures attracted and orientated to find male approval elsewhere that can put us at risk of engaging in risky unhealthy relationships ... and those urban Pacific young women experience avoidance and sex work or gang violence and other kind of more extremes of this reality for some of our young woman. (Samoan group)

The **lack of connection** between individuals, families and their Pasifika culture/s was particularly mentioned as a contributor to family violence by the Tongan, Samoan, and Multi-ethnic Pasifika groups.

...we think there's a lack of understanding about the cultural dimensions that we have - people interpret things differently. And by that we talked about the va - that there are different variances of the va across the Samoan social structure; there's a lack of understanding about what that means in this context in Aotearoa. (Samoan group)

I think it's a bit of a disconnect between support - like cultural support and families. What I've noticed over the years is like everyone's going through stress, everyone's going through hard times financially, you know, with insecurity and all that but what I've seen is that some people are too ashamed to talk to their families about their problems or look for help so there's that disconnectedness. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

In response to a request to elaborate what being disconnected through cultural support meant, the response indicated that disconnection related to how cultural structures that existed in Samoa were not available to support families in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Like church and even their own family; and you know we come from the islands and I can only speak about Samoa you know you got your makais, the elders, the church and there's not really many problems, well not in our villages anyway ... the support's there and the kids are too scared to muck around. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

General statements

The factors contributing to family violence, that is, macro influences, beliefs, and family/personal factors, should not be seen independently from each other. Rather, each of the areas interconnects to produce intersecting susceptibilities to family violence.

For example, colonizing immigration experiences can intersect with poverty, with family and cultural beliefs that support violence, and with addiction and mental health, personal and family factors to produce a tension and stress-filled context susceptible to family violence. As one group suggested:

And that's just ongoing and then it comes back to your, you know, the triggers and low socio-economic you know we're looking at finances, it's a massive thing because that's what they learned, they're on the benefit. What do they go to? "I'm going to go take a loan out," you know? Because you've got church pressures and then pressures from their peers saying, "Oh, I want a car," you know? "I'm living in a state house I'm going to get SKY," you know?

And we're finding the majority of people coming to our attention for family violence are people in that cycle. And is that because they can't afford to pay these things and it creates stress; and then they don't have the skills to manage that stress and then they start going at one another? (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)



HOW DO PASIFIKA PEOPLES PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE?

TABLE 8: EDUCATION FACTORS THAT PROTECT PASIFIKA PEOPLES FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE

EDUCATION	SKILLS	SUPPORT SYSTEMS
Build financial literacy	Strategies for managing anger	Family support
Build workforce pathways	Skills for parenting	Church supports
Build knowledge about family violence		
Build cultural knowledge		

Education

The groups posited that education was an important protective factor against family violence. Education was seen as relevant in a number of areas in terms of financial literacy, building workforce pathways, building knowledge about family violence, and building cultural knowledge.

The protective factor, **building financial literacy**, was promoted as necessary to help Pasifika families who are struggling financially to deal with their circumstances, with the fundamental idea being that if families are less stressed about financial matters, the likelihood of family violence might be reduced.

The same thing around financial stress and it's that you know, more education around that space around your expenses outweighing your income. It feels easy to understand. But actually, our Pasifika people are not the best at managing their money. (Samoan group)

Building workforce pathways was considered an important response to one of the causes of family violence noted in the previous section; unemployment and poverty. Groups thought that providing Pasifika peoples with the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills was necessary in preparation for the workforce.

For our protective factors we just flipped it and looked at ways of mitigating the risk factors. So, for example ... if it's the environment and socio economic spectrum, it could be education and building the workforce pathways... (Tongan group)

Building knowledge about family violence and its impact in families and Pasifika communities was voiced as necessary to protect Pasifika peoples from family violence.

We would ask for workshops, workshops in minority groups, you know, like for us to educate ourselves and our men to know that violence is not appropriate is not okay in New Zealand. (Kiribati group)

The Samoan group voiced frustration that families in the community were still not clear that family violence referred to actions that were broader than physical violence.

Support for education in our communities about what family violence or family harm is or what violence is - it's not just being cheeky, not just grumping, it's physical, psychological, it can be financial, it can be manipulation, all of those things and we just didn't feel confident that that message has gotten out there any wider than physical and even that is still a really limited discussion. (Samoan group)

Education about family violence should include being knowledgeable about the protective actions that could be taken. An example of a protective action is to report the violence. One multi-ethnic Pasifika group had the following to say about reporting violence to the authorities.

How to protect ourselves? ... We talked about men and women saying no to violence and reporting and I wanted to talk about that reporting in terms of holding the perpetrator accountable. I think perhaps we are just too protective in our culture especially if it's quite patriarchal or misogynistic we are too protective of our men we have too much fa'aloalo for them and so we offer them excuses. And so we need to be holding them more accountable. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

Every group identified **building cultural knowledge** in Pasifika communities as important protection against family violence. For the Samoan and Tongan groups, this discussion occurred in the context of acknowledging that sometimes Pasifika families hold incorrect knowledge about important cultural concepts, especially those concepts that underpin Pasifika people's relationships with each other.

First, we had discussed, you know, our cultural factor our aiga, nu'u as the underpinning as the underlying principle, really. And from there we discussed the approach. So often we think there's a lack of understanding about the cultural dimensions that we have - people interpret things differently. And by that we talked about the va - that there are, different variances of the va across the Samoan social structure; there's a lack of understanding about what that means in this context in Aotearoa. But we wanted to layer it with our spirituality, our faith being a core part of the protection from family violence. (Samoan group)

...it's around kind of changing the perception that violence is part of our culture, it's teaching about our core values that do not condone violence at all. (Tongan group)

Building Skills

TABLE 9: SKILL FACTORS THAT PROTECT PASIFIKA PEOPLES FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE

EDUCATION	SKILLS	SUPPORT SYSTEMS
Build financial literacy	Strategies for managing anger	Family support
Build workforce pathways	Communication skills	Church supports
Build knowledge about family violence		
Build cultural knowledge		

Groups identified **anger management** as an important protective skill that families need to build.

And how do we protect ourselves? Actually it's quite difficult sometimes if it's unanticipated, but we thought maybe identifying the needs of our husbands or partners or whoever's perpetrating it. Maybe we can learn some diversion or de-escalation strategies that makes attempts to at least try and mitigate some of those things. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

One group highlighted that specific skills development needed to be practical and applicable to different social settings.

So, you know the basic practical things is like walk away, breathe. And having that, you know planning ahead, and like if you're going to go to family barbecues, where you know, there's going to be alcohol you compromise and negotiate with your partner about who's drinking and if you know if it's going to get excessive you're going to be staying where you are and not coming home. And so, those, those kind of things. (Samoan group)

Another group suggested that families should be supported to develop the skills to manage family disagreements in healthy ways.

People are frustrated by the system for things...they argue when the reality is we shouldn't be trying to stop people arguing, we should be teaching them and enabling them to argue healthy. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

This statement was followed up with a suggestion that schools should deliver programmes to build social skills.

I think a couple of people talked about education, I'll expand on that - we want schools to deliver it. What skills to improve social skills, improve relationships, sex education is in there. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

Communication skills were also highlighted as a protective factor by a number of groups.

In regard to the protective factors ... just a couple of things at the very end ... we felt education about how to communicate and changing mind-sets about expectations is needed. (Samoan group)

One group felt that leaders in the Pasifika community could be funded and supported to deliver skills education to their communities.

... we want leaders in the community, church leaders... yeah, give them some sort of funding to provide the social skills, financial skills, parenting skills. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)



Support Systems

TABLE 10: SUPPORT SYSTEMS THAT PROTECT PASIFIKA PEOPLES FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE

EDUCATION	SKILLS	SUPPORT SYSTEMS
Build financial literacy	Strategies for managing anger	Family support
Build workforce pathways	Communication skills	Church supports
Build knowledge about family violence		
Build cultural knowledge		

Being able to access support systems was viewed as an important factor in protecting Pasifika peoples from family violence. **Family support**, and support from neighbours would be one area of protection.

I know as practitioners in our respective fields that finding someone, not an agency, not police, but an aiga or a neighbour could be or it could be in your church, in that wrap around support like X was saying, you know your immediate circle of people will hold you ... in their own unique way and that's really important because we're not going to be around forever. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

Family Support if we could go to someone else in our family, we can say, hey, something's happening to me. It's really important. And also just saying to yourself and to others. This is not acceptable. I reject that I am being hurt. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

There was an acknowledgement that many Pasifika families already have support networks that could be engaged to provide protection against family violence.

Empathy aye? Empathy. So I think a lot of our people have their own support networks that kick in when they default to, even some of our struggling families who are struggling with stuff and they have that family that support them so that's how, you know we encourage too. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

Every group noted that support from a **Church Minister** could be an important protective factor.

We get support from our minister, we go to our minister, we run to our minister and that's where we get advice and support, emotional support or any support that our Minister can offer at that time. (Kiribati group)

... we wanted to layer it [general protection ideas] with our spirituality, our faith being a core part of the protection from family violence. (Samoan group)

WHAT REDUCES THE IMPACT OF FAMILY VIOLENCE IN PASIFIKA COMMUNITIES?

TABLE 11: FAMILY/COMMUNITY PROTECTIVE FACTORS THAT MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

FAMILY/COMMUNITY FACTORS	FORMAL SUPPORTS	CULTURAL PROCESSES	KNOWLEDGE/ RESOURCING
Family support	Formal supports appropriate to Pasifika cultural frameworks	Talanoa process	Education about family violence
Advocacy for victim and perpetrator within the family system	Recognition of Pasifika gender frameworks	Implementation of cultural values	Resourcing of services and of communities
		Advocacy within the family	Materials available about Pasifika family violence

Responses to the question ‘what reduces the impact of family violence in Pasifika communities?’ resulted in four key theme areas: family/community factors, formal supports, cultural processes, and knowledge/resourcing.

Family/Community factors

There was an acknowledgement that **family support** is important but can be a barrier at times. Groups suggested that having a person to de-escalate and provide **advocacy** in family violence situations was identified as important, and there was a suggestion that this resource does exist in many families.

Finding an appropriate mediator, you know, within a kaiga there is usually that one person who can de-escalate things so that person is important, and we also noted that that person doesn't have to be from the family. It's the most appropriate person to do that. (Tongan group)

We do have someone else in the family who we can talk to, and we can just, you know, help us to support us. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

The Samoan and multi-ethnic Pasifika groups highlighted the importance of talanoa as a way of expressing family support when family violence had occurred.

Also, we talked about our own families and the kind of, you know, stealing the old CYF context, like an FGC process, but within the talanoa. Someone who takes on that leadership role, who drives the leadership from that position. (Samoan group)

An aspect of family support that was viewed as important was role modelling.

We talked about being able to role model behaviours and it's those behaviours that promote coming together and that promotes being open and transparent and talking about it as a family unit. (Samoan group)

There was also acknowledgement that when formal supports are not available it is the family and community support that need to support the family.

When that support mechanism...whether that's professional, is not there, that's when the work really kicks in, you know, in terms of how our families can sustain ... (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)



TABLE 12: FORMAL SUPPORT FACTORS THAT MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

FAMILY/COMMUNITY FACTORS	FORMAL SUPPORTS	CULTURAL PROCESSES	KNOWLEDGE/ RESOURCING
Family support	Formal supports appropriate to Pasifika cultural frameworks	Talanoa process	Education about family violence
Advocacy for victim and perpetrator within the family system	Recognition of Pasifika gender frameworks	Implementation of cultural values	Resourcing of services and of communities
		Advocacy within the family	Materials available about Pasifika family violence

Formal supports

Discussion acknowledged that even though there might be support within the family, there would often be a need for **formal supports** to be engaged with the family.

Even though we've gone in, because we go and meet...the family harm team goes in and focuses on the victim's needs, yeah? Support services and often, you know, they'll say, "No, we've got family support, we've talked it out, we don't need anything." Often we find there are other underlying reasons for that, they don't want to talk to the police, they don't want to call out anymore to the police, they don't want to get anybody else into trouble but when they don't get help then they will come back. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

There was an acknowledgement from the Kiribati focus group that in Aotearoa New Zealand traditional supports do not exist, and that is why formal supports have become important.

...we refer to our elders because back home we've got our elders in the village and they are the main ones who have got the authority to step in when violence does appear or does happen in every village or every household ... because we are in New Zealand we have no leaders at all so we just go to counselling or we just go to the police when violence does happen. (Kiribati group)

The Tongan group also stated that access to formal support was important.

Having access to the right people who are equipped to be able to provide that support, whether they are the faifeau or a social worker or someone trained and then we spoke about access to the right tools. (Tongan group)

Groups acknowledged the importance of people working with families being of the **same Pasifika culture, but also the same gender.**

... having the counselling that's appropriate to us and our own Pacific cultural frameworks. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

Practitioners being of the same culture, but it's about relationship and male role in working with other males. We also talked about how a man might be less likely to engage with a female, so having the availability of a man to work with another man, and even with a man of another ethnicity. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

There was a suggestion that formal supports in a crisis are very limited.

One of the things we don't have enough of is crisis intervention and the need to demystify what woman's refuge stands for and how it works cos maybe our Pacific communities have a stereotype or view of what Women Refuge does. The only 24 hour crisis agencies we have is either the police, or the women's refuge and it's something probably we as women need to explore a bit more. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

Even if there is a need for formal supports, groups suggested that sometimes engagement with formal supports is not positive.

We also acknowledged in there that it isn't always kind the services and the emergency services that show up at your door. And that Police are not necessarily in that first response, and are not always a great experience and so what else, what else is going to really make sure that it's a positive intervention. (Samoan group)

Cultural processes

TABLE 13: CULTURAL SUPPORT FACTORS THAT MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

FAMILY/COMMUNITY FACTORS	FORMAL SUPPORTS	CULTURAL PROCESSES	KNOWLEDGE/RESOURCING
Family support	Formal supports appropriate to Pasifika cultural frameworks	Talanoa process	Education about family violence
Social support	Recognition of Pasifika gender frameworks	Implementation of cultural values	Resourcing of services and of communities
Advocacy for victim and perpetrator within the family system		Advocacy within the family	Materials available about Pasifika family violence Knowledge about the impact of family violence Educated, culturally competent family violence workforce

Cultural processes were viewed as fundamental to families managing the impact of family violence. In particular, focus groups emphasised the **talanoa process**, implemented by both families and professionals, as a protective factor when violence has occurred in Pasifika families.

Was also shared around there are some family retreats, church retreats that have more recently allowed men to talk more openly with other men. And, you know, the children talk through and have a space to voice their own feelings about mum or dad when they argue. X was part of a Family Violence conversation where you know men talk to men, you know men confront men ... when men are with men they talk about things differently. You know, same as when women are with women; so, you know, having those opportunities to discuss, whether it's in a village context, or the church context. (Samoan group)

The point was raised that the church context might be one venue for family discussions, however, the key theme was a recognition that there needed to be a safe place for family and community discussions.

We were talking about the need to have access to a safe place for a talanoa to happen. And wherever that may be. So, it could be the church or may not be the church and just being open to where those places might actually be ... it's about culture being pivotal in the provision of that support and that safe space and those people and just ensuring that the services are culturally appropriate and also that you're using what already exists and what we already know. (Tongan group)

The focus groups were very aware of the complexity of family violence and presented statements about the responsibility that goes with making sure talanoa are conducted appropriately, as shared by the Tongan group.

We also talked about the importance of confidentiality. Futa Helu in his writing talks about guilt culture and shame culture - if the coconut wireless goes off post talanoa and mediation that could actually create more harm. We talked about building rapport and empathy. You know, so both victim and perpetrator feel safe to speak. We talked about the importance of space as well you know where say its sexual violence or any type of any other forms of violence, you're not going to necessarily have the perpetrator and the victim in the same room so the appropriateness of how you conduct the talanoa is important. We also talked about duty of care. Or the Tongan term fatongia. So while we have our cultural hats there's also the hats that we wear as professionals and the legal aspects as well. So we have a duty of care to the victim to make sure that they are feeling safe and they are looked after. (Tongan group)

The Samoan group shared how in Samoa there were family **advocates** for children, and this would be something of a protective factor that could be considered in the Aotearoa New Zealand context.

Finding out who can be the advocate for a child, a young person, a wife or a father - that person is the one who believes in them wholeheartedly. We used to have, back in Samoa ... there was an adult in the village who protected you, who took you around. You stayed next to that Auntie, and we call it a Matua tausi in that context, someone who would be brave enough to stand for you and stand against whatever was happening. (Samoan group)



Knowledge and resourcing

TABLE 14: KNOWLEDGE/RESOURCING FACTORS THAT MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

FAMILY/COMMUNITY FACTORS	FORMAL SUPPORTS	CULTURAL PROCESSES	KNOWLEDGE/RESOURCING
Family support	Formal supports appropriate to Pasifika cultural frameworks	Talanoa process	Education about family violence
Social support	Recognition of Pasifika gender frameworks	Implementation of cultural values	Resourcing of services and of communities
Advocacy for victim and perpetrator within the family system		Advocacy within the family	Materials available about Pasifika family violence Knowledge about the impact of family violence Educated, culturally competent family violence workforce

As in response to previous questions, knowledge building, and adequate resourcing was considered a protective factor in dealing with the impact of family violence. The protective potential of delivering **education about family violence** to multiple generations in the Pasifika community was noted. Groups also stated that **professionals needed to have knowledge** about resources and services that were available.

We thought that how to reduce the impact of family violence when it happens, one of the things is our knowledge. Now, what do we know about other services that are out there. Do we know what to do? Is there some kind of plan? (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

...protection orders. They're good as well and they help to give distance to a victim and perpetrator that they just might need space between them. (Samoan group)

Furthermore, Pasifika practitioners need **resources** to work with families in a protective enhancing way.

We got a little bit annoyed about where are the Pacific resources that would help our people unpack what family violence is and why aren't there more and why aren't there more available and where are the Pasifika proud resources that we remember and recall that were looking at different ethnic appropriate language and culturally responsive language? Because we're not seeing it in the emergency rooms or with police, or with the social workers that come out or the victim support advisors, we're not seeing it with those people. So where is it? (Samoan group)

There was an acknowledgement that resourcing is challenging.

... having access to the right people who are equipped to be able to provide that support, whether they are the faifeau or a social worker or someone trained and then we spoke about access to the right tools. (Tongan group)

Cultural competence was an important knowledge component of any response.

And we talked about culture being pivotal in the provision of that support and that safe space and those people and just ensuring that the services are culturally appropriate and also that you're using what already exists and what we already know. (Samoan group)

There was a recognition from the focus groups about the value of professionals that identified as Pasifika in the workforce.

We hand down believe that having our Pacific staff and our family intervention teams does make a difference. You may not be able to speak the language or whatever but you're brown, that you say you're Samoan or Tongan and automatically there's some connection, there's a connection that just...whether it's invisible or not it's there and people will slowly relax a little bit and open up a bit more and that does work, and I think that's a protective factor for our service, for our Pacific people. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

WHAT FACTORS ENABLE PASIFIKA PEOPLES TO HEAL FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE?

TABLE 15: PASIFIKA CULTURAL PROCESSES AS PROTECTIVE FACTORS ENABLING HEALING

PASIFIKA CULTURAL PROCESSES	EMPOWERMENT OF PASIFIKA PEOPLES	SYSTEMIC FACTORS
A return to Pasifika cultural values	Encouraging women	A well-resourced system
Acknowledgement of violence	Principles of practice	System that can incorporate cultural processes
Formal Pasifika restoration processes	Build self-esteem and confidence, expression of feelings	System that allows time for healing interventions
	Empower families to discuss family violence	
	Education	

Pasifika cultural processes

As noted in response to previous questions, the focus groups highlighted ethnic-specific Pasifika cultural processes as protective factors that helped families heal from family violence. In particular, employing ethnic-specific **Pasifika cultural values** to guide Pasifika family lives was viewed as protective and useful for healing.

A return to our own values and our beliefs, for example, love, respect and forgiveness. Those are the things that are actually going to, you know, help us to heal going forward. We need strong support to help us now help you through. Being able to be heard and to be able to be appreciated for the way that we do things and express things. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

The Samoan group provided an example of the Samoan values underpinning a Samoan process of healing.

So, in the Samoan culture, we have the circle of the va. We start off in that place where the tausi le va, which is the 'you know well' balanced kind of congruent family relationships, village relationships, everything is working well together. And then you get soli le va, which is when it's been breached - something's happened which has created an environment that's broken down, and then the process reverts to teu le va. (Samoan group)

A number of the groups noted that a critical component of healing from family violence is acknowledging what has happened. Groups expressed the importance of providing a safe environment for families to discuss, acknowledge and heal from the impact(s) of family violence.

We talked about there needing to be that really genuine acknowledgement of what's happened, and the impact of what's happened, having the space where those conversations are open for everyone. (Tongan group)

So, we did certainly talk about the fofola e fala and the whole talanoa, and so the cultural response and we were talking about it in terms of having that space to talk, but also as a means of validation so that you can actually start healing or even acknowledgement that something is wrong, very wrong and sometimes people need to hear that. (Tongan group)

Quite often our people are very whakama about talking about what's happened to them. So, it has to be a trusted environment that they are in. (Samoan group)

Validate the feelings of the person who has been victimized. Listen and vindicate women because it's their own story. It's not your story. It's their own particular story. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group).

The Tongan and Samoan focus groups shared narrative about traditional cultural processes of acknowledgement that could be used within the family violence space as an important part of the healing process.

... within Tongan culture there is a custom, it's houlaifi, it's where the person wears leaves and they go and ask for forgiveness - that's the perpetrator, and I know that Samoans have a similar practice as well. Even in a space like New Zealand as mentioned that's often the first step for the healing is the houlaifi, the acknowledgement that there's something that went wrong, and that first step of asking for forgiveness. So, I think there's a lot of things that we can draw on in terms of our culture that we already do, but it's reviving those things again and trying to complement that within the practices that we have. (Tongan group)



There were views shared about the role of the Church in healing from family violence. The following narrative shows a call for church ministers/faith leaders to play a leadership role in helping people to heal from family violence.

Ministers point of perspective having conversations and spiritual healings from the Bible and having that Bible study depending on what violence that you deal with on a daily basis. Because these people we consider so different and important in our culture. That's where we find help, from them. They can do other sort of things taking over the government jobs to do the healing in so many ways ... and if it's not sorted from there, then that's when our government comes in and that's where law comes in. (Kiribati group)

The Multi-ethnic Pasifika group also suggested that Churches had a role in healing, perhaps by creating their own family harm response for their congregation.

... but what if I give you the solution in your church? For those churches we sit down and make them create their own family harm response to your own congregation, right? A place for the people to come and discuss or have some confidentiality and if you need legal or law advice, yep, you can ring to me or ring to another officer that we've got and then the Citizens Advice Bureau or we will have lawyers stand by ... (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

Empowerment of Pasifika peoples

TABLE 16: EMPOWERMENT OF PASIFIKA PEOPLES AS PROTECTIVE FACTORS ENABLING HEALING

PASIFIKA CULTURAL PROCESSES	EMPOWERMENT OF PASIFIKA PEOPLES	SYSTEMIC FACTORS
A recognition of Pasifika cultural values	Encouraging women	A well-resourced system
Acknowledgement of violence	Principles of practice	System that can incorporate cultural processes
Formal Pasifika restoration processes	Build self-esteem and confidence, expression of feelings	System that allows time for healing interventions
	Empower families to discuss family violence	
	Education	

Supporting and empowering Pasifika families and communities to deal with family violence was discussed as an important component of the healing process.

And we talked about, you know, building that person and building their self-esteem and confidence as a way of helping them heal from family violence. (Tongan group)

Healing for us is acknowledging the positive aspects within families. (Samoan group)

Groups believed that **women should be encouraged, in situations where they are victims of family violence, to work on healing themselves.**

Yeah, there's still a lot of work to do, though, to help the victim, so that the victim was not re-victimized. And also, to encourage a woman, not to take on the burden to solve everything because the main person, they have to come back to is themselves and healing for themselves first. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

The groups identified a number of principles under the theme of empowerment of Pasifika peoples. These could be thought of as **principles of practice** and included: valuing victim and perpetrator stories, recognising that healing takes time, adopting a holistic approach to work with families, using Pasifika-informed models, suspending judgement, and making sure that the aim is always to maintain family relationships.

Time was noted as an important component of healing:

So some of the things that we came up with was time and space, you know, time and space for healing. (Tongan group)

And the other thing is that we need our own time to heal. We can't just say, "hurry up, pull yourself together". Because we all take our own time and our own journey. So it's actually trying to suspend our judgment because sometimes we are quick to judge aren't we - "Oh well, you know, it's about time you just pulled yourself together". (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

There were calls for a holistic approach to working with family violence.

If we get a family harm case that is only a window into a family so when they say victim focus you go look at the victim ... No! You go and do that just as a beginning but look at everything else. What about the aggressor? What about the children? What about the environment? Grandma? Aunties? Everything... (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

Additionally, groups acknowledged that there were cultural forums in existence that provided the opportunity for people to share their experiences and celebrate their successes.

So, you know, many cultural groups already have men's groups, women's groups, etc. and that being also an avenue where people can actively share – it's the talanoa that's really key in helping people to share stories and encourage each other. (Tongan group)

One interesting thing we talked about is the celebration of achievements and because there's so much shame associated around this topic that we don't acknowledge when there are strides being taken or gains being made, and in whatever way that is, maybe celebration is an odd word, maybe acknowledgement. But being able to acknowledge along the journey as well because they are complex and it's not as easy as you know, leave him, leave her. (Tongan group)

There was a strong message around the importance of **encouraging Pasifika families** to talk about the violence.

We talked about that and the opportunity to hear the voices of others that are being impacted, that safe space for people to share, facilitated by neutral people being really important as well; non-judgmental and safe for the perpetrator. (Tongan group)

[A] person-centred ... holistic approach and we were looking at everybody else around that person that's part of the healing process that everybody is involved and providing options that will empower them to start making decisions for themselves and moving forward and it's on their time, not the practitioners. And making sure that there's a balance because even though the cultural stuff will help with the healing process it can also be a hindrance. (Samoan group)

Groups shared that in order to empower Pasifika families and communities there needed to be continuing **education** and awareness about family violence and its impacts.

Healing for us was also continuing education and awareness - it's no irony that most of our champions on TV are actually former perpetrators and, you know, victims of family violence. So, that becomes a healing process for a lot of those people. (Samoan group)

The Kiribati group talked about the importance of education to develop the Kiribati community understanding about violence and the law. This was viewed as especially important because the community is still adapting to life in Aotearoa New Zealand without traditional social structures in place to support families.

... of course and a strong message that violence is not okay and we are adapting with that here in New Zealand. I think we are back to the law again and getting ways of support from the government of New Zealand... So, because we're here, we have to look for ways of how to deal with this and how can we get healing after the violence and, we still go to our pastors and our elders, but it's not really effective... but so far we're adapting to the culture in New Zealand, especially about violence and looking forward to getting more help from the government and the agencies that are dealing with this violence. (Kiribati group)

The multi-ethnic Pasifika group also highlighted the importance of education for Pasifika communities from the perspective of encouraging communities to speak to the authorities.

But that's what I mean by giving our people the confidence to speak and it's just education because even to this day I'm getting older now in this job but then when I first came that was the big thing for us to overcome is to make our people confident to talk to us. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

Systemic factors

TABLE 17: SYSTEMIC FACTORS AS PROTECTIVE FACTORS ENABLING HEALING

PASIFIKA CULTURAL PROCESSES	EMPOWERMENT OF PASIFIKA PEOPLES	SYSTEMIC FACTORS
A return to Pasifika cultural values	Encouraging women	A well-resourced system
Acknowledgement of violence	Principles of practice	System that can incorporate cultural processes
Formal Pasifika restoration processes	Build self-esteem and confidence, expression of feelings	System that allows time for healing interventions
	Empower families to discuss family violence	
	Education	



The theme of systemic factors arose throughout the discussions about what helps Pasifika families heal from family violence. The family violence system⁴ was discussed as a potential protective factor to encourage healing, but that the current system was also recognised as a barrier to healing. One of the components that would make for a protective and healing system is a **system that was well-resourced** across both rural and urban areas.

And also we were talking about how we've had all these organizations that have promised to deliver to smaller cities outside of Auckland and Wellington, but we would really love to see those resources come into the smaller cities, because, you know, it's just about for us as a service providers is about being connected to the bigger cities because we often find we're really isolated and we have to work with what we have, which is not much. (Samoan group)

There was general agreement that resourcing is an issue for so many practitioners working in the family violence field.

A number of people have raised that resourcing is an issue for many, so having the resource to do the mahi, to do the work. And the other thing that's been raised is recognising that actually there are Pacific practitioners in family violence, who are in by Pacific for Pacific agencies, but also across mainstream agencies. So, thinking about how we harness and resource all of that work and gather all of our resources to do that work. (Samoan group)

A family violence system that **incorporated Pasifika cultural processes** was identified as important to healing. There were questions as to whether the current system made room for Pasifika cultural processes.

Is the current system, you know, geared up for Pasifika healing you know that we [are] currently operating with within all our sectors? (Samoan group)

I'd like to see our Pacific practitioners lead the way in how to work with specific families as a whole, as a whole family group rather than as perpetrators, or as victims or, as you know, currently, the system is gassed up to look at perpetrators and victims and so forth. (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group).

Groups were clear that the current system does not allow **time for healing**.

So, some of the things that we came up with was time and space, you know, time and space for healing. (Tongan group)

...personally, when I went to church and I was told I had to forgive. It took me a long time to do that. It's not as easy as to say "You gotta forgive". (Multi-ethnic Pasifika group)

⁴ Family violence system refers to government, non-government and community agencies that work with family violence.

05

**FINAL PARTICIPANT
COMMENTS**



FINAL PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

The focus group discussions ended with a question put to all participants as a cohesive group about where they would like to see family violence for Pasifika communities in five years' time.

As expected, people talked about seeing a reduction in family harm by prioritising holistic, family- led approaches to family violence.

I'd like to see in five years' time that we are leading the way in talking as a whole family and the family working out their own solutions of what's best for them. (Single participant)

Resourcing the family violence system, and in particular Pasifika responses to family violence, was continually raised as an issue that needed addressing.

Prevention work continued to be raised as key to reducing the occurrence of family violence within Pasifika communities. People saw the value in strong preventative programmes and thought preventative work could really make a difference in terms of five-year outcomes.

I was just thinking about more education and awareness and community groups and leaders. Explaining what's actually happening, what's acceptable and I think it's going to be easier and it will spread faster and further in five years than hitting one house at a time. If we help all the communities and the conversations will start happening. (Single participant)

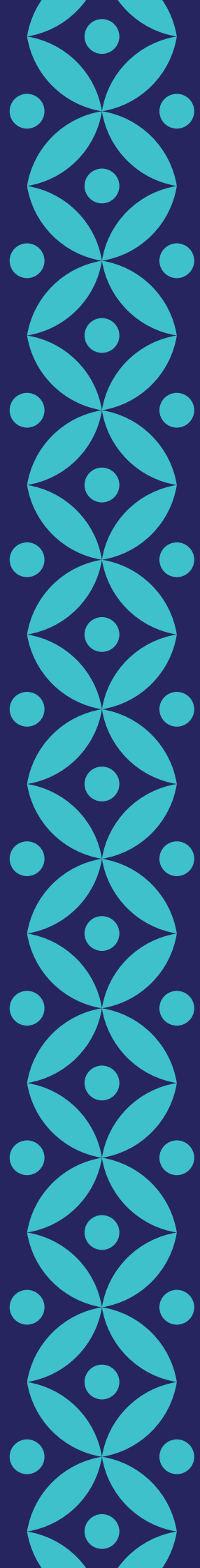
Focus group participants highlighted the importance of Pasifika peoples involved in family violence work, whether as practitioners, researchers, or community members, and being connected with one another in an ongoing way.

We've just found this exercise incredibly powerful. And we just wanted to know, is there any way in which we could either reconnect? Or somehow be a part of a group that has. I know that you've got your study and it's confined and all that kind of stuff, but actually, I'm I've been so excited about the things that I've heard. (Single participant)

06



DISCUSSION



DISCUSSION

The study presents ten key thematic findings relating to protective factors against family violence in Pasifika communities: education, building skills, support systems, family/community factors, formal supports, cultural processes, knowledge and resourcing, Pasifika cultural processes, empowerment of Pasifika peoples, and systemic factors.

The literature review identified a number of protective factors that are relevant here, however, the current study has the benefit of relating themes to specific areas of protection, that is: factors that can protect from family violence, factors that reduce the impact of violence once it has occurred, and factors that enable Pasifika people to heal from family violence.

Like other studies identified in the literature review, this study identified macro factors relating to knowledge about family violence and the law, the protective factor of employment, and the importance of education (*Pasifika Proud, 2020*). However, narratives from this study emphasise the importance of addressing socio-economic pressures that contribute to family violence. Building capacity and capability in Pasifika peoples via education and workforce development is a way of increasing the financial sustainability of Pasifika communities, thereby creating self-sufficient Pasifika families and communities. The International Labour Organization (2016) indicates that people who face financial pressures are likely to have jobs that are less secure and lower paying. Gaining education and developing a skills base are viewed as having an enabling role in reducing poverty, by providing people with the ability to gain higher paid job opportunities. Furthermore, studies have found strong connections between employment and family violence. For example, in relation to intimate partner violence, one study found that the risk of violence is 50% less when both partners are in employment (*Alonso-Borrego & Carrasco, 2017*).

Previous studies have indicated the protective ability of engaging traditional cultural responses to addressing cultural transgressions such as family violence (*Pasifika Proud, 2020; Ministry of Social Development, 2012*). The current study also highlighted the importance of Pasifika cultural responses to family violence but noted that this would be based on building a culturally competent workforce alongside building greater cultural understanding within Pasifika families and communities. Pasifika cultural responses were particularly noted in terms of their potential ability to reduce the impact of family violence and to assist Pasifika peoples in healing from family violence. In this report, advocacy for victims of family violence has been noted as carried out by victim advocates. This term is familiar in the Aotearoa NZ system, however, used in this report we have taken the view of Wendt (1995) about how Pasifika cultural protocols are converted by the use of English words. In this report, therefore, the term

‘victim advocate’ has been indigenised to relate to Pasifika cultural structures.

Education in the current study appeared in relation to every protection area and aligns with other findings about education and family violence (*see for example, Malatest International, 2020*). In the current study the focus on education was presented in three ways; in relation to family violence knowledge, developing skills, and cultural knowledge. Education about family violence, what it is and the impacts it has, was viewed as necessary for all generations of Pasifika peoples. Findings suggest that family violence education should be promoted in different contexts, including in families, in communities, in schools, in churches, and to the family violence workforce. The focus groups called for education in relation to developing skills for both families and professionals, in areas such as being angry in a healthy way, communication, and strategies for de-escalation. Education about Pasifika cultures was also promoted as necessary across the life course, with an emphasis on promoting Pasifika values, and in educating Pasifika peoples that violence is not an inherent part of Pasifika cultures. This educational content was promoted as important for families, communities, and Pasifika professionals.

The current study underscores the importance of addressing those structural factors that contribute to the occurrence of violence in Pasifika communities. Taking an intersectional view acknowledges that protective factors are not able to be operationalised fully if structural and systemic issues such as poverty, unemployment, and limited access to mental health services, for example, are not improved.

A final note should be made about the diversity of the Pasifika community. The Pasifika community in Aotearoa New Zealand is a youthful population with a median age of 23 years and high proportions of the Pasifika community multiply identify with different ethnicities. Protective strategies in respect of family violence should take account of the diversity of the Pasifika population.

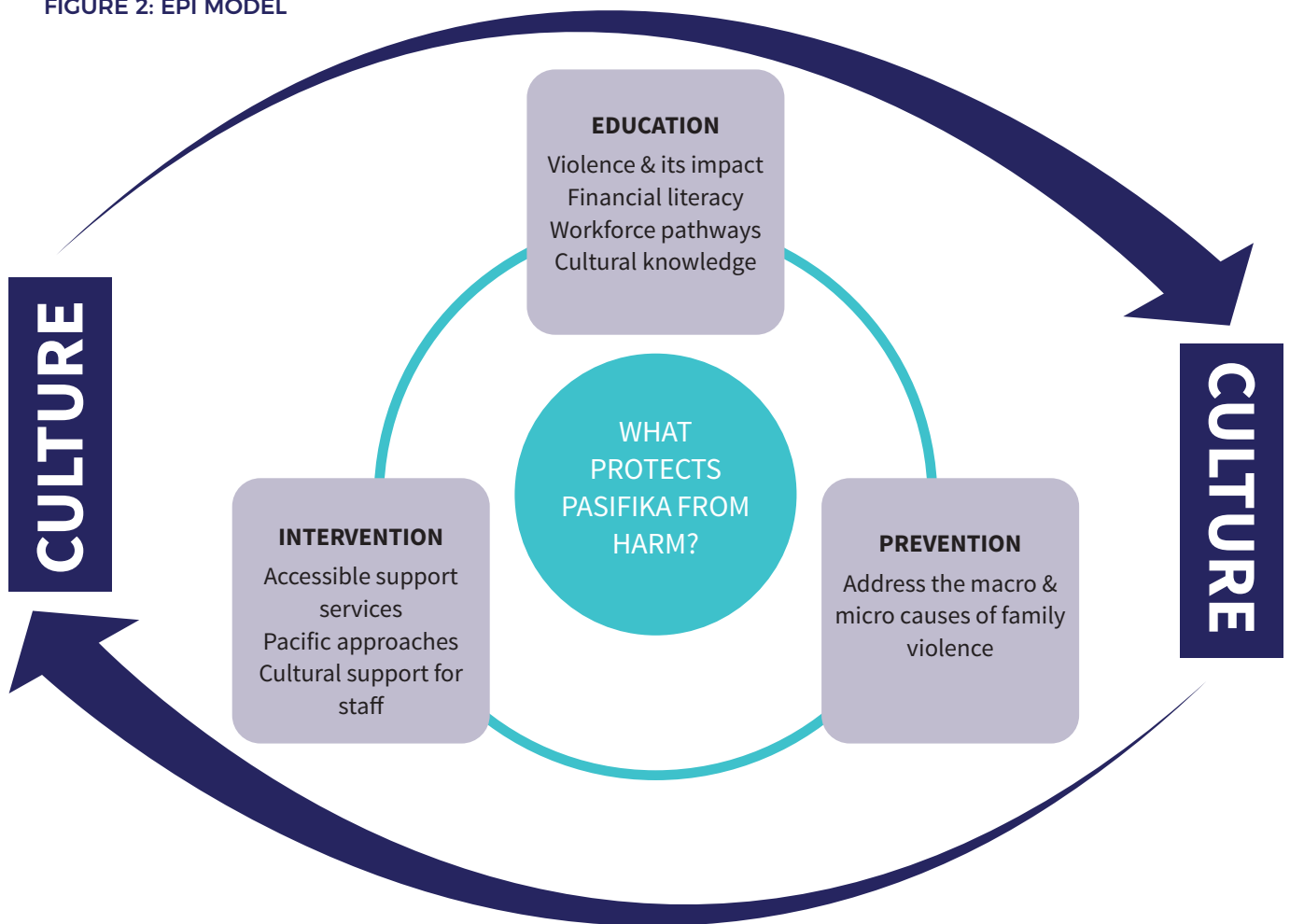
Figure 1 presents a broad summary of the causes of family violence and the protective factors that guard Pasifika peoples from family violence, reduce the impact of family violence when it does occur, and help Pasifika peoples to heal from family violence.

FIGURE 1: SUMMARY OF THEMES



The following EPI (Education, Prevention, Intervention) model (Figure 2) translates the summary of themes from this study into a conceptual way of thinking about protecting Pasifika families and communities from harm.

FIGURE 2: EPI MODEL



The EPI model responds to the question “What protects Pasifika from harm?”. Responses to harm protection in the EPI model are embedded within the context of Pasifika culture; a culture that is recognised as consisting of ethnically specific but diverse Pasifika groups. Thus, wrapped around the EPI model is Pasifika culture that consists of relational values that include, though are not limited to: respect, love, humility, reciprocity, and spirituality (*Ministry of Social Development, 2012*). The culture of Pasifika peoples in general is collective and incorporates family, community and village where relationships are fundamental to identity. Furthermore, most Pasifika peoples prioritise spirituality and religion given that more than 70% of Pasifika peoples are affiliated with a religion or spirituality (*Statistics New Zealand, 2020*). However, despite this understanding of Pasifika cultures and their worldviews, there appears to be a cognitive dissonance in what one believes in, and how one behaves. For example, the belief in family and drawing on values of respect and love as a way of living becomes fundamentally flawed when family violence occurs. Why is this? In order to implement solutions for Pasifika peoples, a genuine acknowledgement of family violence among Pasifika must be accepted by Pasifika communities. To accept that family violence truly exists in our community raises awareness.

To be aware of how we are (consciously or unconsciously) damaging our communities prioritises the need to actively seek sustainable solutions for current and future Pasifika generations.

The response to ‘What protects Pasifika from harm’ is three-fold. The first component is **Education** and is associated with educating Pasifika peoples in four areas: learning about violence and its impact; building financial literacy; building pathways to education and employment; and building ethnic specific Pasifika cultural knowledge. The second area that protects Pasifika from harm is **Prevention**, where the focus should be on addressing the macro and micro causes of family violence, and on building the skills within Pasifika families and communities to prevent family violence. The third component of EPI is **Intervention**. This area focuses on protective factors that enhance the ability of Pasifika families and communities to manage the impact of violence and heal from violence. Elements of Intervention include accessible support services, Pasifika approaches to violence work and cultural support for staff working in the family violence field.

07

RECOMMENDATIONS



RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of the research was to develop an initial set of protective factors that could serve as the foundation for further work on Pasifika resilience and protective factors in the family violence field.

Drawing on the EPI model as a foundation for future work, we recommend the following:

EDUCATION

- Work within existing Pasifika family violence programmes to co-design a Pasifika education and dissemination strategy with faith based/community leaders, professionals, and families with lived experiences of family violence to enable a genuine understanding of violence on current and future Pasifika generations. This should be a holistic approach that includes modules on financial literacy, the neuroscience of family harm, practical skills development and a practical understanding of living Pasifika values and cultural knowledge. This is a practical approach that could be made available in the various Pasifika languages and delivered by ethnic-specific facilitators with expertise in relational engagement and facilitation. The facilitators should be supported by clinical staff such as social workers, psychologists, and counsellors to enable a holistic understanding and knowledge of family violence and its impact on children and families.
- Formulate a clear pathway to approach universities and educational institutes about the incorporation of Pasifika frameworks in the teaching of family harm and violence. This can include a targeted approach to prioritise the recruitment of a Pasifika workforce alongside, teaching all potential practitioners to practice in a culturally responsive and culturally safe manner with Pasifika peoples in Aotearoa NZ.
- Disseminate the findings of this report to all Pasifika groups, though equally important will be distribution to the mainstream community and seeking their involvement in the implementation of these findings. We acknowledge that whilst there is a growing demand for Pasifika approaches led by Pasifika peoples, there continues to be an absence of Pasifika resources to meet this demand.

PREVENTION

- Target and prioritise social and economic support to disadvantaged Pasifika groups within the Pasifika community. For example, Pasifika families engaged in the Justice sector should be a priority group for support given the high likelihood that they will be disengaged from family and cultural support.
- Implement and deliver culturally designed financial literacy and employment seeking workshops in the community, such as with churches, sports groups, and local village gatherings. This will require building partnerships with local agencies already providing this support and contextualisation of support to a Pasifika framework.
- Create partnerships with government groups that work with disadvantaged Pasifika groups such as Oranga Tamariki, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, New Zealand Police, and the Department of Corrections to deliver these workshops and provide a holistic intervention that is likely to target the key source of harm within families.
- Working with key agencies such as Plunket NZ, Early Childhood Centres, Aoga Amata to target Pasifika communities in early child-rearing practice so as to mitigate the risks of harm to babies and children at an early stage of their development.
- Work with primary and secondary schools to develop education about family violence.

INTERVENTION

- Review the accessibility of support services among the regions for Pasifika communities. This is likely to require intensive resourcing and is crucial to developing a robust plan for services for Pasifika. The outcome of this review is likely to provide an action plan to increase accessibility for family violence support services for Pasifika.
- Work with agencies providing family violence support to provide a Pasifika strategy that incorporates findings from this report for working with Pasifika communities. This will enable the use of Pasifika models and frameworks of practice to ensure services are delivered appropriately and safely by both Pasifika and non-Pasifika practitioners and clinicians.
- Work with agencies to provide cultural support and supervision to staff engaging with Pasifika families and communities working in family violence. However, we suggest that the content and structure of this cultural support is clearly outlined so that support is consistent across the regions.
- Develop a Pasifika family violence support network for all practitioners that work in the family violence field with Pasifika families. A Pasifika family violence practitioner network would provide people with the opportunity to support one another and to discuss topics such as: the practice wisdom they have from working with Pasifika families, the knowledge they have gained from research, their knowledge and experiences in relation to family violence policy, and innovative ideas for enhancing ethnic-specific Pasifika family violence practice.

08



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Pasefika

PROUD

Our Families, Our People, Our Responsibility

Pasefika Proud embodies a vision of strong and vibrant Pacific children, young people and their families. Wellbeing for Pacific families occurs when all aspects of the individual and collective are in balance, co-existing with environments, kinship and support systems while recognising mana and tapu.

Pacific cultures are strengths that can be used positively to promote and enhance resilience within Pacific families.

Pasefika Proud mobilises Pacific individuals, families and communities to take responsibility for the issues they are facing, find the solutions and take leadership in implementing them.

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