

## Introduction

*Warm Pacific Greetings,*

*Pasifika Integrated Health Care Quality Management Team is proud to share this document with you. We endeavor to assist you as Pacific and non-Pacific health workers and health professionals to gain better understanding of some of the dynamics of Pacific cultures, and how it affects the health of our people.*

*Some of the issues expressed in this document may not be shared by all Pacific ethnicities. However it is compiled with good intentions to ensure that care and support delivered to Pacific clients is managed with respect for their cultural practices.*

*There is a need to change and adapt to environmental changes. After all like other migrants we choose to leave our country of origin to seek better lifestyle. These lifestyle changes come at a price, a price that some cultural practice may need to be managed differently. Acquiring new skills and knowledge is key to adapting to new environments with better understanding of the changes.*

*There is a lot of literature written about Pacific cultures that anyone can access. This document is to reinforce and support the work being done by others.*

## Guide To Visiting A Pacific Family Home

1. Dress neatly – this is an impression on your profession as a health worker.
2. Use some of the everyday greetings (i.e.) Talofa Lava (Samoa), Malo Lelei (Tongan), Fakalofa Lahi Atu (Niuean), Kia Orana (Cook Island), Taloha Ni (Tuvalu). This will indicate that you do have some idea about their culture.
3. Pronounce names with a fairly high degree of accuracy (Ask if that is the correct pronunciation).
4. Be prepared to learn and ask questions but do show genuine and sincere appreciation.
5. Remove of shoes “Read cues of the specific environment”. If uncomfortable then ask for
6. their approval.
7. Adopt a courteous, open attitude. Allow them to open the conversation. (Remember it’s their environment, they are in control and developing trust in a short period of time is hard work.
8. Be guided by your host as to where to sit, if you are asked into the house. (Sometimes they expect you to sit, without being asked). Sometimes it is better to ask if you can sit down.
9. Accepting some food or drink when seated in the house is generally expected. (Gage the environment, sometimes it’s not appropriate to accept when they have very little for themselves.
10. Speak slowly and clearly (use simple words so they can understand you) and pause before responding to questions. Ask if need to further explain the issue. Do not show you are impatient or could not be bothered. Respond – positively to queries or any issues raised (Your communication skills are important).
11. Admiring objects in the room is often a constraint to give that object away as a gift (be guided that not all cultures are in the frame of giving). Check it out with your professional rules. Remember you are there on a professional capacity). Explain the logic behind the admiration.

**12.** Avoid negative criticism; make genuine sincere comments when suggesting improvement. Ask what can they do for themselves and what do they need support with. If unable to make decisions due to whatever reasons. Ask to discuss it amongst them and you'll return later to confirm.

**13.** The visitor is expected to take the initiative to end the visit.

**14.** Accept their expression of appreciation with genuine courtesy and terminate maybe with you reminding them of your next visit. Leave the family with a positive impression of your visit.

## **Comments**

Do not expect to develop a trusting relationship at first contact. They will not divulge all the information during that first visit. Allow for them to digest your advice and maybe action taken prior to next visit.

Developing the trust will take time and effort. Non compliance to appointments is one of the major problems encountered by Health Professionals. It is important to remind the client of its urgency and importance. Fear of the unknown has always been the norm. And as a result, finds someone to blame. So developing that trust will help overcome these fears.

Consult with the next of kin to confirm that the client understands the importance of what you are trying to achieve. A phone call to follow up leading up to the day of the appointment will be helpful, or a reminder letter.

Remember you can only do so much. Once you've exhausted all approach and fulfill your internal organizations policies to safe guard your practice. It is safer to hand it over for someone else to assist (i.e.) outside the agency or other staff members within the organization.

## Cultural Norms

1. **Greeting People** in your own language (once they know who you are). Family feels that you are part of the family.
2. **Sharing** – This is a well ingrained practice. It is also a sign that you do feel for them.
3. **Loving your neighbor** – There is a real shift of how Pacific People congregate in New Zealand. It's a practice in the country of origin to be able to share practically everything with neighbors.

Due to environmental changes, the concept has shifted remarkably. Which means Pacific People became more cautious of their neighbors.

4. **Community Activities** – This practice is very much alive and active, and it's going from strength to strength. Churches are the main focus, with growing popularity of being part of a Trust of Incorporated Society.

Competition amongst groups is a way of surviving the cultures and creates a sense of belonging. New Zealand born Pacific People very much want to be part of these gatherings. Sometimes they feel left out because older people take over and dominate the function. They are left to find things out for themselves. This can have a negative effect in which they will not participate in the future.

### 5. Cultural Ceremonies and Rituals

Traditional ceremonies include courting of a prospect bride for a son, a white wedding, kava ceremony, and a funeral. Some cultures still hold strong beliefs about young girls first period. The New Zealand environment has made it difficult for some practices to continue.

Death and dying – The practice surrounding this varies markedly between ethnic cultures (i.e.) Niueans – it is based on missionaries (Christians) and Europeans colonial practices. Families are expected to support the family in crisis by giving or donating to assist with all costs and food preparation. It is not expected for the family in crisis to return the favor. However there is an

expectation that when other families are in crisis it is common sense to return the good deed.

In Samoan culture, there is a strong expectation to return gifts in other forms which means the family in crisis has to come up with the same amount of donation or better. This is a ritual where families could easily neglect their health and spend huge amounts of money on trying to keep up with the rituals.

In Tongan culture, it is similar to the Samoans but a period of mourning will drag on and families continue to congregate at one focus place, for as long as it takes. Wearing black is a strong cultural practice for Tongans when a family member dies. Some members have lost their jobs as a result of taking too much time off to attend some of these traditions. And others are much more alerted to ensure their employment comes first.

There is now a shift in behavior. Priorities are becoming more defined, without feeling guilty when absent.

## **6. Respect**

For older members of the community still is a major part of all Pacific ethnic cultures. However, these rituals seem to be slowly eroding with generation and time plus environment (i.e.) New Zealand born are more challenging and assertive now than those who came from the Country of Origin. On the other hand, this respect could easily be taken advantage of by older people and can be used inappropriately. The general rule is that if a child does not learn respect then that is a bad reflection on the parents.

## **7. Consent**

Seeking permission is a common practice in any ethnic culture, western country and health profession.

However, consent to any examination by doctors for a wife and husband must be carefully discussed with both parties. It is very easy for male partners to refuse the wife to have surgery done, especially for reproductive related procedures. Education and support needs to be done in an environment that is culturally sensitive to their needs. Time plays a major role as well as trust. Some couples and families prefer not to talk about these issues to anyone including the minister of religion.

## **8. Fatalistic Thinking**

The desire to change or accept advice is difficult for most Pacific ethnic people. This behavior resulted in not wanting to change for fear of losing 'the mana' or control over one's self or family. As a result they prefer to suffer the consequences than to face up to the new changes. This behavior is much more dominant when a health related problem is addressed for treatment or ask to seek medical advice. Prolonging the inevitable could result in severe illness or death. And a statement such as, if it's God's will leave it up to him better educated New Zealand born children have been assertive enough to impose the change on their family members.

## **9. Donation of Body Parts**

There was and still is the Christian related belief that you come to this world as one whole person with all your body parts (organs) intact, and then you should leave the world in the same way. Donation of body parts is still a big issue for Pacific People. It's all very well to accept someone else's organ, but it's not acceptable to donate your own. This issue will not change in the very near future. Currently some immediate families are beginning to cooperate especially in Kidney failure operation. Education of families could be the answer.

## **10. Alternative Treatment**

Some ethnic groups hold strongly to belief's of alternative medicine. The herbs (leaves of trees, roots and barks, fruits) still hold significant purpose when it comes to treating incurable diseases like cancer. Superstitious (TAULATUA) must (for some Pacific Cultures) not be practiced on its own. It has to have a medium in order for it to work. This means use of natural plants or other form of objects to assist the healing power to be effective. There is also very clear strict advice given with this ritual as a form of treatment. For majority of Pacific People who are committed to Christianity principles, they prefer that praying is the best form of treatment.

## **11. Circumcision**

Post Christianity the Pacific adopted the Biblical beliefs that uncircumcised young men are regarded as unclean. And as a result, the community either makes fun of him or they see him as an 'outcast'. Due to cost, parents are becoming more and more wary about having to pay for one done now. Some parents do still go to such lengths to save up and have the procedure done.

## **12. Hair Cutting (Niuean and Cook Island Only)**

Again this is Post-Christianity belief. Growing the young boy's hair is part of the ritual of making sure that boys do grow up to become strong and healthy men and committed themselves to Christian values after the hair has been

cut in a ceremonial way. It has to be blessed by the church minister, and then the first bundle of hair is cut by the minister himself, followed by the grandparents, then the real parents, then uncles and aunties and then the invited guests.

These rituals have changed over the years; it is becoming a commercialized event. The real essence is also eroding especially here in New Zealand. The significance of this ritual is that if the young boy's hair is cut without being blessed, the belief is that the young boy will grow up weak and unhealthy. The money donated for this ceremony is to be spent on the child himself either for his education or save for the future. However, this is not always the case because of the cost to put up the feast itself.

These donations are exchanged with the basket full of raw food – very traditional way. This is mainly done in the island. Due to change of environment this exchange of money and raw food in bulk has changed too. Here in New Zealand the approach is now more towards cooked food in buffet style and every invited guest has equal access, regardless of how much they eat. The intention is to payback the same amount of money or more. The ritual is also believed to be an opportunity for families to come together.

**(Be aware that this is the Niuean version, the Cook Island one is not available but every attempt is being made to obtain this information).**

### **13. Children Sleep with Parents in one bed**

This practice has benefits yet research conducted in the 1970s-1990s found that there was a relationship between this practice and cot death amongst Pacific infants.

The cultural significance of this practice has two folds

- To ensure that the baby bonds well with the mother while breast feeding
- To avoid physical (sexual) contact between parents which could result in falling pregnant again before the baby is much older

Cot death is unheard of in the islands. All this has changed due to environment and lifestyle in New Zealand. However, the practice has not been completely changed or abolished because families still have choices in their own homes. Despite health professional's advice against the practice, this is now becoming a personal choice.

### **14. Massage – Touch**

Every Pacific ethnic group identifies with massage as a way of life, which is mainly described as a traditional practice. However, research over the years has proven that some traditional massage can be harmful to the clients (e.g.) pregnant mothers. The risk to the unborn child is much higher and the baby can die (still birth) before the full term. Traditional massage is meant to be a healing agent that drives away the bad or evil spirits within the body. Some families have what they call gift of massage and the ability to predict the problem and how massage can or can't help heal. This 'gift of massage' can work against the appointed person if not treated with respect. However acknowledging the person with this gift is now becoming more a practice. This gift is mainly in monetary terms. Each Pacific ethnic group has their own unique ways of performing the art of massage. It's regulated by those who possessed the art and can be passed down to generations only by a selected family member.

## **15. Communal Activities**

**a. Living together** in a house with extended family is a common practice in most ethnic groups especially in open houses within the island communities. In New Zealand the practice has been discouraged by authorities due to potential outbreak of diseases such as TB, Hep B, and common colds. And also for hygiene (i.e.) one bathroom to 10 adults is not an acceptable practice.

### **b. Gatherings**

Pacific people still keep the traditional extended family get together as part of their cultural norm. These gatherings are strengthened by the Christian belief of strong family ties. They identify the eldest male to be the leader and officially appoint that person as the head of the family. If no male the woman next in line would continue the responsibility. This role is more noticeable in functions like funerals, weddings or inductions of a new church minister and other ceremonies that is unique to a particular ethnic group.

### **c. Churches**

Sometimes religion can separate families and can cause a rift between siblings and extended members. In some incidences families will use church commitments as a way of not wanting to meet with families. However, most of these issues are dealt with by individual families. And they do find ways of resolving these problems. There is now a realization that in New Zealand there's a need to work together to support families and not to allow religion to take over or destroy family ties.

## **16. Giving and Accepting Gifts**

It has always been a practice to give. Most Pacific Ethnic Groups have this tradition since history. The practice is now becoming an issue of being selective of who you give to. And it is mainly in monetary terms, not food or traditional crafts, although some ethnics are still giving gifts and food as part of the ceremonial tradition. But it is now a choice issue.

Sometimes an exchange of gifts at special functions is becoming an expensive task. If a person from another completely different culture is given a gift it is meant to be a sign of appreciation for your service. It is best to accept it then make a choice to either return it or ask for advice regarding feeling offended when you return the gift. If it's food, you can share it with staff members and send a letter of thanks to the family.

If the gift is an heirloom of the family, that's hanging on the wall, do not accept it just admire it and comment on how nice it is sitting there. Some Pacific families will give it to you no matter what you say. Insist to leave it behind when you terminate your visit; send them a letter to thank them for their generosity.

## **17. Welcome Guests/ Visitors & Farewell People**

This cultural norm is more prominent and important in the Pacific Country of Origin. Migration to New Zealand has changed all this. It's more confined to family members and extended families and members of the same church or groups. On the other hand if the welcoming of the guest from other ethnics and from Country of Origin. Again different Pacific ethnic acknowledge hierarchal guests e.g. Tongan Royal welcome in special ways, Ministers or Religion have special preferences, Head of State for Samoan and Matai's are all treated differently.

There is a protocol you need to adhere to such as who to speak to first, and who to respond to. Normally the welcome is done by those who host the occasion. The speakers normally start off by women from the invited guest then the men to round up before it's handed over to the hosting group. Gifts can also be exchanged during this speech time or can be left till the end. This ritual can either strengthen relationships or can break friendships. Most of the time we have to show appreciation and friendship.

## **18. Serving Food to Visitors and Guests**

This tradition is still actively practiced by groups and some families. It has changed over the years with cost of living when migrated to New Zealand. Instead of a heavy meal, it's mainly a cup of tea or nothing.

In a much more important visit to the home of a Pacific Family the full tradition still exists (i.e.) a visit of a Reverend to see a sick member of the family. The practice still holds significant meaning. The younger generation of New Zealand has a different view of this tradition. However, it is best to go along with it, than to ignore or disrespect by not taking part in their tradition.

### **19. Invitation to eat**

If you are present while people are eating you will be invited to join in and eat with the family. It is regarded as bad manners if you don't. It is best to gage as how many people are there and especially children. And make your own quick judgment re- who hasn't eaten. Join in to respect the cultural norm and show how grateful you are but invite all other members' share with you. Sometimes some ethnics still have this strict protocol of children eat last. Go along with the practice as you are regarded as important to them. Some traditions such as this cannot change overnight.

### **20. Care for Death & Dying**

Death and Dying is not a topic that is discussed openly. Even in today's generation it is best to find out who is the 'power of attorney' or the primary carer. Then make a time to sit down with them (only if they wish to do so).

Through this period of grief and sadness it is sometimes best to not say anything. Health Professionals are normally the first to be blamed for not doing enough. Older people will request for their church minister to be there. It is important that all family members do take time off to have a rest, if they are visiting to offer support. Request to die at home varies from family to family; most families prefer to be at home with their loved ones. Others prefer out of home (mainly in hospital).

Most Pacific people go through the same grieving process as those from other cultures. But there are some practices or rituals that are uniquely different. Find out first from the head of the family before proceeding with any assistance. Sometimes, guilt can be overwhelming that it can cause huge disharmony amongst families of the dying client. Allow them time to ventilate their feelings. They will come to a point where acceptance of their own guilt is not share by all members.

The most difficult thing for Pacific People is to 'let go' when the time comes for their loved ones to pass on. As Health Professionals we can offer support to a point where most families will know where to stop or terminate your support. Your presence is just sufficient to give them the comfort that you care.

## 21. Use of Traditional Medicine

Traditional medicine is a major part of any Pacific family across the Pacific.

It is how the westerners view and interpret the use of traditional medicine that is the problem. Some ethnic groups still hold strongly to a belief that if the palagi medicine does not work it is important to then go back to traditional medicine. This is also more noticeable in mental health.

There is belief that herbal remedies do help a lot in minor ailments, and advice give to use them is just as important.

Some families still protect and safe guard the use of some herbal remedies. There is also a belief that if not prepared by the right people or family it will lose it's potent and will have no effect on the person using it. There is a ritual process that needs to take place in order for it to work.

There are selected family members who are chosen to carry on the art/ritual. Every ethnic group has their own unique ways of preparing and applying herbal remedies. Some are superstitiously based and others are handed down through generation.

It is the choice of the users, to use traditional medicine and to believe in it or not. Traditional medicine is the challenge for the future for all health professionals. Our cultural practices is strongly linked to traditional medicine.

### Cultural Competency

There are tools and frameworks being collated and trialed mostly in the Mental Health Services. You do not have to be a Pacific person to become competent in caring for Pacific People. However there are processes that need to be fulfilled prior to obtaining or claim as culturally competency to deliver health care to Pacific People.

### Cultural Assessment

The makeup of different Pacific ethnicities has made cultural assessments more challenging and sometimes difficult to understand. The identified areas that are highlighted are of great significance when trying to understand and offer appropriate support and treatment are:

## **COMMUNICATION**

Be alerted to racial, cultural and social factors that make people who they are and affect how they behave, observe their dialect, style of language and social situation, the volume of their voice (silence, whisper, loud and harsh), use of touch, context of speech (emotional or anger), kinesics (like gestures) stance and eye behavior.

Language style seems to be more a major problem amongst Pacific People. When asked (i.e.) “are you ok for me not to come back.” The response normally means the opposite on the other hand, “silence” sometimes can be totally misinterpreted as “not” agreed. Yet it may be a sign of being humble, respect and grateful that you are here.

Touch is used by Pacific People as a sign of comfort, approval of one support. Touch is used in massages as a healing power. Touch can be appropriate in an environment (i.e.) death and dying where families need support, yet touch in a social environment can have the complete opposite effect. It is advisable to ask first.

Pacific People do have their own hierarchal structure more prominent in the Samoan and Tongan culture. Niueans and Cook Islanders tend to be more viewed as ‘all are equal’. However holding a job in government and working hard, they tend to earn their respect from the community as a result of that position.

Yet in Tongan culture, it is structured as the King and Nobles and then the commoners. They have their level of communication from language used in rituals to perform prior to a commoner wanting to see any of the Monarch’s members.

Samoans are very similar, the Matai of High Chief in the village do have a channel set out of how to communicate with him. The church Ministers are also given the same respect.

In Fiji, the ‘high chiefs’ have very strict protocols in place of how common people communicate with them. Grieving for the death of a High Chief in Fiji is totally forbidden. Visitors are thoroughly screened prior to coming in contact with chiefs. It is much safer to find out first before pursuing any care or support.

## **SPACE**

Pacific People have subtleness in their behavior when it comes to identifying space, in the scope of space. There are four identified type of space, the intimate, the person space, the social space and the public space.

Most Pacific People falls between personal space and social space. The intimate space which mainly confines to the bedroom is viewed as taboo. Ensure you ask before you enter. The social space we normally refer to as the working environment space. Most Pacific people see this as a much safer space to be in.

Most Pacific People enjoy the public space as most church gatherings are seen as an environment where no one will harass or confront you alone, it is safe to socialize.

## **SOCIAL ORGANISATION**

Pacific People live historically in an extended family environment and the norms are whatever one family member brought into the family it is expected that everyone will have a 'say' or share amongst others. The head of the family is primarily the father.

Over the years, changes has emerged that more and more single parent families are having to cope with the role to control and manage his/her children alone. Sometimes grandparents help.

Pacific People are not individualistic people. They need support of extended families. It is better to ask if their family dynamics are traditional or not.

## **TIME**

Cultural groups can be either past, present or future oriented. Most Pacific People are past and present oriented. The future is seen as leave it up to God to decide. We can only pray and have faith (this is more noticeable in New Zealand when insurance is a major issue). Saving for the future is not something that Pacific People will voluntarily do. Maintain tradition is very strong in most Pacific People.

Holding on to practices that sometimes hinder progress could cause confusion and undesirable consequences. In health terms, it can also delay treatment for condition that can be corrected by surgery. Fatal thinking can take over common sense which could lead to death and follow by guilt. It is much safer to seek extended families opinion.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL**

This refers to the ability of the person to control nature and to plan and direct factors in the environment that affects the individual. Pacific People tend to use forces of nature to either describe people as sinner or saints. In health terms thinking fatalistically is very much alive and well in Pacific People. If

diagnosed with cancer, there's the belief that nothing can be done its God's choice and leave it up to him to decide. Pacific People believe that illness and death are predetermined and therefore do not take preventative measures seriously and prefer to 'brave' it out and wait and see what happens.

## **BIOLOGICAL VARIATIONS**

An understanding of bio-psycho-socio variable is also important for understanding persons from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Features, skin colour, body size can be traced back to adjustments made by ancestors to the environment.

The feeling of being treated as an individual emotionally and physically is very similar in all Pacific ethnicities.

The susceptibility to disease has been viewed and interpreted as strongly related to our Pacific biological make up. Therefore sometimes Pacific People are led to believe that there's not much that can be done. This tends to have a negative effect on Pacific People which results in not seeking medical treatment early enough. Example is diabetes; screening routinely by visits to the GP is not something Pacific People do voluntarily. Hoping it will go away can only worsen the condition.

Ensure that total holistic approach to care is communicated to Pacific Person right from the first point of contact. Other issues such as alcohol consumption, tendency to blame on parents who drink will have a high chance that children will drink. It is genetically linked.

Assessment can only be beneficial when time to explore these phenomena's and how they are interrelated is seriously considered. If a diagnosis must be reached the family is asked to participate and share their concerns.

It is safer to incorporate cultural assessments to the routine assessment tool that's used to obtain health related information about the client prior to implementing the care.

## **CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS**

**Children are to be obedient and respectful to their parents.**

All Pacific ethnic cultures hold strongly to this belief no age boundary. Even though you turn 21 years old and live at home, parents still have control over

what you do. This belief is based on Biblical teaching “children are seen but not heard”.

It is perceived as a sign of respect and whatever parents say children must conform or face the consequence of being severely punished. This day in age as well as being born in New Zealand it is no longer strictly conformed to this tradition. There is much more flexible approach to adjusting so children can be heard when there’s a need to hear their issues.

Sometimes some Pacific families are adopting their own ways of making sure children are heard. A lot of children tend to bond better with grandparents rather than their parents. They are heard through their grandparents. Response to how children should not be heard in different environment still seems to be imposed as part of family cultural practices. This includes when other adults of family members come to visit. Children will revert to serving guests without being asked.

### **Respect for Elders**

This is one cultural practice that will not change in a hurry. Older people irrespective of their status, deserves respect. Older people are seen to have the Mana and have given so much for our sake and that of their own immediate families.

There are some contrary to this practice these days. Some older people take advantage of young members of the family and it can have a negative effect. Abuse either physical or sexual has not been highlighted or mentioned as a concern. It appears as though RESPECT for elders supersedes the complaints and the ‘shame’ associated with the incident. And as a result, younger people tend to lose the respect for older people. It is not an identifiable issue.

### **Responsibilities – the difference between Male and Female Role**

Pacific families are uniquely different in that roles of a man and woman are quite traditionally spelled out well before they are married.

Migration to New Zealand has changed most of this due to the demand of having to work to make ends meet. Basically what it meant is that men provide for the family. This includes hunting for food, plants and fish. The woman is the home maker. She keeps the family together. In the church arena, it’s much more prominent. Some Christian denomination imposes rules that women are not allowed to preach and others do.

In the home, the women are to look after the in-laws and concentrate on activities that support her husband. Most of these demands have changed over the years due to migration. Equal responsibilities and equal commitments have become the

norm now. Women are becoming better educated and taking leadership in prominent positions amongst Pacific communities.

This shift has made it much more acceptable for families to balance cultural demands and society's expectation.

### **Expectation for children to do well and have good jobs**

Parents in most Pacific families have always intended for children to do better than them. The support in the island of origin is decided by limited access to a lot of children's entertainment, toys etc. And children who are brought up in the island have no other means of competition except to adhere to parents demands, and succeed in their school work.

Here in New Zealand it is very different. There is freedom of choice, and children tend to make all the wrong choices. Parent's expectations for children to do well without strong support have caused more harm than good. Sometimes the cultural activities take precedence over school work.

### **Obtain a good spouse**

Traditionally, the church environment and church going young people is seen as a good start to courting a spouse. Parents do have much more to say when it comes to matching the appropriate person with either their son or daughter. This decision can only be reached after parents assess what sort of family background the girl or boy comes from.

Mixed marriage is becoming more and more the norm in New Zealand. With young people meeting their partners other than the church or church related functions. Parent's involvement is getting less and less important. White weddings are gradually replaced by living together without being married (especially here in New Zealand). New Zealand born finds it is an expensive exercise. While the tradition is still alive and well it is respected back in most of the Pacific Islands.

A good spouse does not necessarily have to be clever, but someone who can provide for his wife and family. More and more single parents (mostly women) family is become an acceptable part of Pacific family life.

Choosing the right spouse is now a challenge and trust is a loose phrase. For most young Pacific people it's what happened here and now that matters. Don't worry about the future.

## **CARE FOR ELDERLY PARENTS/GRANDPARENTS AND DISABLED FAMILY MEMBER**

Extended 'family's living' is still a strong tradition. Grandparents are part of this living arrangement. Their needs must be met by immediate families. This includes the family having to care for the elder parents/grandparents. The sacrifice sometimes is leaving the job to be with the elderly couple.

In New Zealand, this task has become more of a burden. The responsibility to pay back their hard work of bringing up their children is now left to the state to care for them while the couple goes off to work. The demand is also left to just one member of the family and if anything goes wrong it is always the child that was designated to do the care seems to be the victim. This is where families fall apart in their relationship with each other.

Grandchildren are now becoming more and more the responsible caregivers. They are told that grandparents do have the mana to bless them as grandchildren than their maternal children and they need to help care for them.

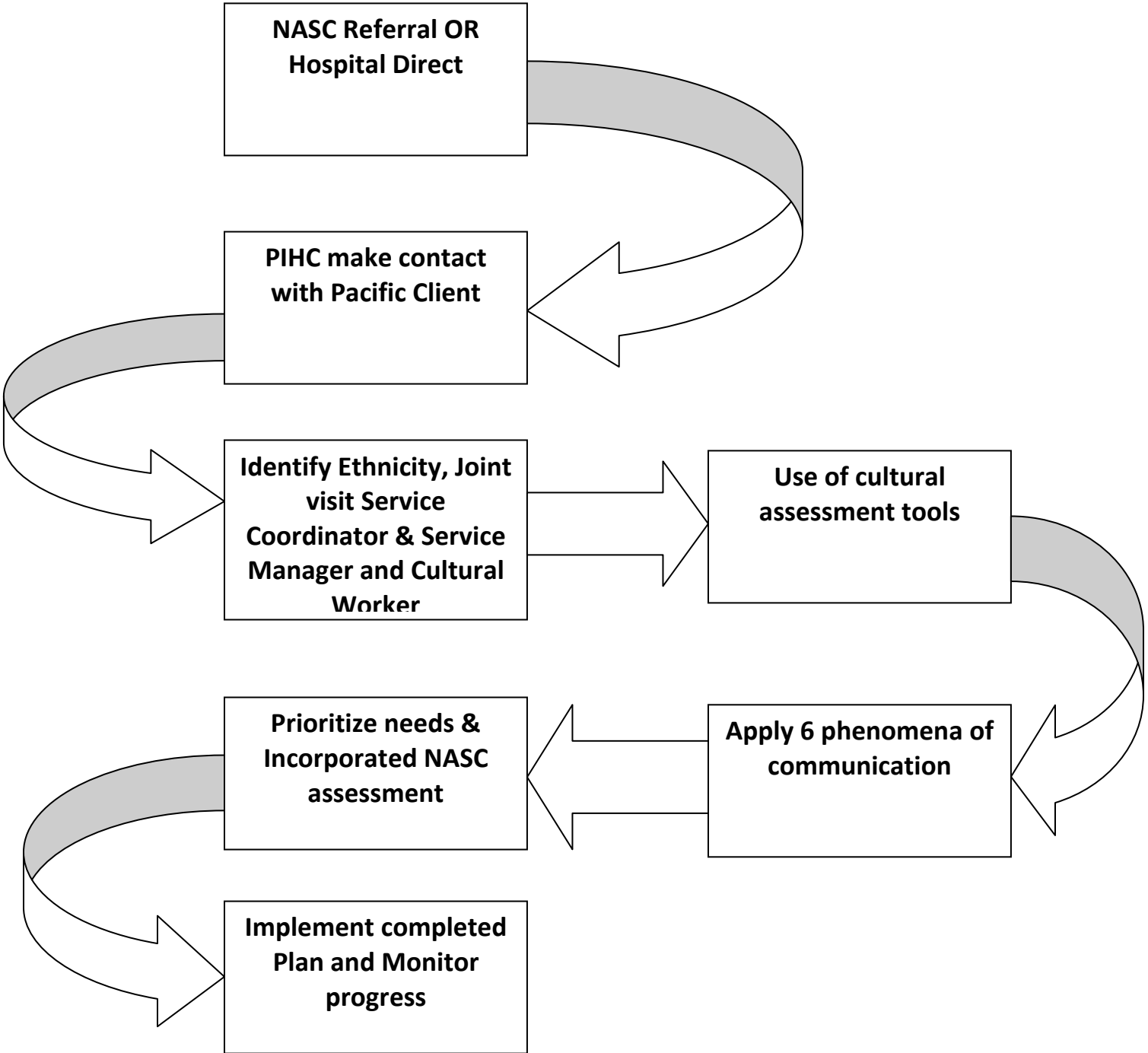
In some families, grandparents do impose threats of cursing the family if they are unable to care for them or decide to take them to the rest home while it is not a traditional practice.

Grandparents who are diagnosed with dementia or Alzheimer are much more susceptible to be taken away to the rest home without any fuss. There is still a huge gap of Pacific Communities wanting to learn more about the condition and how to manage them at home. They interpreted Alzheimer's as an extension of the curse.

Pacific cultures are uniquely complex. Ensure that a given situation is assessed and managed appropriately when taking care of older people. However not all Pacific families conform to the traditional practices of caring for elderly parents or grandparents.

The environmental changes and cost of living are some of the contributing factors in New Zealand. Disabled family members on the other hand are sometimes worse off than elderly. Pacific people sometimes lack the skills to care and result in abuse. When a mother has a disabled child there is a high chance of being stigmatized and branded as a curse. Most of these myths have been demystified when some families migrate to New Zealand. With a lot of training on disability, the appreciation of knowledge understanding has paved the way to respect and care for disabled children has improved quite a lot.

**CULTURAL ASSESSMENT**





## PASIFIKA INTEGRATED HEALTH CARE LTD

# CULTURAL ASSESSMENT

### CULTURAL ORIENTATION

- (1) ETHNICITY:
- (2) FIRST LANGUAGE:
- (3) SECOND LANGUAGE:
- (4) OTHER LANGUAGES USED:
- (5) STATUS/TITLE IN OWN COMMUNITY:
- (6) ANY SPECIAL REFERENCE: (ie)

### RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

(1)

Status in Church:
Preferred Way of Communication: (tick one) <input type="checkbox"/> Formal <input type="checkbox"/> Informal
State Details:

### FAMILY ORIENTATION

Status Within Family:		
Family Dynamics / Support:		
<b><u>Immediate Contact for Cultural Issues:</u></b>		
Name:		
Address:	Phone No.:	

# DIFFICULTIES FACED BY THE PACIFIC ISLAND PEOPLE IN ADAPTING TO NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY

## GENERAL

- Most Pacific People have not brought with them any money to invest in housing or set up in a foreign country until the late 1990s.
- The need to adapt not just to the predominant European culture, but also to the people and cultures of other ethnic groups.
- Acquiring enough English to meet the functional needs of this type of society.
- Related to point (3) above, because they are unable to express themselves in work situations, in Court, in the Press, they are sometimes taken advantage of by people who have better understanding of the language. Prejudice may take over and a person may lose his job; inability to present his reasons before the judge may result a sentence and the press may succeed in endorsing a stereotype.
- There is a need for apprenticeships for youths who have reached fifth form level but did not get School Certificate. Adult apprenticeships are also needed.
- Many people in this society still act from pre-conceived ideas such as primitiveness and inferiority and fear of the minority race. This sometimes adds up to intolerance and xenophobia.
- Colonial Europeans and those with a colonial outlook are not prepared yet to welcome Pacific Islanders as their equals. This can result in a Pacific Islander being relegated to a third class job.
- Training is needed for those who are relatively uneducated and experience given an understanding and using wisely the civic amenities available to them.
- A shyness that dates back to the islands where Europeans are greatly respected. This if not understand and remedied can result in withdrawal.
- ❖ Note: Most of the above issues has taken huge shift and change as more and more NZ born Pacific emerge during the late 1990 and to date.

## **SPECEFIC**

1. Unaware of their legal rights as citizens in such situations as being arrested by the police, legal aid when appearing in court and whom to ask for assistance.
2. Communication and language problems especially in work situations and filling in of forms and use of their registered names.
3. Accommodation – finding the suitable accommodation, who to ask when buying a house; the right to lay a complaint to the appropriate authorities in cases of unfairness on the landlord's side (high rent, no adequate notice to leave the premises etc).
4. Unawareness of the basics of the country's laws especially the local by-laws in such matters as obtaining a permit to light and umu etc.
5. Social welfare benefits – the need to know more about their entitlement and the proper channel to apply for them.
6. The lack of knowledge of how to go about enrolling their children in pre-school centers, kindergartens, play centers, schools.
7. Unawareness of their rights to use public facilities and amenities such as restaurants, boy's town, public parks, libraries etc.
8. The use of apparel in appropriate situations e.g. at work, hotel, restaurant, special functions.
9. Employment agencies apart from the vacancies advertised in the press.
10. Health – the need to understand their rights as patients when attended by doctors at surgeries or in hospital. The rights to privacy and inform consent.
11. Unawareness of vocational and educational opportunities for themselves and their children.
12. Unawareness of their rights as members of Unions and Social Organizations etc
13. The need to understand their rights to contribute at community meetings, school committees etc.
14. The need to understand statements heard or given as jokes with no intention to offend, in different situations.
15. The basics of the Race Relations Act and how to lodge their complaint.

❖ Note: Most of the issues above has improved quite a lot since the 1990s till now.

## **FAMILY CONCEPTS**

The Polynesian concept of family differs from the Pakeha's (Pakeha) concept. Whereas the Pakeha refer to their family as a nuclear family; father, mother, children. The Polynesian family extends to cover all those relatives that New Zealanders call uncles, aunts, cousins, grandparents and sometimes even very close friends. The families of those that marry into a Polynesian family also become regarded as part of that family and vice versa.

Pita or the child we have chosen to look at has two biological parents (shaded). At the same time, all the brothers and sisters of both his parents also become regarded as parent by Pita. He can refer to them as his MOTHER or FATHER. This idea is also extended to his grandparents and older men and women in gatherings such as church meetings etc. When you ask Pita what relation he is to loane you can expect the answer to be 'brother' without doubt. This concept of family is found throughout the Pacific Islands.

The extended family network does not have rules that are stated or written down. All members of each family know their responsibilities and obligations. The network comes into operation when important occasions such as weddings, funerals, 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays, etc take place and the workload, responsibilities, organization and so on are shared out. The majority of those Pacific Islanders, who come to New Zealand to work, send money home to help their families. Their obligations are linked to the strong family ties that they have.

At places like the airport large groups of Pacific islanders gather to farewell relatives returning to the islands or welcome those arriving in NZ. It is easy to see why Pacific Islanders are not ashamed of showing their emotions. Crying openly certainly helps to release tension and to show love for one's relatives. Open expression of grief is part of the cultural practice of Polynesian culture.

## **LANGUAGE**

Pacific Islanders come from a society where everybody in the village or community knows everybody else. A spirit of aroha develops in this social environment and permeates it. Their language reflects this; it is personal and friendly and courteous on the appropriate occasions. The whole personality comes into play in an unreserved manner when involved in a conversation in the village or town. The emotions are generally expressed freely if you're angry, you're really angry and if something is funny, there is much laughter. However, despite this, there is an overriding respect for the individual and his needs, which is expressed in language, behavior and attitude.

Because of the intimacy of this type of society, facial and body expression as well as language, plays a big part in communication. There is no place for the solid countenance, which is associated not just with austerity but with friendliness. For example, there are many ways to say hello, some of which are used here, but not in such a widespread manner because of the nature of city society: (A) smiling (B) raising eyebrows (C) waving (D) making a friendly comment or asking a personal question (E) using a standard greeting (F) a handshake or slap on the shoulder or back (G) greeting a man or woman with a kiss.

The language these Pacific societies reflects a great respect for their kinsfolk and older folk and their clergy and leaders. Europeans are treated with the same high regard accorded their men of status, in the island, though it tends to level off in the city setting.

Polynesian Pacific languages share a common vowel pattern a,e,i,o,u with a varying number of consonants. It is important to master these basic vowel sounds as it will help considerably to pronounce Polynesian names correctly.

## **PRONUNCIATION OF PACIFIC ISLAND**

Correct pronunciation of a person's name is important. You would not want your name mispronounced all the time. Some people may get used to it but this is poor excuse for not doing your best. Those addressed feel relaxed when they hear their names pronounced properly. Close attention to this could well pave the way for good person to person relationships.

### **Methods:**

There are two methods of learning to pronounce names correctly and it is best to make use of both.

First Method: The first method is to ask the person to pronounce his name. Listen carefully, then repeat the name aloud and ask the person if that is correct. If it is not correct, repeat the process until you are saying the name correctly.

Second Method: The second method is, apply certain rules of pronunciation and work from the spelling.

## **Vowels:**

Vowel sounds are similar to those in correctly spoken Maori. Vowel length varies and this will generally need to be learnt from careful listening. (Sometimes this is marked by a macron – tola). The following represents an approximation of the vowel sounds)

A as in father  
E as in pet  
I as in pit  
O as in for  
U as in put

All vowels are sounded. Some combinations such as oe, oi, ae, ai, ao and au join closely together as diphthongs but the basic sound remains. Some of the differences are difficult for English speakers to detect.

## **Consonant Difficulties**

When 'g' occurs in a Pacific island this is pronounced as ng in "sing" in Cook Island, Tongan and sometimes in Samoan the spelling "ng" is used for this sound.

The apostrophe is a consonant known as a break or glottal stop. When this is used it creates a break or pause between two vowels (e.g Nukualofa). Other consonants can be pronounced as in English. (There are some minor differences for anyone seeking absolute perfection).

## **Stress**

Stress is an important and different form of English. The most common pattern is to stress the second to last syllable. It is best to listen carefully to the name being correctly pronounced and repeat it. Avoid overstressing any syllable.

## WORKING WITH PEOPLE WHERE ENGLISH IS THEIR SECOND LANGUAGE

<u>DO</u>	<u>DON'T</u>
<p>Elicit Information -to keep interest - to find out what already grasped</p>	<p>Ask Yes/No question Use abbreviation/jargon/slang without checking comprehension</p>
<p>Use wh-/How questions</p>	<p>Overload</p>
<p>Ask questions – pause – ask specific person</p>	<p>Ridicule/show individual up in front of group</p>
<p>Check back to test comprehension</p>	<p>Make “cultural” joke</p>
<p>Encourage questions/requests for clarification</p>	<p>Allow certain individuals to dominate the group</p>
<p>Question any mistakes made – why did you do that? To ascertain where the misunderstanding occurred.</p>	<p>Speak to quickly</p>
<p>Explain abbreviations used</p>	
<p>Demonstrate – more effective than lengthy explanation and use examples</p>	
<p>Summarize – at end of each teaching point</p>	
<p>Plan instruction to allow for questions</p>	
<p>Use group for correcting purposes – keep everyone involved</p>	
<p>Use pair/group work</p>	
<p>Give reassurance/encouragement</p>	
<p>Give practical technique/tips to demonstrate the point to combat nervousness</p>	
<p>Set aside enough time to follow up</p>	

## CULTURAL DIFFERENCE IN SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

	<b>Polynesian</b>	<b>Pakeha</b>
<b>Specefic cues</b>	<i>Convey meaning by body language and listen by watching</i>	<i>Convey meaning by voice and word and listen by attending to words</i>
Head tilt and/or eyebrow raise	Agreement	Questioning or surprise
Unresponsive looking ahead or down	Disagreement (verbal disagreement is rare)	Failure to understand
Hunched shoulders	I don't know	I don't care
Quick frowns	Puzzlement, please help	Disapproval
Sniff	Admit mistake apologise	Disdain
Hand down and in to chest	Come here (Samoan)	It doesn't matter (Maori and Pakeha)
Touching and hugging	Welcome, support, desire for friendship, liking, gratitude or apology	Close friendship only otherwise seen as excessive or hypocrisy
Standing up to greet	Sign of superior status	Sign of respect
Sitting down to greet	Sign of respect	Sign of superior status
Wandering eyes, looking away	Politeness	Boredom, evasion or guilt Undivided attention
Alternative and steady gaze	Opposition of conflict	An order
Using imperative ("do this")	Acceptable	Politeness
Request as a question	Uncertainty	"Yes" (I don't want it)
Double negative e.g. you don't want it, do you	"No" (I do want it)	Unresponsive or stupid. Creates awkwardness unless with intimates
Pauses and silences	Time to think being companionable and relaxed	

## CULTURE: VALUES, ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR

<b>TRADITIONAL</b>	<b>MODERN</b>
Emphasis on conformity	Emphasis on independence
Kin Reliant	Self Reliant
Group orientated	Self Oriented
Fatalistic	Belief in self ability to change
Extended family	Nuclear Family
Authoritarian	Permissiveness
Emphasis on Company	Emphasis on privacy
Relatively fixed status	Socially mobile
Socially dependant	Socially independent
Unused to ambiguity and abstract	Able to cope with ambiguity and abstract

**BODY LANGUAGE**  
**CULTURAL DIFFERENCE IN SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

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