MIHI WHAKATAU & WELCOME



WE'RE ALL IN DIFFERENT boats BUT WE'RE ON THE SAME moana

By the end of the day, I hope you leave inspired, with new ideas & connections

Taimi Allan M.C.

TAIAHA CLARKE
Ngāti Whātua Kaumatua

We're all in the same waka. We all have a role & every role is important.

As we gain experience, we move from the front to the back of the waka. We learn to read the water & guide the way.

DR ANDREW OLD
Deputy Director-General Ministry of Health

GOOD integration

+ Youth know where to go...

... and it's accessible

Experience it as a whole.

"I'm from the government & I'm here to help."

- No thank you

THE SYSTEM listens AND WALKS alongside YOUNG PEOPLE

NEW Mental Health Act

SUCCESS will not look like if it's been implemented properly. It'll be if people can access the services they need.

SURVEY COMING 2027

Te Hiringa Mahara
Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission

theMHS LEARNING NETWORK

HAUORA HINENGARO HUI TAUMATA
MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE 2026

#HauoraHinengaro2026 #TheMHS
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YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES FROM NATIONAL SURVEY DATA & LIVED EXPERIENCE ENGAGEMENT



PROFESSOR TIM SLADE — University of Sydney

3 AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL SURVEYS

Latest survey results



Highest for young people.

prevalence of mental disorders has gone up over time.

- ANXIETY
- DEPRESSION
- MOOD DISORDERS

8x MORE LIKELY to have agoraphobia

DOUBLING of co-morbidity



Experience of mental disorders has INCREASED in cases & severity.

Suicidal ideation in young men has gone up.

SERVICE USE HAS GONE UP! → but why?

Matilda Youth Advisory Board

LIVED EXPERIENCE PERSPECTIVE

Not one reason for rise in mental disorders

- family
- climate anxiety
- finances
- social media



NB. small sample size

1 FINANCIAL HARDSHIP





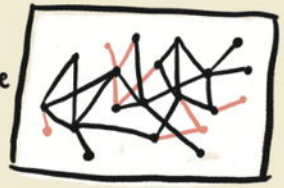
Cumulative effect if poor mental health + financial hardship

2 SOCIAL CONNECTION

MIND YOUR MATE

New initiative training young people how to talk to their friends about mental health.

MAPPING RELATIONSHIPS & seeing how mental health changes over time



3 SOCIAL MEDIA USE



measuring social media use a bit of a blunt instrument to measure mental health.

Found NO CHANGES between social media use & mental health.



Looking at the data.



NEW LEGISLATION for under 16s

study showed it had little impact on M.H.

A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD





Helps CONNECT people

SOCIAL MEDIA

Increase SOCIAL DISTRESS

Q+A



Why lower substance abuse?

- Different attitude amongst young people
- Less in-person interaction



How many young people are turning to social media BECAUSE of poor M.H.



Needs its own thing



Gambling not covered in this survey but important.



Not always the same.

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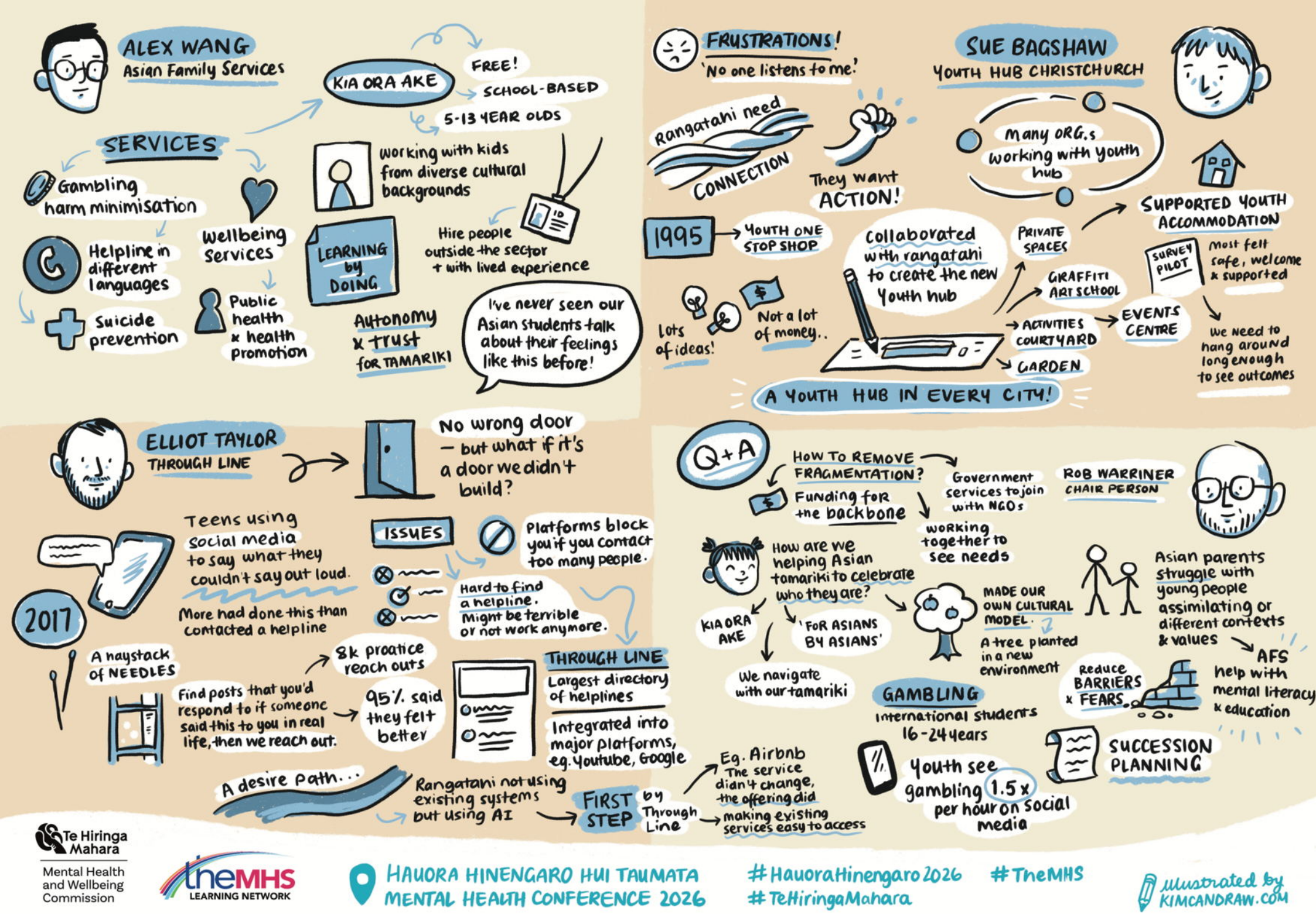

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INNOVATION in YOUTH-FOCUSED service delivery





NZ RUGBY



SPORTS CULTURE can make it harder to talk

Some don't have a GP BUT they go to their local rugby club.

150,000 REGISTRATIONS that we can reach out to.

we meet them where they are

Connect with local services



IS IT OK FOR ALL BLACKS TO CRY?

YES!

Show videos of players talking about their mental health.

Getting calls now after a workshop to show attitudes are shifting.

230 SCHOOL WORKSHOPS

4,469 participants

122 CLUBS

3,899 participants

CREATING SAFE, CONNECTED SCHOOL COMMUNITIES



Dr Linda Bowden

This research is not mine alone.

We use the term: SELF HARM because it reflects that motivations change in each episode

CREATING GUIDELINES for SCHOOLS.



co-designed Guidelines with STUDENTS and WHĀNAU



PUBLISHED PAPER!

'Systematic review of Best Practice Guidance for Schools to respond to Self-harm.'



staying in school REDUCES self-harm.



Find the magic that works with young people!

DON'T OFFER WHAT WORKS FOR ADULTS









TE AWA ORA

Grounded in te ao Māori

10 week course

Rangatahi CONNECT with their CULTURE

FINDING YOURSELF AGAIN

Learning about being whānau and rangatahi again

Learning about different uses of rākau

Beaches, BBQs, games, community, fun, friends

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INNOVATION IN YOUTH-FOCUSED SERVICE DELIVERY CONTINUED

REIMAGINING THE VA

The VA is CHANGING → online spaces

How do we ENTER SPACES where young people already are?

How do we help young people NAVIGATE these new spaces?

Online & in gaming

Leilani Clarke

The VA means ... the SPACE

- SCHOOL
- FAMILY
- COMMUNITIES
- CHURCH

WHAT ARE YOUNG PASIFIKA TELLING US? → ASB POLYFEST

AI somewhere a lot are turning to for mental wellbeing

AUNTY DEE

Getting a facelift with AI

An algorithm for the Village, by the Village

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE VS ANCESTRAL INTELLIGENCE

A living intelligence carried through the generations. → THE VA

LE VA's 3 C MODEL

1. Culturally relevant
2. Clinically sound
3. Community led

Using innovation to Strengthen the Va.

YOUTH PANEL RESPONSE

Athalia, Narnea, Celine, Jackie, Amber

THE IMPORTANCE OF Self-awareness

You came into this work for a reason

Brick by brick → NO EGOS!

Hearing a lot of data, a lot of trauma, a lot of disorders.

Do rangatahi have disorders? or are they suffering the consequences of what's happened to them?

Go to where the youth are!

- SCHOOLS
- SPORTS
- WHĀNAU

Looking at all the aspects of a young person's life

TRAUMA can be TABOO

We are products of our ENVIRONMENTS

- EDUCATE & AWHI our whānau
- what happens when they go home?

PERFECT SCHOOL

- FREE!
- Better schoollunches
- Teachers who understand the curriculum → more FUNDING
- Support teacher aides

power imbalance

CO-DESIGN

can become a consultation, a tick of approval

RAISE THE BAR!

- treat rangatahi with respect
- show them how they should be treated

FILL YOUR CUP → Look after yourself so you can help rangatahi

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So WHAT? NOW WHAT?

— YOUTH PANEL —



1. WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE?

Change STARTS within us and in our homes

You need to start small



2. HOW CAN WE IMPROVE CROSS AGENCY TRANSPARENCY?

Avoid CONSULTATION FATIGUE



3. HOW ARE YOU IMPLEMENTING TE TIRITI?

'I uphold Te Tiriti by being Māori x speaking my reo'

How do you show up for your people?

Remember the goodness you bring to the mahi

4. HOW CAN YOUTH BE MEANINGFULLY INVOLVED?



whose voices are being heard?

When are they involved?

Continue the conversation

Feedback loops necessary

TRUE SUPPORT FOR RANGATAHI



listen + empathy

Don't put them into a Box.



Young people's voices aren't just HEARD but UNDERSTOOD.



5. HOW TO HELP WITH HIGH RISK YOUTH?

They stood with me x walked alongside me

Red DOOR in Wellington



The people who think they're "too hard".

When writing patient notes, write them as if you'll show it to them.



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BUILDING RESILIENCE

- David Letele -



WELCOME TO THE STAGE, THE BROWN BUTTABEAN!

It's POSSIBLE!



Don't let where you start in life determine where you end up.

But what if you don't have a rich uncle?

Rich uncle sent me to Aus.



Went BROKE



NZ MUSCLE

Death threats

HOME ADDRESS POSTED

POOR MENTAL HEALTH

AS A YOUNG MAN, I WAS So angry!



I took a KNIFE to myself.

"It's their choice."

We're all born with different starting points



What CHOICES does she have?

It's up to people like us to help.

Greatness THROUGH STRUGGLE



SON of MONGREL MOB AUCKLAND chapter

IN THE HOSPITAL, I SAID ALL THE RIGHT THINGS & GOT OUT —



What happens when you don't have people there to support you?



Swallowing rats to make stuff happen.



What happens to the messages I don't receive, the people who don't have someone to advocate for them?

ASK AGAIN

Don't ask just once

It takes longer to get to the TRUTH.

TIPS

1. JUST START!
2. STAY CONSISTENT
3. SURROUND YOURSELF WITH POSITIVE PEOPLE
4. HAVE A VERY STRONG WHY & A PURPOSE

The GOOD LIFE belongs to all of us

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