

KIA Ū KIA KAHA

From Principles to Practice
The Case for Continuing Our Practice Transformation

PRACTICE APPROACH SURVEY

Oranga Tamariki has taken bold steps in transforming practice over the past few years, integrating Te Ao Māori principles into a mana-enhancing approach. This report showcases feedback from kaimahi that calls for continued commitment to ensure an inclusive, restorative future for tamariki and whānau—urging us to continue to implement this new Practice Approach.

SUMMARY

The Practice Approach Survey at Oranga Tamariki reveals positive impacts of integrating Te Ao Māori principles into a mana-enhancing approach for working with tamariki and whānau.

Key findings

- Increased practitioner engagement and improved understanding of holistic support methods
- Stronger alignment with Māori values
- Positive reception from kaimahi, with the majority finding the trial delivery helpful
- Encouragement of a more culturally aligned approach to working with tamariki, children, whānau and family.
- Improved understanding and implementation of new tools like Te Puna Oranga

Challenges

Despite overall positive reception, some challenges remain:

- Practical implementation difficulties
- Alignment issues with existing organisational processes and workloads
- Need for ongoing support and training

Recommendations

The report strongly recommends:

- Sustaining and expanding the mana-enhancing approach
- Providing ongoing support to practitioners
- Addressing remaining challenges to secure long-term success

The shift in our practice we are seeking to make

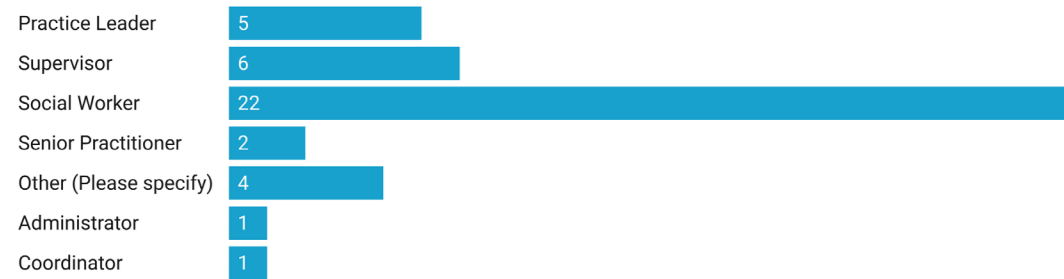
From	To
Privileging Tauwi beliefs, values and knowledge (ongoing colonisation)	Preferencing Te Ao Māori beliefs, values and knowledge
Te Ao Māori knowledge is an 'add on' to mainstream ways of working	Tauwi bodies of knowledge are included when there is evidence of benefits for tamariki Māori
Child-centric social work practice; dominated by risk	Tamariki are understood in context of whakapapa with oranga as the frame
Managerial practice (e.g. unchallenged biases) driving practice and decision making	Rights- and mana-enhancing based approaches driving practice and decision making
Muted social work voice	Strong social work reasoning and advocacy
Working largely in isolation from our iwi, Māori, and community partners	Working with iwi, Māori and community partners in ways that promote relational, inclusive and restorative outcomes for tamariki, children, whānau and families

From where
to where

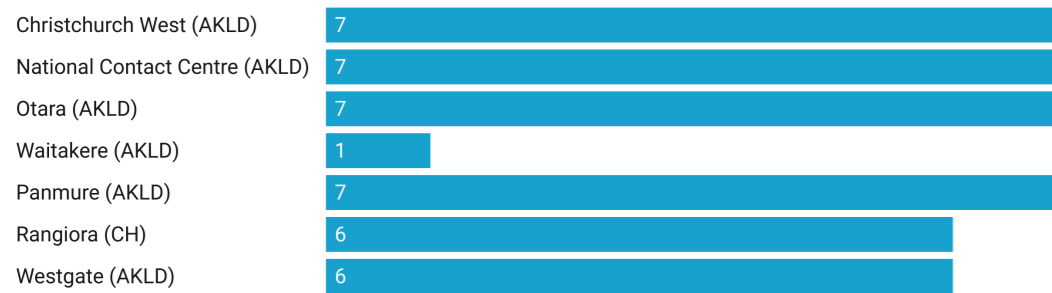
“ *The shift in practice will result in a lift in practice that we can gift back to our families and communities - tomorrow is hopeful!* ”



Q1 - What is your role?



Q2 - What is your work location?



Q3 - Were you able to join onsite coaching?



Q4 - How helpful was the trial delivery including onsite coaching



“ Many people who’ve been in the Ministry for a long time are absolutely wedded to CYRAS and how it dictates practice. They are very risk averse and practice (and dictate the practice of others) from a place of “have to be careful, if it’s not done this specific CYRAS way, you’re liable”.

Q5 - Can you tell us why the trial delivery has or hasn't been helpful, and provide suggestions for improvement?

--POSITIVE ASPECTS--

On-site Support: The presence of subject matter experts like Tony, Bronwyn, and others on-site was highly valued. Their ability to translate concepts, answer questions, and model the practice approach in day-to-day work significantly enhanced understanding and implementation.

Pace and Flexibility: Many respondents appreciated the ability to learn at their own pace and the flexibility in implementing the tools. This allowed for better integration of the learning and encouraged creativity in applying the approach.

Cultural Alignment: Several participants found that the Practice Approach aligned well with their own values and beliefs, particularly in terms of working holistically with whānau and incorporating Te Ao Māori worldviews.

Group Work and Discussions: The opportunity for group work, case studies, and discussions with peers was highlighted as particularly helpful in understanding and applying the new approach.

--CHALLENGES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT--

Consistency and Structure: Some respondents noted inconsistencies in delivery and suggested more regular or structured training sessions, such as block training instead of weekly hour-long sessions.

Workload and Time Constraints: A significant barrier to full engagement with the trial was the heavy workload and time constraints faced by staff. Some suggested prioritising the training by making it compulsory or conducting it off-site to minimise distractions.

Leadership and Implementation: The success of implementation varied depending on the leadership team’s approach and personal biases. Some respondents noted that without specific instructions, the implementation of learning cycles was inconsistent across teams.

Practical Application: There was a desire for more practical scenarios and examples, particularly for frontline staff, to better understand how the Practice Approach changes their work with families.

Documentation and Tools: While the new tools were generally well-received, some found the frequent changes in documents and templates confusing. There was also a need for more guidance on how to effectively use the new assessment tools in practice.

Q6 Have you found the Practice Approach useful?



Q7 - What have or haven't you found useful, and please explain why?

--USEFUL ASPECTS--

Holistic and Culturally Aligned Approach: Many respondents appreciated the holistic nature of the approach, incorporating Te Ao Māori concepts. The framework was seen as mana-enhancing for tamariki and whānau.

Improved Assessment and Engagement: Te Puna Oranga was highlighted as an excellent tool for organising thoughts around assessment and engagement. The approach helped in asking better questions and widening the frame of understanding.

Representation of Social Work Practice: Many felt the approach accurately represented their preferred way of practicing. It gave permission for social workers to bring their authentic selves to work.

Practical Tools and Framework: The Practice Framework was noted as particularly helpful in grounding the work and providing purpose. Tools like "Organising My Practice" received positive feedback.

--CHALLENGES AND LESS USEFUL ASPECTS--

Implementation Difficulties: Some found the framework difficult to memorise and suggested aligning it with existing models like whare tapa wha. Inconsistencies with other processes and legislative requirements were noted, particularly regarding needs assessments for tamariki in care.

Workload and Time Constraints: The approach was seen as time-consuming, adding to already heavy workloads. Some felt it created more work for overworked social workers.

Organisational Alignment: There was a perceived disconnect between the Practice Approach and organizational focus on KPIs and performance metrics.

Training and Leadership: Some site leaders felt unprepared to lead the approach, having received the same training as kaimahi.

Q8 How would you rate your understanding of the new Practice Approach?

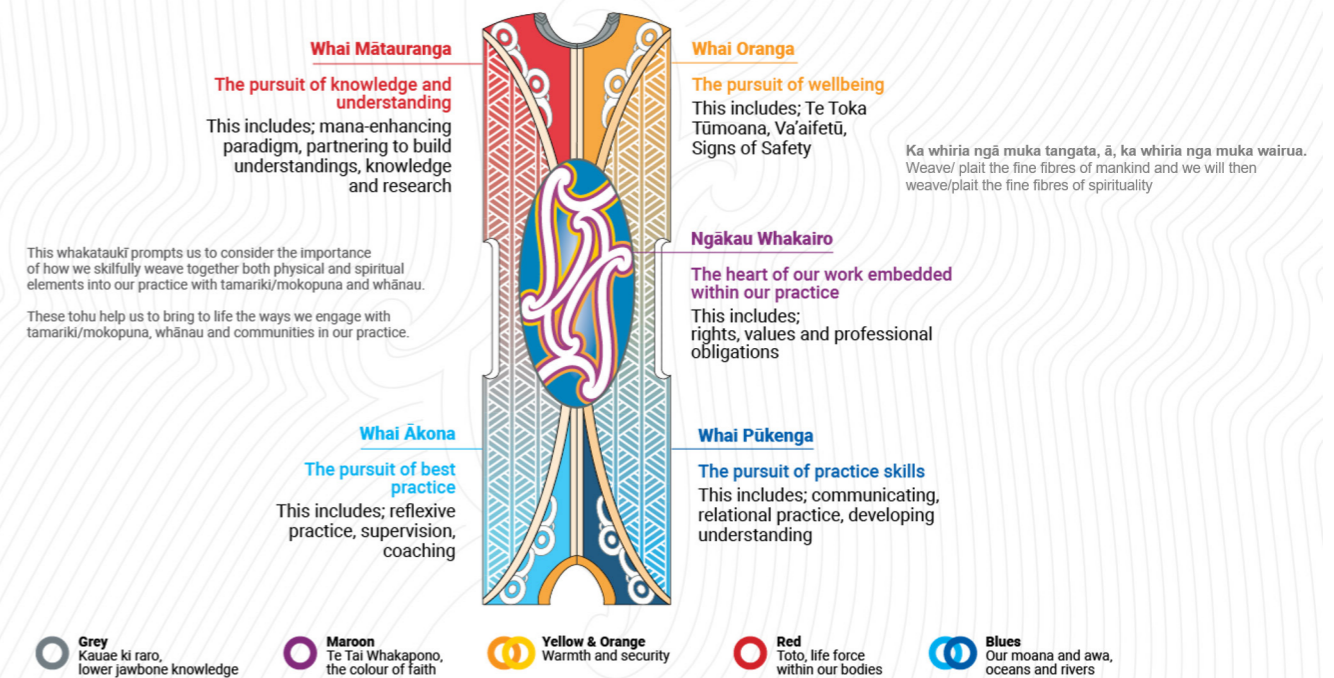


I have to share that there is a huge rub with the way this practice approach discusses how we work and how the CE, DCE are wanting us to work which is moving towards transactional to get KPI's and being more performance driven. I understand that high performing teams can do both if led and supported to be that way - [but] the organisation does not function in this way.



A framework to organise our practice

This Framework can help us make sense of and organise our practice within the context of our role in statutory Child Protection and Youth Justice in Aotearoa.

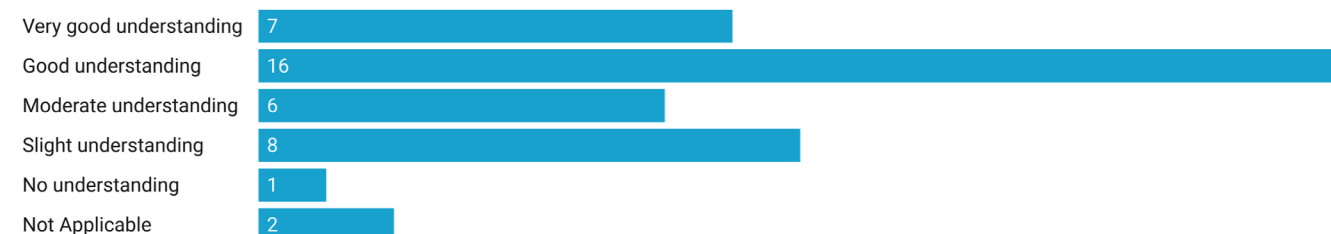


Q9 How would you rate your understanding of the different Practice Approach components?

Q9_1 Practice Framework?



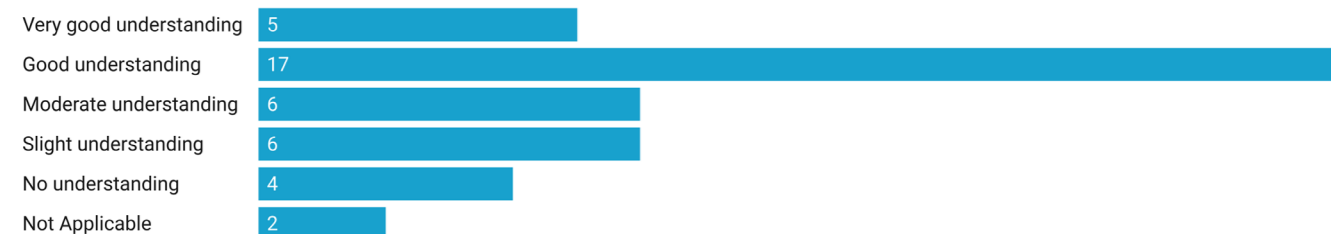
Q9_2 Te Toka Tūmoana Practice



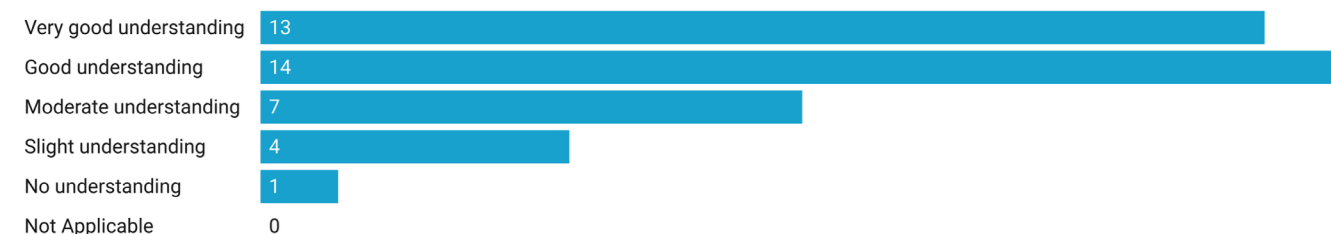
Q9_3 Va'aifetū Practice Model



Q9_4 Tangata Whenua and Bicultural Supervision Model



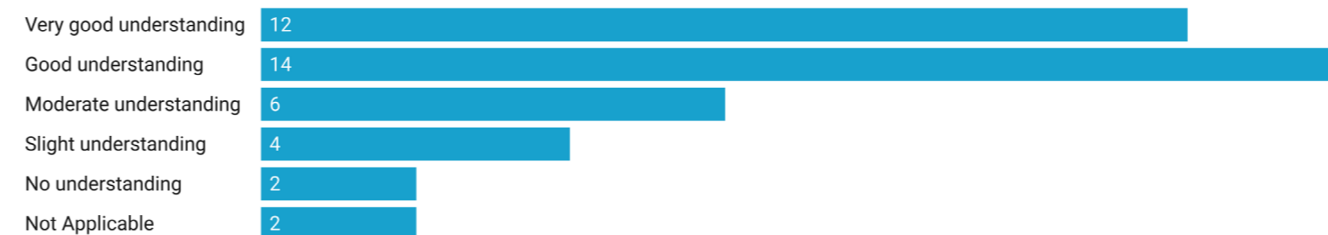
Q9_5 Te Puna Oranga



Q9_6 Tiaki Oranga Screen



Q9_7 Organising My Practice template



Q9_8 Assessment Report



“ Not enough time, too many interruptions to learning due to workload. ”



Working together to support a shift in our practice



Q10 How much has your understanding of the new Practice Approach components improved over the course of the trial delivery?

Q10_1 Practice Framework



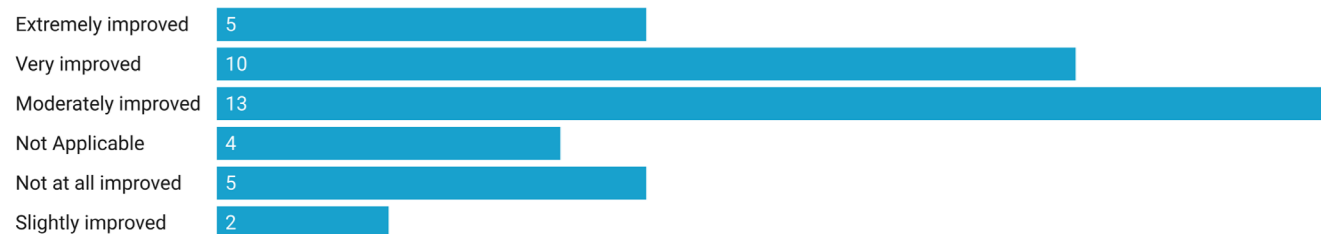
Q10_2 Te Toka Tūmoana Practice



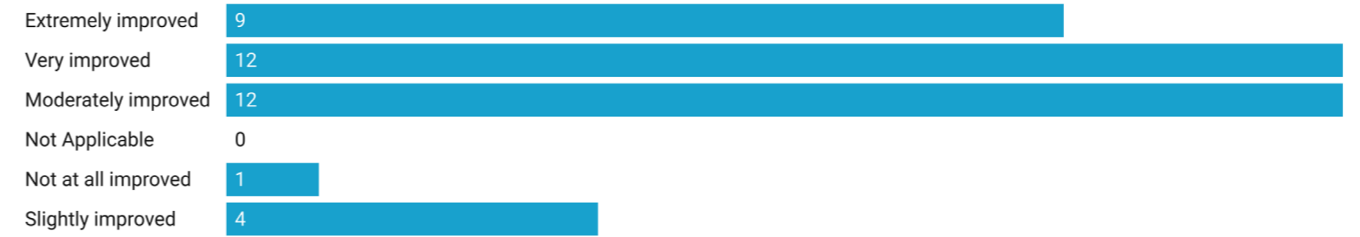
Q10_3 Va'aifetū Practice Model



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Q10_5 Te Puna Oranga



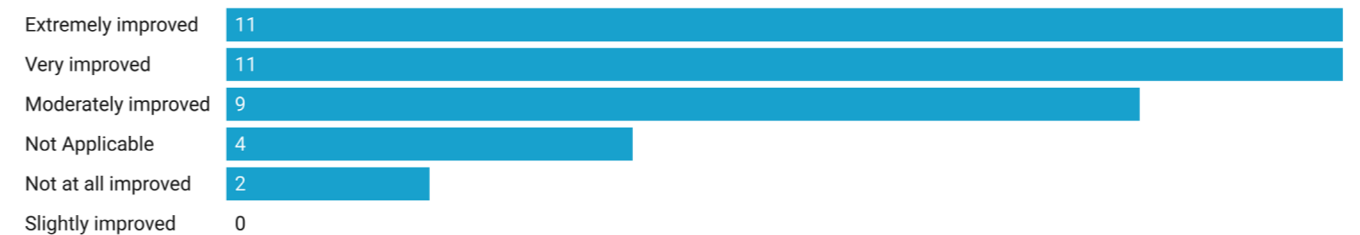
Q10_6 Tiaki Oranga Screen



Q10_7 Organising My Practice template



Q10_8 Assessment Report



“

I have found the Practice Approach Trial, a better way to work with people. It's holistic, it incorporates Te Ao Māori concepts, it's pragmatic to[o], this practice approach works for all people. I believe in it.

”

Q11 - How confident overall are you feeling about working with the Practice Approach?



Q12 - Given your confidence rating above, why do you feel this way?

--POSITIVE FACTORS--

Embedded practice: Those who had been using the approach for longer, especially at trial sites, reported higher confidence due to regular use.

Alignment with values: Many found the approach resonated with their personal values and preferred way of practicing.

Holistic and culturally responsive: The approach was seen as providing a more comprehensive, culturally appropriate framework for working with whānau.

Ongoing support: Regular training, practice forums, and on-site support contributed to increased confidence.

--AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT--

Time constraints: Heavy workloads and interruptions limited time for learning and practice.

Complexity: Some found aspects of the approach complex, requiring more time to fully understand and apply.

Need for more practice: Many felt their confidence would increase with more opportunities to use the tools regularly.

Role-specific challenges: Some roles (e.g., administrators) found less direct application in their daily work.

--OVERALL SENTIMENT--

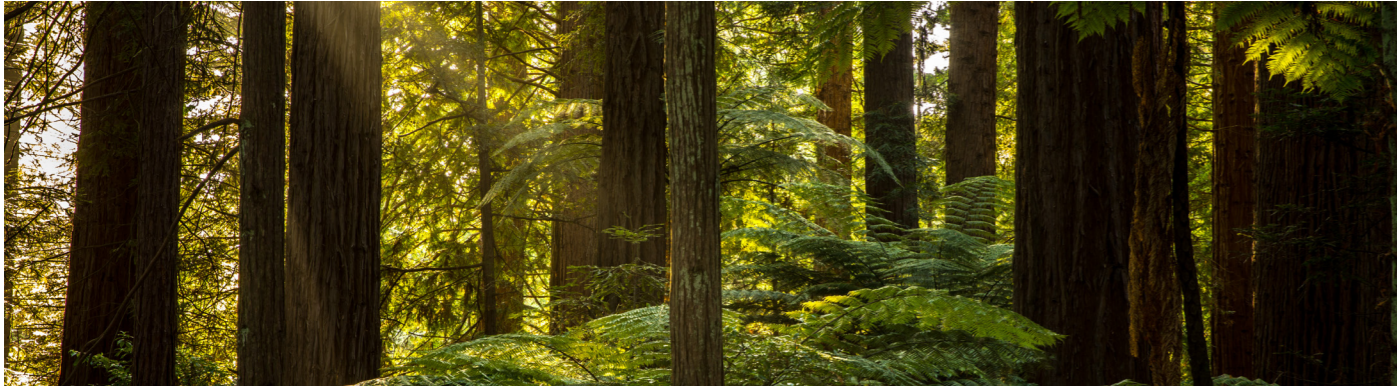
Most respondents viewed the Practice Approach positively, seeing it as valuable for improving their work with whānau. However, they also recognised it as an ongoing learning process, with many expressing a commitment to continued growth and improvement in applying the approach.



“ *I am still [on] a journey about working/ understanding with the Practice Approach.* ”

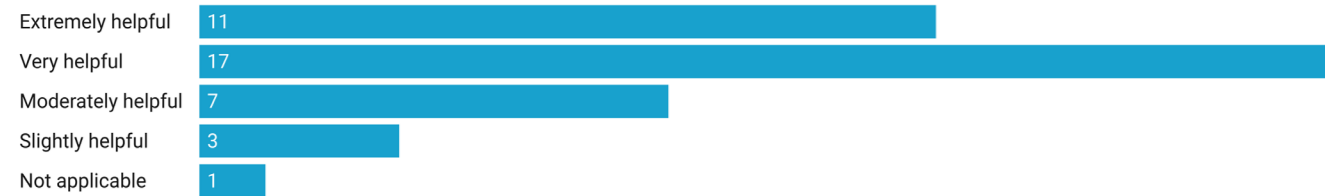
Q13 - Have you been able to put your Practice Approach learning into everyday use?



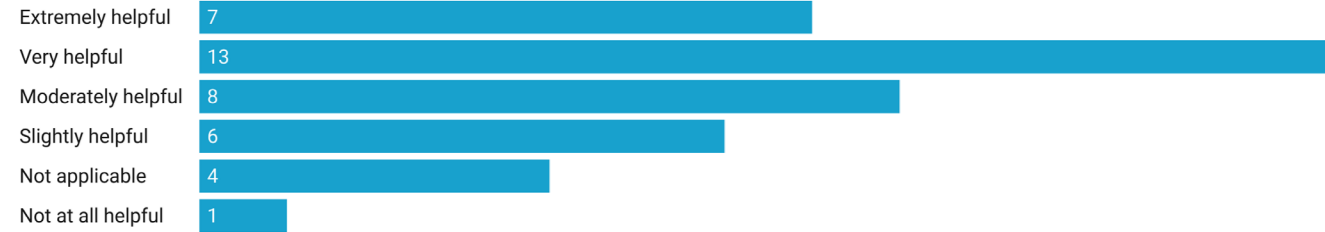


Q14 - How helpful have you found the new Practice Approach components for everyday use?

Q14_1 Practice Framework



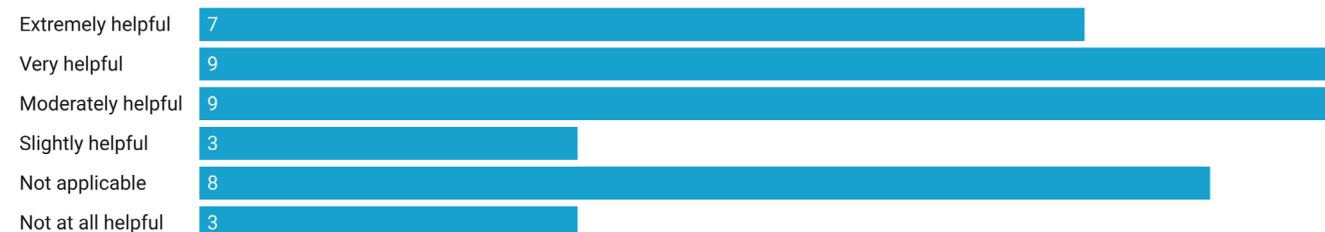
Q14_2 Te Toka Tūmoana



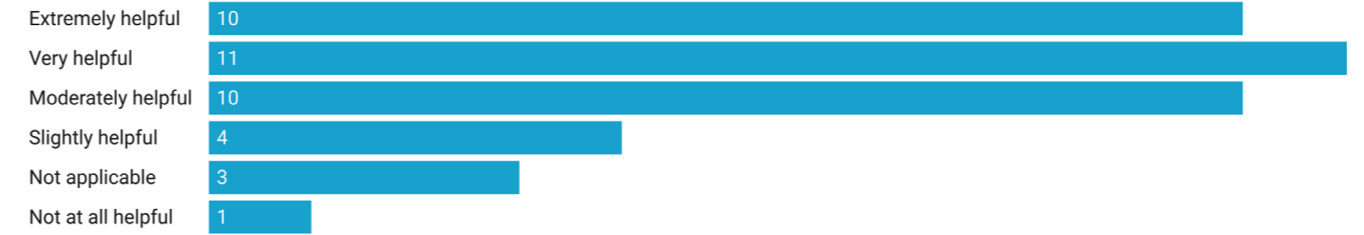
Q14_3 Va'aifetū Practice Model



Q14_4 Tangata Whenua and Bicultural Supervision



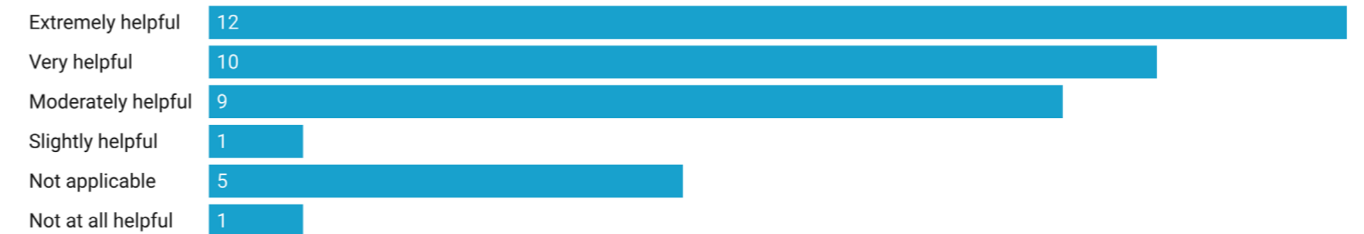
Q14_5 Te Puna Oranga



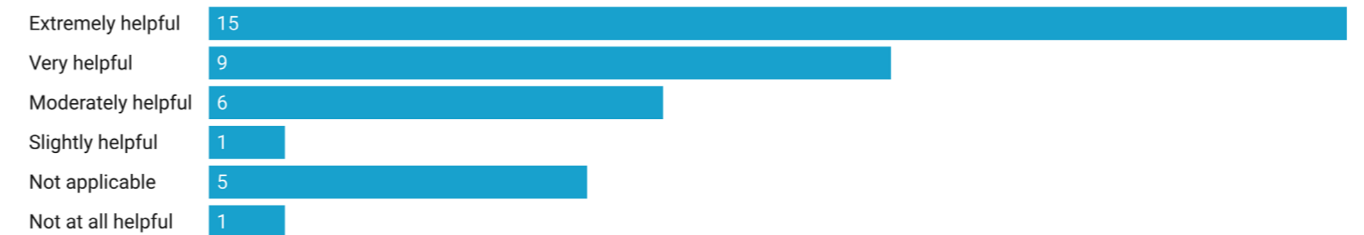
Q14_6 Tiaki Oranga



Q14_7 Organising My Practice



Q14_8 Assesment Report



There [is] lots of information that we have been provided with and we need time to digest and put the learnings into actions.



Q15 - What has or hasn't helped you put your Practice Approach learning and the components into everyday use?

--HELPFUL ASPECTS--

Practical application of tools: Regular use of tools like Tiaki Oranga and the Assessment Report in daily work has been beneficial.

On-site support: Having access to knowledgeable colleagues, supervisors, and practice leaders for questions and guidance.

Group learning and discussions: Sharing experiences and discussing with peers has enhanced understanding.

Cultural alignment: The approach aligns well with cultural values and knowledge, particularly for Māori practitioners.

Holistic framework: The Practice Framework and "Organising My Practice" are seen as versatile and applicable to all aspects of work.

Leadership support: Sites with supportive leadership have found implementation easier.

--CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS--

Time constraints: Heavy caseloads and time pressures make it difficult to fully engage with new practices.

Inconsistent application: Some noted differences in approach between practitioners and supervisors, particularly in time-sensitive situations.

Complexity: Some components (e.g., Va'aifetu models) require more time and practice to fully understand and implement.

System limitations: Existing nationwide systems and KPI focus sometimes conflict with the new approach.

Incomplete learning: Some respondents haven't yet learned about all components (e.g., supervision model, Va'aifetu).

Lack of ongoing support: Some mentioned a need for continued coaching after initial training.

Information overload: The amount of new information can be overwhelming, requiring time to digest and implement.

Overall, while many find the Practice Approach beneficial and aligned with good social work practice, successful implementation requires time, ongoing support, and a supportive organizational culture.



Q16 - We would like to know about the Practice Approach making a fundamental practice shift and whether you have any further comments or thoughts. Overall, how do you think the Practice Approach will improve social work practice, supervision, youth work, and other support functions?

--PERCEIVED BENEFITS--

Enhanced relationships with families (whānau) and communities
Improved cultural competence and integration of Māori concepts
Better articulation of social work assessments and views
More holistic and respectful approach to working with clients

--CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS--

Implementation may be slow and requires patience
Need for additional training, especially in Te Reo Māori
Potential conflict between the new approach and existing key performance indicators
Concerns about supervisor knowledge and ability to support the new approach
Resource constraints and workload issues may hinder full adoption

--SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT--

Dedicated practice coaches at each site
Allowing sufficient time for social workers to use the new tools
Consistent implementation across sites and regions
Clear organizational direction and purpose for the Practice Approach

--OVERALL IMPACT--

Many respondents believe the Practice Approach will lead to more cohesive, consistent, and quality social work practice, fostering deeper thinking and reflection in their work with clients.

“

I'm new to OT but I was a long time carer prior to being employed. As a carer, this practice approach was not utilised with me and I felt my needs were failed miserably with the old CYFS approach. I am an advocate for this approach 100%!

”

Q17 - Do you have any final comments or thoughts?

--OVERALL RECEPTION--

The Practice Approach is generally viewed positively, with many respondents believing it will improve social work practice, supervision, and support functions.

--PERCEIVED BENEFITS--

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Dedicated practice coaches at each site
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--OVERALL IMPACT--

Many respondents believe the Practice Approach will lead to more cohesive, consistent, and quality social work practice, fostering deeper thinking and reflection in their work with clients. However, some express concerns about the disconnect between the new approach and recent government policies, particularly regarding Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi) and its place in practice.

