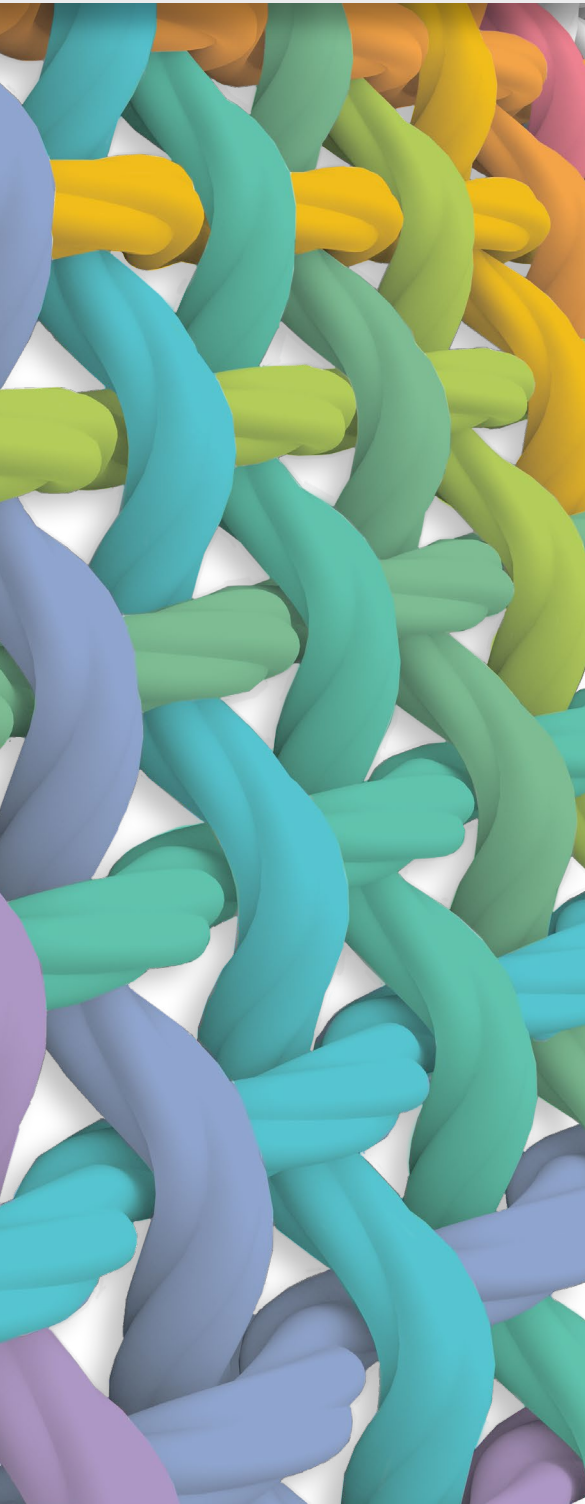




SUMMARY RAINBOW BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES



This document is a summary of the Rainbow Best Practice Guidelines

Working with Rainbow Communities, which can be found at rvpn.nz/guidelines/. We recommend that practitioners download the full document to use as a reference. The full document also contains a glossary of Rainbow and violence prevention terms used in this document.

How to use this document

This summary document is meant to act alongside the full guidelines as a quick reference document to assist in providing practical steps for violence prevention practitioners working with Rainbow communities through intersectional practice, working in partnership based on the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The full document breaks down the systemic causes of violence with a power analysis to expand and deepen our understanding as practitioners of the impacts of systemic forms of disadvantage as a risk factor for violence. Both are intended as living documents and may be changed and updated over time.

Each summary section includes a short breakdown of structural violence faced by the community, as well as practice principles for working with that community. Section 2. General Rainbow Best Practice contains key information for working with all Rainbow clients / communities. Sections 3–12 contain more targeted information and advice for working with specific Rainbow communities.

While these guidelines are primarily aimed at frontline workers, it is important for managers, policy makers and anyone in a position of leadership to be familiar with Rainbow best practice. Front line practitioners can only succeed in implementing Rainbow best practice if they are properly supported by managers and the overall structure and culture of their workplaces. This includes making time within paid working hours to upskill in Rainbow competence, providing resources and training, and deliberately cultivating a culture of inclusivity, safety and learning.

A note on language — Rainbow / Takatāpui

The term 'Rainbow' refers to all variations of sex, gender and/or sexuality that exist beyond normative constructions of endosex, cisgender, and heterosexuality (i.e., endo/cis/hetero-normativities). Rainbow people include those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender (among other Western labels), Māori takatāpui (including whakawāhine, tangata ira tāne, and tāhine), Pacific Rainbow + identities, and other non-Western identities, such as bakla, two spirit, hijra, 同志 (tongzhi), sistergirls and brotherboys, and more. It is important to appreciate that the very notion of clear divisions between sex, gender, and sexuality, rooted in biological essentialism, are Western (colonial) ideas and that many of these ways of knowing and being oneself cannot be understood through a Western lens. While many may not identify as 'Rainbow', this term is used in this document because of its flexible interpretation, which does not inherently reinscribe Western categories of interpretation.

Takatāpui is a term with a complex history, which has provoked both strength and tension for gender, sex, and sexuality-diverse Māori. Unlike Western understandings of gender, sex, and sexuality, which are often grounded in essentialising narratives that construe these characteristics as inherent and immutable, Māori identities are inherently political, fluid, and contingent, resisting notions of reducible 'authenticity'.

General Rainbow Best Practice

In Aotearoa New Zealand, “Rainbow” is used to describe a diverse group of people who identify with non-heteronormative sexual orientations, genders, or have variation of sex characteristics. This includes people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual (LGBTQIA+) and people whose ways of being are culturally specific and cannot be fully understood through a Western lens — such as Takatāpui people.

Structural violence

- Discrimination towards Rainbow people in Aotearoa New Zealand, which has become entrenched into the structure of our society.
- This includes social, legal, medical, economic and political systems.
- Structural violence/ discrimination was introduced to Aotearoa New Zealand through colonisation. Because of this, Rainbow issues are Te Tiriti issues.

Practice principles

- Acknowledge the existence of Rainbow people and their experiences of violence. Listen to and believe Rainbow people, including their relationships, gender, sex and sexuality and their disclosures of violence.
- Use reflective language, be tika and pono. Practise professional humility if you come across language or concepts that are new to you.
- Engage in professional development first, through readings, competency training and community-led resources. Respect the expertise and lived experience of Rainbow people, and value and remunerate it appropriately.
- Be Rainbow community-led in your professional practice. Look for information from the communities you are learning about, engage in consultation, and amplify Rainbow voices within violence prevention work.
- Being Rainbow trauma-informed means understanding that Rainbow people are subject to structural and institutional forms of violence that enable interpersonal violence. Being trauma-informed with Rainbow people means understanding structural violence against Rainbow people.

Attraction and Sexuality

This section includes people who experience exclusively same-gender attraction, people who are bi+, and people who are asexual, aromantic, hypersexual and people who experience non-heteronormative attraction. We use queer to capture all of these forms of sexual and attraction diversity in this section. However, it is important to note that not everyone identifies with this word.

Structural violence

- Queer people in Aotearoa New Zealand face challenges due to heteronormative social structures and norms that disregard and erase their experiences of sex, relationships, and violence.
- Sex negativity is deeply rooted in Aotearoa New Zealand society through colonisation. It is the belief that non-normative sex is disgusting, wrong, and dangerous and fuels queerphobic actions and beliefs within individuals, families, education, and institutions throughout Aotearoa.
- Queer experiences of violence are invisibilised by gender essentialism and gendered stereotypes about violence.
- Gender essentialism is an ongoing impact of colonisation and continues to enable structural violence against takatāpui and all queer people in Aotearoa.

Practice principles

- Be sensitive to the fact that queer people may have had bad experiences with institutions and helping professionals, and practice trauma-informed care.
- Understand that systems in Aotearoa New Zealand, such as justice and healthcare, have histories of violence towards queer communities.
- Be familiar with what abuse towards queer people looks like and work to make it more visible in violence prevention in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Engage in professional development and reflective practice to unpack queerphobia, stereotypes, and sex negativity that may impact your professional practice with queer clients.
- When practising reflective language with queer people, be aware of slurs. Be comfortable checking in with queer people about the words that they prefer.

Transgender – including non-binary

This section is dedicated to people who are transgender or non-binary. Transgender people have a gender that differs from the sex assigned to them at birth. Non-binary is an umbrella category for people whose gender does not fit neatly within the binary of man or woman. Transgender people may have any sexual orientation.

Structural violence

- Cisnormativity, transphobia and transmisogyny are forms of prejudice that are often entrenched into the worldviews and practices of individuals and institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Transgender people face barriers to getting support for violence. Many forms of violence towards transgender people are invisibilised by social norms.
- Transgender people face ongoing forms of structural and interpersonal violence in medical settings. This includes pathologisation, sexual assault and harassment that is motivated by curiosity.
- Transgender people also experience structural violence through the justice system and social services, some of which are highly gendered and gender essentialist.

Practice principles

- Be client-led when discussing intimate and personal details. Be aware of intrusive curiosity, such as curiosity sexual harassment and engage in good consent practices when discussing intimate or personal details with trans people.
- Understand that trans and non-binary people experience violence in medical care settings.
- Be aware that privacy may be a safety issue for trans people.
- Understand and be able to speak about gender essentialism and gender stereotypes as drivers of violence and discrimination towards trans people.
- Understand that there are specific forms of abuse that transgender people experience and incorporate these into violence prevention work.

Intersex

Intersex is an umbrella term used to describe a range of natural variations in the human body — specifically, a person's innate Variations in Sex Characteristics (VSC). Sex characteristics can include everything from hormones, chromosomes, and internal and external anatomy. When someone has an innate variation of sex characteristics, this means that there are atypical traits present at birth or that naturally develop through life.¹

Structural violence

- Structural violence against intersex people is rooted in endosexism, binary thinking, and gender essentialism, introduced to Aotearoa New Zealand, through colonisation.
- These harmful ideologies underpin the non-consensual and unnecessary medical interventions performed on intersex individuals aimed at conforming their sex characteristics to societal norms.
- Intersex people face multiple forms of structural violence, stigma, limited access to affirming support networks, erasure of their experiences, and inadequate legal recognition of their human rights.

Practice principles

- Understand that intersex/VSC is normal and natural. Be community-led in developing your professional understandings of intersex people. Develop your professional understanding of intersex/VSC enough to be able to comfortably answer the question, 'What is intersex?'
- Understand that intersex people may have experienced violence or abuse in medical care settings, including surgeries that were performed on them as children or babies or throughout their lifetime.
- Be client-led when discussing intersex/VSC — understand that many people are very private about their VSC and that people view being intersex or having VSC in many different ways.
- Understand that not all intersex people/people with VSC identify with or as part of Rainbow communities.

Rainbow Māori

Takatāpui (Rainbow) and irawhiti (transgender) Māori may or may not identify with Western definitions and words associated with Rainbow identities.

Rainbow Māori may experience gender, sex, and orientation in ways that incorporate cultural traditions or are culturally specific.

Structural violence

- Rainbow Māori experience the minority stress of living with colonisation, white supremacy and navigating the prejudices against the Rainbow community.
- Many Māori also experience cultural grief around Māori understandings of gender and sexualities being undermined by colonisation, such as Takatāpuitanga.

Practice principles

- Practice partnership and cultural safety.
- Understand violence through mātauranga Māori and be able to apply Māori concepts in violence prevention work.
- Develop your understanding of Māori concepts such as Takatāpui.
- Be client and community-led when discussing cultural understandings of gender, sex, sexuality and violence. Understand that gender, sex and sexuality are conceptualised and experienced differently in every culture.
- Understand Māori models of justice and whānau-centred practice.

Rainbow Pasifika

Rainbow Pasifika people may identify with culturally specific terms and may or may not consider themselves a part of the Rainbow community. They incorporate their cultural traditions and heritages alongside their Rainbow identities.

Structural violence

- Rainbow Pasifika people may experience minority stressors such as living with colonisation, white supremacy, and migrant stress, as well as navigating the prejudices against Rainbow communities.
- Some Rainbow Pasifika people also experience cultural grief around indigenous understandings of gender and sexualities being undermined by colonisation.

Practice principles

- Practise cultural safety and humility. Understand that gender/sex and sexuality are conceptualised and experienced differently in every culture. Be client-led and ask people to speak to their own experiences when working with Rainbow Pasifika people.
- Be familiar with Pasifika understandings of gender and sexuality, such as MVPFAFF+.
- Understand spiritual and religious trauma and how this may show up in Rainbow Pasifika people. Be client-led when talking about this, and do not assume that every Rainbow Pasifika person has experienced religious or spiritual abuse.
- Understand what is meant by ongoing colonisation and how to avoid it in your practice.

Ethnic and Migrant

This section covers the experiences of Rainbow migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who identify their ethnicity as African, Asian, Continental European, Latin-American and Middle Eastern. Rainbow ethnic and migrant communities are culturally and socioeconomically diverse and represent a diversity in migration pathways into Aotearoa New Zealand.

Structural violence

- Rainbow migrant and ethnic communities in Aotearoa face various structural forms of violence rooted in the intersectionality of their identities. Colonisation and navigating systems based on Western gender essentialism impacts the lives of Rainbow ethnic and migrant people in Aotearoa.
- Ethnic Rainbow people experience minority stress resulting from the impacts of colonisation, white supremacy, and border imperialism.
- Migrants, on the other hand, face unique challenges associated with migrant stress, including adjusting to unfamiliar social norms, navigating complex immigration processes, and experiencing disconnection from their families, communities, and wider society.
- Both groups encounter xenophobia and must navigate prejudices within mainstream spaces as well as within Rainbow communities themselves.

Practice principles

- Practise cultural safety and cultural humility.
- Be client led in understandings of sex, sexuality and gender.
- Be mindful of safety issues when making referrals and recommendations. Understand that people may not always prefer practitioners from their own ethnic or migrant communities, as this may be a safety/privacy issue.
- Understand religious and spiritual abuse towards Rainbow ethnic and migrant people. Be mindful faith may also be a source of strength and comfort.
- Develop a professional awareness of the social, legal and logistical issues faced by Rainbow ethnic and migrant people. Be community-led in your learning about these communities.

Rainbow Elders

“Elders” traditionally refers to those who, due to their age, are considered to hold a high degree of wisdom. In many societies, this corresponds to older people who are respected for their life experiences and knowledge. Rainbow elders have navigated significant societal and cultural shifts related to acceptance and rights for Rainbow communities.

Structural violence

- Rainbow elders in Aotearoa New Zealand, face structural violence compounded by living with the impacts of colonisation on Rainbow communities.
- Many elders experience marginalisation within the broader elder community due to being Rainbow and may choose to hide this aspect of themselves from peers.
- Many Rainbow community spaces and events are inaccessible to elders due to age.
- Limited access to inclusive healthcare, social isolation, and economic challenges are common and are additional barriers that Rainbow elders may have to navigate.

Practice principles

- Practice trauma-informed care by understanding that Rainbow elders have lived through a lifetime of discrimination, including the criminalisation of Rainbow communities and that this may impact Rainbow elders’ trust of institutions and helping professionals.
- Understand that the role of carers for Rainbow elders creates unique power and control dynamics, particularly around privacy and access to gender-affirming care.
- Use reflective language and understand that language changes over time. Rainbow elders may still use some words now considered slurs, while some words that have been reclaimed are still considered offensive to many Rainbow elders.
- Be aware that Rainbow elders can be at increased risk of isolation due to fear of discrimination from their non-Rainbow peers.

Rainbow disabled people

Rainbow disabled people are rainbow people who experience disability. Disability refers to the experience of individuals whose full participation in society is hindered by barriers and limitations imposed by physical, social, and attitudinal factors within their surroundings.

Structural violence

- Institutionalised ableism, barriers to healthcare and support, discrimination, and limited representation are drivers of harm to Rainbow disabled people.
- The inequalities faced by disabled Rainbow people are still perpetuated at the policy level, such as the accessibility of funds/support from WINZ.
- Colonisation brought the pathologization of Rainbow and disabled people to Aotearoa.
- The pathologisation of Rainbow people with disabilities is a driver of violence and invalidation of Rainbow disabled people in their families and other relationships.

Practice principles

- Practice Rainbow and disability inclusivity all the time. You cannot tell if someone is Rainbow or disabled just by looking at them.
- Be aware that Rainbow disabled people are vulnerable to unique forms of interpersonal violence. Safety checks should include asking Rainbow disabled people if they feel seen, heard and accepted by the important people in their lives. Opening conversations about sexuality, gender and sex characteristics is violence prevention.
- Have a professional awareness of how ableism can impact Rainbow people's family and personal relationships. Validate Rainbow disabled people in their identities, and validate their intimate, sexual and romantic relationships.
- Consider access and privacy needs when working with Rainbow people. Trauma-informed practice with Rainbow people with disabilities means talking about consent and demonstrating good consent practices in all your interactions. Rainbow disabled people may not have had access to consent education and some may have been actively blocked from accessing this information. Do not assume what someone's base level of knowledge is.
- Be transparent about the limitations and service options you can offer or link to.

Rainbow Children & Young People

This section covers Rainbow young people, including children aged 12 and under who are part of Rainbow communities, such as those born with intersex variations or who are transgender.

Structural violence

- Children and young people are vulnerable to all the forms of structural violence that are faced by Rainbow people generally.
- Rainbow children and young people may be dependent on people who are hostile towards Rainbow people.
- Children and young people are more likely to experience economic insecurity or homelessness.
- Children and young people are more at risk of violence, including conversion practices.

Practice principles

- Understand that Rainbow young people are subject to forms of violence that are invisibilised by social norms.
- Practice trauma-informed care and understand that Rainbow children and young people may have had negative experiences with institutions such as schools, churches and medical establishments.
- Rainbow education is violence prevention education, particularly with children and young people who may be dependent on people that hold hostile views towards Rainbow people.
- Be responsive and understanding with young people who are still figuring themselves and other people out.

Rainbow Families

This section is focused on Rainbow parents and adults with children, as opposed to Rainbow children and young people who are covered in section 11. Rainbow Children and Young People.

Rainbow families are diverse, and can have many different structures, including:

- Single rainbow parents, couples, co-parenting.
- Different relationship structures — polyamory etc.
- Found/chosen family members. May not have connection to extended family.
- Families with members who do not fit within cisnormative family models.
- A rainbow adult within a heterosexual relationship (ie a bisexual / multiple gender attracted person in a heterosexual partnership).
- Heterosexual transgender parents, who may not see their relationship as “rainbow” at all.
- And many other families.

Structural violence

- Rainbow people and families are largely erased from family or sexual violence narratives. This can make it harder for people to see abuse when it happens in a Rainbow context or to get help when they need it.
- This erasure can be particularly isolating during times of stress, such as neonatal and postnatal periods.

Practice principles

- Practice inclusivity towards Rainbow families all the time. Be aware that family spaces can be very gendered, which can be isolating for Rainbow families.
- Practice trauma-informed care for Rainbow people by learning the unique forms of power and control that Rainbow families are vulnerable to.
- Be community led when learning about Rainbow families.
- Be client-led when discussing intimate or sensitive topics with Rainbow families.

