

Grace Gane Memorial Award Lecture 2019

Presented by Professor Suzanne Purdy

Communication research in the context of *te whare tapa whā* model of health

Abstract:

Purpose: Te [whare](#) tapa whā represents a Māori view of health and wellness in four dimensions: taha wairua (spiritual health), taha hinengaro (mental health), taha tinana (physical health) and taha [whānau](#) (family health). This model of health focuses on indigenous Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand but has relevance for all people. Speech-language pathologists, including those not familiar with this model, recognise that all four dimensions are needed to support health and wellbeing. Taha wairua includes the importance of culture and heritage to personal identity, an area that speech-language pathology (SLP) recognises as key to clinical competency. Taha hinengaro includes the need to express thoughts and feelings, another area particularly salient to SLP. The other two dimensions taha tinana (physical health) and taha [whānau](#) (family health) are arguably more familiar in the day-to-day work of speech-language pathologists.

Method: Two broad strands of research are examined within this model of health exploring the challenges faced by vulnerable populations namely: (1) two community based groups (a Choir and a Gavel Club) for people with acquired neurological conditions such as stroke and Parkinson's disease, and (2) diagnosis and management of hearing loss and auditory processing disorder.

Result: Community based groups, explored through the CeleBRation Choir and the Gavel Club, highlighted the application of all aspects of te whare tapa whā to the experiences of people with neurological conditions participating in these community therapies. In the area of hearing loss and auditory processing disorder, gaps across all four dimensions of taha wairua, taha hinengaro, taha tinana and taha [whānau](#) were identified in the available literature and in examination of clinical provision for participants.

Conclusion: Te whare tapa whā provides a framework to consider all the elements that contribute to people living well while experiencing communication challenges within their whānau (extended family). This approach relies on strong partnerships between clinicians, extended family, researchers, communities, organisations and other professionals. Clinicians and researchers are encouraged to consider how their beliefs, practices and impact could improve through consideration of Indigenous health models such as te whare tapa whā.

Full article available:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17549507.2020.1768288>