



Te Ako Manaaki Practice Companion

Using the Framework in Everyday Practice

This companion is designed as a practical guide that can be used during intake, case management, cross-sector hui, supervision, reflective practice and service planning.

The guiding question is:

“What needs to happen now to create sustainable long-term wellbeing?”

Step 1: Begin with the Two Streams

Systems Stream

Start by identifying who is, or should be, involved around the person, student or whānau. The aim is coordinated support rather than multiple disconnected referrals.

- Who is already involved?
- Who should be involved?
- What services are missing?
- Are organisations working together?
- Who is coordinating the overall response?

Relational Stream

Next identify the trusted relationships that will help the person engage with support. Relationships are often the vehicle through which services become effective.

- Who does this person trust?
- Who already has influence?
- How can trusted people reinforce important messages?
- How can we support those trusted people?
- The Two Lanes of Action

Systems Level (Structural Coherence)	Relational Level (Engagement and Support)
Focus: Reducing system fragmentation through the alignment of governance, shared data infrastructure, and cross-sector mandates.	Focus: Building high-trust relationships and ensuring whānau have a clear, supported pathway to the right help at the right time.
Activities: Establishing multi-agency collectives, aligning policy, and ensuring funding streams support integrated service delivery rather than siloed outputs.	Activities: Mentoring and intensive support roles that navigate the complexities of the system alongside the whānau, ensuring their voice is heard.

Who is Involved: Agency leaders, governance boards, iwi authorities, policy makers, and data architects.	Who is Involved: Kaimahi, mentors, social workers, and dedicated support roles working directly on the frontline.

Interconnected Pathways

These lanes are not silos. Systems-level actions—such as data sharing agreements—are designed specifically to empower relational work by removing the bureaucratic hurdles that hinder kaimahi. Conversely, the relational insights gathered during frontline engagement must be fed back into the system to inform governance, ensuring that policy is shaped by the actual needs of our whānau.

Step 2: Work Through the Priority Domains

Always begin with the foundational domains. You do not need to solve every problem before moving on, but you do need the right people involved with an agreed plan.

5. Deep Dive: Layer 1 – Foundational Stabilisation

Sustainable progress is impossible without the stabilisation of the three pillars of Layer 1.

Personal and Family Safety

Safety is the absolute prerequisite for any therapeutic or social progress. This involves coordinated risk management with **Police** and **Youth Justice**. Because chronic instability and fear fundamentally alter brain development and cognitive processing, safety must be addressed through immediate, collaborative intervention.

Stability (Housing/Financial)

A stable base is required for whānau to look beyond the "urgent present." This necessitates the immediate involvement of **MSD** and **Kāinga Ora** to secure safe, warm housing and financial entitlements, alongside ensuring food security.

Health and Wellness

Foundational health is a core pillar of stabilisation. This includes ensuring immediate access to primary care, managing chronic conditions that impede daily functioning, and providing urgent mental health or addiction crisis support. Without physical and mental wellness, whānau cannot sustain the energy required for the higher levels of the hierarchy.

Practitioner's Note: Stabilisation does not require every problem to be "fixed" before moving to Layer 2. However, it requires that the right collective of agencies—utilizing mechanisms like *Hui-a-whānau* or multi-agency case tables—is actively involved and that the risks in these domains are managed and predictable.

Looking Beyond the Foundations

Once stability is improving, focus on relationships, education, participation, identity, aspirations and long-term independence.

Step 3: Think Across Time

Every case should be considered across three timeframes:

- What needs attention today?
- What needs to happen over the next few months?
- What will make change sustainable over the next two years?

Effective practice requires holding the tension between the **Urgent Present** and **Sustainable Long-Term Change**.

While we must prioritise Layer 1, we must do so without losing sight of the whānau's ultimate mana and independence (Layer 3). For example, a practitioner might focus on securing transitional housing (Layer 1 Stability) to resolve a crisis, while simultaneously facilitating the whānau's reconnection to their marae or hapū (Layer 3 Cultural Connectedness). The immediate intervention provides the floor, while the cultural connection provides the long-term ceiling for growth.

Step 4: Let the Principles Guide Your Decisions

Person and Whānau Centred

The support model is built entirely around the specific needs and self-defined goals of the whānau. We do not force whānau to fit into agency silos; we wrap the system around them.

Continually ask: What is best for this person now and in the future?

Solutions Focused

Our mahi is results-oriented and context-responsive. Accountability is not held by a single entity but is shared across the collective. In times of crisis, the identification of immediate, actionable solutions is mandatory to ensure whānau safety and momentum.

The collective has a responsibility to develop solutions, not simply identify problems.

Valuing Relationships

High-trust connections are the primary vehicle for sustainable change. Practitioners must maintain a stance of mana-enhancing respect and *whakawhanaungatanga*, approaching every kōrero with curiosity and a willingness to test their own assumptions. We focus on what has worked for the whānau previously to build on existing successes.

Lead with respect, curiosity and trust. Avoid blame. Build on what has worked.

Strengths Based

Practice focuses on identifying and leveraging the inherent capabilities and protective factors already present within the whānau to foster resilience.

Identify existing strengths and avoid unnecessary duplication.

Inclusive and Collaborative

This is a non-siloed, unified approach. It demands the active inclusion of all relevant voices—including iwi, community partners, and government sectors—to create a comprehensive support net.

Bring together all relevant voices and work across organisational boundaries.

Practice Reflection Checklist

- Have we involved the right organisations, agencies and people?
 - Which agencies are required in the collective to support this whānau effectively,
 - Is there a clear mechanism for our collaboration (e.g., a multi-agency collective)? (Can this be covered by just case discussions, does this need a professionals meeting, or does this need to be escalated to a multi-agency forum/meeting/table?)
- Are we applying the five Te Ako Manaaki principles in how we approach everyone involved in this?
- What has worked for this whānau in the past? How can we use those existing strengths to enhance their mana?
- What is best for the person or **whānau** right now, in the mid and long term?
 - What three actions do we need to prioritise today?
 - What seeds do we need to plant so that what will be needed in the future is ready?
- Is the foundational layer (Safety, Stability, Health) stabilised enough to support higher-level engagement?

Quick Conversation Guide

Referral → Systems Stream → Relational Stream → Foundational Domains (Safety → Basic Needs → Health) → Functioning Domains → Sustainability.

At every step ask:

- What needs to happen now?
- What builds long-term change?
- Are we working consistently with the five principles

More information can be found at www.teakomanaaki.com

Te Ako Manaaki: An Integrated Framework for Whānau Wellbeing

