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Careful vessels

Designing artefacts to support an
NGO advocating for care-experienced
tamariki and rangatahi

Exegesis in support of practice-based Thesis

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In New Zealand, more than 4,200 children and youth are currently in state or foster care (Oranga Tamariki, 2024). Many decisions are made every year about the rights and care of care-experienced children and youth. Care-experienced children and youth voices need to be included in these decision-making processes because their lived experiences make them experts on the care system (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2022). VOYCE Whakarongo Mai is a non-governmental organisation that advocates for care-experienced children and youth (McCarthy et al., 2017). In 2022, VOYCE published 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono': a framework which outlines how to partner with care-experienced children and young people in safe and ethical ways (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2022). This practice-led research project used co-design and communication design methods, working in partnership with VOYCE and care-experienced people to develop a set of creative artefacts to support 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'. The intention in creating these resources was to support wider engagement with the framework. This thesis outlines the design process, contributing perspectives on the nuance and complexity of working in partnership with an NGO as a designer.

Abstract



He Karakia

*Huaki kau te ata
Huaki kau te awatea
i tāu korihi mai*

*Ūhia tōu korowai aroha
Hīpokina mātou ki ōu hou
Ki raro i ōu parirau*

*Mā tōu mārie e tiaki
Ō mātou hinengaro
Ō mātou wairua*

*E rere, e rere
Arahina mātou
Ki ngā ara o te tika
Ki ngā ara o te pono*

*Kia puāwai
Ēnei kupu
Ēnei whakaaro*

*Ruia he aroha
Hauhaketia he oranga
Ki ngā tamariki mokopuna.*

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the Acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed

20/4/2026

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Glossary

Terms referenced from:

Te Aka Māori-English Dictionary

Te Rōpū Arotahi. (2022). Kia Tika, Kia Pono – Honouring Truths: An Ethical Framework for Engaging with Children and Young People who are Care Experienced.

Aotearoa	New Zealand.
Aroha	love, empathy
Awa	river, stream, creek, canal, gully, gorge, groove, furrow.
Hapū	kinship group, clan, tribe, subtribe
Harakeke	New Zealand flax
Heru	comb (for hair)
Hui	gathering, meeting, assembly, conference
Iwi	extended kinship group, tribe, nation, people.
Kai	food, meal.
Kaihautū	leader, presenter
Kaimahi	worker, employee, staff.
Kāinga	home
Kairaranga	weaver
Kaitiaki	guardian, caregiver, keeper, steward.
Kaiwhakairo	carver
Kaiwhakamana	advocate
Karakia	prayer, grace, blessing
Karakia whakakapi	closing prayer
Kaumātua	adult, elder
Kaupapa	topic, policy, subject, programme, theme, issue, initiative.
Kāwana	to govern. Governor, ruler
Koha	gift, present, offering, donation, contribution

Kōhatu	stone, rock.
Korowai	cloak
Kupu Māori	Māori words
Kupu whakarite	metaphor, simile, figure of speech.
Kuru pounamu	small piece of jade stone (term of endearment)
Mahi	work, job, employment
Mana	prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power. This is difficult term to accurately translate into English.
Manaakitanga	hospitality, kindness, generosity
Manawa	heart
Māori	Indigenous people of New Zealand
Māramatanga	understanding, light, meaning
Mātauranga	knowledge, wisdom, understanding, skill
Mauri	life principle, life force, vital essence, special nature, a material symbol of a life principle, source of emotions - the essential quality and vitality of a being or entity. Used in 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' to refer to uniqueness.
Mihi	speech of greeting, acknowledgement, tribute.
Mokopuna	grandchildren, grandchild, descendant

Muka	prepared flax fibre
Ngākau	seat of affections, heart, mind, soul
Ngāti Tautahi	A sub-tribe of Ngāpuhi based in Kaikohe
Ngāpuhi	A Northland based tribe
Noho marae	overnight stay at a marae (meeting house)
Oneone	earth, soil, dirt, land
Paipera Tapu	Holy Bible
Pākehā	English, foreign, European person
Papatūānuku	Earth, atua of the earth, Earth mother
Pitomata	potential
Pōhiri	welcome ceremony on to a marae
Pono	be true, valid, honest, genuine, sincere
Pou	pillar
Pounamu	greenstone, nephrite, jade
Pūrākau tahito	ancient stories
Rākau	tree, stick, timber, wood
Rangatahi	younger generation, youth
Rangatira	leader
Rangatiratanga	chieftainship, right to exercise authority
Rau	leaf, feather
Ringatoi	artist
Rito	centre shoot, young centre leaf of the harakeke

Rumaki	immersion
Tā moko	traditional tattoo
Taiao	environment, nature,
Taitamariki	youth, teenagers, adolescent
Tamaiti	child
Tamariki	children
Tangata	person
Tāngata	people
Tangata Tiriti	a non-Māori person who is led by their sense of relationship and responsibility to Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Bell, 2024)
Tangata whenua	local people, hosts, Indigenous people - people born of the whenua (earth)
Taonga	treasure, anything prized - applied to anything considered to be of value including socially or culturally valuable objects, resources, phenomenon, ideas and technique
Tapu	be sacred, prohibited, restricted, set apart, forbidden
Tātahi	beach
Te Ao Māori	The Māori world
Te Reo Māori	Māori Language
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Māori language version of the Treaty of Waitangi
Tiaki	guard, keep; to look after, nurse, care, protect

Tika	truth, correctness, justice, fairness, righteousness, right.
Tikanga	correct procedure, custom, protocol
Tokotoko	walking stick, staff
Tūhono	to join, bond, attach, connect.
Tūkino	to ill-treat with violence, rape, torture, destroy, abuse, violate, mistreat.
Ūkaipō	mother, source of sustenance/ origin, real home. Used in 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' to describe belonging
Uku	clay
Wahine	woman
Wāhine	women
Wai	water
Waiata	song, chant, psalm
Wairuatanga	spirituality. Used in 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' to describe wellbeing.
Waka	canoe, vehicle
Waka Huia	treasure box
Wānanga	seminar, conference, forum
Whai Pūkenga	to be equipped with, have, possessing, acquire
Whaikōrero	formal speeches usually made by men during a pōhiri and other gatherings
Whakaaro Māori	Māori thought, understanding

Whakairo	to carve, ornament with a pattern, sculpt
Whakamana	to give authority to, give effect to, give prestige to
Whakapapa	genealogy, lineage, descent
Whakapono	to believe, trust, religion
Whakatairanga	to raise up, elevate, promote, emphasise
Whakatau	to decide, settle. Formal welcome
Whakatauāki	proverb (the identity of the originator is known)
Whakatauki	proverb (origin unknown)
Whakawhanaungatanga	process of establishing relationships
Whānau	extended family, family group
Whanaungatanga	relationship, kinship, sense of family connection
Whenua	land, earth

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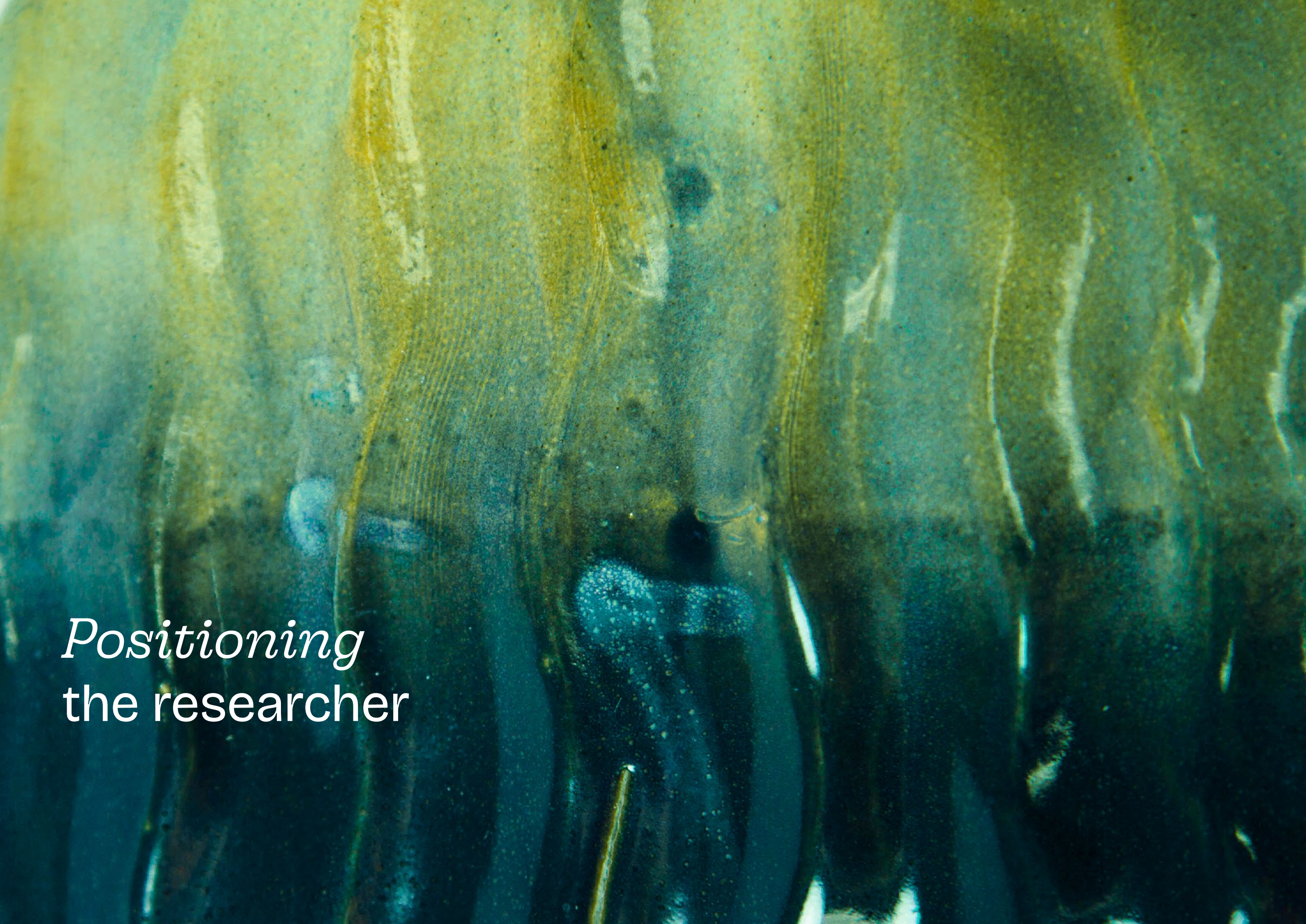
To my church family, who have prayed with me, made me meals, checked in, and encouraged me the whole way through this journey. Special thanks to Ben McQueen, for your support with videography and editing of the video for presenting my final work.

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Lastly, I want to acknowledge the children and youth in care.

He tapu te tangata, he taonga te mokopuna.
People are sacred, children are precious.



Positioning
the researcher

Design begins well before the project itself commences (Akama et al., 2019). Thoughtful design is necessarily rooted in place; in cultural and social contexts. Before starting this research, to best position myself and to prepare for a reflexive design practice, I needed to begin with my context, my values, my journey.

My family has been in the Christian faith for many generations, preachers, teachers, people who met God upon the ocean and people who quietly talked with Jesus in the kitchen. My faith is my first foundation, the wellspring of my values, my confidence, my sense of calling to what I do.

I grew up in a *home* – safety, peace, food on the table. My family was a refuge. The generations before me laid a foundation of peace upon that same faith in Christ. I grew up with a deeply rooted understanding of what love looks and feels like. The older I get, the more streets I walk, the more people I know, the less common that kind of love seems. My naivety has been stripped back by my experiences. For a long time, I was confused about how to respond to the struggles I witnessed around me. I was slowly realising that I had a responsibility to use my privileges to come alongside other people. I began to see that one way I could do so was through using my education and skills to support underserved communities.

In 2020, I commenced a Bachelor of Communication Design, a design discipline stemming from graphic design. Communication designers use a range of media and methods, merging image-making and typography to create systems of communication for a broad range of contexts (Ghosh & Nag, 2016). During this degree, I was excited about the power of creative communication and storytelling to create social change and serve communities (Systems Storytellers, 2022). However, completing my undergraduate degree left me dissatisfied with the range of opportunities that seemed to be before me. I felt as though my education had condemned me to a future where I would operate as a Photoshop drone, selling unnecessary products to the consuming masses.

In 2023, I began to recognise that my practice as a designer might be used to serve in complex social contexts in New Zealand. I connected with AUT's Good Health Design (a transdisciplinary design research centre at AUT) and Professor Denise Wilson. I had the privilege of working with Denise to explore how design could be used to communicate the story that formed the basis of her research paper 'Wāhine' Māori²: Keeping Safe in Unsafe Relationships' (Wilson et al., 2019). This report aimed to articulate the complexities of whānau³ violence. To support the communication of this research to non-academic audiences, I developed a storytelling artefact, 'Aroha'⁴. This artefact has since travelled around New Zealand and internationally, supporting Denise's valuable work by coming into the hands and lives of whānau where it is used as a tool for healing. The real, personal impact I saw from this piece of design was humbling. This project encouraged me to believe that my design practice could genuinely play a role in serving underserved communities in New Zealand.

¹Women

²The Indigenous people of New Zealand

³Family

⁴Love, Empathy



Figure 1:
'Aroha' - a storytelling artefact

In 2024, I spent the year learning Te Reo Māori⁵ with my husband at Te Wānanga Takiura⁶. I am Pākehā⁷, and my husband has whakapapa⁸ connection to Ngāti Tautahi, Ngāpuhi⁹. This beautiful rumaki¹⁰ in te ao Māori¹¹ widened my worldview. Starting to learn Te Reo was the beginning of a humbling journey of questioning my assumptions, gently holding different perspectives, navigating nuance, wrestling with privilege, and learning how to not know much at all. I never thought I would get to be a part of that space, speak the reo, sing the waiata¹², be welcomed into such a whānau. I loved it, and I wanted to honour it and to better understand my place in it.

At this time, I also took up a role at my church working with high school aged students. This involved coordinating our Friday evening youth group and supporting the youth pastorally. I learnt a lot in this role and realised how much I loved working with teenagers and seeing them grow into young adults.

Reflecting on the alignment of my actions with my values has been a habit for me, and a prayerful practice of my faith. I believe that Jesus set an example for a life of justice and service, as he cared for the lonely, served the lowly, and comforted the sorrowful. As I reflected on the 2023 project and the years following, I wanted to use my experiences and skillset in alignment with how I saw the example of Christ; serving communities and addressing social issues through my design practice.

⁵ The Māori language

⁶ Te Wānanga Takiura is an independant tertiary education provider who teach full immersion courses in Te Reo Māori. The institute offers a year-long diploma in Māori language fluency, alongside a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree (Te Wānanga Takiura on Ngā Kura Kauapapa Māori o Aotearoa, n.d.).

⁷ English, foreign, European

⁸ Genealogical connections

⁹ Ngāpuhi is a tribe in the Northland region of New Zealand. Ngāti Tautahi is a sub-tribe group of Ngāpuhi.

¹⁰ Immersion

¹¹ The Māori world

¹² Songs

At the end of 2024, Professor Steve Reay from Good Health Design Research Centre connected me to VOYCE Whakarongo, an NGO advocating for care-experienced youth and children. Hunia Mackay, Kaihautū Kaupapa Māori¹³ saw the potential to undertake a project similar to ‘Aroha’ with VOYCE’s ethical guidelines document ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2022).

This connection to VOYCE seemed like a serendipitous opportunity for a Master’s project. The previous three years had given me relevant expertise and prepared my heart for the journey ahead. The 2023 project with Professor Denise Wilson was my first experience working in an interdisciplinary partnership as a designer on a social issue. My work with youth at my church seemed relevant to VOYCE’s work with young people. I felt that my experiences at Te Wānanga Takiura had prepared me to engage meaningfully with VOYCE’s emphasis on whakaaro Māori¹⁴. The years between my Bachelor’s and return to postgraduate study allowed me to mature, recognise what I valued, and confirm that I wanted to use my design practice to serve social contexts in New Zealand.

¹³ National Māori Advisor

¹⁴ Māori thought

Contextual
Review

Current Context

In New Zealand, more than 4,200 children and youth are currently in care¹⁵. Approximately 57% of children in care whakapapa Māori¹⁶ (Oranga Tamariki, 2024). These statistics are linked to the intergenerational consequences of colonisation, loss, trauma, displacement and urbanisation (Savage et al., 2021). The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions (2024b) revealed an ugly history of abuse in state and faith-based care in New Zealand. VOYCE's¹⁷ 2023 submission to parliament, 'Korowai Aroha' (Te Rōpū Kaitiaki mō ngā Teina e haere ake nei, 2023), evidenced that abuse is an ongoing reality for care-experienced children and youth.

Oranga Tamariki, the ministry for children in New Zealand, is deeply distrusted by whānau Māori (Wilson et al., 2019) and remains under constant public criticism. Whānau report experiences of discrimination, forceful removal of tamariki¹⁸, dismissive attitudes, lack of cultural competency, and shifting goalposts (Ford et al., 2020). A 2024 report by the Ombudsman details complaints from youth about Oranga Tamariki. These complaints include official Reports of Concern not being responded to, inadequate information about the Family Court, failure to consult people with disabilities, concerns about the process of uplifting children, and failure to listen to the voices of youth (Boshier, 2024).

The standards of care and surrounding legislation in New Zealand need ongoing development to protect the safety, well-being, and flourishing of children and youth in care.

¹⁵ The term 'care-experienced' refers to someone who is "experiencing or has experienced the child protection system, including foster care, residential care, protection residences and youth justice residences." (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2022, p. 9) The term 'care-experienced' is used by VOYCE in their work and literature to comprehensively describe the diverse range of experiences within state and foster care. I chose to use this term to remain consistent with VOYCE's language as I partnered with them.

¹⁶ Have Māori genealogy

¹⁷ VOYCE is an NGO advocating for children and youth in state and foster care.

¹⁸ Children

A Brief Overview of the History of Care in New Zealand

Child welfare has a complicated history in New Zealand, marked by valiant humanitarian efforts and devastating ethical failures whereby the state consistently overreached into family affairs and failed to honour promises. This history is bound up with colonisation. These failures continue to have an impact at both systemic and individual levels today.

In pre-colonial Aotearoa¹⁹, whānau Māori had established family structures that upheld the mana²⁰ and tapu²¹ of tamariki (Eruera & Riuwhiu, 2015). Tamariki were cared for by the wider hapū²² (Wilson et al., 2021). Pūrākau tahito²³ show that violence within whānau was unacceptable and dealt with severely (Wilson et al., 2019).

Social welfare is inextricably linked to colonisation (Garlick, 2012). The early 19th century brought an influx of immigrants from England and Ireland, seeking a fresh start and an escape from economic burdens in their home countries (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions, 2024a). Immigrants brought their own ideas about family structures and social welfare. Social welfare involved transplanting ideas from foreign cultures and using these ideas as a means of controlling problematic people and 'civilising' Indigenous peoples (Garlick, 2012).

The British Government began to see the need to establish a civil government in 'New Zealand' due to the large number of British immigrants (Waitangi Tribunal, n.d.). Signing a treaty with an Indigenous people as equals was a hopeful alternative to the Crown's previous violent colonisation of the likes of West Africa and India. This idea was advocated for by the Clapham Sect, a Christian abolitionist movement based in London (Ruka, 2019).

In 1845, the Treaty of Waitangi and Te Tiriti o Waitangi were signed, forming an agreement between the British Crown and tangata whenua. The English and the Māori versions of the document differ significantly, leading to markedly different interpretations of this agreement (Biggs, 1989; Mutu, 2011). Te Tiriti o Waitangi held the promise of partnership, protection, and the retention of tino rangatiratanga²⁴. This Māori translation stated that the Queen of England could have 'kāwana' over Māori land, which at that time was understood by Māori as governance, not complete ownership and control (Mutu, 2011; Waitangi Tribunal, n.d.). The Treaty of Waitangi,

¹⁹ The Māori name for New Zealand

²⁰ prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power.

²¹ be sacred, prohibited, restricted, set apart, forbidden

²² Sub-tribe

²³ Ancient Māori stories

²⁴ Sovereignty

by contrast, granted the Queen of England complete sovereignty over all Māori land (The Treaty of Waitangi, Article 1, 1845). Scholars argue that the Māori signatories of the time would not have agreed to these terms of governance (Mulholland & Tawhai, 2011).

Te Tiriti o Waitangi²⁵ carried a hopeful promise for peoples intertwined (Reese, 2024; Ruka, 2019) - a guideline for how Māori and non-Māori people could live together in partnership in the land. However, the promises within Te Tiriti were desecrated, and a brutal period of colonisation ensued with policies of assimilation and the confiscation of land (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions, 2024a).

In response to the large numbers of British citizens migrating to New Zealand, informal social welfare systems began to emerge. These were largely dependent on churches to care for people in need, including youth and children (Garlick, 2012). However, the lack of well-established church parishes and family networks in these new settlements made this system unsustainable (Garlick, 2012). The government intervened in 1867, establishing industrial schools (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions, 2024a). Industrial schools were initially established to detain neglected and lawless children and youth (Dalley, 1998). Child welfare was deemed the responsibility of the justice department and treated as a punitive issue. Public perspectives on child welfare began to move from punitive to reformatory from 1880, when the industrial schools were shifted from control of the justice department to the Ministry of Education (Garlick, 2012).

In the early 20th century, conditions in industrial schools improved with increased inspection and the regulation of food, bedding, and punishment (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions, 2024a). At this time, 'boarding out' became a favourable option for caring for children and young people housed in industrial schools. Boarding out entailed hiring out children and youth to homes to work as housekeepers or farmhands. Boarding out was beneficial for families who received labour, children who received a more natural family environment, as well as being cheaper for the government (Dalley, 1998).

Following World War I, foster care became the primary response to child and youth welfare concerns. Welfare concerns included delinquency, poverty, and lack of family support. Humanitarian standards for child welfare in New Zealand began to improve. John Beck, Superintendent of Child Welfare in 1925, had an influential role in moving New Zealand

²⁵ I have chosen to refer to Te Tiriti o Waitangi throughout this thesis, as I understand this to be a more accurate translation of the two. Te Tiriti o Waitangi will be referred to as Te Tiriti from this point onwards.

Child Welfare towards more holistic, family-centred, and preventative approaches (Dalley, 1998). Beck cared about what he called the 'vital human problem lying behind the routine office work' (Garlick, 2012, p. 34).

In 1925, the Child Welfare Act was established. This Act established the Children's Court and Child Welfare Branch of the Department of Education (Savage et al, 2021). This also meant that the training of foster parents was established, and government officials became more actively involved in inspecting the standards of child welfare within family homes. This was, arguably, the beginning of the 'centralised' childcare system (Garlick, 2012).

From the 1940s, the number of Māori in care began to be recorded. War, the influenza epidemic, and colonisation led to increased urbanisation, impoverishment of tāngata Māori, and disconnection from tikanga²⁶. Tikanga protected Māori whānau ties. By 1966, more than 60% of tāngata Māori²⁷ lived in urban areas (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions, 2024a). Levels of poverty meant that more tamariki Māori were flagged for state intervention, and Māori became overrepresented in state care statistics. This imbalance remains today (Savage et al, 2021).

In the 1970s, cases of abuse in care began to be brought to public attention, with 20,000 alerts of abuse being made to the government over the following 20 years. The disparity of experiences between Māori and non-Māori in care also began to be recognised:

Once tamariki and rangatahi²⁸ Māori were brought to the attention of the State, they were more likely than non-Māori children to be taken into social welfare care. Once in social welfare care, Māori were more likely to be criminalised or placed in a harsher environment, and less likely to receive intensive support, than non-Māori. (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions, 2024a, p. 92)

These shifts in public recognition of Māori over-representation in state care and their disproportionate mistreatment led to the release of the Pūao-Te-Ata-Tū report (The Māori Perspective Advisory Committee, 1988). Pūao-Te-Ata-Tū was a Māori perspective on the government's department of Social Welfare, voicing the ongoing failures and racism within the established system. The report made 13 urgent recommendations for change, which had the potential to improve the well-being of wards of the State. These recommendations included reviewing legislation to consider whakapapa and consult with whānau²⁹, hapū³⁰ and iwi³¹ when making decisions about the placements of children in care.

²⁶ Cultural protocol

²⁷ Māori people, the Indigenous people of New Zealand

²⁸ Young people

²⁹ Families

³⁰ Subtribes

³¹ Tribes

In 1989, the ‘Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act’ was established in response to Pūao-Te-Ata-Tū. This Act was internationally groundbreaking for its emphasis on families making decisions for their children’s welfare, as well as for the value of cultural heritage and practice (Dalley, 1998). This Act coincided with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which the New Zealand Government affirmed in 1993.

The Department of Child, Youth, and Family Services (CYFS) was established in 1999 and was responsible for child welfare, working with welfare organisations, the court system, and the police. CYFS was highly criticised for inadequacy and irresponsibility following the deaths of at-risk children who had been placed in care by CYFS (Pollock, 2011). After an expert panel report called for an overhaul of the system in 2016 (Falck, 2016), the ministry was redeveloped. As a result, Oranga Tamariki replaced CYFS in 2017 (Pollock, 2011). Oranga Tamariki was the current ministry for children in New Zealand (at the time of writing).

Despite these structural changes at the highest level, the 2021 Waitangi Tribunal report on Oranga Tamariki (WAI2915) found that the Crown had failed to implement the Pūao-Te-Ata-Tū 1988 recommendations. The report concluded that Oranga Tamariki was not honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi due to its consistent overstepping in decisions about Māori homes and whānau. The Tribunal also recommended that a ‘Māori Transition Authority’ be established, to ensure a Māori-led approach to reducing the number of tamariki Māori in State care (Waitangi Tribunal, 2021, p. 186)

The Tribunal’s primary recommendation is that the Crown steps back from further intrusion into what was reserved to Māori under te Tiriti/the Treaty and allow Māori to reclaim their space. Māori should be given the right to realising rangatiratanga over their kāinga³². (Waitangi Tribunal, 2021, p. 15)

Between 2018 and 2024, the Royal Commission of Inquiry examined abuse in care in New Zealand. This inquiry exposed a deep and ugly history of abuse in state and faith-based care in New Zealand between 1950 and 1999, with hundreds of accounts of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect, and trauma (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions, 2024b). VOYCE’s 2020 submission to parliament, ‘Korowai Aroha’ (Te Rōpū Kaitiaki mō ngā Teina e haere ake nei, 2023), was a reminder that this abuse did not cease in 1999, evidencing that abuse in state care remains prevalent.

In 2025, further legislative changes were criticised for failing to ethically honour care-experienced children and youth (VOYCE Whakarongo Mai, 2025d). In April 2025, parliament removed section 7AA of the Oranga Tamariki Act (Oranga

Tamariki (Repeal of Section 7AA) Amendment Bill, 2024), meaning that the ministry was no longer legally required to consider whakapapa or the Treaty of Waitangi when making decisions about children and youth in care. This legislative change was perceived by many advocates for care-experienced rangatahi and tamariki as a backwards step in progress towards honouring the 1988 recommendations and the WAI 2915 recommendations (New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2024).

In May 2025, the New Zealand Government announced that it would not develop a new redress system for abuse survivors (Moir, 2025), despite this being the Royal Commission’s key recommendation in 2024 (Sydney, 2025b). This decision disappointed many care-experienced youth, who viewed it as a ‘broken promise’ that weakened their confidence in the Government’s commitment to the other recommendations in the Inquiry (Sydney, 2025a).

During this time, the proposed Treaty Principles Bill brought into question the validity of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in New Zealand (Waitangi Tribunal, 2024). The late Moana Jackson asserted during the Royal Commission of Inquiry hearing that the overrepresentation of Māori in State care is inextricably linked to a failure to take the Tiriti seriously (Statement of Moana Jackson at the Contextual Hearing, 2019). This proposed bill caused advocates to question the Government’s commitment to the standard of State care in New Zealand (VOYCE Whakarongo Mai, 2025d).

In 2025, VOYCE³³ released ‘Kei te rongo koe? Are you listening? Our Voices on the State of Care’. This report examined the state of the care system in New Zealand between 2020 and 2025. In 2023, politicians committed to improving the standards of physical needs, safety, education, healthcare, autonomy and cultural connection of children and youth in care. This report looked beyond statistics, conducting its analysis based on the lived experiences of children and youth in care. This report emphasised that the standards assessed were not merely a measurement of a system, but of lives and childhoods. Lived experiences and stories needed to be considered, beyond quantifying statistics. The report concluded that while there had been some improvement, the promises that were made in 2023 had not been kept. One in five youth said that they felt unsafe in care, and 507 children were harmed while in care in 2025. This was only the reported number. Housing placements of youth and children were unstable, with youth living in cars, garages, and motels. Children and youth were constantly moved between different caregivers. High numbers of youth in care reported experiencing suicidal thoughts and mental distress. Children and youth in care were not included in decision-making about their lives and placements into care (VOYCE Whakarongo Mai, 2025a).

³² Homes

³³ VOYCE is an NGO advocating for children and youth in state and foster care.

This brief overview of the history of care in New Zealand reveals a pattern of ambitious changes in the system being introduced and consequently inadequately implemented. This pattern is present from Te Tiriti o Waitangi and consequent colonisation, to Pūao-te-Ata-Tū and the consequent critique of WAI 2915, to a failure to implement the recommendations from the Royal Commission of Inquiry, as well as the broken promises detailed in the 2025 VOYCE State of Care report. This pattern evidences a history in New Zealand of failing to honour the voices and experiences of people in care. The care system in New Zealand has developed a long way since its genesis in the 1800s. However, as long as children remain in state and foster care, the system must continue to be critiqued and improved (Savage et al., 2021).

The (unintended) Consequences

The trauma of experiences in the care system has far-reaching consequences for individuals and whānau, including drug and alcohol abuse, mental and physical illness and homelessness (Savage et al., 2021). Large numbers of people within the justice system in New Zealand have experienced the care system (Te Ohu Whakatika, 2019). The care system is inextricably linked to a web of social issues. This trauma becomes intergenerational, meaning that many care-experienced youth come from families with multiple generations in the care system (Sydney, 2025c).

Excluding lived-experience perspectives leads to decision-making that fails to consider the nuance and humanity of lived experience (VOYCE Whakarongo Mai, 2025a). This kind of decision-making is more likely to result in a care system that misses the insights from insider perspectives. These missing perspectives create systemic ‘gaps’ through which children and youth can fall, resulting in various degrees of negative experiences in care (Te Rōpū Kaitiaki mō ngā Teina e haere ake nei, 2023).

However, inclusion alone is insufficient; including care-experienced perspectives in ways that are not relationally safe or respectful also has adverse effects. Care-experienced youth report that interactions are often rushed, thoughtless and lack authentic relational accountability (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2022). These interactions are fatiguing and overwhelming for youth who are sharing very personal, often troubling experiences. Where young people perceive that their contributions do not translate into tangible change, institutional distrust is likely to deepen.

People do not understand how powerful my words are – they come from experience – often trauma... this is real life we are sharing or contributing. It is the most emotionally expensive thing we have to offer. It’s valuable to us. (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2022, p. 29)

Consultation with Children and Youth in Care

Consulting care-experienced youth is supportive toward their sense of agency and worth (Toros & Falch-Eriksen, 2021). Consultation and inclusion benefit care-experienced youth by providing opportunities for self-advocacy, developing their communication skills, and giving them the power to control information about themselves, (Dixon et al., 2019). Involving care-experienced youth in these conversations is an opportunity to build their capacity and support them to feel heard. One young person commented that being involved in a consultation process as a youth advocate “boosted my confidence – it made me believe I could speak to anyone... I loved everything about it – it was life-changing” (VOYCE Whakaron-go Mai, 2025a, p. 59).

Consulting care-experienced youth on the development of a child and youth wellbeing strategy has been a legal requirement since 2018 (K. Brown et al., 2020; New Zealand Legislation, 2018). Oranga Tamariki has developed methods for collecting care-experienced perspectives, such as the Youth Advisory Group, inviting youth to participate in surveys (Oranga Tamariki Voices of Children and Young People Team, 2023), and rangatahi councils in residences (VOYCE Whakarongo Mai, 2025a).

Despite these positive initiatives, many decisions about the care of children and young people and about the system are still made by adults in ministries and services without any communication or consultation with children and youth. Many adults fail to recognise the powerful insights of children and youth (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2022). They are often not included in the decision-making conversations that affect them directly or are included in trivial or inappropriate ways (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2022).

Often, youth and children are not included in decision-making because people are unsure how to involve them safely and ethically in conversations (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2022). Organisational bureaucracy, time and financial pressures, and lack of training for social workers further contribute to this problem (Diaz & Aylward, 2019). Services and organisations need to understand the importance of involving youth perspectives in the decisions that affect them and be equipped to do so in ways that are caring, relational, and safe.

VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai

In 2016, a series of wānanga³⁴ addressing the lack of advocacy for care-experienced youth (McCarthy et al, 2017) led to the 2016 Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act Amendment, which required Oranga Tamariki to make services available to care-experienced youth “that provide them with an opportunity and support to express their views..” (Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Amendment Act 2016, 2016, p. Section 7(2)(bb)). In response to this legislative change, VOYCE Whakarongo Mai was established (Ministry of Social Development, 2017). VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai stands for the Voices Of the Young and Care Experienced - Listen to me.

“The purpose of the service is to create a community which connects children and young people in care and promotes their individual and collective voice, so that they can influence the care system to meet their needs and realise their aspirations.” (McCarthy et al, 2017, p. 18)

VOYCE partners with Oranga Tamariki and other non-governmental social services. These services connect care-experienced youth to VOYCE as an additional system of support and advocacy, which youth may choose to engage with.

In 2025, VOYCE advocated for the perspectives of care-experienced youth on a variety of issues, including the removal of section 7AA of the Oranga Tamariki Act, legislative changes to youth offending, and the government's response to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in State Care (Sydney, 2025b; VOYCE Whakarongo Mai, 2025b, 2025d). These issues exemplify why care-experienced perspectives have a valuable place in conversations - the decisions being made directly affect the lives of care-experienced youth.

³⁴ To meet and discuss, forum, conference.

VOYCE has five key ‘pou³⁵’ or values (VOYCE Whakarongo Mai, 2023b):

1. Whakamana (advocacy) involves listening to the needs of care-experienced youth and ensuring these needs are heard by social workers, foster parents, courts, etc. Advocacy could also involve supporting youth to understand information about their care, including their rights and legal processes. In addition, Kaiwhakamana (advocates employed by VOYCE) might support youth by attending Family Group Conferences³⁶ or hearings.
2. Whakatairanga (promotion) involves elevating the key concerns of care-experienced youth. This involves collecting youth views through platforms like regional youth councils and creating channels to share these perspectives. This may involve making submissions to Parliament on issues affecting youth, issuing press statements in response to current events, or providing feedback to Oranga Tamariki.
3. Whai Pūkenga refers to equipping youth for their futures. This can involve mentoring youth through challenges, providing them with tools and opportunities to learn and develop new skills, or walking with them as they transition out of the care system.
4. Tūhono (connection) involves connecting care-experienced youth to one another. VOYCE has built networks of care-experienced youth online, in youth councils, and through social events. Building a community of people with similar experiences is important for the well-being of care-experienced youth, who may find their situations isolating.
5. Rangatiratanga (leadership and sovereignty) refers to building the leadership abilities of care-experienced youth. VOYCE views the youth that they advocate for as rangatira, as leaders, because they hold the expertise of their lived experience. Their lived experiences give them the unique position to provide insider perspectives on care. VOYCE provides many opportunities for youth to share their perspectives with social services and government organisations.

³⁵ Pillars

³⁶ Family Group Conference is a meeting held between children or young people their families, and professionals to make decisions about the care, wellbeing and protection of children, or in regards to an offense perpetrated by a child. Family Group Conferences are outlined in New Zealand legislation (Oranga Tamariki, n.d.)

Kia Tika, Kia Pono

In 2021, VOYCE published ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2022). ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ is an ethical framework created for anyone seeking to involve care-experienced youth in research, governance, policymaking and service design. This framework guides people to involve care-experienced youth in safe, ethical ways that uphold their mana. VOYCE co-created this framework with care-experienced youth; these guidelines needed to be informed by lived experience.

‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ emphasises that engagement with care-experienced rangatahi needs to be a level partnership, where care-experienced people are not seen as participants, but architects and co-authors of information. ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ emphasises that care-experienced children and youth need space to tell their own stories, without these stories being twisted or used by organisations for their own benefit (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2022).

The framework has three sections:

- Our Words: direct quotes from the care-experienced youth who were involved in the development of the framework outlining what they require from those who seek to engage and consult with them.
- Ethical Values: A set of values that are drawn from the themes expressed by the youth participants.
- Reflexive Questions: A set of questions that any person intending to engage with care-experienced youth may use to test the intentions and integrity of their engagement.

‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ became a central aspect of VOYCE’s work, providing a set of tikanga for their own staff and a set of expectations for organisations and groups they partner with. VOYCE staff use this document as a foundation for their own engagement with children and youth, and invite other ministries and services to do likewise. VOYCE sought for ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ to help support systemic change regarding ethical engagement with care-experienced youth.

The opportunity for design to support the work of VOYCE

Design practice is developing beyond creative visualisation and into the fields of creative problem solving. Muratovski (2016) noted that designers are beginning to define themselves not only as visual service providers but also as strategists with expertise in understanding complexity. Designers, therefore, have the capacity to address a diversity of problems (Norman & Stappers, 2015) Some of these problems are ‘wicked problems’ - often difficult to define, part of larger systematic complexities, and can be approached in a variety of creative ways (Buchanan, 1992). Issues around state and foster care could be classed as wicked problems. Sanders and Stappers (2012) suggest that design can support the solution of complex problems through “collective forms of creativity and generative design thinking” (p. 22). Generative design thinking refers to the use of creative methods to define a problem and generate different responses.

It is important, however, that designers address these multifaceted problems in interdisciplinary partnerships, recognising that they do not have sufficient expertise to tackle these issues as individuals (Norman & Stappers, 2015). Designers are experts in creative problem-solving, but they are not experts in the content of every wicked problem. Designers should, therefore, collaborate with people with contextual knowledge and experience (McKercher, 2020). This way of working is a partnership between relevant experts from different contexts, where each person contributes their expertise. Such experts could include business owners, social workers, health professionals, or those who are experts of their own lived experience. A designer may bring creative and technical expertise to the project, as well as lead the methods and tools for co-design thinking (Sanders & Stappers, 2008).

Designers can help enhance access to complex information through clear, engaging visual communication. Communicating ideas in creative forms can also help to shift perspectives, leading to new responses (Systems Storytellers, 2022). In this way, designers may act as bridges between these ‘voices’ and those who hold the power to create change for these voices (Jackson, 2024).

Research *Question*

How can creating physical artefacts through collaboration support the work of an NGO representing care-experienced tamariki & rangatahi in New Zealand?

Research *Opportunity*

To increase engagement with 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono', I was invited to partner with VOYCE and the care experienced co-creators of the document to develop it beyond a written PDF into a tangible creative artefact. This artefact would make 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' more accessible by going beyond words and more engaging by being interactive and beautiful.

Research *Objectives*

The key objectives for this research were to:

- Develop 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' into a creative artefact to support wider engagement with the framework.
- Co-design this artefact with care-experienced people and VOYCE kaiwhakamana³⁷
- Make the artefact useful for:
 - VOYCE Kaiwhakamana: as a guideline for them in their work
 - Government and social service providers: as an educational tool on how they should interact with care-experienced youth.

³⁷ Advocates



Methodology

My methodological approach was informed by action research and co-design methodologies. Kaupapa Māori methodology also provided insights for how to emphasise relationships within my practice.

Action Research

Action research is a process of action and research, practised through an iterative cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Swann, 2002, Baum et al., 2006). Action research can be applied across a range of contexts, including healthcare, policy, and community development. Action researchers partner with communities to address a need, supporting them to reflect upon and create practical change to their contexts and systems (Bradbury & Reason, 2008).

Reflective practice involves ‘reflection in action’ (pg. 25) and ‘reflection on action’ (pg. 26), in which practitioners think about their actions and make changes to what they do, constantly improving their work (Schön, 1994). Reflective practice turns theoretical knowledge into action in response to the complexities and nuances of real-world situations. Working as a designer in partnership with an organisation, practising reflection helped me respond to different relational situations and analyse my developing practice and attitudes.

Action research was suitable for the context of this project with VOYCE; VOYCE emphasises that care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi are experts in their lived experience and must be involved in decision-making about their care (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2022). Action research recognises lived experience as a valid form of knowledge, allowing the insights of communities to inform developments that are made to their contexts (Baum et al., 2006). Action research is comprised of four phases, planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. These phases are repeated in cycles throughout the design process (Swann, 2002). I planned interactions with VOYCE and care-experienced people, produced prototypes to share with this community, observed their feedback, and reflected upon their perspectives to inform my design decisions. I repeated this cycle multiple times throughout the process. This project addressed VOYCE's need to make ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ more accessible, creating a set of resources to support the document.

Co-design

McKercher (2020, p. 8) defined co-design as ‘an approach to designing with, not for, people. It involves sharing power, prioritising relationships, using participatory means and building capability.’ For this project, co-design refers to the act of designers and people not trained in design working in a creative partnership throughout the process of a project (Sanders and Stappers, 2012, p. 25). Participants in co-design processes are recognised as experts in their own experiences (McKercher, 2020), where the designer is an expert in technology and/or craft. In co-design, the users and beneficiaries of the design should be active participants in defining the context, aims and concepts of the whole process (Sanders & Stappers, 2012). The project itself should be initiated and defined by the community, not the designer. When communities are involved in defining and designing solutions to their own needs, the designed solutions are embedded into these communities, and therefore more likely to be sustainable (Mark & Hagen, 2020). Beyond consultation, co-design participation should involve creative methods (McKercher, 2020). The role of the designer is to facilitate the development process and give form to the ideas produced (Sanders & Stappers, 2008).

Co-design's prioritisation of lived experience (McKercher, 2020) aligns with ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2022), which emphasises partnering with care-experienced people. ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ also encourages people to involve participants in every aspect of a project, from start to finish. ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ was developed using a co-creation method. In many ways, this ethical guideline presents a co-design methodology, which makes it appropriate for this project.

However, co-design has been critiqued for its coloniality. King and Cormack (2024) assert that co-design tokenises Indigenous perspectives and fatigues communities, creating distrust. Co-designers can be deficit-focused, seeing a ‘negative or victim’ version of the communities they partner with. Co-designers often fail to return outcomes to research participants (King & Cormack, 2024). Co-designers use participants’ perspectives and experiences to inform their work, yet the design outputs do not always benefit or acknowledge these communities for their valuable input. To consider and mitigate these concerns, I looked at how Kaupapa Māori methodological research prioritises people and relationships.

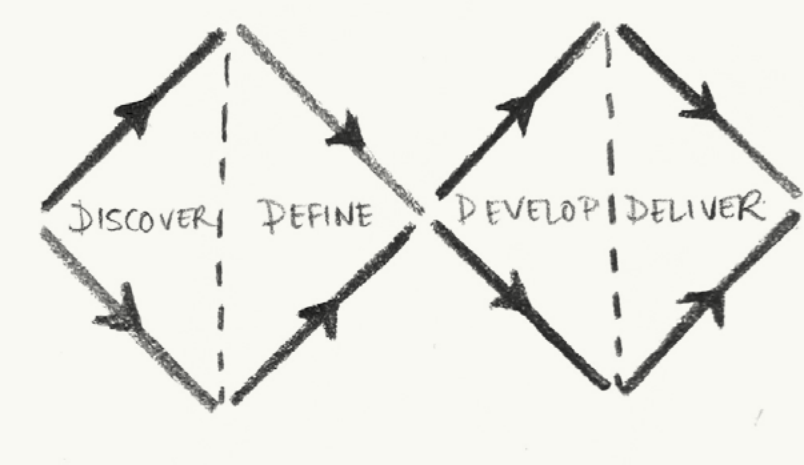
Kaupapa Māori research is defined as being by Māori, for Māori (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). I have not used a kaupapa Māori methodology, as I am a Pākehā researcher. However, concepts within kaupapa Māori methodology have informed my methodological approach to engage with the care-experienced community more appropriately. Kaupapa Māori methodology offers guidance on reimagining co-design to better honour communities, emphasising relationships as the highest value in the research process (Reay et al., 2023). Tikanga Māori is strongly embedded in VOYCE; learning from kaupapa Māori methodology helped me develop a practice that reflected VOYCE's values.

Whakawhanaungatanga³⁸ is a practice of recognising connections and establishing relationships (Akama et al., 2019; Bishop, 1996; Vaeau & Trundle, 2020). Bishop (1996) suggests that whakawhanaungatanga in research requires prioritising the goals of the group rather than those of the individual researcher, reflecting a Māori ontology that defines the self through its relational connection to others. Working in relationship helps to break down hierarchies between the designer/researcher and community by 'talking across power' (Tuhiwai Smith et al., 2019, p. 10). Prioritising relationships redefines the project's success. The success of the project is no longer defined by the individual researcher but by the group's shared goals. The outcomes of the research project must be returned to the community for their benefit (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2022) reflects co-design methodology through its invitation to work in partnership with care-experienced rangatahi. 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' also emphasises working relationally with a set of ethical values, including whakawhanaungatanga, pono³⁹, rangatira, and koha⁴⁰. I practised whakawhanaungatanga by seeking to build relationships with VOYCE and the care-experienced participants in the project. I sought to be pono by constantly reflecting on my actions and intentions throughout the project. I recognised the care-experienced participants as rangatira: experts on their lived experience. I engaged with them as a designer and facilitator of activities and interactions to better understand their needs and aspirations for 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' so that these could be reflected in a designed resource. I ultimately returned these resources to VOYCE as a koha for the benefit of the care-experienced community.

³⁸ Process of establishing relationships
³⁹ True, genuine, sincere
⁴⁰ Gift, offering, contribution

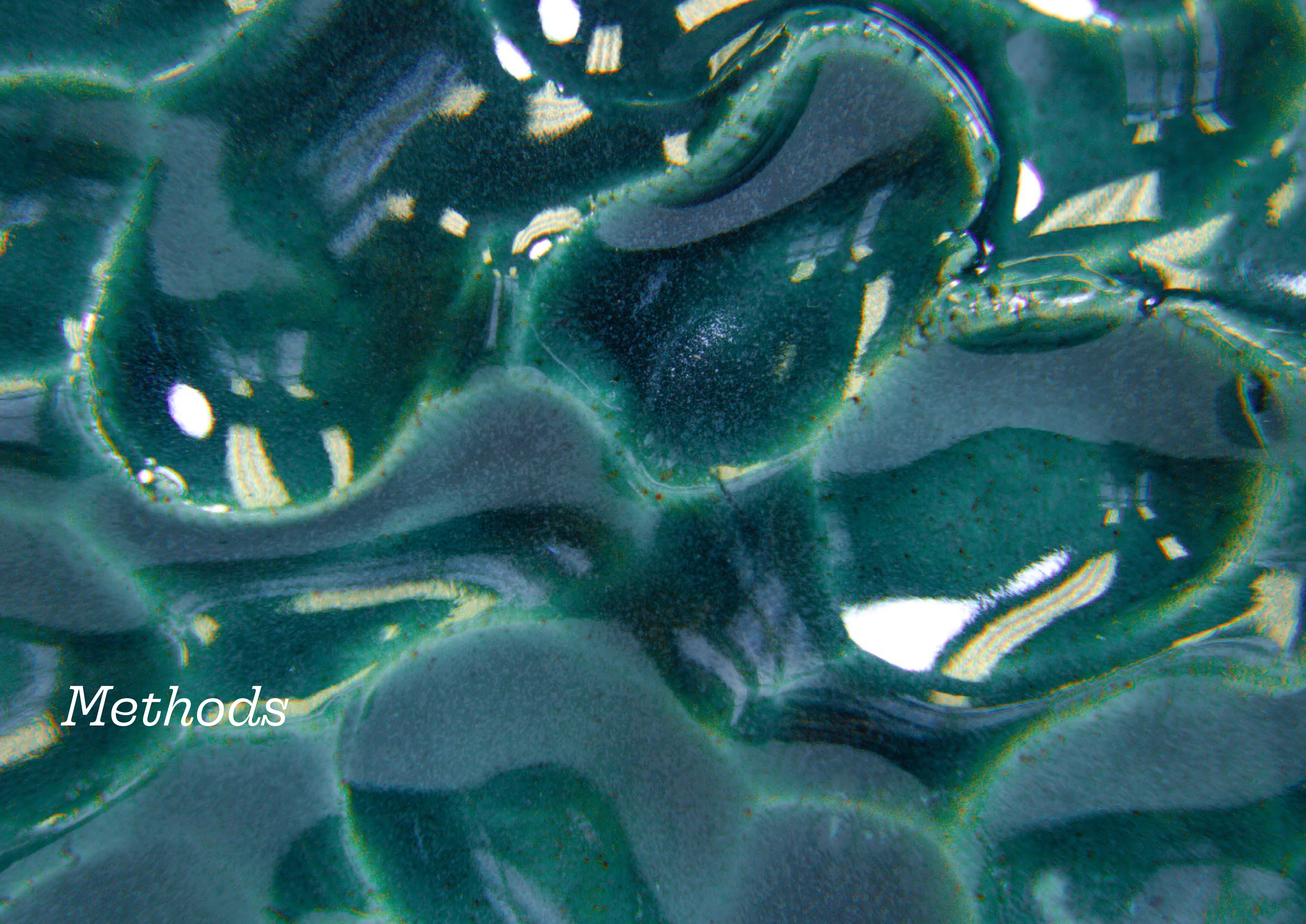
Figure 2:
Double Diamond diagram



Note: Based off the British Design Council diagram (2003)

Double Diamond

The double diamond is a design process developed by the British Design Council in 2003. The double diamond is comprised of four stages: discover, define, develop and deliver. Following this structure, the designer will broadly explore the design issue and then converge their thinking to define the issue. The designer will then explore many options to address the issue and finally settle on producing a final design outcome. This process is iterative, and the designer may cycle through these stages multiple times (Design Council, 2024). This structure did not lead my design process, but I used it reflectively to help me structure my documentation of research chapter.



Methods

Contextual Review

A literature review collects and digests existing information to gain a good understanding of the context of an issue or topic (Collins, 2010). A contextual review extends beyond a literature review to gain a broader understanding of a particular topic by looking at sources other than literature, recognising that knowledge comes in diverse forms. These sources could include artworks, conversations, and other forms of information. A contextual review is undertaken at the start of a project to develop a foundational understanding of existing knowledge in an area before seeking to build on it.

I undertook a contextual review following the initial introduction to the project to help me understand the state care system, including its history and current context. I read literature, including books, academic articles, news articles, and reports (notably the 2024 Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in State and Faith-Based care). I also grew my contextual understanding through conversation with Hunia. I undertook a contextual review of VOYCE by reading the reports on their website, reviewing their social media to understand the organisation’s tone, and spending time in the office to better understand the culture and daily operations. As part of the contextual review, I also conducted case studies of existing similar projects. The criteria for this review involved design projects which produced tangible resources in partnership with community or research groups.

Co-Design

I received institutional ethics approval for this project in preparation for working in co-design partnership with VOYCE staff and care-experienced people (AUTC Approval no. 25/294).

Consultation hui⁴¹

A design project often involves an initial consultation meeting with a client, following which the designer may work independently on the project. In contrast, co-design requires an ongoing partnership throughout the project (McKercher, 2020). This project was a co-design partnership between both VOYCE and the care-experienced co-creators of ‘Kia tika, Kia Pono’. Having regular consultation hui with Hunia, as a representative of VOYCE, maintained the co-design partnership with the organisation. I met frequently with Hunia throughout the project to define the intentions, plan the process and receive his perspectives on my work. These hui created a fluid, collaborative journey across the project. This consultation helped ensure my work aligned with VOYCE’s project aims. Hunia also provided consultation on tikanga Māori within the project, in his role as Kaihautū Kaupapa Māori (National Māori Advisor) at VOYCE.

⁴¹ Meetings

Workshops

(See Documentation of Research: Co-Design Workshop for further detail)

Co-design workshops are a method of co-design that uses creative participatory methods to generate ideas and develop creative content. Co-design workshops invite participants into the design process as partners (Sanders & Stappers, 2012). Workshop participants move beyond responding to set questions to working creatively, using participatory methods such as making, brainstorming, and critiquing (McKercher, 2020). It is the role of the designer or researcher to facilitate these workshops and record the data produced (Sanders & Stappers, 2012).

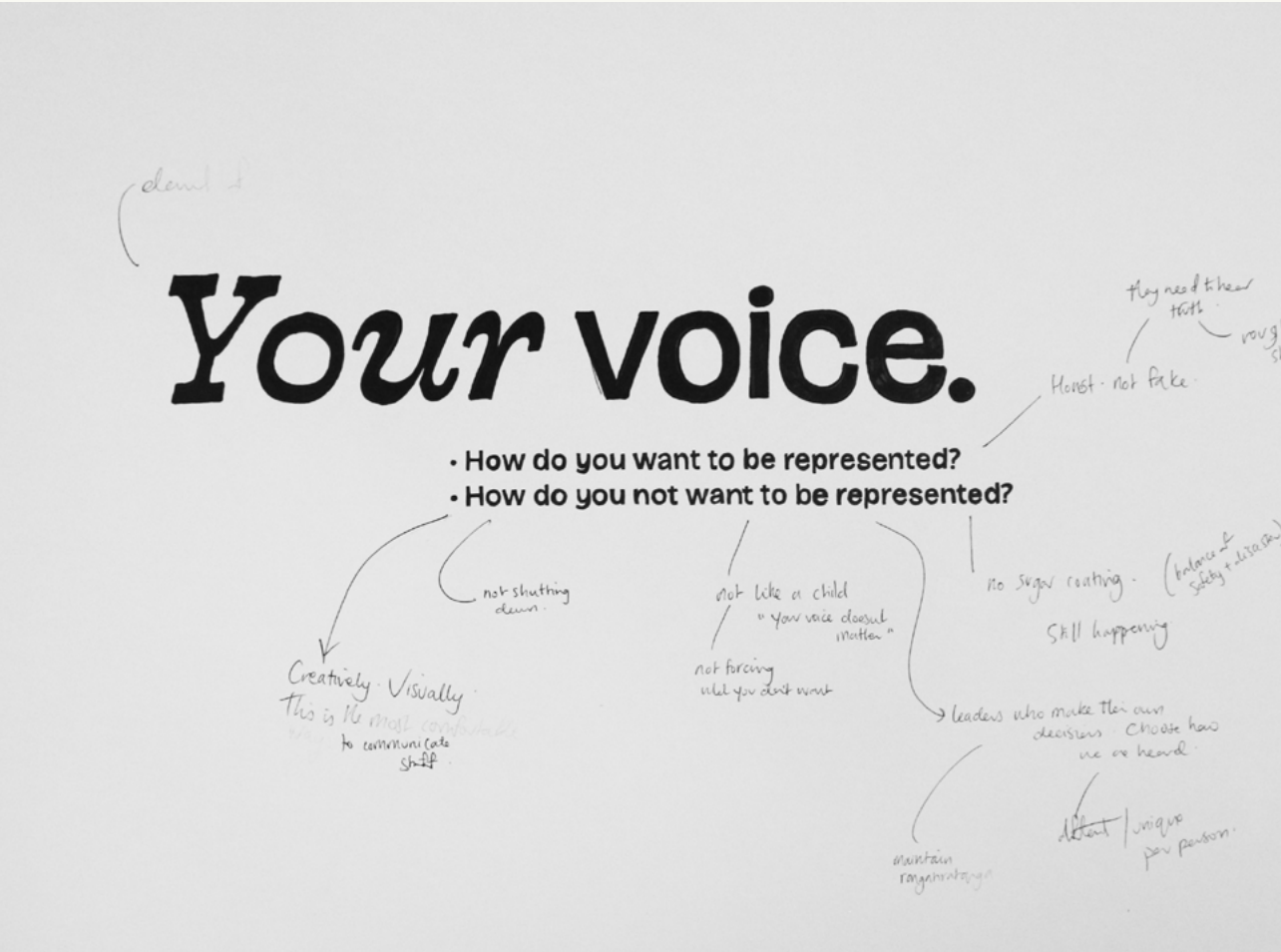
Alongside the ongoing consultation with Hunia, I ran one co-design workshop with care-experienced young adults and VOYCE staff. The purpose of this workshop was to generate ideas and inspiration for how a set of resources could be developed to support ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’. This workshop began with a whakatau⁴² and whakawhanaungatanga to build a relationship with the participants. I practised manaakitanga⁴³ by creating a welcoming environment, providing kai⁴⁴ and being flexible with the schedule.

The main intention of this workshop was to work in partnership with the community to generate ideas, so that my concepting was informed by their lived experience rather than my own assumptions. The workshop involved three separate activities: a brainstorming session, a feedback session, and a creative making activity.

⁴² Formal welcome

⁴³ Hospitality

⁴⁴ Food



Activity 1: Brainstorming Session

The brainstorming session was informal and semi-structured. I created a series of posters with prompts to guide the brainstorming session (See Figure 1). The questions included:

What is working well (about 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono')?

- What is 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'?
- How is 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' being used currently?
- Who is using it?
- What do you like/value about 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'?
- What are its most important parts?

What is the purpose (of 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono')?

- Who could use this resource (which we are developing)?
- How could they use it?
- What is the best vision or dream that you have for 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'?
- What do you not want 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' to become?

What (about 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono') could be better?

How do you want to be represented (in the design of these new artefacts)?

- How do you not want to be represented?

Activity 2: Feedback session

During the feedback session, I shared my first prototype with the group. They interacted with artefacts, and I recorded their responses.

Activity 3: Making

I set up the creative making activity, providing paint, clay, and other materials. I prepared another set of posters with some of the values from 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' and creative prompts. The creative making activity involved using paint, clay and other materials to support the generation of additional creative responses to a subsequent set of prompts (another series of posters) (see Figure 2).

Figure 3:
Brainstorm activity poster prompts

Figure 4:
Creative making activity poster prompts

Feedback Sessions

I ran two feedback sessions with Hunia and the care-experienced participants, respectively, following the in-person co-design workshop. In these sessions, I presented the concept and prototypes I had developed following the co-design workshop.

Feedback session with Hunia

The feedback session with Hunia was in person. This feedback session was in addition to our ongoing consultation hui, which ran throughout the project. This feedback session was an opportunity to present my prototypes to him. Presenting this work, I was checking whether I was on track with VOYCE's vision for the project. I took notes on his comments during this session.

Feedback session with care-experienced participants

The feedback session with the care-experienced participants was online. In the online feedback session, I shared the prototypes I had developed following the co-design workshop. I explained how I had arrived at these concepts from the initial co-design workshop. I asked the group:

- What do you like/not like about the prototypes?
- What is missing from this work?
- Do you feel like this work reflects you and your input?
- Any comments or questions?

Ideation and Prototyping

Ideating

Ideating is the process of producing many ideas and then sorting and refining these into concepts (Collins, 2010). Ideating is the point at which the work moves from understanding an issue to beginning to consider design responses. In this phase, key ideas evolve into more refined concepts (IDEO 2015).

My ideation was a fluid process of writing, mind mapping, and sketching. I found inspiration through key phrases or themes drawn from the co-design workshop data. I expanded upon the meanings within words or phrases through mind mapping. I then began to sketch images evoked by the words within the mind map. I would refine these ideas through a process of further sketching, annotating, critiquing and prototyping.

Prototyping

Prototyping involves building draft versions of a concept before the final version. Prototyping is a helpful method for exploring and refining an idea and can help to reveal issues with a concept (Sanders & Stappers, 2012).

Following the ideating phase, I fleshed out concepts by creating various physical prototypes. As my ideas became more refined, the prototypes would become more sophisticated. I experimented with many different media, including paint, paper, photography, carving, and clay. Making with my hands helped me to move the project out of my head and into reality. At times, I was making artefacts to give form to preconceived ideas. At other times, I was physically making and experimenting to help my thinking get unstuck.

Data Analysis

Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis is essentially a method for interpreting patterns in qualitative data (Terry & Hayfield, 2021). In reflexive thematic analysis, researcher subjectivity is valued. Researchers construct meaning from data, rather than just “finding” themes (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This process of constructing meaning suits a design project, as design involves analysing a range of information and synthesising it to communicate something meaningful (Swann, 2002). In reflexive thematic analysis, the researcher must reflect on and critique their own practice and process. Researchers must be comfortable navigating complexity, recognising nuance, checking their assumptions, and seeing that it is not possible to know everything about an idea (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

This method consists of the following steps (Braun & Clarke, 2022):

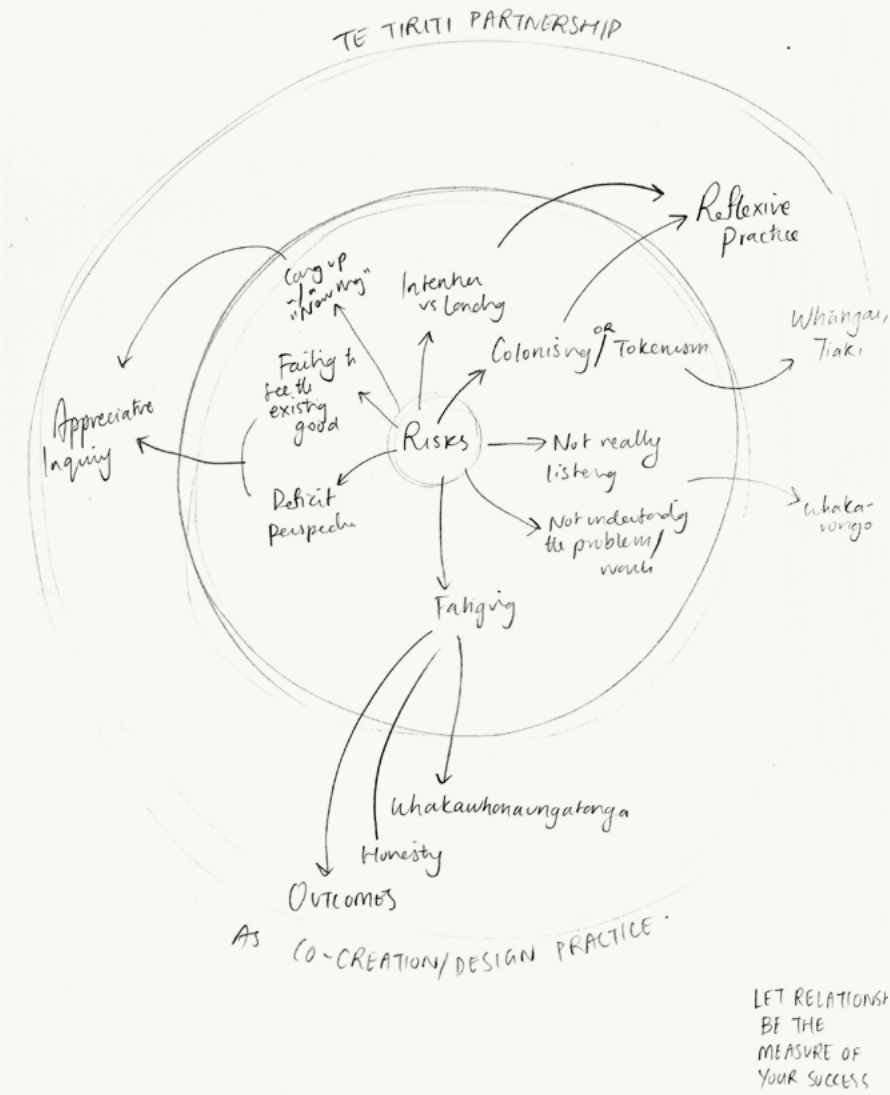
- 1. Understanding data
- 2. Coding data into chunks of information
- 3. Creating themes
- 4. Developing themes
- 5. Refining themes
- 6. Writing

Reflexive thematic analysis loosely informed my processing of data from the co-design workshop and online feedback session. The data that I received from the co-design workshop and feedback sessions involved transcriptions from the conversations, poster pages with the notes from the brainstorming session, and painted poster pages from the creative making session. I analysed the data by highlighting and annotating insightful phrases and making notes of repeated ideas. These repeated ideas and phrases became pieces of code, which I then interpreted into themes. Each theme was nuanced and complex, as it was constructed from a collection of ideas and comments. I further developed these themes through mind-mapping. Organising the data in this way helped me to create concepts which encapsulated the breadth of the data.

Mind mapping

Mind mapping is a type of diagramming which is used to produce and organise ideas, (Wigan, 2009) through a method of word and association, (Sanders & Stappers, 2012). Mind maps are structured like a web of words expanding from one initial keyword (See Figure 5). Mind maps are helpful for exploring the relationships between ideas (Wigan, 2009). I used mind mapping to develop concepts from themes within the data.

Figure 5:
Example mind map



Reflection

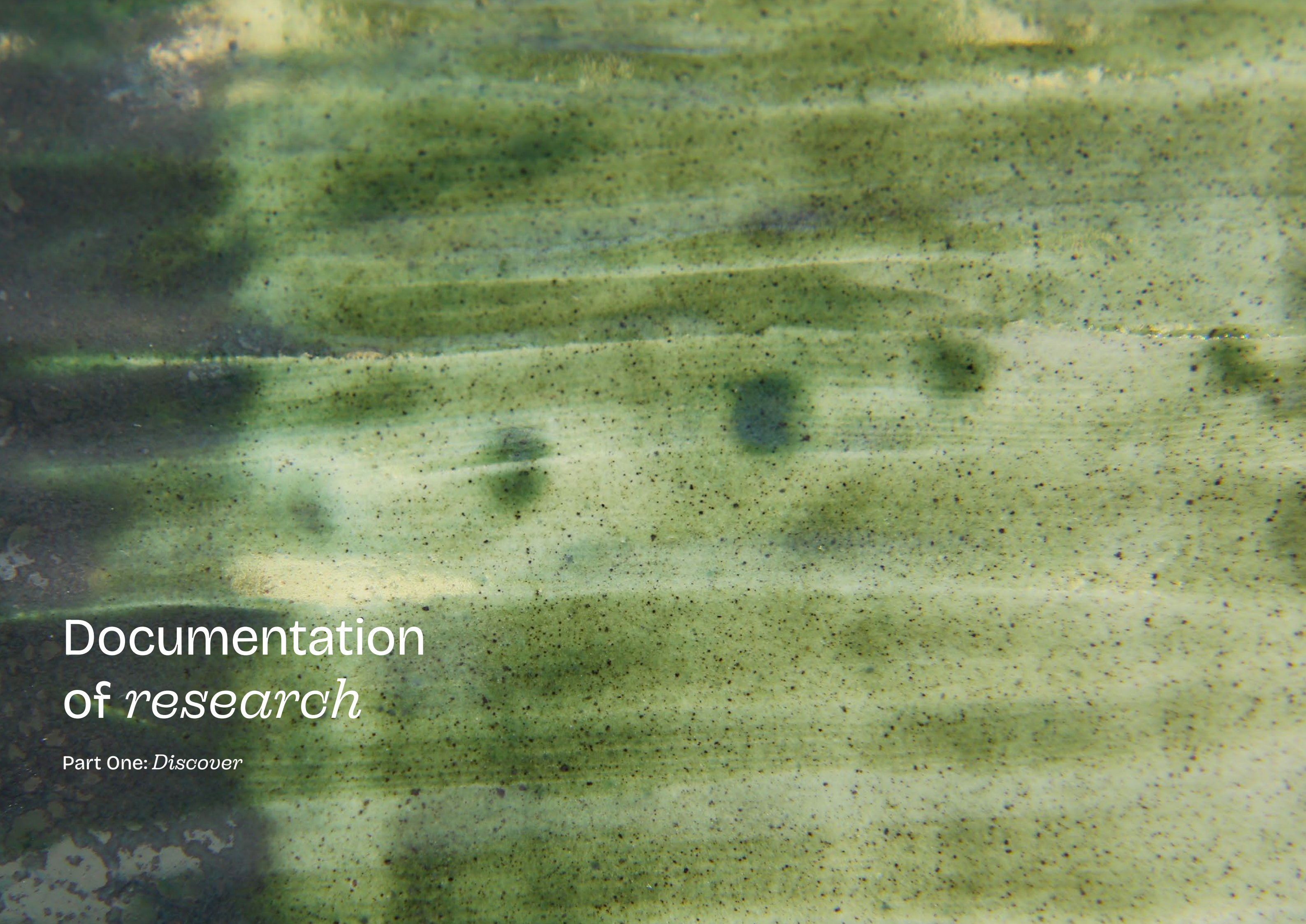
Reflecting on action involves retrospective reflection after an event. Reflecting in action can involve quick thinking in the moment, or an ongoing practice of reflection over the slow course of a longer project (Schön, 1994), such as throughout the duration of this Master's project. Moll et al. (2020) note that reflection within a co-design project should involve reflection on the designer's own worldview, the community they are connecting with, and the context the project exists within.

I reflected on my positionality, how I connected to the care-experienced community, and the wider context of the care system in New Zealand. Journaling was a key method for practising reflexivity. I kept a record of my thinking by writing diary-style journal entries as I worked. I could refer to these entries to remember ideas and see how my thinking had developed. Writing reflections on my experiences helped me trace back over my actions and interactions and unpack where I felt confusion or unease with myself or a subject. Journaling also sometimes took the form of drawing. I made sense of the difficult parts of the project, drawing to represent my feelings and process my thoughts.

I also processed these emotions and confusions through prayer. Journaling and prayer are daily practices in my personal life. My prayers were thought, written conversationally, or as poems. Prayer helped me to reflect upon my research at an emotional and spiritual level. I believe that prayer is a conversation; I was inviting God to grow and guide me in the project.



Figure 6:
My work space



Documentation of *research*

Part One: *Discover*

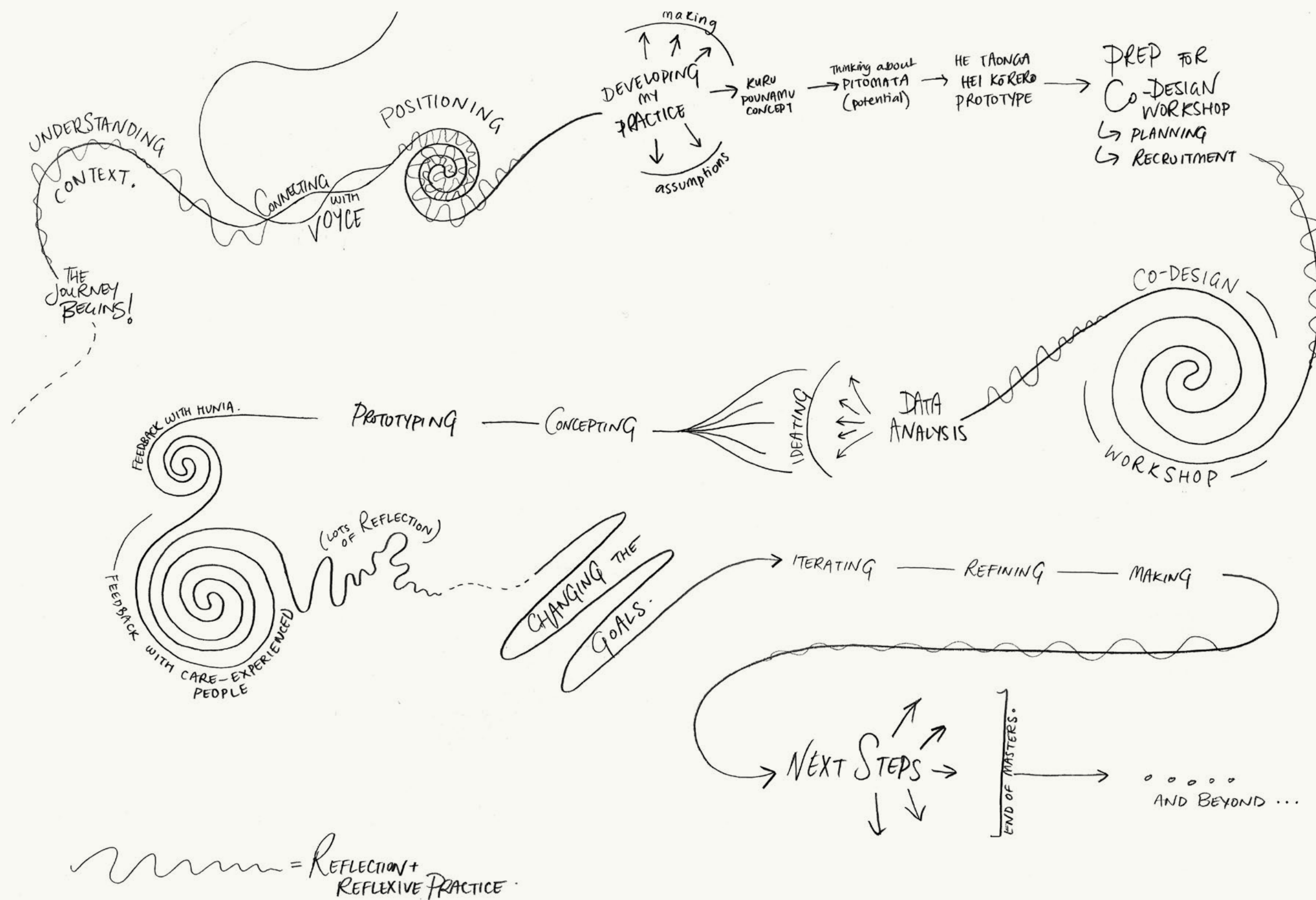


Figure 7
Diagram of my journey

Introduction to the Project

In November 2024, the team at Good Health Design Research Centre connected me with Hunia Mackay⁴⁵ from VOYCE Whakarongo to discuss a potential partnership on my Master’s project. I had previously met Hunia in 2023 (briefly), when he and his colleagues had presented ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ at a symposium hosted by Good Health Design. At this symposium, Hunia and his colleagues had seen my project ‘Aroha’⁴⁶ and recognised the potential to develop ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ into a designed tool like ‘Aroha’.

I met with Hunia to initiate a relationship and discuss the potential for a research partnership for this Master’s project. This meeting was an opportunity to get to know one another and consider whether this partnership was appropriate and would be of value or interest to both groups. We discussed the potential project and built connection over a cup of coffee, chatting about whānau, whakapono⁴⁷, politics, and finding shared connections through my study at Te Wānanga Takiura. Establishing a research project upon a relational foundation removes the researcher from a position of power, ensuring that the definition and aims of the project are formed communally (Bishop, 1996).

Mark & Hagen (2020) note that it is best co-design practice when the community defines the problem or opportunity which the project is addressing. If the designer defines the problem without seeking the community’s perspectives, their decision-making is likely to miss key nuances of the context. After establishing a relationship and recognising how my design background could fit with this project, Hunia presented VOYCE’s aspirations for ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’. They wanted to develop it beyond a PDF and into a physical artefact which could communicate the heart of the guidelines in a more engaging way to a wider audience of researchers, government departments, and service providers.

⁴⁵ Hunia Mackay consented to being named in this thesis as a co-design partner and consultant.

⁴⁶ This project is introduced in the contextual review chapter

⁴⁷ Faith or spirituality.

Figure 8
‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ Guidelines



Understanding the Context

Contextual research was essential to understanding what was appropriate and prioritised within the care-experienced community, and how I might approach working in this complex context. My background research helped me become better informed about the challenges that VOYCE and the care-experienced community were facing. Becoming informed about these things reduced the chances of causing harm to this community through my ignorance (Suri & IDEO, 2015).

Case Studies

I prepared for the project by undertaking case studies of similar projects to gain insights into co-design, working with communities in complex contexts, and relational ethics.

Kei Roto Tō Tātou Rongoā

Kei Roto Tō Tātou Rongoā (Wilson et al., 2025), was an interdisciplinary research project produced in partnership between health academics and designers. This project addressed the complicated contexts of whānau Māori experiencing violence, unsafe relationships and the uplifting of their tamariki. Researchers held a series of wānanga⁴⁸ where they heard about the experiences of whānau Māori and asked what whānau needed to support them on their journeys to heal. The research findings that were produced were developed by communication designer Jordan Tane (2024) into a set of beautiful resources, which were returned to the communities that were involved in the research wānanga as tools for healing.

Taitamariki Healthy Relationships

Campbell and Barbarich-Unasa (2025) hosted a series of wānanga with Māori youth in social services to hear taitamariki⁴⁹ perspectives on whānau violence and their experiences with social services, including the state care system. These perspectives were collated to inform future resources which could support taitamariki navigating unsafe situations. A set of cards was developed, presenting taitamariki perspectives on healthy intimate relationships, intended for discussion and personal reflection (Ka'ai et al., 2025).

⁴⁸To meet and discuss, forum, conference

⁴⁹Young people

Te Ara Poutama

Te Ara Poutama was a co-design partnership between AUT’s Taupua Waiora Māori Research Centre, Good Health Design Research Centre, and Te Whare Whakaruruhau o Tauranga Moana, Te Whāriki Manawāhine o Hauraki (Good Health Design, 2022). A series of wānanga about mahi tūkino⁵⁰ were hosted with whānau in Hauraki. At these wānanga, whānau requested tools to support them on their healing journeys. These social services then partnered with academics and designers at AUT to create a series of cards, underpinned by mātauranga Māori⁵¹, which guide whānau through a conversation about violence and intergenerational harm.

Areare Taringa Mai – Let Me Be Heard!

Areare Taringa Mai – Let Me Be Heard! (Barbarich-Unasa, 2022) is a set of guidelines which are designed to help practitioners engage with rangatahi Māori in health contexts, according to the needs and values defined by rangatahi Māori. This tool was developed in a co-creation partnership with rangatahi. The design of the resource includes the voice of rangatahi through the illustrative style and the quotes used. This brings the voice of the rangatahi to the forefront, uplifting and advocating for their perspectives.

Whakauae Research Centre

Whakauae Research is a Māori research centre focused on systemic change to improve outcomes for Māori communities. Whakauae recognises that academic outputs are often inaccessible and will therefore not create lasting practical change. Therefore, Whakauae often partners with designers and creatives to translate their research into outputs that communicate with iwi, communities, and decision-makers (Johnson et al., 2024).

These projects constitute a foundational body of research on partnering with communities to develop resources with and for them in the context of complex social issues. Each of these projects prioritised relationships, enacting manaakitanga and whakawhanaungatanga. These projects emphasise the expertise of communities, revealing that they hold the answers to their own problems. The insights from these projects informed my own project goals to build relationships, value lived experience, and return useful resources to VOYCE/the care-experienced community.

⁵⁰ to ill-treat with violence, rape, torture, destroy, abuse, maltreat, violate, mistreat.

⁵¹ knowledge, wisdom



Figure 9:
Tools for Healing developed as part of Kei Roto Tō Tātou Rongoā

Note. From Kei Roto Tō Tātou Rongoā, by J. Tane, 2025, Tāmata Oranga (<https://www.tāmata-oranga.co.nz/keirototatourongoa/home>). Copyright 2025 by Jordan Tane. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 10:
Taitamariki Healthy Relationships Cards

Note. From Kei Roto Tō Tātou Rongoā, by J. Tane, 2025, Tāmata Oranga (<https://www.tāmata-oranga.co.nz/resources/taitamariki-healthy-relationships>). Copyright 2025 by Jordan Tane. Reprinted with permission.



Figure 11:
Te Ara Poutama cards

Note. From Te Ara Poutama, by Good Health Design, 2022, Tāmata Oranga (<https://www.tāmata-oranga.co.nz/projects/te-ara-poutama>). Copyright 2025 by Good Health Design. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 12:
Areare Taringa Mai – Let Me Be Heard! Guidelines

Note. From Areare Taringa Mai – Let Me Be Heard!, by T. Barbarich-Unasa, 2022, Tāmata Oranga (<https://www.tāmata-oranga.co.nz/projects/areare-taringa-mai>). Copyright 2022 by Te Wai Barbarich-Unasa. Reprinted with permission.

The Context of VOYCE

I read reports produced by VOYCE to understand the nature of their advocacy work (Te Rōpū Kaitiaki mō ngā Teina e haere ake nei, 2023; VOYCE Whakarongo Mai, 2022, 2023a, 2023b, 2025b, 2025a, 2025c, 2025d). I particularly spent time understanding 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2022), as this would become both the content and the framework for my design.

Figure 13:
Illustrations inspired by 'Korowai Aroha'

Note. I created a series of illustrations inspired by VOYCE's report 'Korowai Aroha' (Te Rōpū Kaitiaki mō ngā Teina e haere ake nei, 2023). I sought to represent the voices of the rangatahi within the report as I reflected on my upcoming work co-designing with care-experienced people. I etched these illustrations into metal using an intaglio acid-etching process.



I spent time in the VOYCE office to gain a better contextual understanding of their work and connect with kaimahi⁵². In the office space, the kaiwhakamana⁵³ discussed their interactions with rangatahi, whānau, and different housing situations (such as juvenile detention facilities). Their daily work included pastoral visits with youth, supporting youth in family group conferences⁵⁴, and checking food and safety standards in housing facilities, among other things. During my visits to the VOYCE office, my eyes were opened to the injustices and struggles youth face, and to the great value of VOYCE’s advocacy.

I came to understand that ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ was a key document within VOYCE – their “Paipera Tapu”⁵⁵. My work could create a practical resource that their staff could use every day. This project was not purely personal, academic, or theoretical. This project had real-world potential (and consequences). I was humbled and challenged by the reality of the context within which I was working.

To gain a broader contextual understanding, I undertook a review of the history of state care in New Zealand, gaining insight into the genesis and development of our system, key political developments, relevance to Te Tiriti, and the state of care today. I also read through survivor experiences within the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in State and Faith-based care (2024b), which was a topical report at the time of the project. This was very heavy reading, and it was important to understand the raw reality of the history of abuse in care in New Zealand.

However, this reading, researching and reflection had its limits. It was clear to me during this time that no amount of head knowledge and empathising could replace the expertise of lived experience.

I reflected on a previous master’s class I took, where Jackie Dillon, former general manager at the Auckland City Mission, was a guest presenter (personal communication, March, 2025). Dillon shared a story about a group of women who had enthusiastically gifted thermal blankets to the mission, which they had lovingly knitted from Bluebird chip packets. Despite the women’s intentions, not a single person experiencing homelessness at the mission was interested in using these blankets. They would rather sleep in the rain than add a conspicuously shiny layer of embarrassment to their already public and vulnerable situations. This story helped emphasise the gap between theoretical knowledge and the nuance of lived experience, and reminded me to stay in close partnership with the community I was working with.

⁵² Workers, staff

⁵³ Advocates – this is the official role title of these staff members at VOYCE

⁵⁴ Family group conferences are meetings of youth and children in care with professionals and their families, often for making decisions about the care of children and youth (Oranga Tamariki, n.d.).

⁵⁵ Holy Bible

Figure 14:
Positioning mind map



Tangata Tiriti⁵⁶

Te Tiriti is relevant to any design project located in New Zealand, particularly when beneficiaries and partners in the design process are tāngata Māori (Hudson et al, 2010). Although this research was not entirely about tāngata Māori⁵⁷, Te Tiriti is particularly relevant to this research because of the high number of tamariki and rangatahi Māori in the care system (Oranga Tamariki, 2024).

Because Te Tiriti was relevant to this project, I began to consider how I could best uphold Te Tiriti within my co-design practice. Jones (2017) used the term ‘working the hyphen’ to describe her practice as a Pākehā academic working in partnership with Māori scholars in kaupapa Māori educational research. She reflected that it is necessary for Pākehā researchers to situate themselves in their in-between positioning. She encourages such researchers to become immersed within te ao Māori and simultaneously recognise and reflect upon their own position and privilege.

I could see how my own immersion experiences at Te Wānanga Takiura and with my own whānau (in-law) helped me to be more familiar with Māori contexts, tikanga, and reo. This familiarity helped me better understand the whakaaro Māori woven through VOYCE’s work and, ultimately, design something that aligned with these concepts.

Reflexive practices of journaling and prayer helped me to check my positioning and privilege throughout the project. These practices helped me recognise that I was at times overconfident about my knowledge of te ao Māori, which had the potential to lead to appropriation and tokenisation of Māori ideas. Vaeau & Trundle (2020) discuss how Pākehā must recognise their own ignorance to decolonise their approach to research. Through my reflexivity, I remembered that I was a stranger and a child in te ao Māori. It was and remains impossible for me to understand an inherently Māori nuance and worldview. Being honest about my positioning helped me be more realistic about the limitations of my own expertise, and practice ‘staying in my lane’ as a designer.

⁵⁶ A non-Māori person who is led by their sense of relationship and responsibility to Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Bell, 2024)

⁵⁷ Māori people



Figure 15:
*Tokotoko*⁵⁸

Note. I carved this stick in my first semester, while thinking about how there is a ‘talking stick’ on my husband’s marae, which is passed around the whānau at a tangi. I connected this idea to advocacy and youth having their voices heard. Reading ‘Toi te Mana’ (D. Brown et al, 2024), I recognised that it was inappropriate for me to be practising whakairo⁵⁹, a skill which requires training and mātauranga. This stick was cultural appropriation. This artefact became a reminder of my ignorance of the great depth of te ao Māori and a warning to remember my place as a designer.

58 Staff, Walking stick
59 Carving

EMBARRASSED ABOUT
MY OVER-CONFIDENCE,
BUT THAT WAS ME
TRYING TO WALK IN
THE JOURNEY THAT
I'VE ALREADY BEEN
ON — I already wrestled
with this stuff at
Takiura.

Is my whānau enough
of a hononga?
They receive me in,
knew my heart +
call me enough...
but then in academia
I'm told that it
isn't enough.

Cancel culture,
fear of judgement +
political correctness
makes me afraid to
make mistakes
along the way. But to
walk the walk + do
the talking, I have to
make the mistakes.

Can I use the
mātauranga I have,
having done the work
+ the journey? Or do
I need to know it all?
Or do I have no place?
Should I never engage?

The tension between
RELATIONAL +
ACADEMIC. If my
ngākau is what
matters, how can
that be known or
translated in an
academic space

You need to be
humble to engage
with this journey.
Humility comes
from being humbled,
being humbled
comes from making
mistakes

Embarrassment
leads me to be quiet
+ not contribute for
fear of failing.
I need to still speak
up + be willing to fail,
but this is also good
in that it reminds me
I AM NOT THE EXPERT.

Figure 16:

A page from my reflective journal,
processing my positioning

You've been more focused
on doing what you
WANT TO DO + have already
decided to do than
actually critically
questioning whether it
is the right thing to do.

BEING
HUMBLE
REQUIRES
BEING
HUMBLED.

Privilege

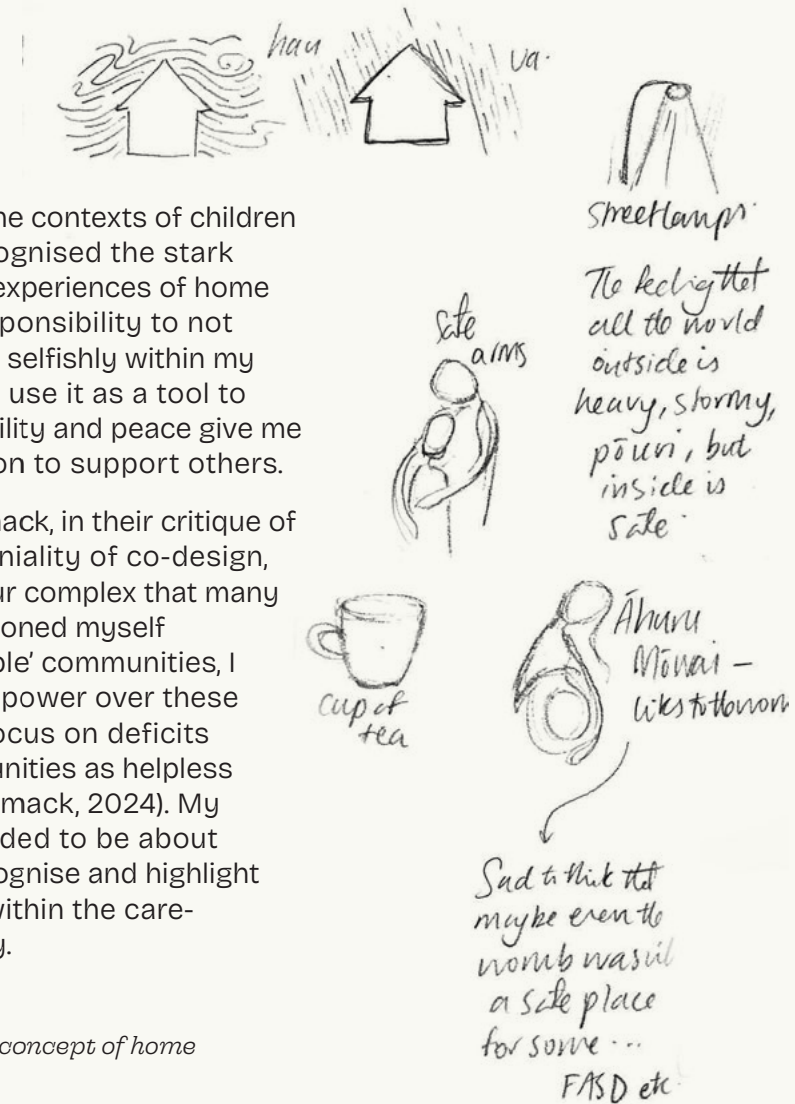
Neta Kerepeti (2024), a survivor of abuse in state care reflected on the definition of home:

"A HOME SHOULD BE A PLACE WHERE ALL YOUR NEEDS ARE MET, AND NOT AS SOME ROMANTIC NOTION.

THIS IS WHAT REALITY IS FOR SOME, SHOULD BE FOR ALL, AND CERTAINLY SHOULD BE FOR ALL TAMARIKI MOKORUNA WHO ARE MADE WARDS OF THE STATE, AND SUBSEQUENTLY PLACED IN CARE.

I THINK OF HOME AS THE PLACE WE GO WHEN WE'RE TIRED + NEED REST... WE GO HOME; WHEN WE'RE SAD AND HURTING... WE GO HOME; WHEN WE'RE STRETCHED AND RELATIONSHIPS ARE FRAGILE... WE GO HOME; WHEN WE NEED TO FEEL SAFE... WE GO HOME.

WE ALL WANT TO BE ABLE TO GO HOME."



As I learnt more about the contexts of children and youth in care, I recognised the stark contrast between their experiences of home and my own. I felt a responsibility to not remain comfortably and selfishly within my privilege, but instead to use it as a tool to support others. My stability and peace give me a strong, safe foundation to support others.

However, King and Cormack, in their critique of the whiteness and coloniality of co-design, discuss the white saviour complex that many designers hold. If I positioned myself as a saviour to 'vulnerable' communities, I would assume a role of power over these communities; I would focus on deficits and frame these communities as helpless without me (King & Cormack, 2024). My work as a designer needed to be about using my skill set to recognise and highlight the existing strengths within the care-experienced community.

Figure 17:
Sketches reflecting on my concept of home

The Place for Faith

My Christian faith is deeply embedded in my positioning as a designer. Akama et al. (2019) argue that there are no neutral designers; our values will always be expressed in our work. I can't pretend that my faith does not influence the way I work and make decisions. And my humble hope is that my faith moves me to act with compassion and care toward all people. Even so, the priority of this project was uplifting the values of care-experienced people, not my own. To many care-experienced people, 'Christian' is not a safe word. The Royal Commission of Inquiry (Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions, 2024) makes it very clear that many children and youth have had traumatising experiences with faith-based care, which I grieve.

Reflecting on this tension, I was unsure about how to hold my faith within this project. I could see how, in future projects, people may prefer to work with people of other faiths or backgrounds than my own. This project was not the appropriate context for me to take control and express my views explicitly. I expressed my faith in this project through a deep personal reflection on the harm that the church has done, and tears shed in the quiet place before God. My role as a Christian in this context was not to lead, but to listen, and to serve.

Liminal Space

Many tensions were highlighted through my reflexive practice throughout the project. I often felt in between as I navigated questions about my place as a Pākehā, a designer, and a Christian, and reflected on my position and privilege. At times, this reflexivity was heavy and confusing. I made mistakes, overstepping and failing to hold the tensions well. Many of the questions that I wrestled with remain unanswered. I will carry these questions into my future practice, allowing myself to be shaped by the work I do.

McKercher (2020) names 'being in the grey' as a key mindset in co-design. Co-designers address complex problems without clear answers, and we must learn how to avoid rushing to answers that don't fit well. The complex questions that I navigate about my role as a designer are a kind of grey space. These big questions require a journey, a non-linear process, and I have not arrived at an answer yet. This journey will continue beyond the scope of this project and into my personal practice.

Horizon line, between night + day.
 A valley between mountains.
 A chasm, a divide.
 A bridge?

 A pendulum swinging
 Right one day,
 unsure the next.
 Stand in confidence,
 Question yourself.

 Trying to carve out a pathway
 Yet I believe in
~~I can't hear my thoughts~~
 Trying to listen to the korounga
 admit all these voices

 Aputa, ātea
 white space,
 Dawn.

Figure 18:
*Liminal Space: a poem written
 by me as I reflected/prayed
 about feeling in-between*

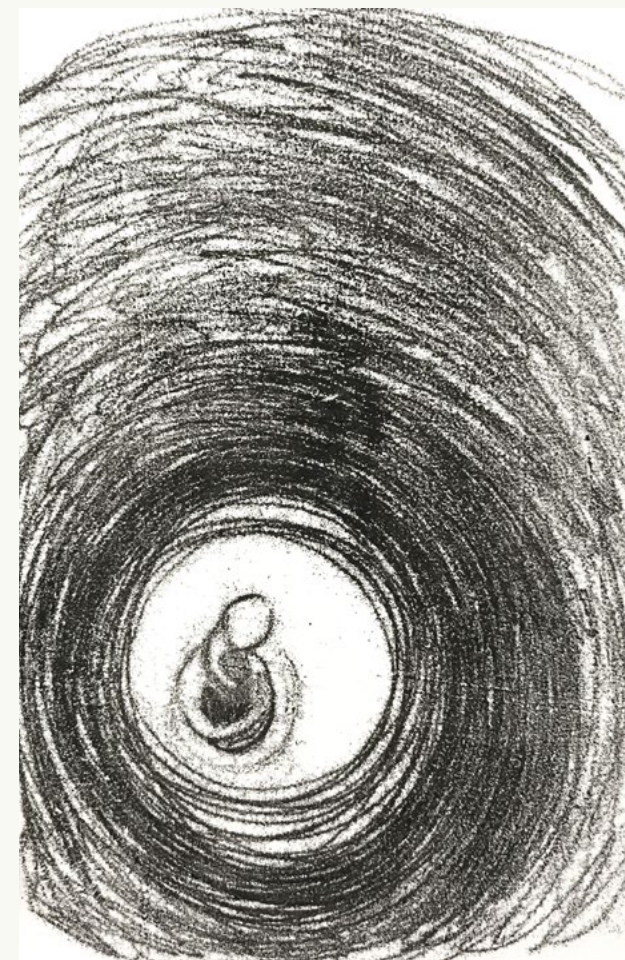
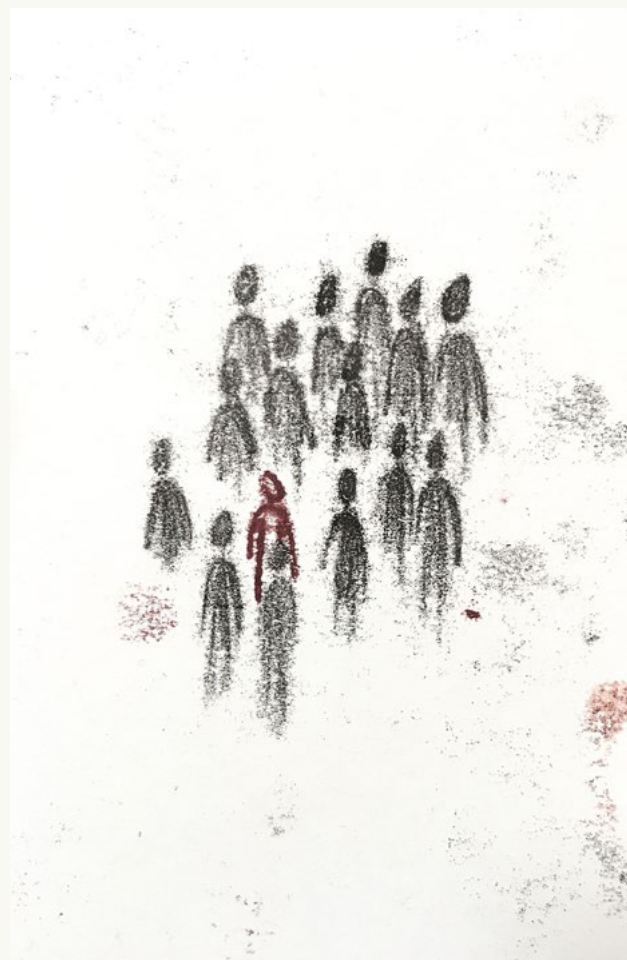


Figure 19:
Dry point feelings

Note. As part of my reflective practice, I illustrated my feelings as a way to process the confusion I felt as I navigated my positioning in the project.

Developing my Practice/Making Making Assumptions

I needed to gain ethics approval before beginning co-design with care-experienced people. However, I found it challenging to develop a making practice before hearing the insights of care-experienced people, because I felt that my limited knowledge would lead me to make assumptions. So, I decided that is what I would do. I would ‘make’ my assumptions. If I was paralysed by fear of assuming, I would not learn anything. The key to making assumptions in a productive way is a process of critical reflection on my making.

Tang (2021) uses the term ‘conversational artefacts’ in her thesis work to describe designed artefacts which prompt discussion. The artefacts I created in this phase of the research initiated a kind of reflexive conversation with myself as I critiqued both my work and my perspectives. This making process provided an opportunity for me to reflect upon my own assumptions or bias. The things I made served as critical artefacts, objects which are designed to prompt critical thinking (Fisher et al., 2019). I created different artefacts and critiqued my work in a reflexive cycle, which went on to inform my understanding of how I would engage with the care-experienced community.

I drew from the list of ethical principles within ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ as a starting point for my making. These values are listed in both English and Māori. This set of ethical principles serves as a summary of the document. I was interested in illustrating kupu Māori⁶⁰, because of the depth of ideas and imagery in the language. I began illustrating metaphors that represented my own understanding of these values. I then returned to the illustrations with a critical lens to test my assumptions.

⁶⁰ Māori word

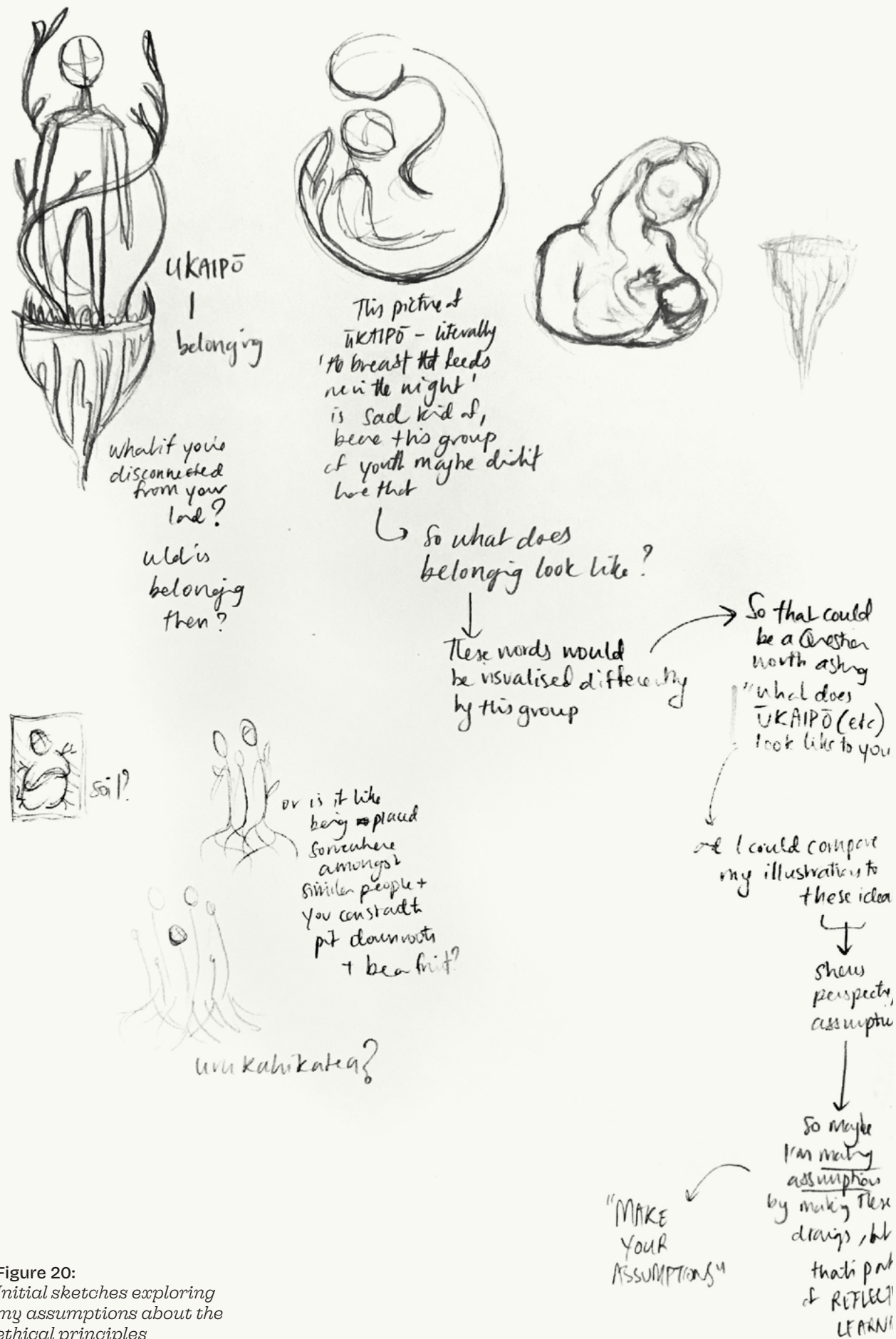


Figure 20:
Initial sketches exploring my assumptions about the ethical principles

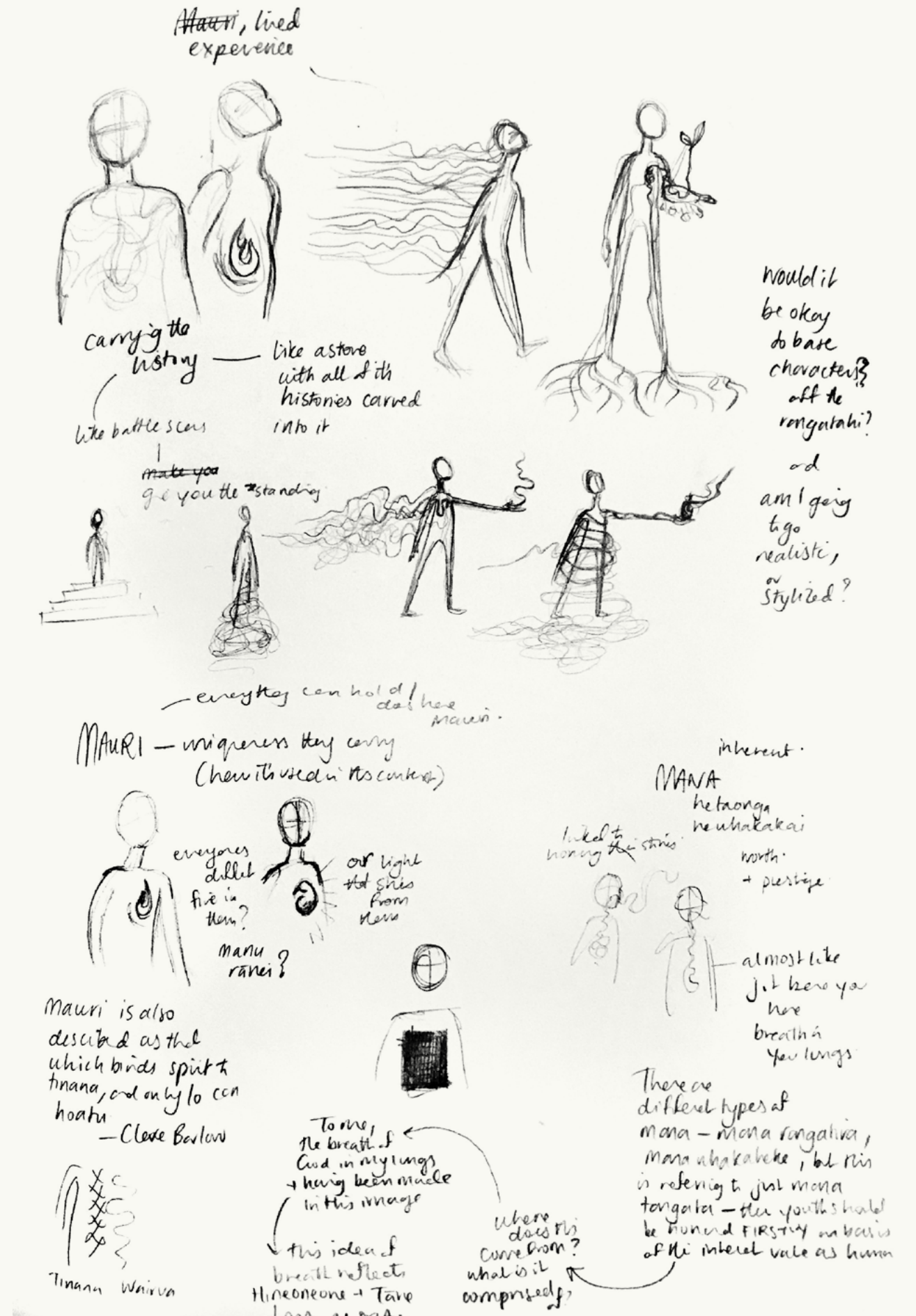




Figure 21:
'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' ethical
values illustrations and
critical annotations



Does illustrating w/
Maori imagery + ideas
exclude non-Maori
from connecting?



What does it really mean
to be a RANGATIRA?

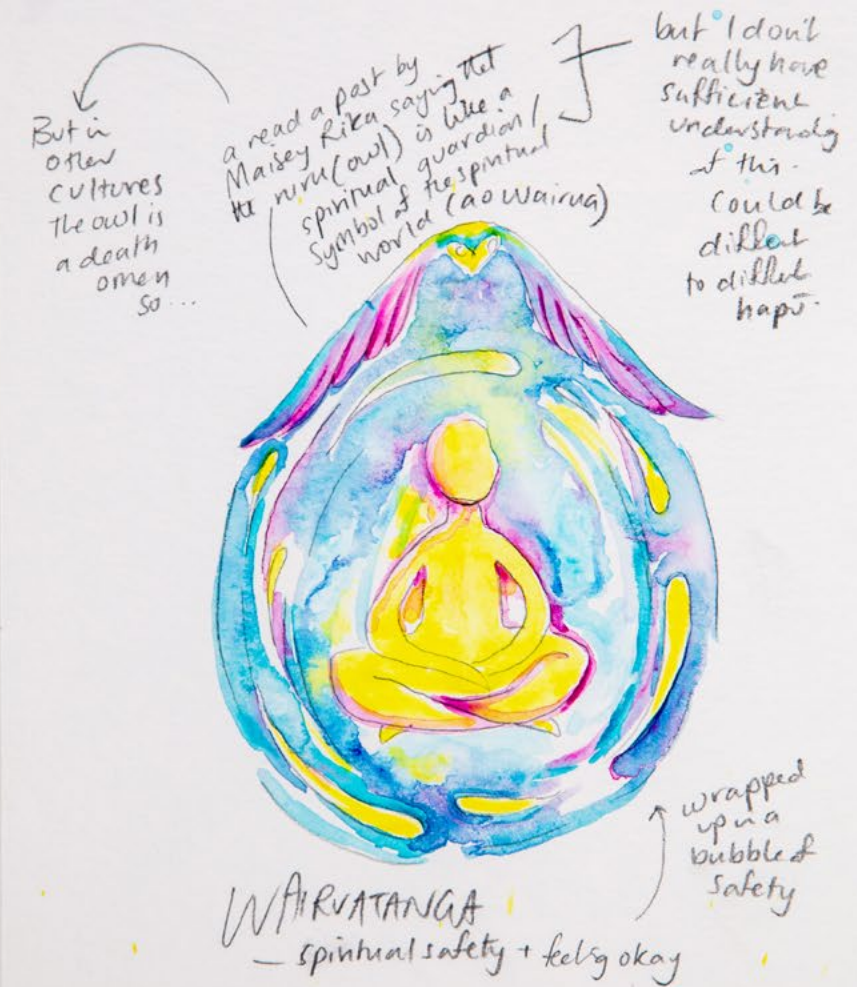
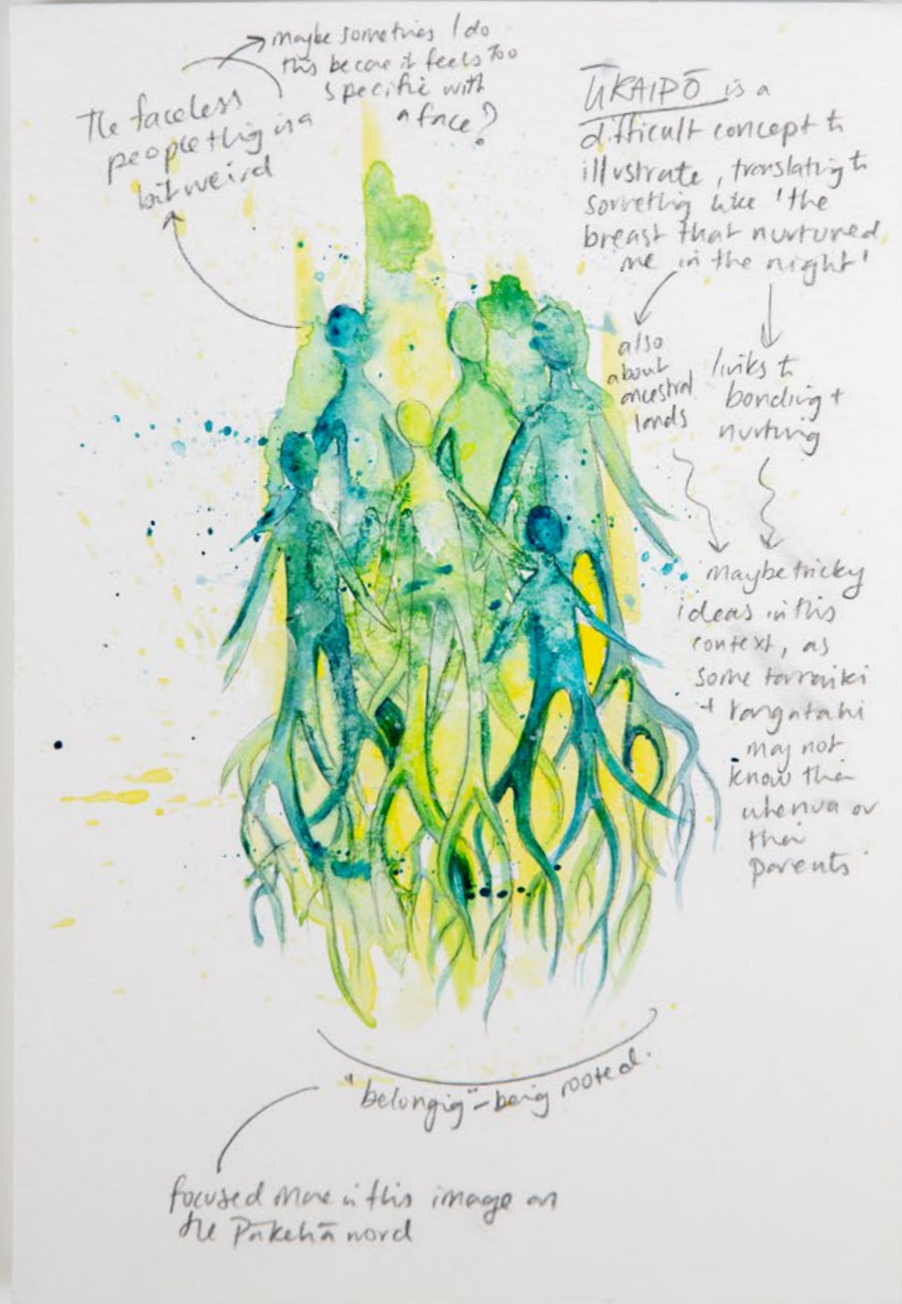
↳ does this image miss the nuance
of this word according to voice?

Hongi, represents
trust. — aroha



TIKA, FONO

Would this
level of
intimacy + trust
be too much
for some
people?
If this represents
care-experienced
youth +
government,
this
level of
trust +
care
may feel
like too
much to
ask
for
some
people.



IS IT APPROPRIATE FOR ME
TO MAKE THESE TAONGA?

I chose to carve
feather-forms rather
than any whakairo
design, because I
don't have sufficient
understanding of the meaning
within the forms

But in half-creating
these taonga in this way,
am I evidencing that it isn't
appropriate for me to make
them?

→ am I overthinking it??



Figure 22:
Clay Heru

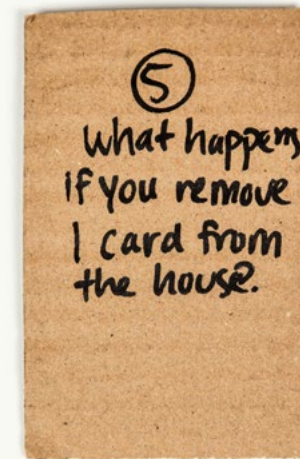
Note. VOYCE described care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi as 'rangatira'; they are experts and leaders because of their lived experience in care. I made clay heru⁶¹ to represent this idea of rangatira, as in the past a heru would have been a symbol of mana (D. Brown et al, 2024).

⁶¹ Comb



Figure 23:
Home cards

Note. I created this set of cards as an exploration of the meaning of 'home'. These cards are based on Sir Mason Durie's 'Te Whare Tapa Whā' (1985) acknowledging the necessity of physical, spiritual, emotional and family wellbeing as crucial aspects of a safe home.



Is it inappropriate to
use stories from the Royal
Commission of Inquiry into Abuse
in Care?

But developing my own
generalised stories is
inauthentic to the
unique stories +
experiences
of people
in care

it doesn't seem okay to
take these deeply personal
stories + apply them to my
own context/work.

"USING"
STORIES.

Sia has been moved
between 4 different
foster homes in the
past 2 years. She
has no friends at
her new school and
feels uncomfortable
+ unsettled in the
new home.

Build Sia's home from
the cards.

especially with a
relationship with
the story-teller.

⑥
Reflect:
what would
it be like if
your tinana/
hinengaro/
wainua/
whānau was
not safe in
your house?

Note. I created scenario cards to connect this idea of 'home' to the experiences of tamariki and rangatahi in care. Initially, I thought about drawing stories from the The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions (2024b). However, I felt that this was inappropriate, so I wrote my own scenarios instead. However, this also seemed inappropriate.

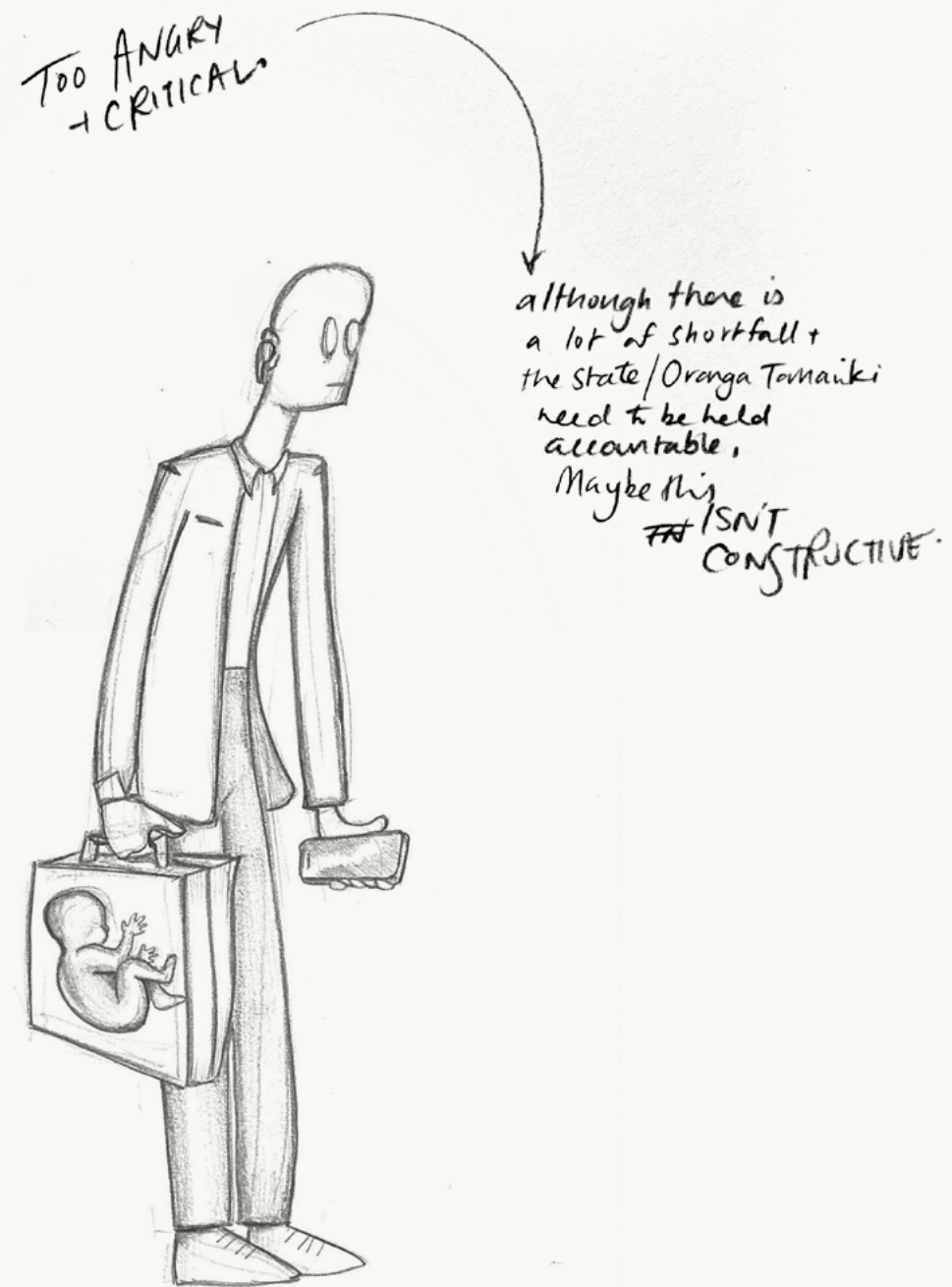
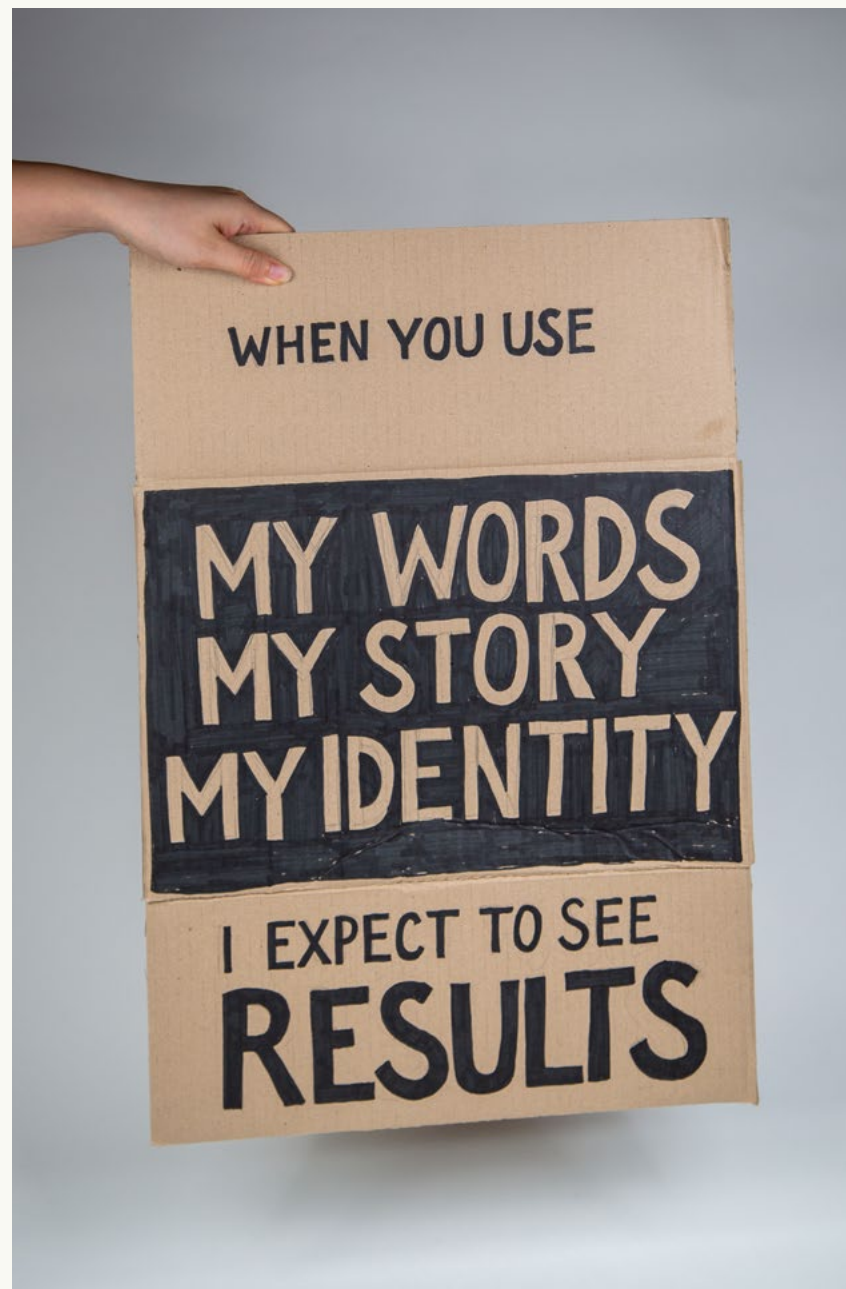


Figure 24:
The state as parent

Note. This illustration was inspired by the critiques at the Kei Roto Tō Tātou Rongoā symposium (Wilson et al., 2025) about failures of the state towards tamariki in care.

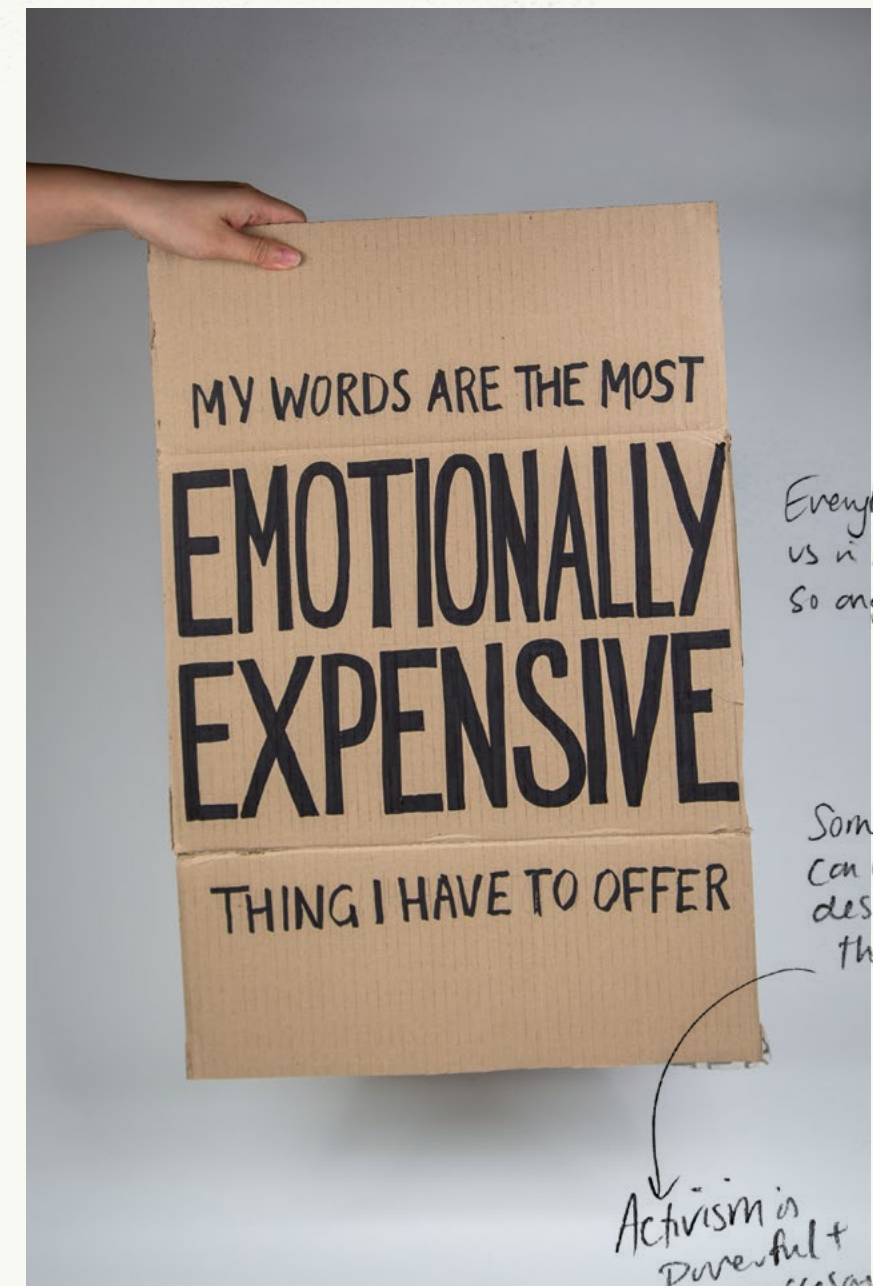
Figure 25:
Protest signs



Note. At the 'Reimagining Māori and Home' Symposium (2025), in a workshop activity participants were encouraged to make patches as a sign of protest against homelessness in New Zealand.

At the time of the project, there was widespread activism around the Treaty Principles Bill and the conflict in Gaza. Reflecting on the language of protest and the emotivity of typography in activism, I created these placards using key quotes from 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'.

BOLD LETTERING
+ CAPITAL CASE
= ANGRY TONE.



Everything around
us in media seems
so angry + negative

Sometimes this
can lead to
despair, rather
than action.

Activism is
powerful +
necessary

But could I
~~not~~ emphasise
a relational
approach
instead?

Figure 26:
Posters - 'Kei hea te korimako e kō?'

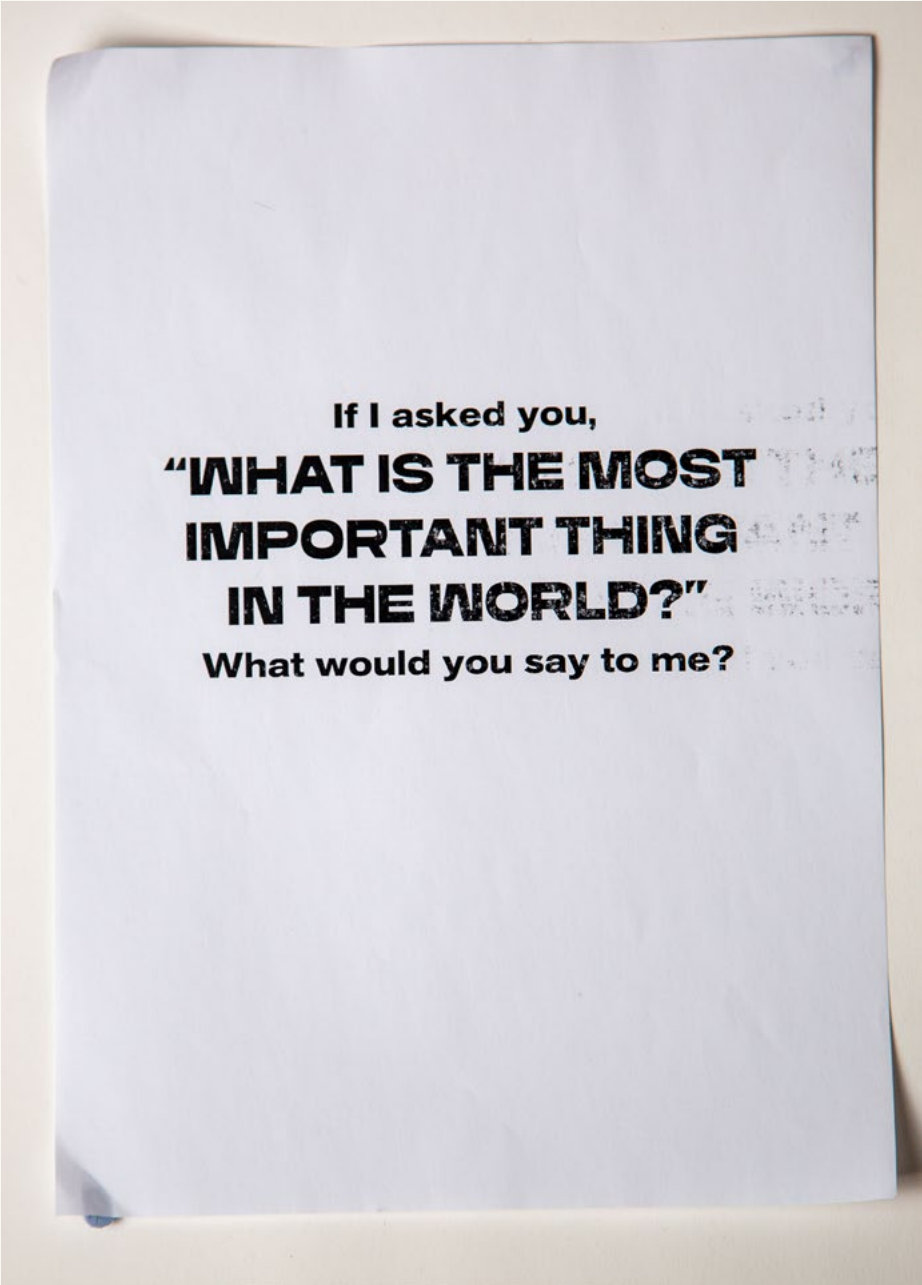
Note. 'Hūtia te rito o te harakeke, kea hea te kōmako e kō?... Māu e ui mai, 'He aha te mea nui o te ao?' Māku e kī atu, 'He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata"
'If you remove the heart of the flax bush, where will the bellbird sing? If you ask me, 'what is the most important thing of the world?' I will tell you, 'It is people, it is people, it is people"

(Te Aupōuri and The Crown: Deed of Settlement of Historical Claims, 2012)

The harakeke (flax bush) is a picture of generations in the family. The longest outer leaves are like the grandparents. The next leaves in are like the parents, and the leaves in the centre, the heart (or rito) are the children. The tikanga⁶² of harvesting harakeke is that you should always harvest the outer leaves, never the innermost leaves, to protect the future of the plant – giving the children a chance to grow up and future generations to grow. This whakatauāki⁶³, spoken by Meri Ngāroto of Te Aupōuri, talks about the importance of people, and of the family unit. This poster series was intended as a provocation to the government to prioritise caring for people over profit.

⁶² correct procedure, custom, protocol

⁶³ proverb





**KEI HEA
TE**



**KORIMAKO
E KŌ?**

*I want to communicate
hopefully, INVITING
people to listen with
a DIFFERENT KIND
OF VOICE.*

Figure 27:
Kuru Pounamu

Note. At a noho marae⁶⁴ with Te Wānanga o Aotearoa⁶⁵, I learnt about the kupu whakarite ⁶⁶ 'he kuru pounamu'. 'He kuru pounamu' translates to 'a small piece of pounamu', like what may be found upon the bench of a kaiwhakairo.⁶⁷ Pounamu⁶⁸ is the most precious stone in te ao Māori, prized for its great strength and brilliant colours (D. Brown et al, 2024). Even a shard broken off a larger stone is valuable. This kupu whakarite is a term of endearment, particularly used for children. Ahakoa he iti, he pounamu – although they are small, they are precious.

This kupu whakarite was very fitting for children and youth in care. Disconnected from their whānau, these children could be seen as shards, little pieces. Small and scattered, they are like pounamu still, because they are children, they are people, they are precious.

Reflecting on this kupu whakarite, I created these small clay pieces by sculpting a lump of clay and glazing it a deep green.

⁶⁴ Overnight stay at a traditional meeting house

⁶⁵ Te Wānanga o Aotearoa is a Māori institute of learning which offers many programmes including free Māori language night classes. At the time of the Masters project, I was participating in a level 7 language class.

⁶⁶ Metaphor

⁶⁷ Carver

⁶⁸ Jade



The idea of conversational artefacts (Tang, 2021) continued to influence my making as I later began to design artefacts which would spark critical conversations with a wider audience.

Pitomata⁶⁹

Focusing on the deficits of care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi can stop them from building capacity. Alternatively, recognising strengths can grant tamariki and rangatahi a hopeful vision about their identities and futures.

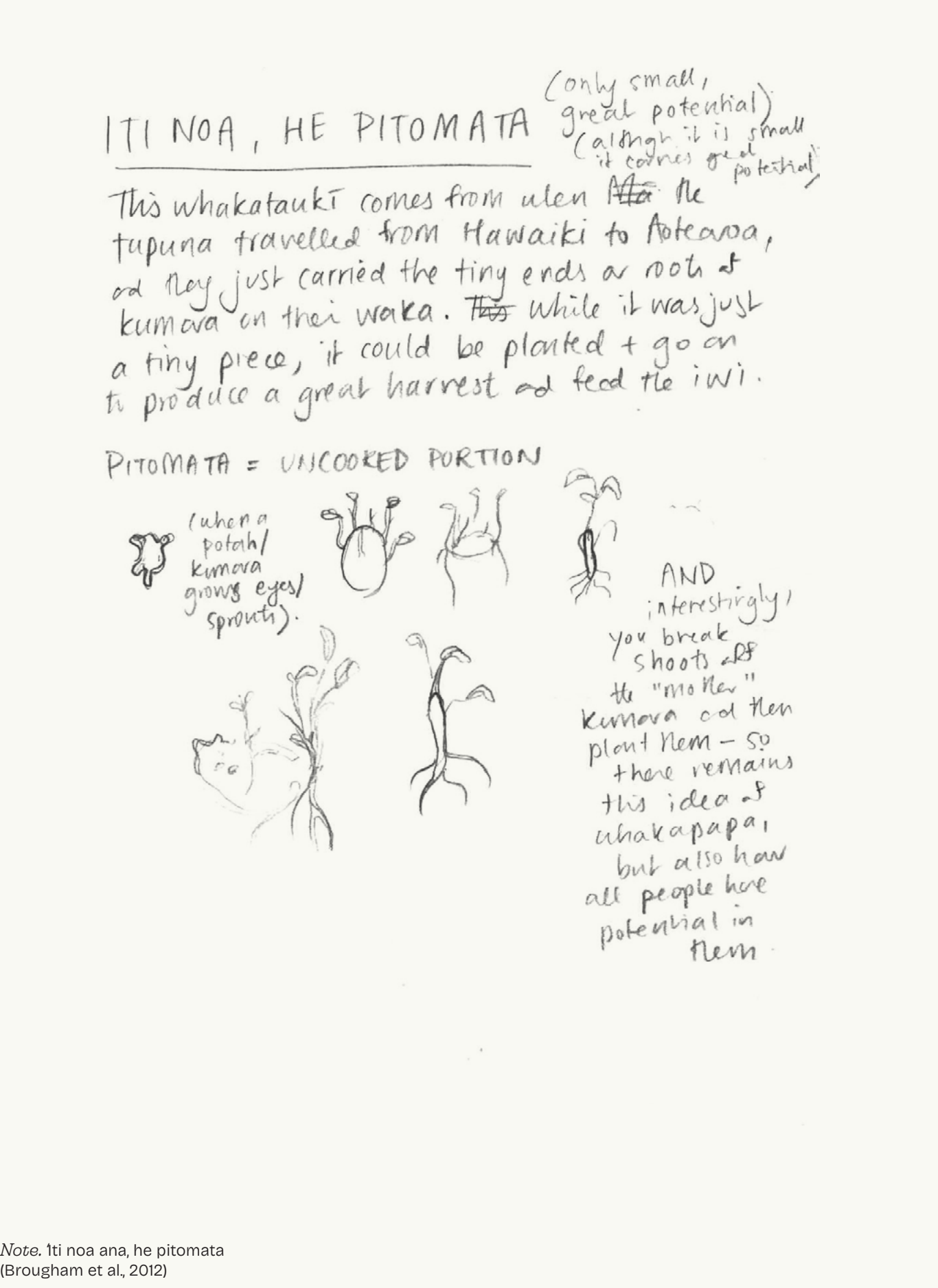
Looking at the kuru pounamu pieces I had formed earlier, I reflected on pitomata – potential. Every care-experienced tamaiti⁷⁰ is a taonga tapu⁷¹ who carries hope and healing inside of themselves and their whakapapa. Tamariki and rangatahi are not statistics, and they are not defined by the deficits of their contexts. Each of them carries potential for a more hopeful story, and they are not purely dependent on the system to create a different future. Many care-experienced people have fought to create a better future for themselves despite their experiences of the system (Kerepeti, 2024). However, the system and those working within it are still responsible to nurture the pitomata within these young people and grant them the best possible foundation.

I wanted to develop an artefact which critiqued deficit perspectives and invited people to recognise the potential within care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi. With this goal, I returned to my clay work. Following a similar process to the kuru pounamu, I collected whakatauki⁷² and kupu whakarite which spoke about pitomata. Drawing from the natural imagery within the reo Māori, I designed a taonga uku⁷³ to represent each phrase. I then developed a series of cards and packaging that drew the taonga together into a cohesive artefact which explored ideas around perspectives and potential.

Note. The whakatauki and kupu whakarite that I used were drawn from my Māori language studies at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa and Te Wānanga Takiura. I cross-checked these phrases and provided references to records of these whakatauki and kupu whakarite.

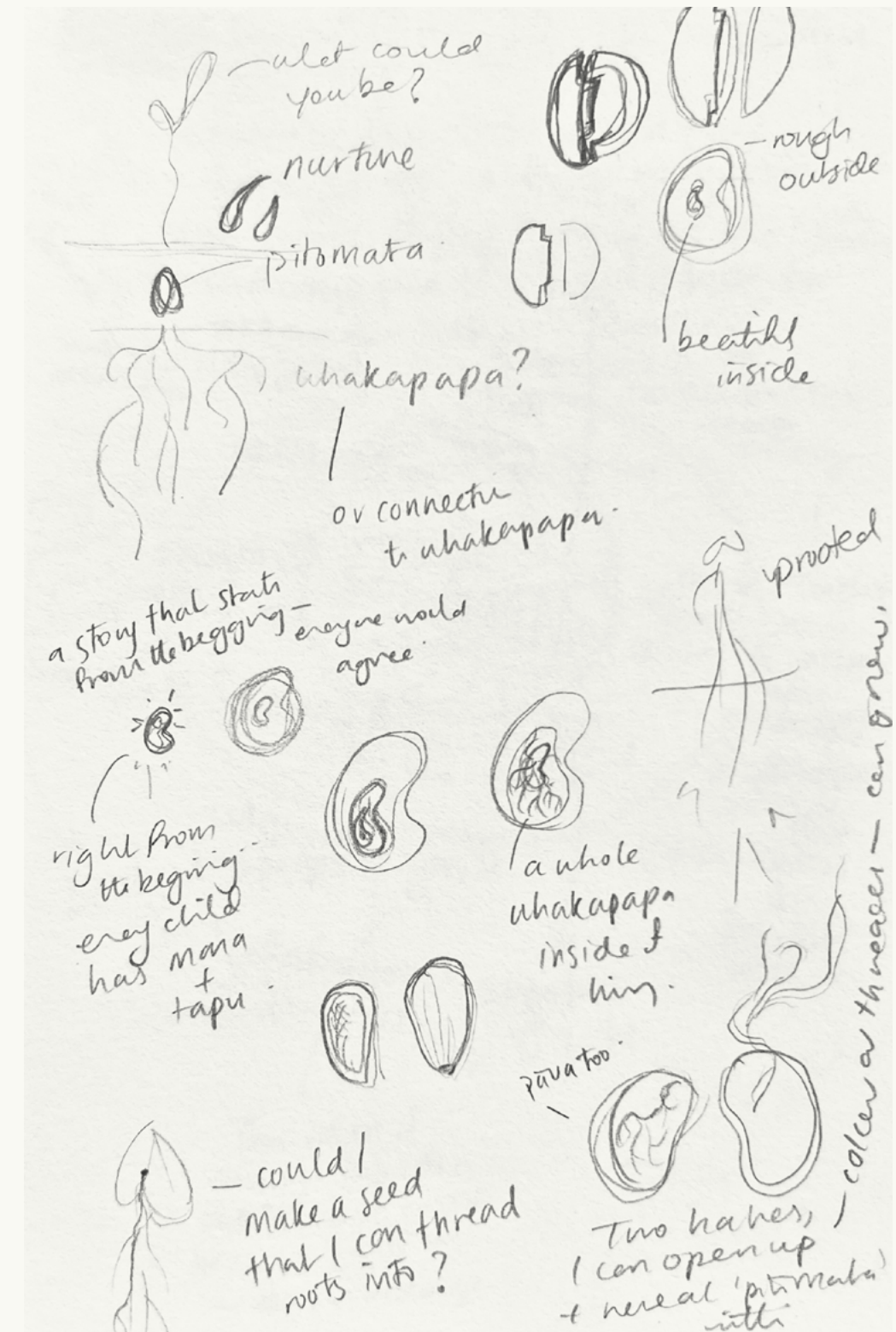
⁶⁹ potential
⁷⁰ child
⁷¹ sacred treasure
⁷² Māori proverbs
⁷³ clay treasure

Figure 28:
Sketches planning the taonga uku



POIPOIĀ TE KĀKAO KIA PUĀWAI

nurture the seed so that it ~~blooms~~ blooms.



I loved the process of working with the uku⁷⁴. It made sense to be working with my hands to whenua⁷⁵ as I formed taonga⁷⁶ to represent language, which in turn drew its mātauranga⁷⁷ from the taiao⁷⁸. Each time I glazed a piece, it was exciting to see how it would come out of the kiln. Each taonga was like a tamaiti with her own hues and shades, unexpected delights.

As part of my co-design process, I met consistently with Hunia to share updates on my progress and get his feedback and direction. When I shared the taonga with Hunia during one of these consultation hui⁷⁹, he commented that holding these pieces of whenua drew him “down to Papatūānuku⁸⁰”. He talked about how holding something physical helps to anchor us and articulate ideas that otherwise remain formless in our minds. Having something made of the earth tethers us to reality and away from abstraction. The physicality of these objects invites those who interact with them beyond words into practical action.

⁷⁴ clay

⁷⁵ earth

⁷⁶ treasures

⁷⁷ wisdom, knowledge

⁷⁸ environment

⁷⁹ meeting

⁸⁰ Earth Mother

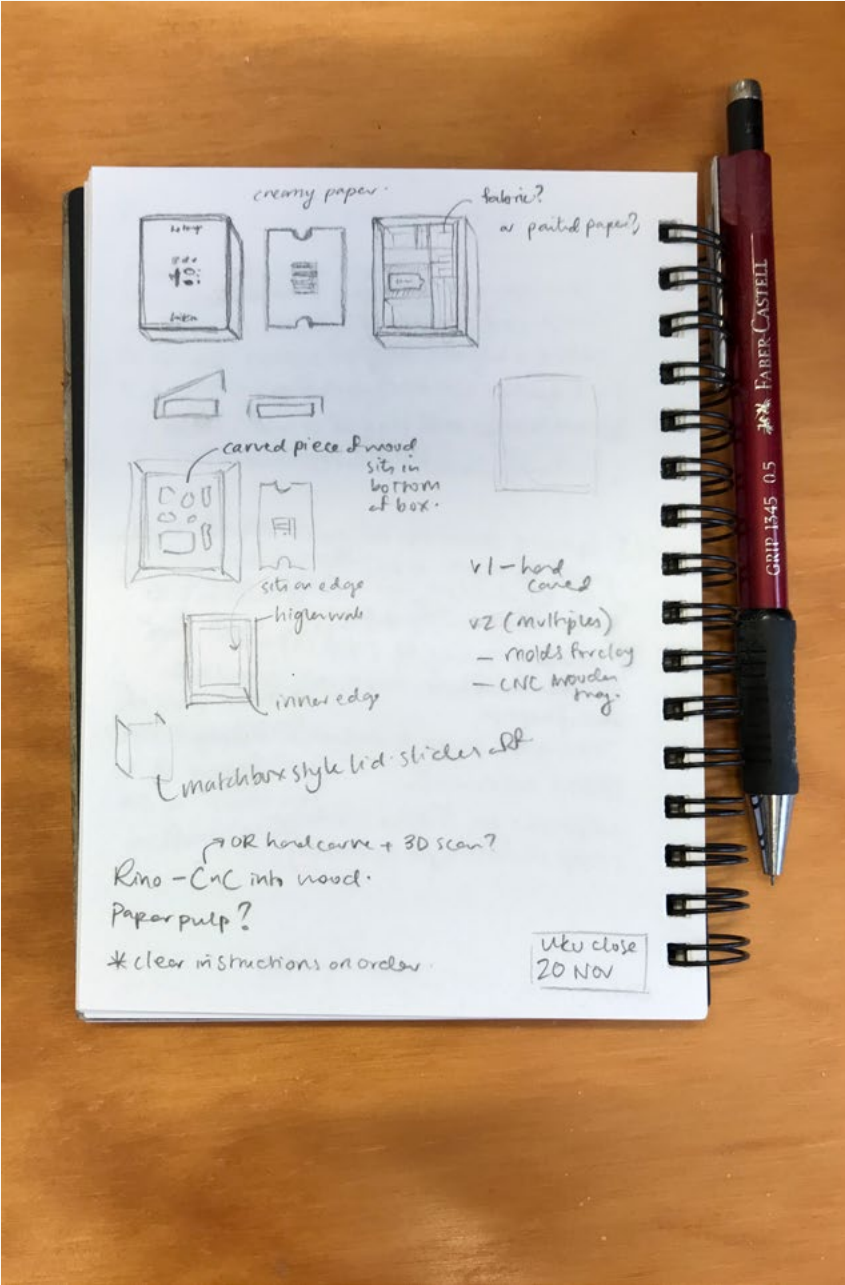
Figure 29:
Clay Process



Figure 30:
Print-making process



Figure 31:
Packaging development



Note. I wanted to package these pieces together in a kind of nest. In my sketches, I considered using natural materials, protecting the pieces from breaking, and presenting them as taonga.

Figure 32:
Carving with the dremill



Note. I carved a wooden base for the box with a dremill and a chisel. The presence of the maker's hand in the chiselled surface was intended as a symbol of care and intentionality. The physical labour present in these marks was evidence of the care invested into the object (Ings, 2015).

Figure 33:
Binding the box





Figure 34:
'He Taonga Hei Kōrero' prototype



Figure 35:
Clay Taonga

This prototype was about shifting perspectives away from deficits and towards potential. Seeking to invite government ministries and others to interact differently with care-experienced youth must begin with changing their mindsets. Changing beliefs and assumptions is the deepest intervention point for creating effective systemic change (Johnson et al. 2024).

Each of the clay artefacts within the prototype represented a different whakataukī about potential. A series of cards paired with each clay artefact led the user to reflect upon the relevance of the whakataukī to tamariki and rangatahi in care.





Part Two: *Define*

Ethical Considerations

A rigorous ethical process should be considered a key component of any co-design project (Mark & Hagen, 2020). Design exists within contexts of power dynamics; an ethics process both acknowledges these dynamics and considers how to level them (Stanton, 2019). Ethical procedures involve intentional decision-making which honours and benefits the parties involved.

I prepared an ethics application to conduct a series of co-design workshops with care-experienced members of the group who originally developed ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ as part of the requirements of my degree. This process gave me a deeper understanding of the ethical requirements of the project, which I had not previously considered.

The co-design engagement was planned to align with the values of ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’. For example, to show manaakitanga, I provided kai and created an accessible environment. To create māramatanga⁸¹, I shared the workshop plan with the participants in advance and invited feedback. To acknowledge the participants’ time and effort with koha, I created small gifts (see Figure 39) and sent them updates following the workshop.

The reflective questions within ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ (Te Rōpū Arotahi 2020) helped me to reflect on whether my intentions and process were tika⁸² and pono⁸³. These reflective questions brought me right back to the start of the process and prompted me to question why I was engaging with care-experienced people and whether it was necessary to involve them. These questions continued to challenge and ground me throughout the project.

I found the ethics approval process slowed down the pace of the project and limited the time I had available to engage with the co-design participants, reducing opportunities for sustained participation. The flexible and dynamic nature of co-design did not fit well with the ethics application, which was primarily designed for academic research (Mark & Hagen, 2020), making it difficult to adapt my processes as the project developed. I also felt that formalities required by ethics, such as signing consent forms, disrupted the natural whanaungatanga of the project and sat at odds with the relational tikanga embedded in VOYCE. Despite these challenges, the process helped me carefully plan my engagement with care-experienced participants.

⁸¹ clarity, understanding
⁸² true, correct, fair, right.
⁸³ genuine, sincere

Workshop recruitment process

After receiving ethics approval, Hunia and I began preparing for the first co-design workshop and contacted the original care-experienced contributors to Kia Tika, Kia Pono, who were enthusiastic about the project. However, during recruitment, it became clear that my initial vision for the co-design process would not match practical realities. Funding cuts reduced VOYCE’s capacity to support participant attendance and travel from other cities. Potential participants’ availability was limited. As a result, the planned series of workshops was scaled back to one in-person session with additional online feedback, which respected participants’ capacity but limited the depth of co-design engagement. However, the consultation hui with Hunia were ongoing throughout the project.

Figure 39:
Thank you cards

Note. I developed a set of thank you cards for the participants, each with a small clay ‘kuru pounamu’ as a reminder of the workshop, and an acknowledgement of the pitomata and mana of care-experienced youth.



The Co-design Workshop

In November 2025, I facilitated a co-design workshop with Hunia, two VOYCE kaiwhakamana and two care-experienced people who had been members of the group which initially developed ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’.

Whakatau

The workshop began with a short whakatau⁸⁴. Hunia opened the space with a karakia⁸⁵ and mihi⁸⁶. I then introduced myself in Te Reo Māori and English, sharing about my whānau, background and work.

Morning Tea

After the whakatau, we had a morning tea break. This was a good opportunity to have conversations in an informal setting, build relationships, and help participants feel comfortable in the context.

Aroha

Following morning tea, I gave context to the activities of the day by sharing my project ‘Aroha’ with the group. I shared this to provide an example of my work with the group and exemplify what I meant when I talked about turning ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ into a tool. I could see a switch in the understanding of the group as they got the picture for what we were doing together in this project.

⁸⁴ formal welcome
⁸⁵ prayer
⁸⁶ acknowledgements

Figure 40:
Morning tea

Figure 41:
Sharing ‘Aroha’ with the group



Activity 1

The first activity of the day was a brainstorming session. I had prepared a series of large pages with questions to prompt discussion and ideation about the development of this new set of resources. As I introduced the questions I had put together, the group shared their ideas. I took notes on each of the pages I had prepared, summarising and quoting, and adding extra questions as we went, where I saw that it could be useful to draw out specific ideas.



Figure 42:
Brainstorming session setup

Figure 43:
Hand-made brainstorming posters



Note. I (painstakingly) hand wrote large A2 scale posters for brainstorming during our workshop. The presence of the human hand in the craft of these posters was intended to evidence the time, care and intentionality in my preparation for the workshop (Ings, 2015).

Figure 44:
Workspace during the co-design workshop.

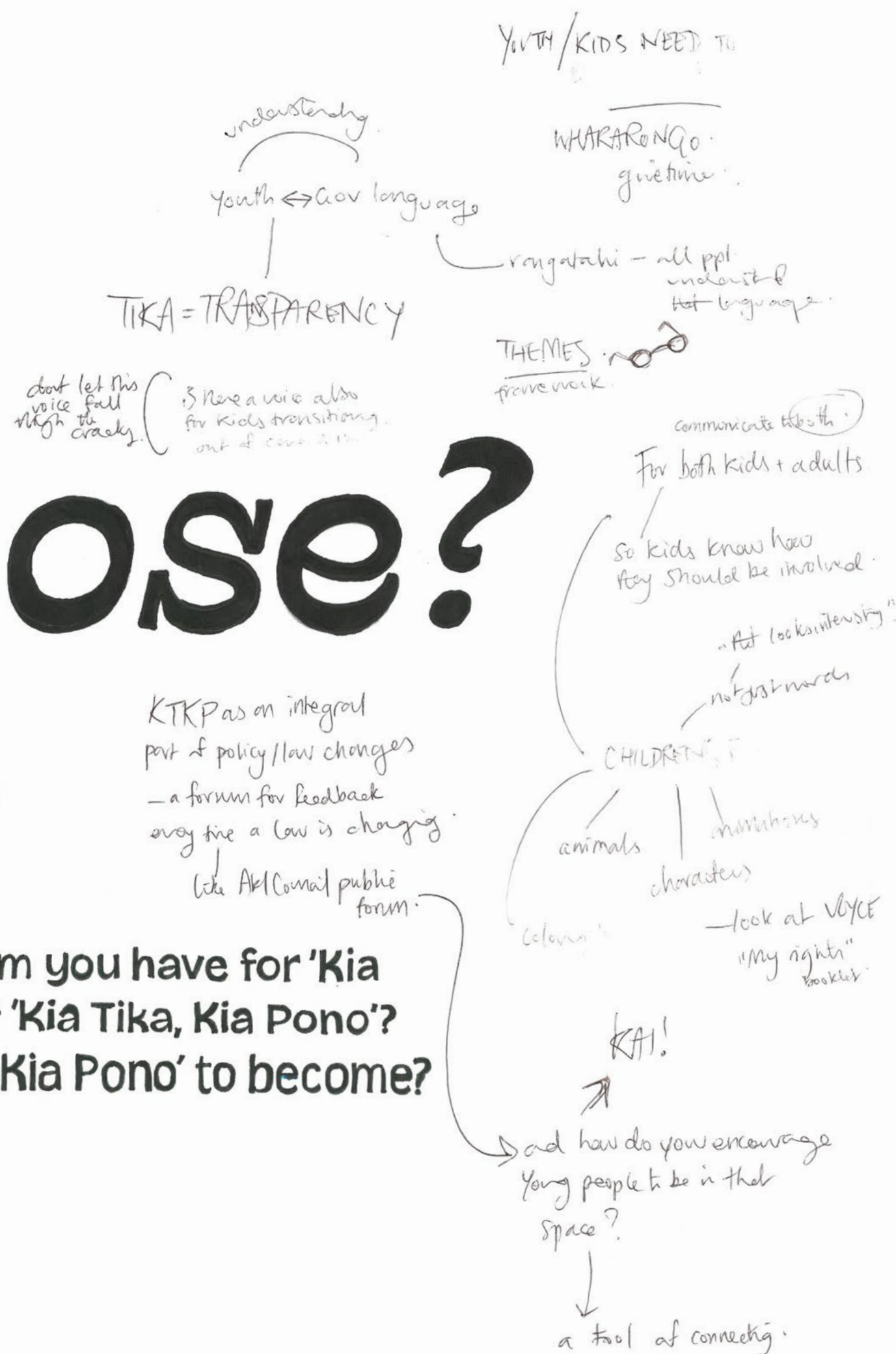


Note. Fidget toys helped to keep everyone focused during the long conversation.

Figure 44:
Brainstorms created during the workshop

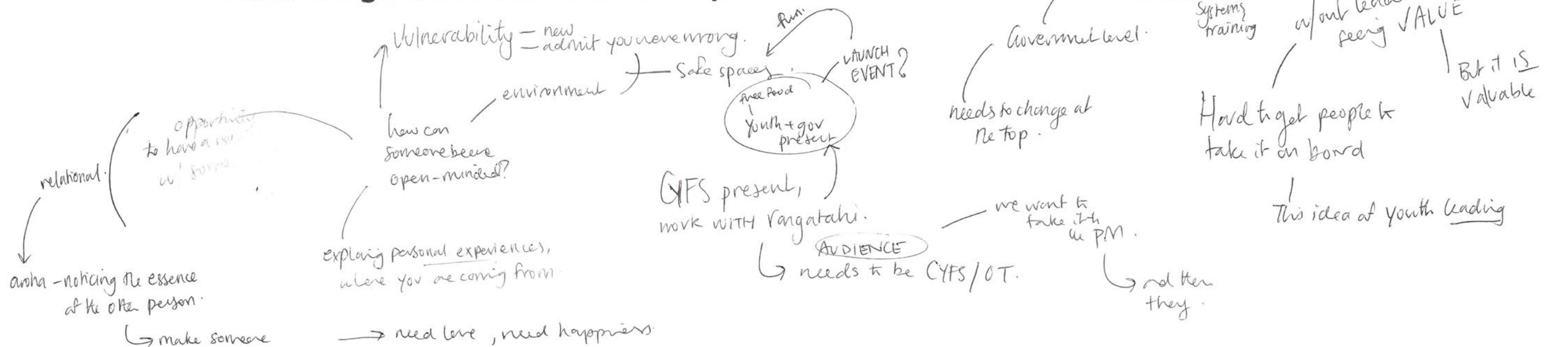
What is the purpose?

- Who should use this resource?
- How could they use it?
- What could it help them to do?
- What is the best vision or dream you have for 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono', or the impact of 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'?
- What do we not want 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' to become?



What could be better?

- How do you want to be represented?
- How do you not want to be represented?



What is

working well?

as a person
working outside of
VOICE - likewise
"I was pumped"
excited to see
Rangatahi WORKING
ALONGSIDE

"my friends"

Our words - good insight in
core experienced
perspective

pictures make it easier to read,
not all job words

"not just an
adult book"

at least can read

diff voice between
rangatahi
→ social
workers.

emphasis
on
rangatahi
leading
different

learning how to involve youth in everything
→ Being TIKA.

TuHONO - KTKP
"a way of
being in
practice"

DIFFERENT
STORIES
UNIQUE STILL.

Your personal
story - not expecting
to speak for all.

Quite a learning
UNLEARNING of
previous mahi
before VOICE.

adult centric.

1 yp ≠ all yp.

Media app

encouraging
people to read
KTKP before
working w/ youth

applies to WHAKATIRANGA as well.

Reflective Questions - always relevant.

used in
whakatairanga situations

Capturing voice + amplifying

transition

Compiling/taking/using stories.
"Making up a narrative"

Manaaki Rangatahi - Youth homelessness

Checking yourself
→ REFLECT

- What is Kia Tika, Kia Pono?
- How is Kia Tika, Kia Pono being used currently?
Who is using it?
- What do you like/value about Kia Tika, Kia Pono?
- What are it's most important parts?

most useful here
→ 6 PROMISES
Systems level
advocacy
collective voice
of young
people
DESIGNED FOR:
[WHAKATIRANGA]
Active pop

dem

Your voice.

they need to hear
truth.
rough
shit.

Honest - not fake.

- How do you want to be represented?
- How do you not want to be represented?

not shutting
down.

Creatively - Visually.
This is the most
to communicate
stuff.

not like a child
"your voice doesn't
matter"

not forcing
what you don't want

no sugar coating - (balance of
safety + disaster).

Still happening.

leaders who make their own
decisions. Choose how
we are heard.

maintain
relationships

different / unique
per person.

Activity 2

Following this brainstorming session, I shared my earlier prototype, 'He Taonga Hei Kōrero', with the group. I wanted to know whether the group felt like this resource was heading in the right direction for the design development of 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'.

Figure 46:
Sharing the prototype with the group

Figure 47:
Lunch





Figure 48:
Posters for the making session

Activity 3

The third activity of the day was a making session, where the participants were invited to paint, draw, sculpt or write their interpretations of the ethical values from 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'. I had prepared a set of pages with the values and some creative prompts as a kind of scaffold for creativity (Sanders & Stappers, 2012).

Concluding the Day

The day was concluded with a karakia whakakapi⁸⁷. I gifted the group the thankyou cards and their vouchers before the participants left, and we talked about plans for the project's future – hoping to reconnect for feedback, but also for a final summary and presentation of the work.

⁸⁷ closing prayer

Figure 49:
Setup for the creative making session



Note. I set up the workshop with paint, clay, pens and post it notes, as well as the pages for drawing and brainstorming on.



Figure 50:
Participants painting and drawing on the posters



Figure 51:
One of my favourite moments from this activity

Note. One of the participants was painting, and her toddler son came and put his fingers in the paint, joining in. I felt like this was such a cool picture of the beautiful things that have happened in her life and where she is now, despite the hardships of her time in care.



What does it mean to you?

mandaaki-
tanga

LOVE, RESPECT, CARE.



If it was a place/person/object...
what would it be?



Figure 52:
Posters from the creative
making session

"We got you,
you got us"
"You belong"
"All of you matter"

What does it mean to you?

ūkai pō

BELONGING.

- Anchor.
- A table with a seat reserved for you.

If it was a place/person/object...
what would it be?

We have mi/tupuna
• Different forms
of this from
different culture.

- Trees of significance.
• Kauri, Tōtara,
Pohutukawa etc
(NZ)
• Coconut tree (Pacific)
• Bamboo (Asia).
these serve as markers or
flags → "You are where you
belong"

• Representation
through jigsaw
puzzle and its pieces.
Each piece belongs
to the collective to
help complete it.



OPENNESS
SEE HOW CONNECTED
GROW, AND TO
SEE NEW ONES

whaka-

What does it mean to you?



RELATIONSHIPS.

whanauunga

If it was a place/person/object...
what would it be?



when multiple
pieces grow together
to find space as
one

-tanga



If it was a place/person/object...
what would it be?



Workshop Findings and Insights

Reflections

Tikanga Māori

During the whakatau, I introduced myself with a mihi in Te Reo Māori. I thought that it was important to include my husband's whakapapa connections to Ngāpuhi when I introduced myself, to help find connection to the participants. Mooney (2009) discusses how whakawhanaungatanga can support research participants to feel settled through the recognition of connections between themselves and other participants. Although I did not personally have shared whakapapa with the participants, acknowledging the importance of whakapapa invited the participants to share their own connections and open a conversation about their journeys to learn about their whakapapa. This helped us begin a conversation, build rapport, and feel more comfortable in the space.

Upon reflection, I was unsure whether it had been appropriate for me, as a non-Māori person, to open with a mihi in Te Reo Māori. A comment from one of the participants made me think that speaking in Māori in the space may have made her feel embarrassed about not speaking much Māori. However, this participant led a karakia for the kai⁸⁸ later in the day. I could see that she was proud to lead this. So, although I was unsure about using my reo, it was valuable to follow tikanga²⁷ in the context. We created a space where tikanga was a welcome way of working, and Māori culture was upheld and valued.

I sought to reflect a wānanga during the brainstorming session by creating a space where all people present could feel comfortable contributing, where ideas could weave together and build upon each other. Tuhiwai Smith et al. (2019) comment that the open context of a wānanga helps to cut across power imbalances. In a presentation about a similar workshop run with rangatahi, Barbarich-Unasa & Campbell (2025) used the term 'yarn-anga' (having a 'yarn') to describe a wānanga-style workshop which is open, semi-structured, and comfortable. I felt this was an appropriate term to describe the co-design workshop; key ideas emerged from the casual, relational conversation.

Barabarich-Unasa (2022) discusses how a wānanga format invites co-creators to feel comfortable approaching the conversation from a te ao Māori lens. I could see how establishing tikanga Māori at the start of the workshop, with the whakatau, karakia, and whakawhanaungatanga, supported participants in drawing Māori concepts into our conversation. Participants drew on metaphors such as the resource being a waka or a kaitiaki. If participants did not feel the meeting was a space that welcomed Māori perspectives, these ideas may not have been explained using this kind of imagery.

Encouragement about my work

The responses from the group to my work were positive, which encouraged me that I was on the right track and that the participants present in the workshop believed in my ability to create a set of resources which would represent their input to 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' well.

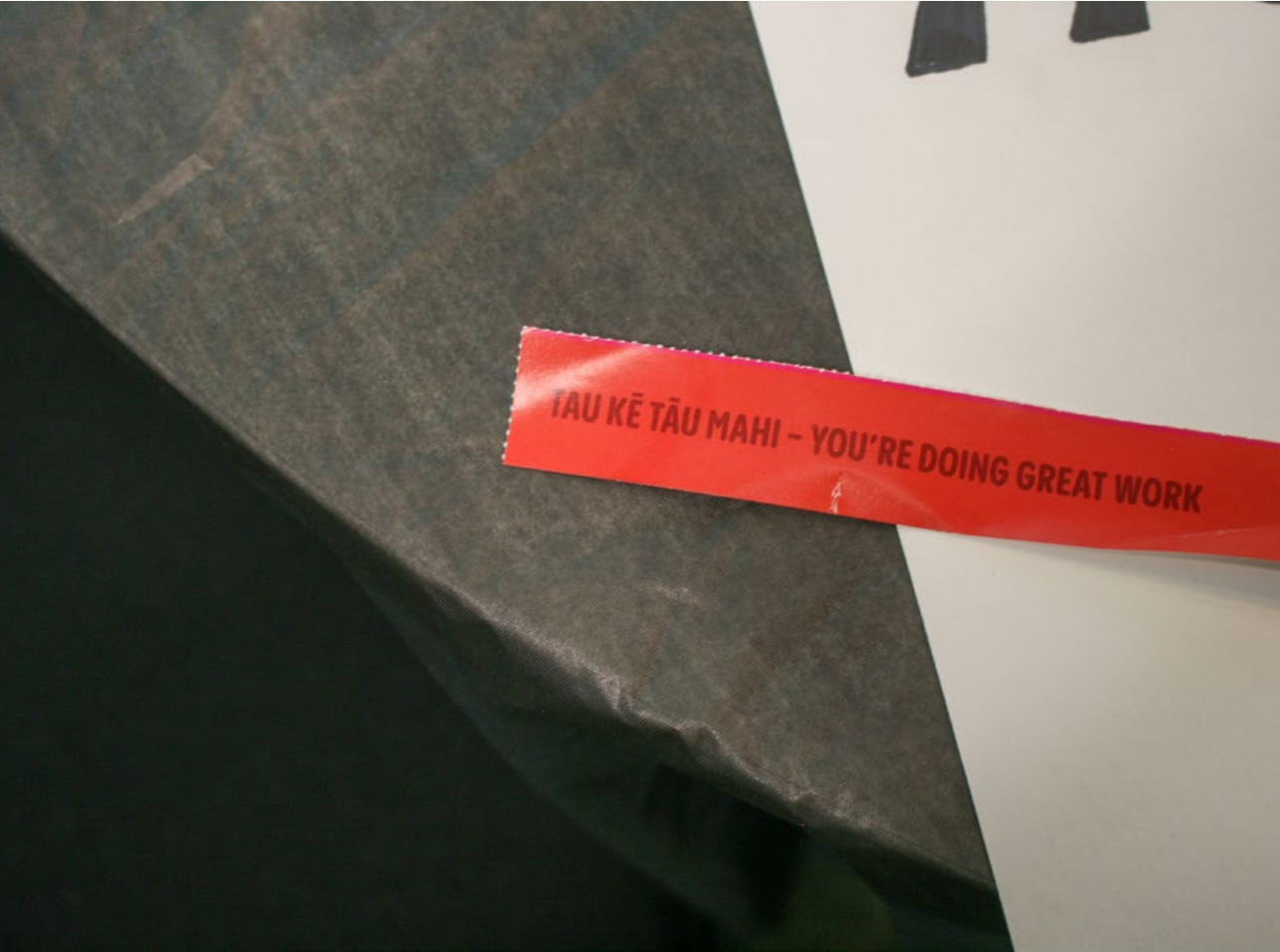


Figure 43:
A note of encouragement

Note. During the wānanga, one of the participants came and gave me this note, which I felt was an encouragement that I was on the right track

When I shared my project 'Aroha' with the group, one participant commented that she wanted the set of resources for 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' to communicate in the same way.

When I shared the 'He Taonga Hei Kōrero' prototype with the group, they were excited about it and saw themselves reflected in the objects and cards.

"THEY MAY SEEM ROUGH ON THE OUTSIDE, BUT IF THEY ARE NURTURED, THEY SHINE! THAT'S DEFINITELY US THOUGH! LIKE WE MAY SEEM ROUGH ON THE OUTSIDE BUT ACTUALLY WE'RE JUST SOFT ON THE INSIDE."

"IT'S LIKE A REALLY TANGIBLE EXPERIENCE LIKE TOUCHING THESE (CLAY TAONGA), LIKE FOR THE PĀVA THE INSIDE IT'S GLOSSY AND PRETTY AND THEN THE OUTSIDE HAS TEXTURE AND SHARPNESS AND STUFF!"

"YOU CAN DEFINITELY FEEL THE STORY IN THESE (CLAY TAONGA)"

"I CONNECT WITH THIS ONE A LOT BECAUSE IT REMINDS ME OF WHEN MY MUM WOULD MAKE BOIL UP, AND SHE WOULD ALWAYS HAVE KUMARA BECAUSE SHE KNOW I LIKED KUMARA."

"YOU KNOW WHAT? READING THESE MAKES ME THINK OF MY LIFE, LIKE REAL LIFE."

"I THINK THEY (KIDS IN CARE) WOULD LIKE THIS."

"I REALLY LIKE THAT THE FIRST ACTIVITY IS ASKING YOU TO CONNECT WITH US ON A PERSONAL LEVEL"

"THERE IS POWER IN THE PROCESS THAT YOU'VE GOT US TO UNDERTAKE HERE"

Facilitation:

Facilitating the conversation was an interesting balance of seeing the value in all the thoughts shared and keeping the group on track. I could see the value of my experience in youth work as I practised communicating clearly, listening deeply, and encouraging the group.

It was valuable having the kaimahi there, as they were able to provide a more contextualised perspective on ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’. However, I wondered if their input sometimes overshadowed the care-experienced perspectives, which needed to be amplified in the design. I tried to prioritise the comments from the care-experienced participants when processing the workshop data.

Flexibility

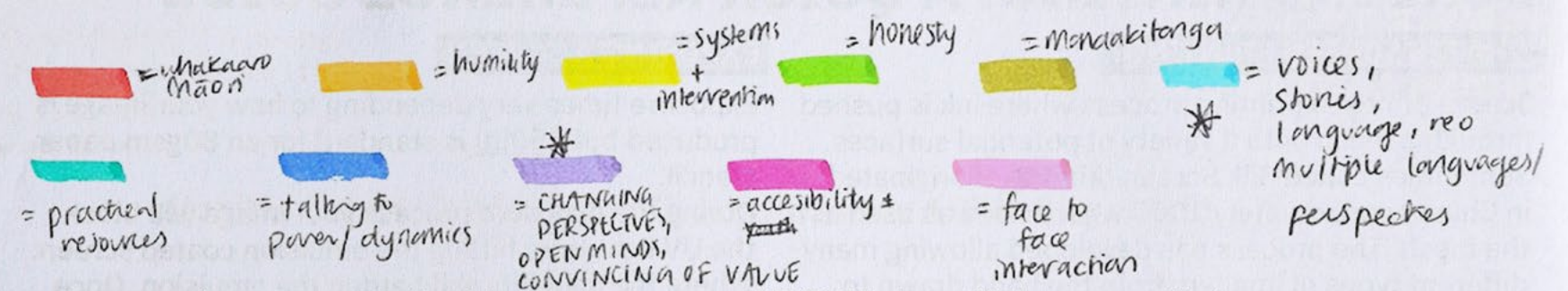
I was deliberately flexible with the workshop to try to prioritise the needs and well-being of the group. Flexibility was a way for me to value people and relationships over outcomes. We took many breaks throughout the day, because it was difficult for the group to remain focused. We spent almost as much time eating and chatting as we did working. The value that came out of this was the relationships which were established. These relationships were a different kind of outcome than what I had expected or sought, but that was a positive thing.

Concluding the Workshop

Overall, the workshop was positive, and I felt that I had established special connections with the co-design participants. However, reflecting on the workshop, I was disappointed with the small attendance and the short timeframe of the workshop. I was concerned that the data I had collected did not include a wide or thorough range of perspectives. There was also not much creative data as we ran out of time in the making activity of the workshop.

I thought about planning another co-design workshop, but ultimately decided that this would strain my capacity and put pressure on VOYCE and the participants. Therefore, I had to emphasise feedback sessions instead. I began to worry that I could not define my work as authentic co-design or as aligned with VOYCE’s values with only a brief initial interaction/partnership like this. However, I could only partner with the care-experienced participants according to their commitment to the project. Their lack of capacity for the project meant that I was working within limits. I could not co-design with the whole group of care-experienced authors of ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’. Instead, I had to begin creating concepts based on the perspectives I had received and later seek feedback from the group.

Figure 54:
Annotating on the
workshop transcription



I guess what we were actually doing today is um so KTKP this beautiful resource that you guys were involved with creating a number of years ago, is, because it's such a cool piece of work that VOYCE uses, to my understanding, often, um, I think that Hunia and some of the team have been talking for a while in like how can we make this go even further, and how can we make it go from a written pdf into a tangible tool. So what we're doing today is kind of working out together what that tool should be, um, and it's really important that all of

Data Synthesis and Analysis

I began data processing informed by the reflexive thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2022). I transcribed notes from the workshop recordings. I then annotated these notes, highlighting key ideas and particularly insightful comments. These annotations became a kind of loose coding system, which I then organised and refined into 6 key themes: Whakaaro Māori, Language/Voice, Systems & Intervention, Changing people's perspectives, Honesty and Practical/Accessible resources.

'LIKE HOW IT'S PRESENTED (AROMA)
 THAT'S EXACTLY HOW I WANT IT TO BE.
 LIKE THE POUNAMU SITTING ON TOP WITH
 THE ROPE, HOLDING EACH OTHER. AND
 THE ROCK CARING FOR EVERYONE MAKING
 SURE THAT EVERYONE BELOW FEELS SAFE.
 AND WHEN YOU OPEN IT, EVERYONE
 FEELS SAFE AT HOME WHERE THEY CAN
 SPEAK THEIR MIND. I LIKE HOW THIS
 BOX IS."

'THAT'S THE VERY ESSENCE OF BEING TIKA,
 RIGHT? IT'S ABOUT BEING TRANSPARENT
 + BOTH SIDES OF THE COIN KNOWING +
 UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE OTHER SIDE IS."

Themes from the Data

Whakaaro Māori

There were some beautiful ideas raised in the workshop, which drew from Māori imagery and metaphors. One idea presented was the image of this new development, 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono', as a waka⁸⁹, because it has movement and carries the truths, journeys, and stories of care-experienced rangatahi. Another one of the participants described my earlier work 'Aroha', seeing the pounamu as a kind of kaitiaki⁹⁰.

89 Canoe

90 Protector, guardian

Language/Voice

We discussed how it can feel like government ministries are talking a completely different language than tamariki and rangatahi. We wanted to think about how we could use illustration to create a resource that was accessible to both government and tamariki/rangatahi.

Systems & Intervention

The kaimahi participants discussed how 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' was designed to be used within the whakatairanga aspect of VOYCE's work, which focused on systems change. We discussed how the framework needed to be practically implemented within organisations, but that people in power could later choose to disregard it.

We asked the question, 'Where in the system or levels of power would be the most impactful intervention point for creating lasting change?'

Systems change thinking is about pinpointing relationships within the system and creating shifts within them to drive larger changes towards equity (Johnson et al., 2024). The deepest level of systemic change is beliefs and assumptions (Kania et al., 2018).

Changing people's perspectives

A large part of the brainstorming session centred on the need to shift governmental and organisational perspectives on 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' to help them see its value. I asked the question, 'How can you help someone to become open-minded?'

The group discussed how often changing perspectives begins with relationship; hearing people's stories, and "aroa - noticing the essence of the other person."

We also discussed how face-to-face interaction is a powerful way to help people establish those relationships. The group talked about how, when 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' was initially launched, they ran an event and invited organisations and politicians to hear care-experienced rangatahi speak first-hand about the resource.

"TO BE OPEN MINDED + CHANGE YOUR MIND YOU ACTUALLY NEED TO BE QUITE VULNERABLE BECAUSE IT'S AN OPENNESS TO SEEING SOMETHING IN A DIFFERENT WAY, TO LEARNING SOMETHING NEW, TO MAYBE ADMITTING YOU WERE WRONG!"

"I WOULD WANT IT TO COME OUT HONESTLY. NOTHING FAKE - I FEEL LIKE THEY NEED TO HEAR THE TRUTH!"

"THEY NEED TO HEAR SOME OF THE ROUGH SHIT."

Honesty

The care-experienced participants in the workshop emphasised that they wanted their stories to be represented with honesty, "not sugar coating", but openly talking about some of the rough and heavy experiences within care.

Practical/accessible resources

The workshop participants reiterated that they wanted 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' to be a tangible resource which was accessible to youth as well as adults. They said that they wanted to see illustration, and suggested formats such as a picture book.

Part Three: Develop

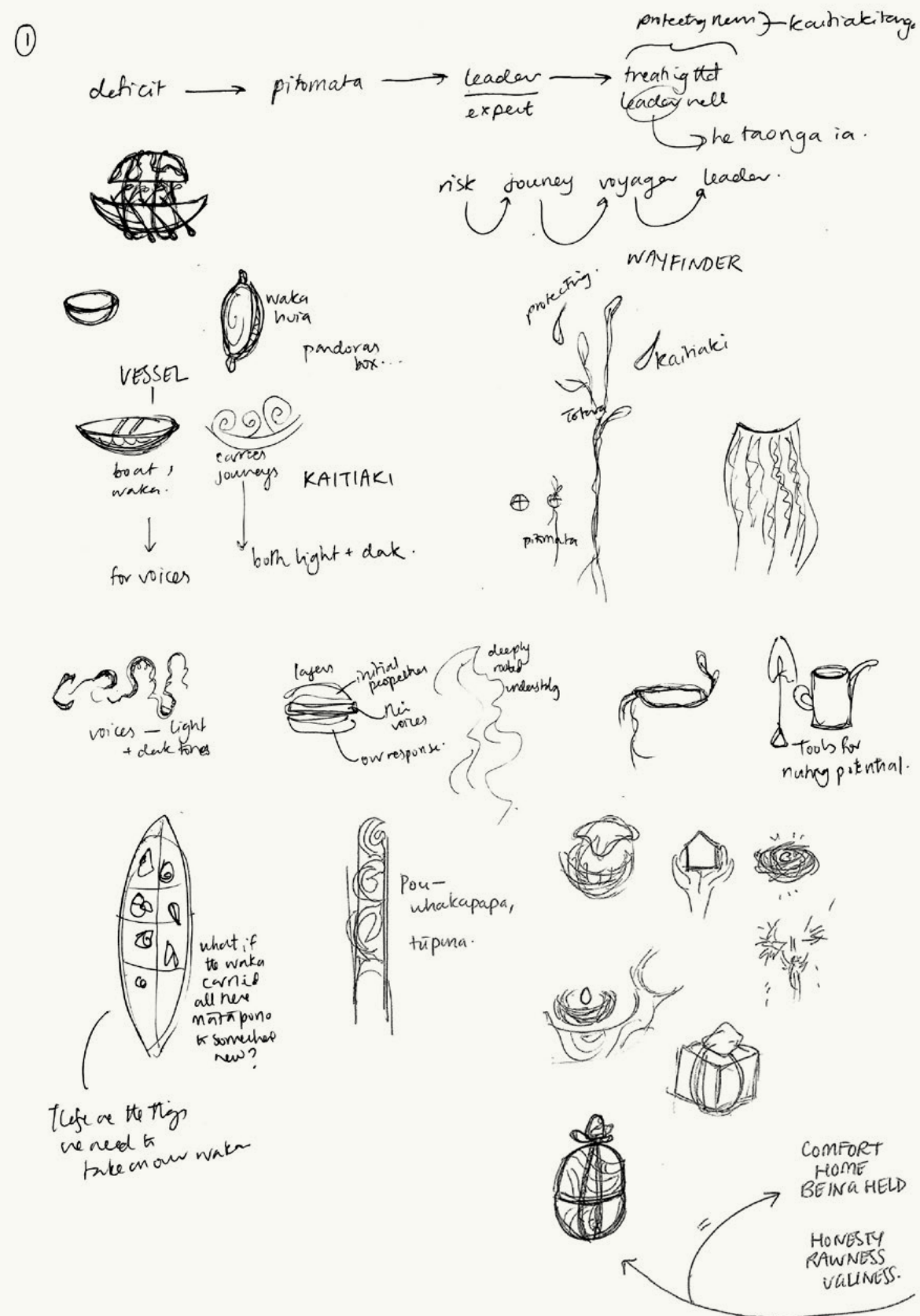
Ideating

I began to create a series of mind-maps, diagrams, and illustrations unpacking the themes and quotes from the co-design workshop. Each of the following figures was inspired by the workshop data.



Figure 55:
Mind map of themes and quotes from the workshop

Figure 56:
Quick sketches exploring key
words and ideas from the data



Before we arrive at HTHK — changing from deficit perspectives ...

Capture attention — beautiful/more than words/tactile/straight from youth/being physically PRESENT in the space.
become it's youth

Slow down — give attention "unhkarono māi" reo nua?
conceive & value

Be humble, be vulnerable — Aroha: konohi ki te konohi. Tika. See Nem!
"noticing the essence of the other person"

Become open-minded

Shift from deficit perspectives → seeing the potential (HTHK).

Seeing youth as rangatira

Listening to what they say about how to work with Nem — "OUR WORDS"

understanding it

reflecting on it — reflexive questions.

embedding it.

Figure 57:
Diagram Exploring Conditions
for Changing Perspectives

Figure 58:
Mind map exploring the
concept of a waka

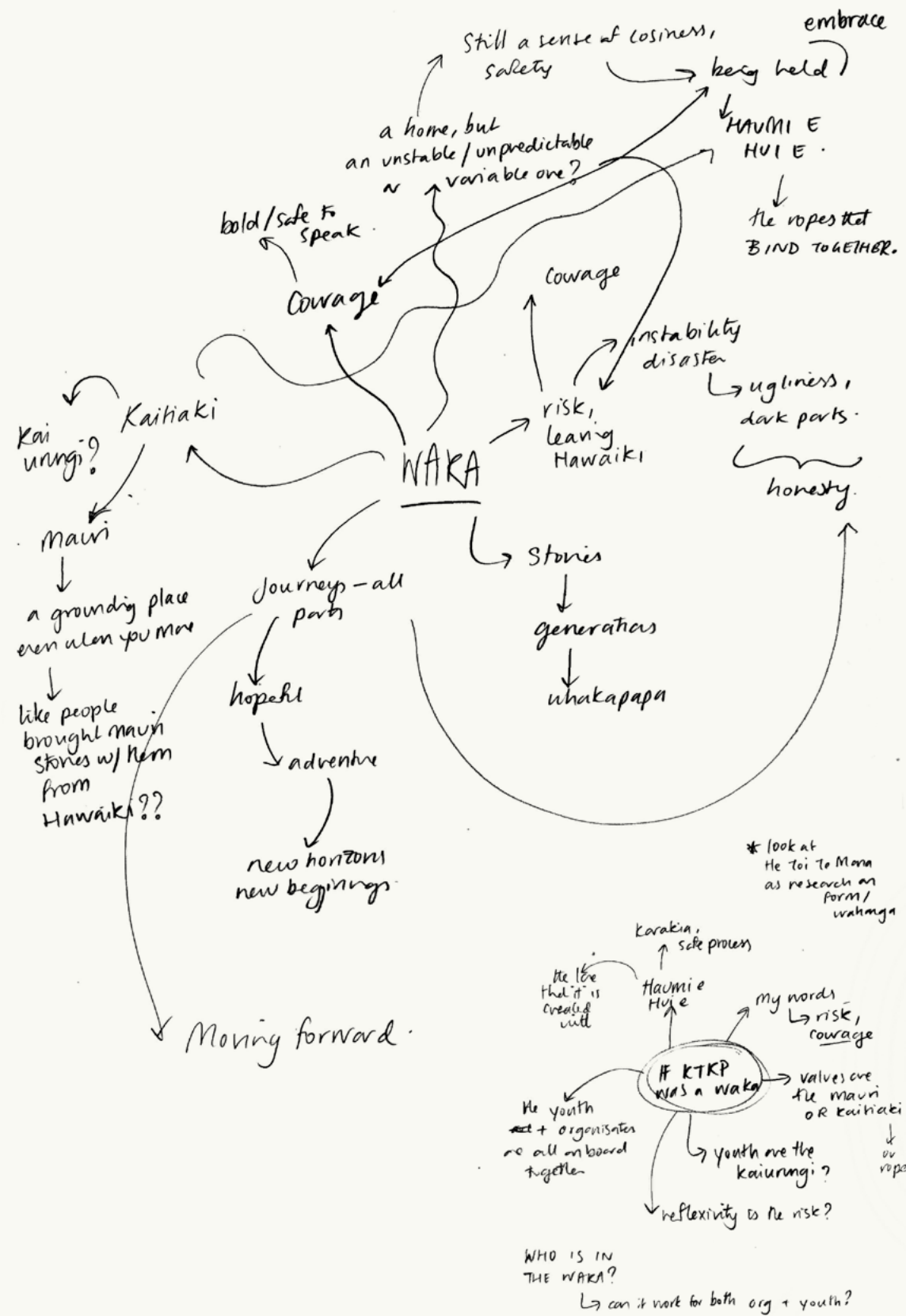


Figure 59:
Mind map about humility

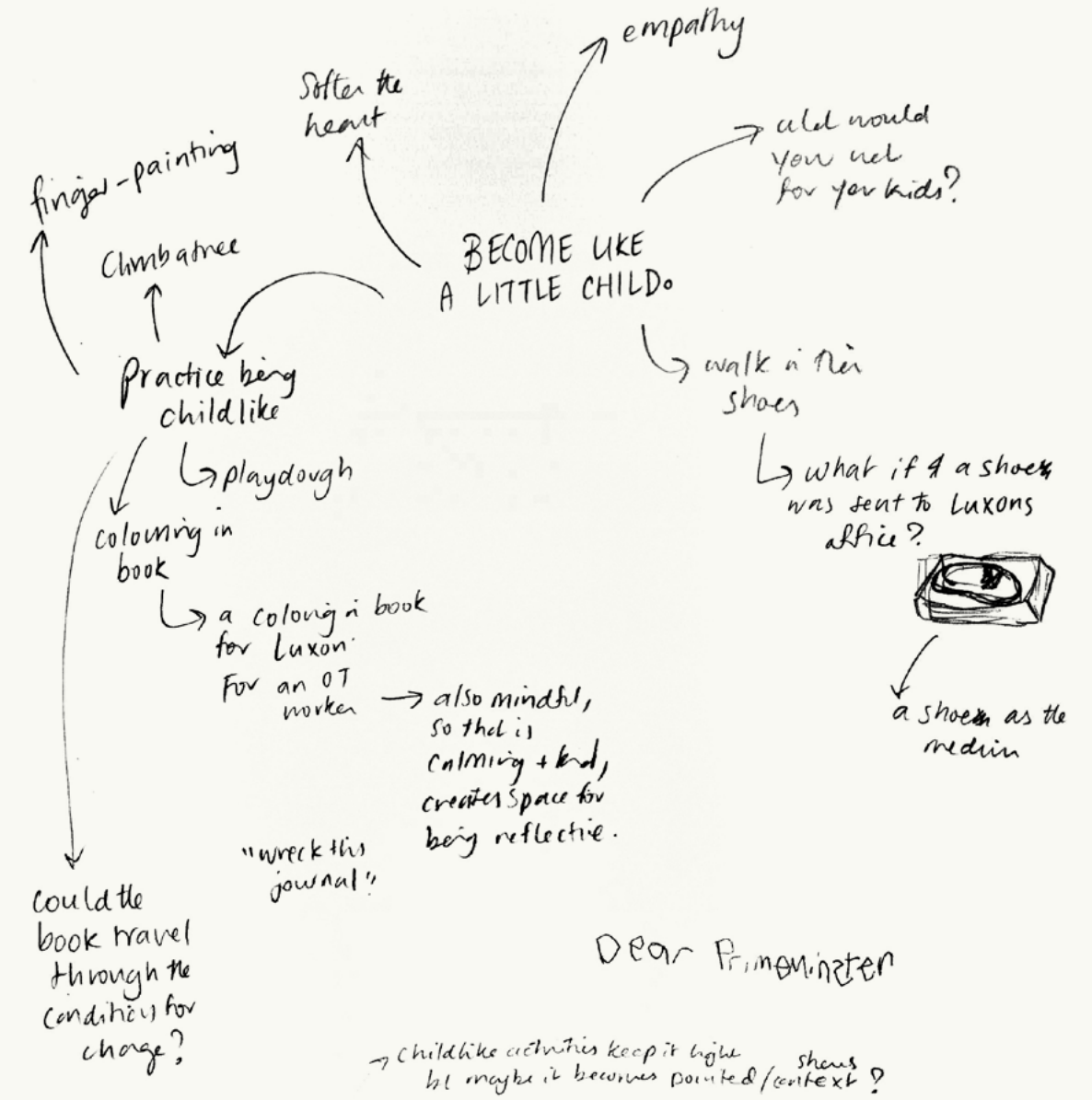


Figure 60:
Diagram exploring conditions
for changing perspectives

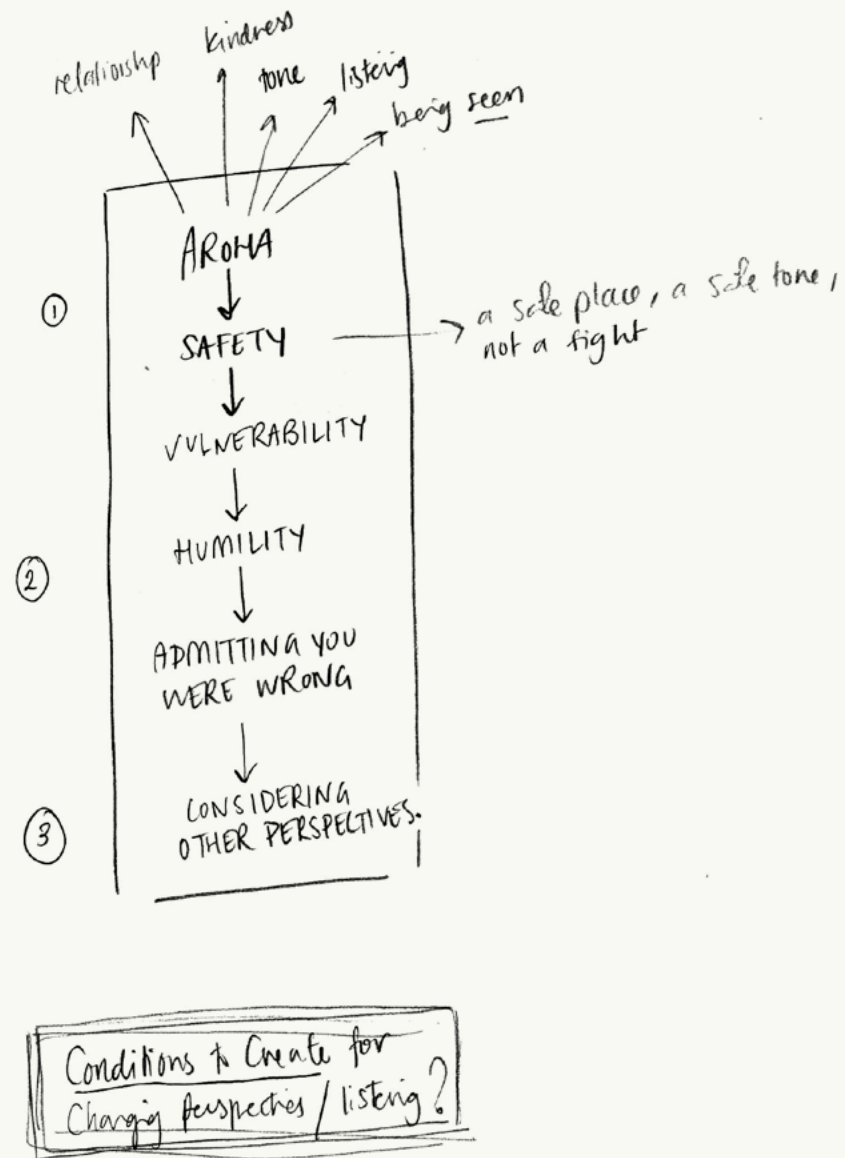
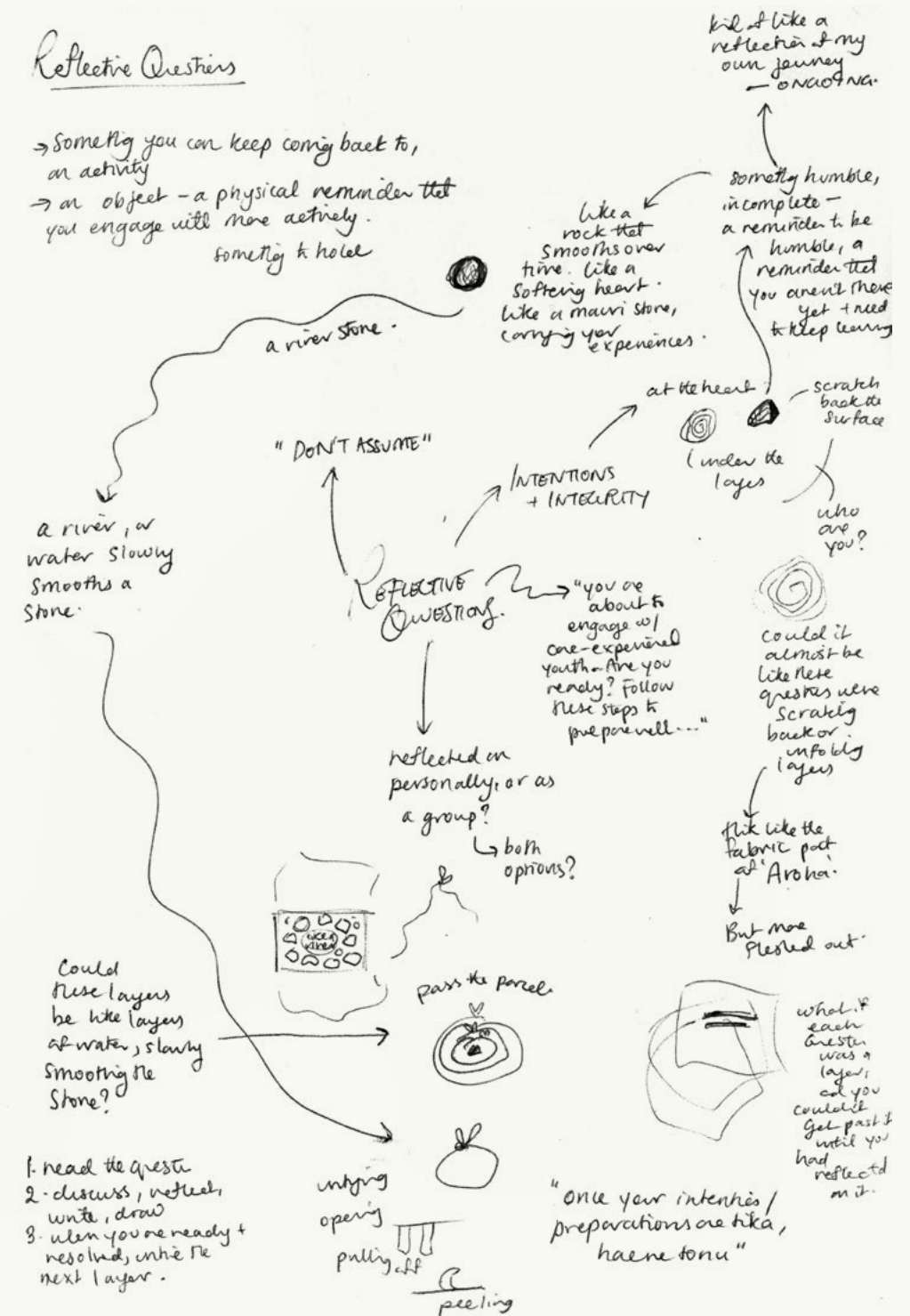


Figure 61:
Ideation for a resource which
encourages reflexivity



Concepting

I began to refine my exploration into concepts, creating coherence from the many thoughts shared in the workshop (Swann, 2002).

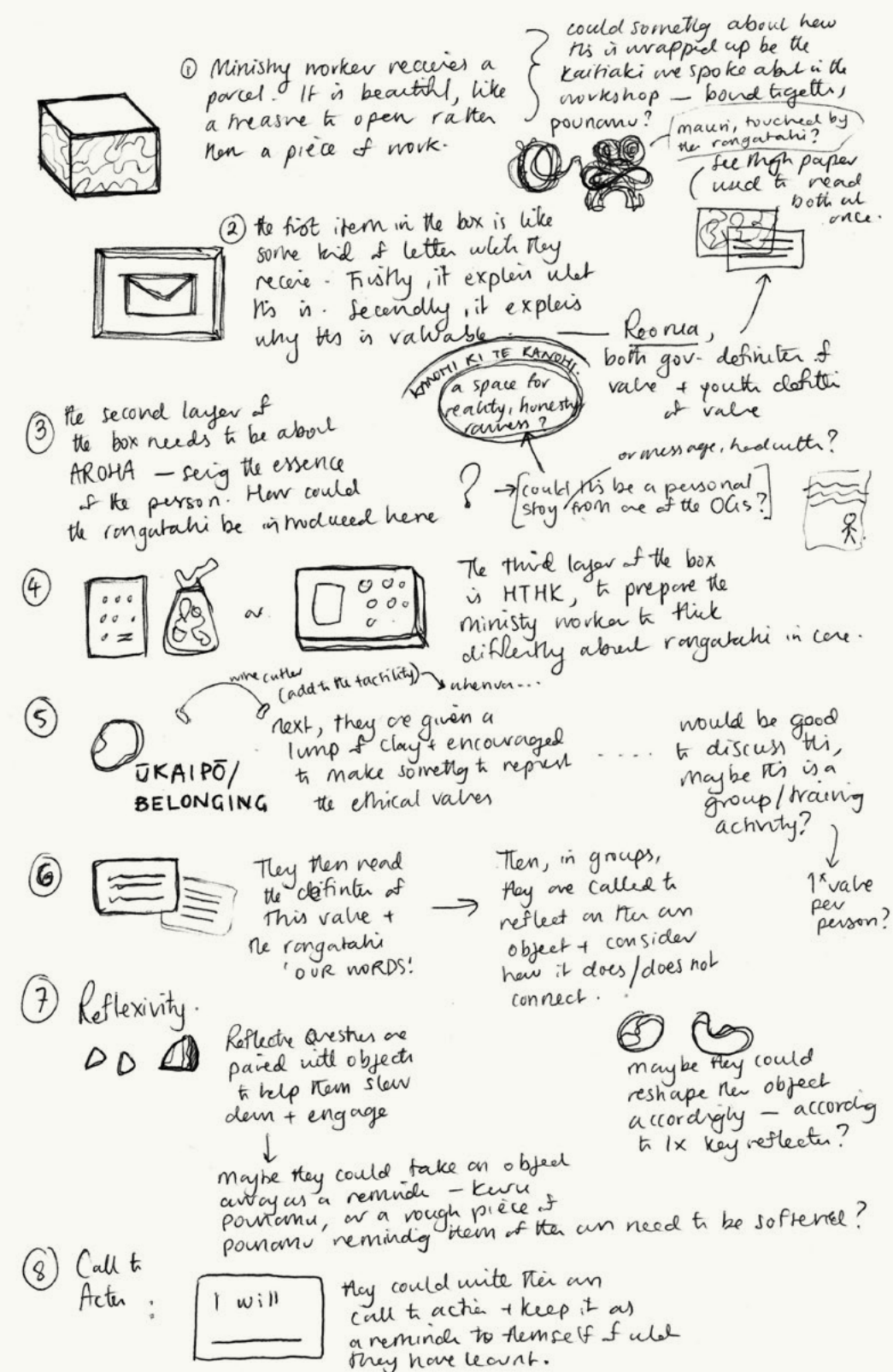


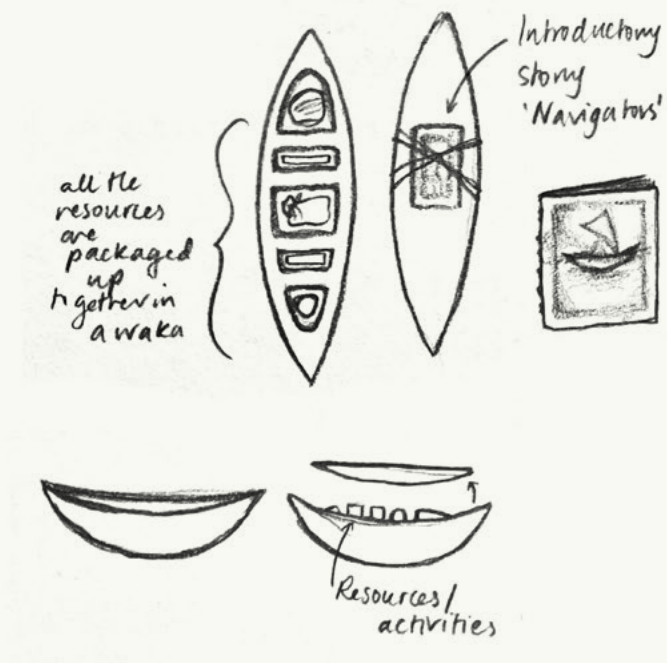
Figure 62:
Concept one — a package of
educational resources delivered
to Oranga Tamariki

REINTERPRETING my CONCEPT as a WAKA

- all about preparing for a journey
- ①  what if the first parcel they received was a waka huia? something that carries a treasure. (I know there are some difficulties with this but just an idea)
- ②  opening it up, there is some kind of written invitation to a journey - reo-nua (gov + rangatahi) → what this is (KTKP) → why it matters.
- ③  AROHA what if the carvings told the stories of the rangatahi + the courage of their journeys? (uhakairi rangi porakau) → honesty + rawness → almost like a pūrākau of Kaiwhakatere-o-mua ~ tapuna - those who are experienced (a pūrākau of rangatira).
- ④  HTHK - about shifting perspectives - could this be about changing the way they view the taiao, to see it as a partner in the journey? (metaphor for rangatahi)
- ⑤ Preparing for the journey / how to appropriately partner with the taiao / what do you need to take with you = ETHICAL PRINCIPLES - clay, making, remaking.
- ⑥ are you ready for this journey? Reflexive Anesthetics. (how can this be not all words? accessible...)
- ⑦ Call to Action what will I take with me on this journey? OR Draw a map? 
- ⑧  - the waka pūkapa could be a resource that goes with it / a poetic guidebook? poetic + practical? Being super metaphorical could just be real confusing - could I communicate both ways?

Figure 63:
Concept two - A waka huia⁹¹
containing a set of educational
resources

⁹¹ carved treasure box.



Iterating

I continued to develop these concepts through sketching, mind-mapping, and prototyping until I arrived at a more refined concept.

A Package with Three Activities

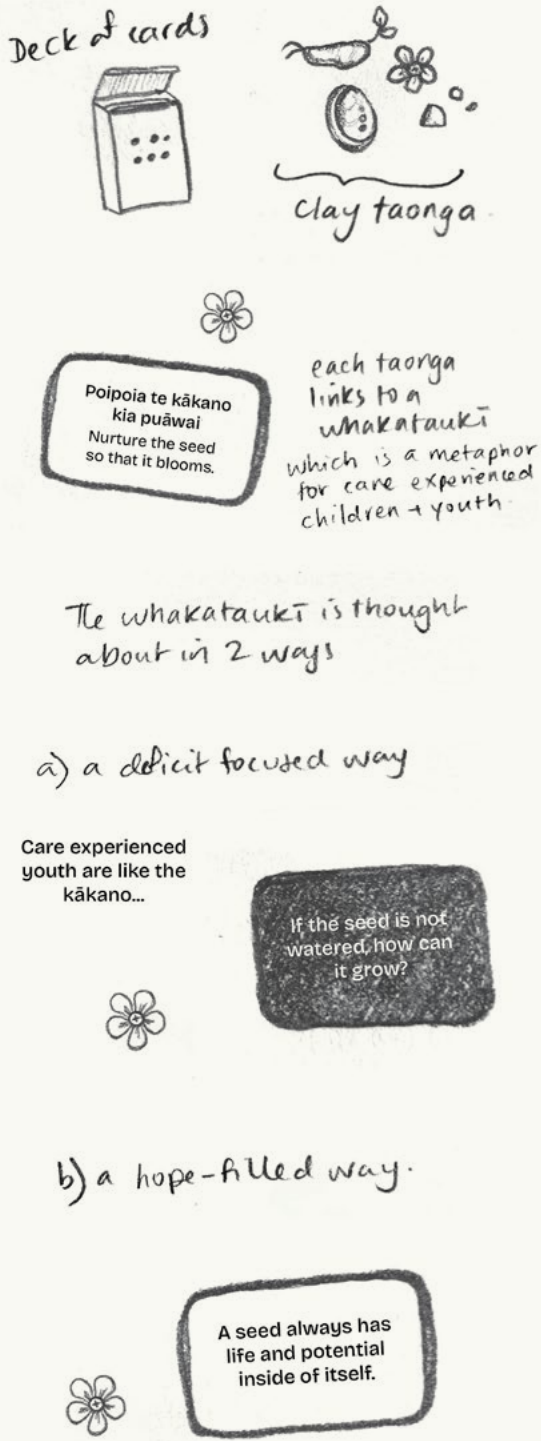
Figure 64:
Diagram of the package of activities

Note. The concept comprised three educational activities packaged together in the form of a waka⁹², and an introductory storybook.

⁹² canoe

Activity 1: Ngā Taonga

Figure 65:
Diagram of 'Ngā Taonga' concept activity

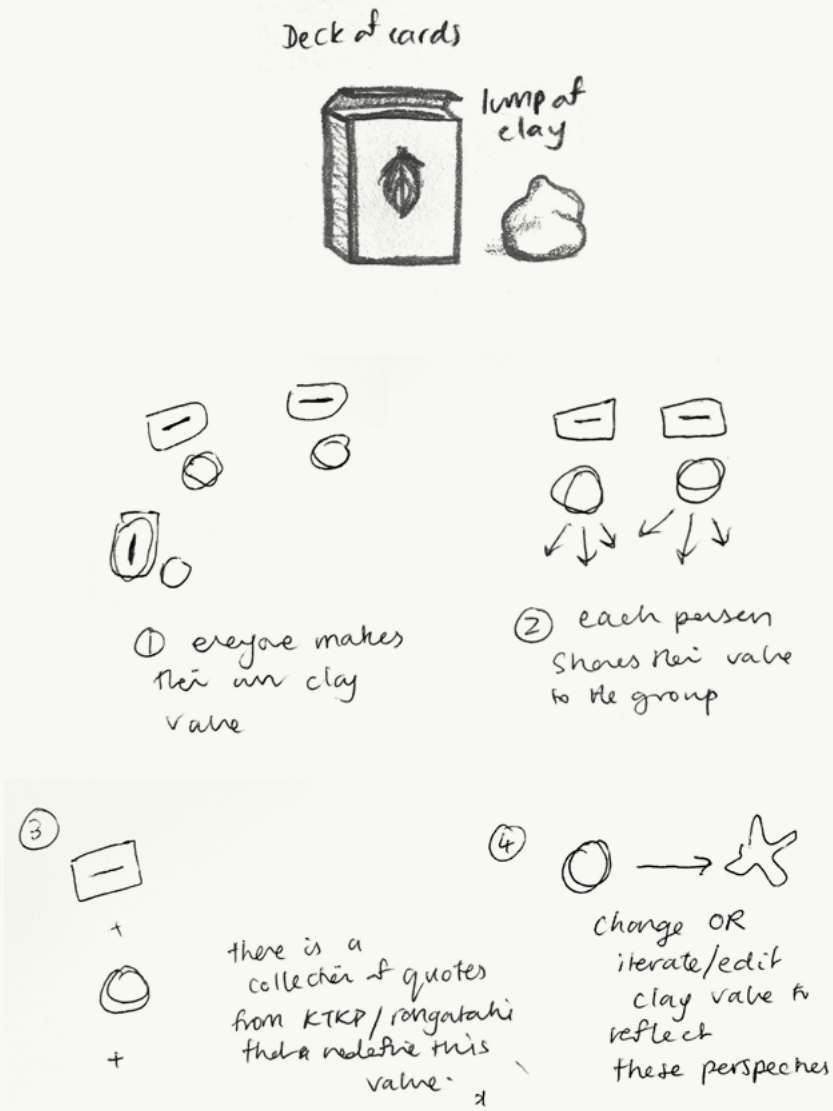


Note. The first activity was called 'Ngā Taonga'⁹³. This activity is a development of the earlier prototype that I presented at the co-design workshop, 'He Taonga Hei Kōrero'. This activity was about shifting people's perspectives about tamariki and rangatahi.

⁹³ The Treasures

Activity 2: He Korowai

Figure 66:
Diagram of 'He Korowai' concept activity



Note. The second activity, 'He Korowai'⁹⁴, was about defining ethical values according to the perspectives of care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi.

⁹⁴ A Cloak

Activity 3: Te Mauri

Figure 67:
Diagram of 'Te Mauri' concept activity



Note. The final activity was called 'Te Mauri'⁹⁵. This activity invites participants to reflect on their practice when engaging with care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi.

⁹⁵ The Life Principle, The Essence

Concept Prototypes

I prepared a set of prototypes to present to Hunia during one of our consultation hui, refining the copywriting, creating an implementation plan, and developing a draft facilitator guidebook.

As an introduction to the collection of activities, I developed an illustrated story. In the co-design wānanga, the care-experienced participants discussed how storytelling and illustration can make information more engaging. They suggested I could develop 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' into a storybook. Systems Storytellers (2022) discuss how stories are powerful tools for shifting perspectives, particularly when stories are told by non-dominant voices. I wanted to consider how I could use storytelling to invite people engaging with care-experienced youth to be open-minded, to 'see the essence' of these tamariki and rangatahi. I began developing a concept for a story, drawing again from this metaphor of a waka.

Initially, after developing this story, I had some doubts about the appropriateness of writing a story for care-experienced people. In doing so, was I summarising their many lives and experiences into a universal story, based on my assumptions?

Despite these misgivings, I decided to send a couple of copies away to the care-experienced participants who had come to the wānanga. I wanted to give them evidence of how their thinking was influencing my work, to encourage them and show that their voices were heard. I felt it was okay to send these books to the participants because I had built relationships with them during the wānanga, and these stories were influenced by the perspectives they shared.





AND WE ARE SEEKING
A NEW LAND,
A PLACE TO REST.



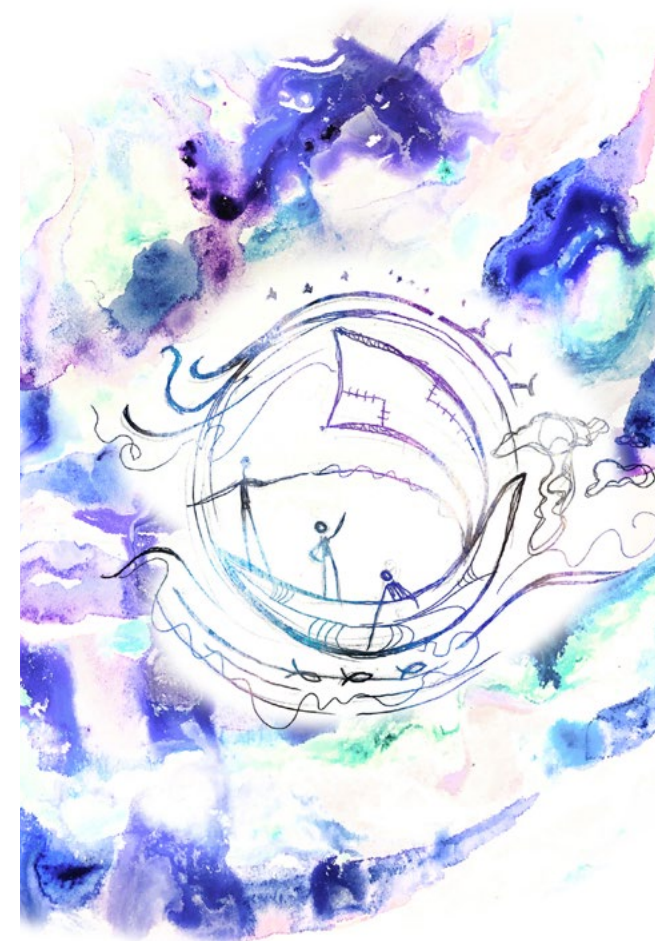
BUT THIS WAKA DOESN'T
ONLY CARRY US. IT CARRIES
HISTORIES + JOURNEYS.
IT CARRIES OUR TŪPUNA
AND GENERATIONS TO COME.
IT CARRIES THE MEMORIES OF
THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE
US AND HAVE NOT SURVIVED
THIS OCEAN.



SOMETIMES THE OCEAN HAS
BEEN A DANGEROUS PLACE.
WE HAVE SURVIVED MANY STORMS,
WHEN THE SEA BECAME UGLY,
AND WE WERE ALONE.

IN OUR TIME UPON THESE WAKA,
WE HAVE BECOME EXPERTS
OF THE OCEAN. WE ARE
NAVIGATORS, KAIWHAKATERE.
WE ARE RANGATIRA.

WHAKARONGO MAI.



Feedback – round 1

I presented the prototypes to Hunia, seeking feedback on whether I was on the right track and my ideas around dissemination/implementation. This hui was positive, and affirmed that I was understanding the kaupapa well, and on track to create something that shared the heart of VOYCE and which could be implemented into their work.

Hunia was positive about the concept. He commented that the metaphors, language, and use of whakataukī aligned well with VOYCE's kaupapa and communication. He noted that the waka concept connected well with the idea of 'Te Waka Rangatira'; a name which they used at VOYCE to describe the movement of their work. He also affirmed the concept of the mauri stone, saying that they had previously established the tikanga of a mauri stone in another kaupapa within VOYCE.

I chose to bring Māori ideas and concepts into the concept because whakaaro Māori is woven throughout VOYCE's work. However, I expressed to Hunia that I had felt unsure about whether it was appropriate for me to explore these ideas as a Pākehā designer. He shared with me about a Pākehā kaumātua⁹⁶ who was involved with his hapū⁹⁷. This kaumātua had been concerned about whether it was appropriate for him to be standing to whaikōrero⁹⁸, karakia, and lead different kaupapa. But the hapū responded to this kaumātua, expressing that he faithfully served the needs of their hapū, and so it did not matter what kind of blood ran in his veins - he had a ngākau Māori.⁹⁹ Hunia said, some people will say that if I have no toto Māori¹⁰⁰, I shouldn't do the work. But he disagreed with that. He said I have a ngākau Māori; a heart that cares for the kaupapa and these tamariki and rangatahi, so I am the right person for the job. These words were incredibly encouraging and humbling, because I had been wrestling with these questions, and seeking to act with care and wisdom. I was reminded that I needed to be confident in my work because of the relationships I had formed and the preparation I had done.

This meeting was an encouragement that I was on the right track – but the big question remained: would the care-experienced participants in the process be on board with the concept?

⁹⁶ elderly person

⁹⁷ sub-tribe

⁹⁸ formal speaking

⁹⁹ Māori heart

¹⁰⁰ Māori blood



Figure 69:

Prototypes

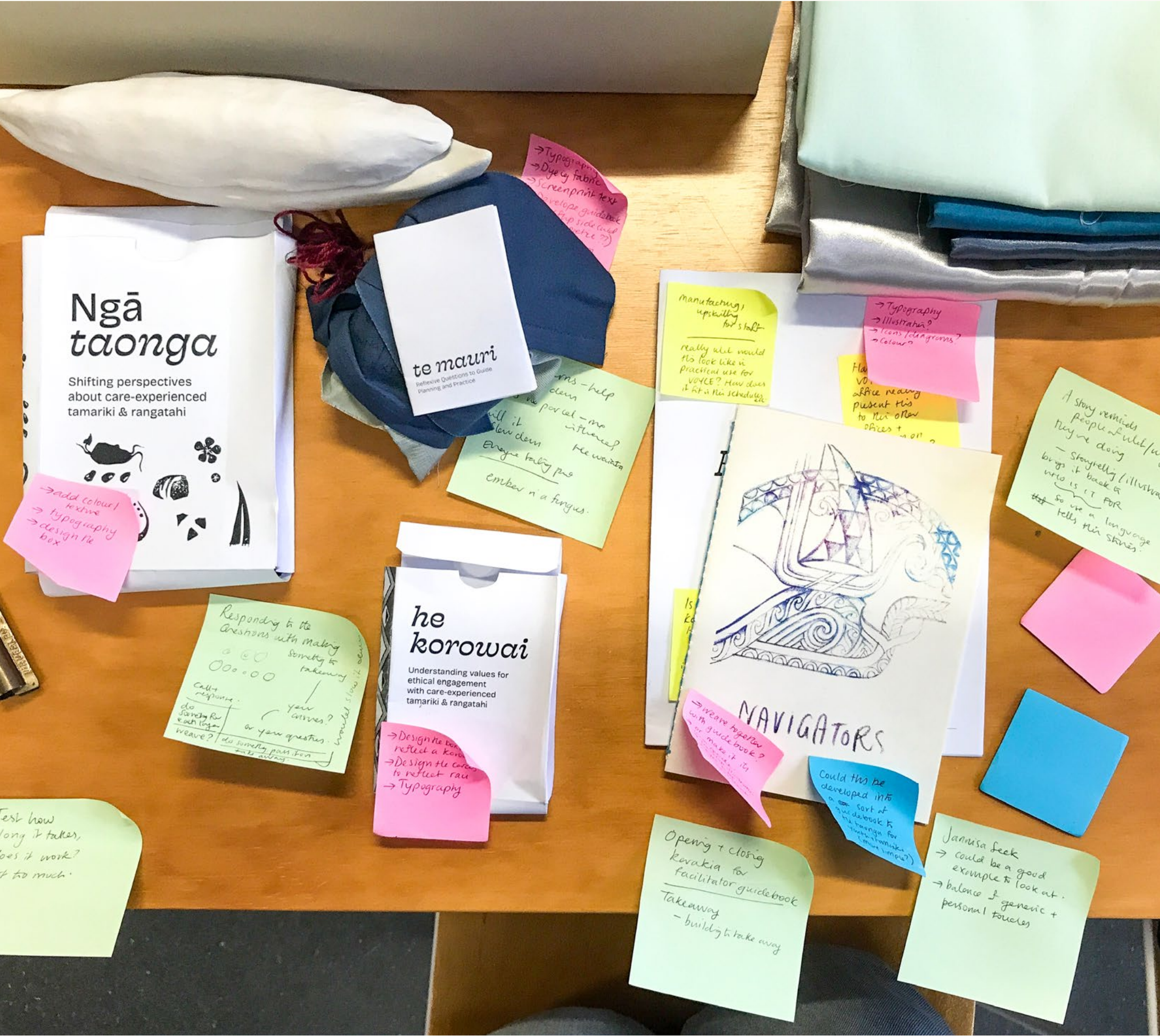


Figure 70:
Critiquing the Prototypes

Refining the Prototypes

I spent time refining the prototypes' designs in preparation for an online feedback session scheduled for mid-February. I wanted to present polished versions of the prototypes to get feedback on the design decisions (typography, illustration, etc.) alongside the concept.

Figure 71:
Creating clay textures to use as backgrounds on the boxes and cards

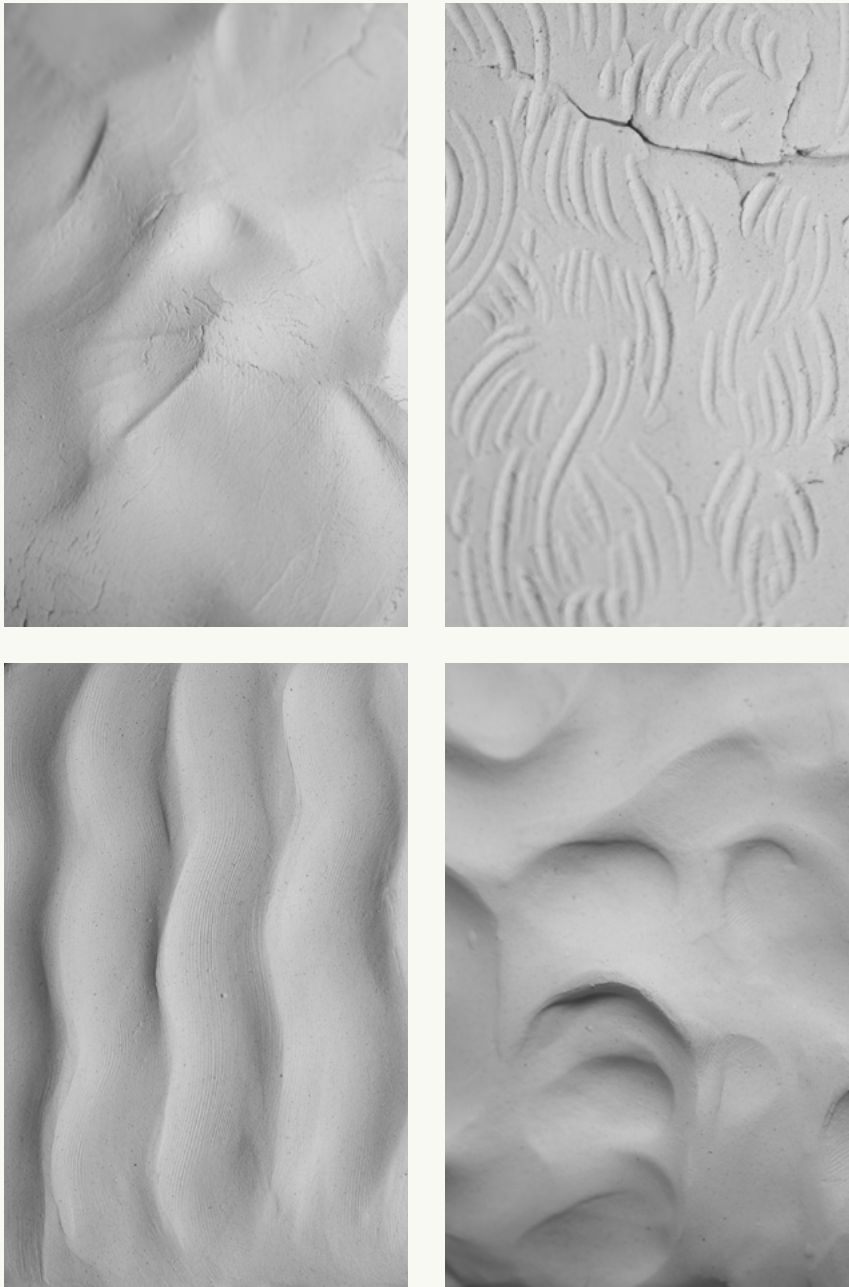


Figure 72:
Testing screen printing reflexive questions on to different fabrics

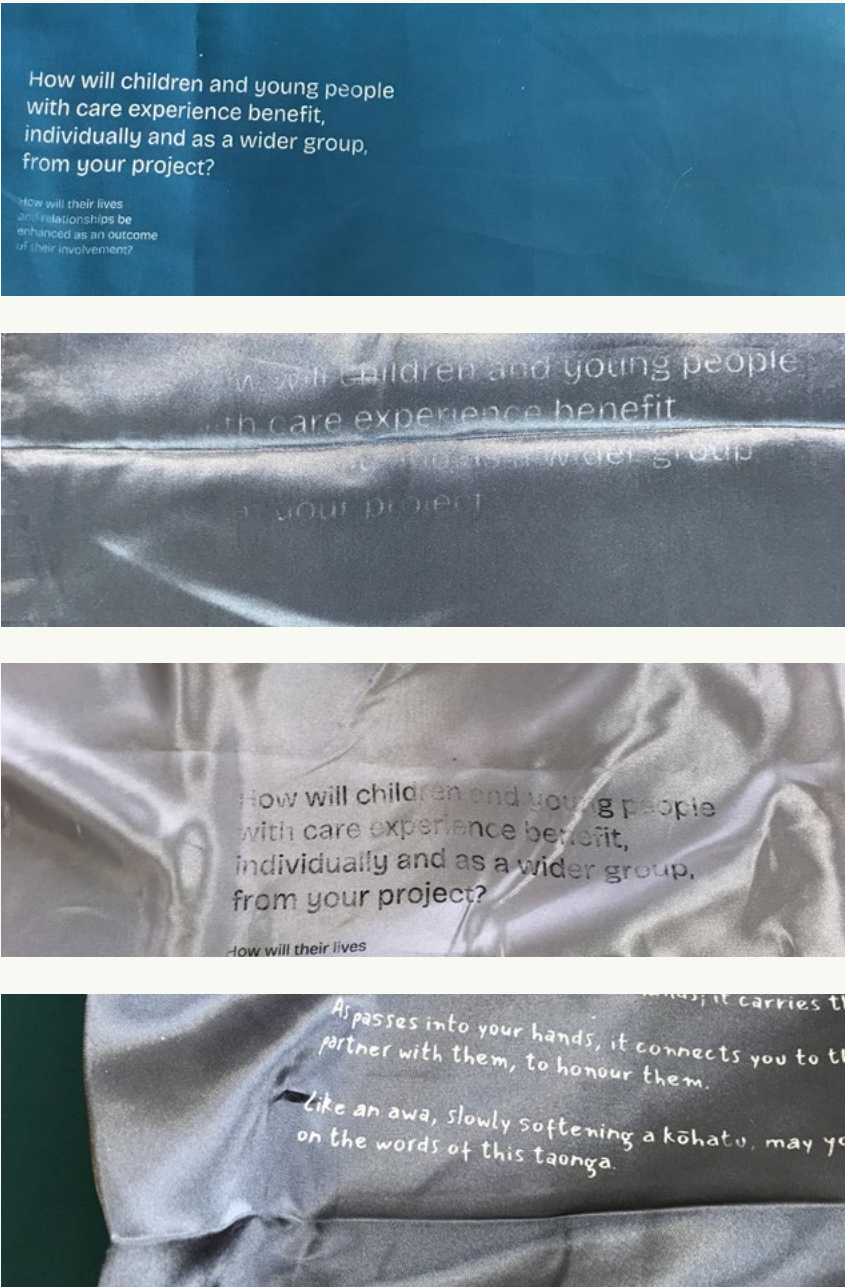


Figure 73:
Lino printing illustrations
for cards



Figure 74:
Test printing and developing
box designs





Prototypes for the Online Feedback Session

Figure 75:
Prototype of the waka container

Figure 76:
*Navigators book –
the introductory story*

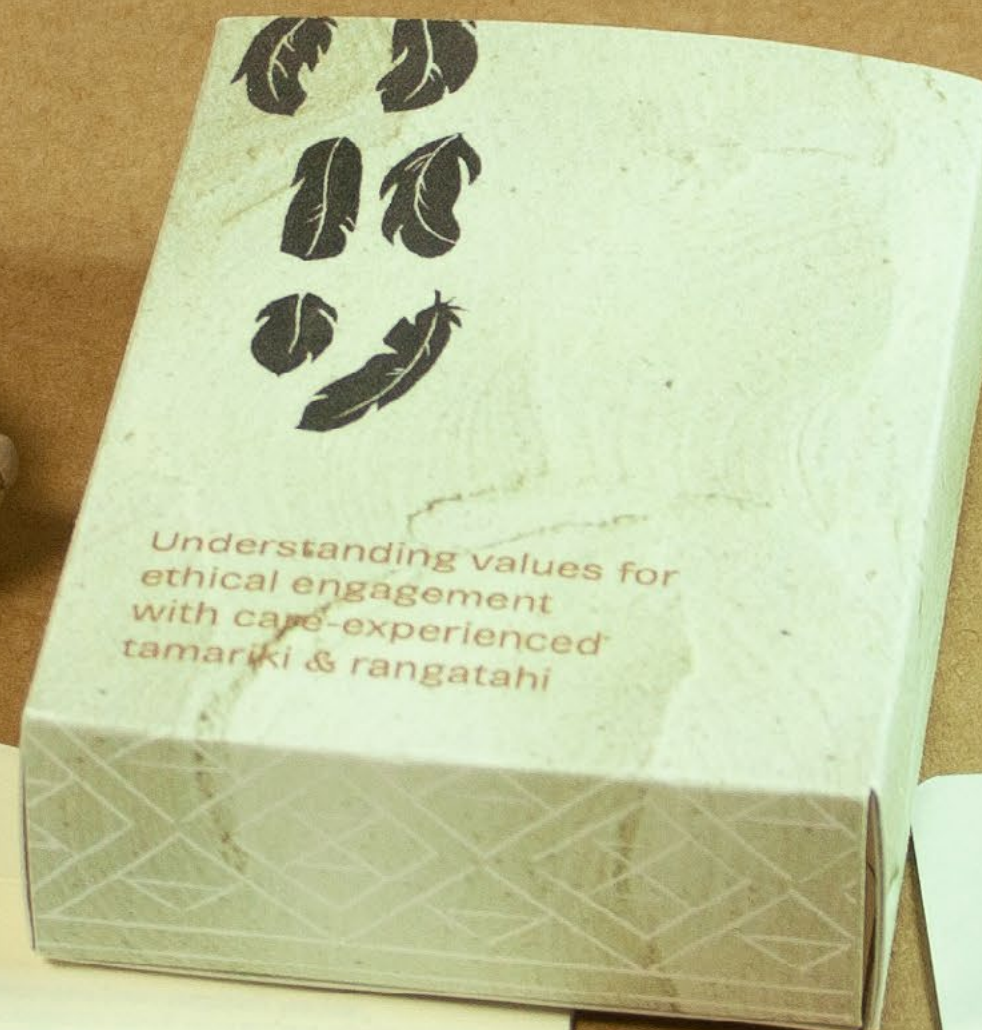




Figure 77:
Activity one: Ngā Taonga

Our Words – Adult Factors

"You know the purpose and plans ahead of time and have had time to prepare...so should I. Also, be understanding and give space. Don't pressure us. Don't force stuff. Have clear expectations but don't let your agenda take over...Respect me, my story, my words, and the value I bring to the conversation."



Our Words – Adult Factors

"Why is your organisation doing it? People need to be positive coming from the heart... sometimes it feels like a tick box and doesn't feel real. Participation needs to feel real and authentic. We know when you're not, and this will affect our willingness to participate. It's about people's intentions and integrity."

Figure 78:
Activity two: He Korowai

Figure 79:
He Korowai cards and clay





Figure 80:
Activity three: Te Mauri

Figure 81:
Te Mauri fabric and stone



Feedback – Round 2

I presented the latest prototypes in an online Teams meeting, seeking feedback from care-experienced people on the concept and design. Although about six people had initially indicated they would join the meeting, only two care-experienced people showed up, alongside Hunia and one member of staff who had been at the previous co-design workshop. The two care-experienced participants from the last meeting did not join. I had not previously met the care-experienced participants who joined the meeting. These participants had young children at home and noted that they were short on time. Because of my concern for their time, I raced through some of the introductory material and probably didn't provide sufficient context for the project and the journey so far.

There were some positive responses to the concepts that I presented, and some helpful feedback on the design direction. However, the main piece of feedback I received was that the project failed to sufficiently involve care-experienced youth in the making and content writing.

The main thing that triggered this response was my proposal of the short story that I had written. Initially, I hadn't intended to present this story to the group, as I had been unsure about the appropriateness of my writing it. However, I decided to still pitch it to the group for feedback on the use of storytelling and illustration in the resources. The response to the story was that it would have been much more meaningful if this story had been written by a care-experienced youth. This participant commented that having someone else write their story felt like they were being used, rather than having their voice heard.

The participants commented that the concepts were good, but would carry much more meaning if created by care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi. They suggested that the stories should be written by rangatahi in care, the illustrations should be created by someone care-experienced, and the clay pieces should be made with care-experienced tamariki. A highly involved level of co-design partnership is necessary in the context of care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi, because too often their voices are not heard, and they are not granted opportunities.

Reflections

Reflecting on these comments, I was frustrated at my lack of insight in creating this story. The heart of 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' is an emphasis on allowing care-experienced youth to tell their own stories. Due to deadlines and expectations, I had lost sight of the heart of 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'. I was frustrated that my lack of insight had led the workshop participants to feel they were experiencing the same old ethical failure they were so used to.

It was correct for the participants to critique the level of involvement of care-experienced rangatahi in the project. If this project was genuinely co-design, then I should have been making in partnership with these people, not just seeking their feedback. I lost sight of that because I became focused on creating an outcome that I liked and which represented my work well. As much as I had sought to practice reflexivity within the project, my agenda had gotten in the way.

However, within the limitations of this project – ethics applications, time pressures, and lack of participant buy-in, it was not possible for me to include care-experienced youth more than I did. To develop the writing, illustration, and content of these resources in partnership with care-experienced youth would involve a series of co-design workshops, which I did not have time for. This limitation revealed to me that there is a difference between a co-design project outside of a university context and co-design within the scope of a thesis project.

Although this feedback session was challenging, it was a great learning opportunity. Receiving criticism is a normal and realistic part of co-design. It gave me a chance to reflect on the realities of working with people and think about what I could do better in the future.

Next Steps

Despite the limitations of the Master's project, the truth of the feedback I received remained. If these resources really honoured 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono', the illustration, writing and making needed to be done in partnership with care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi.

Recognising this changed the scope of my Master's project. Initially, I had hoped to create a finalised resource ready for implementation by VOYCE. However, I now saw that I could not finalise a resource before partnering with care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi, and this could not happen within the Master's timeline. Therefore, I could not present a completed design solution, but I could demonstrate the potential of how design could contribute to 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'. Thus, the end point of the Masters would mark the start of a co-design journey with care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi, in which my work would be redeveloped with them.

Refining

I sent out a document detailing the concepts which I had presented in the online feedback session to the care-experienced participants who had been unable to attend, inviting them to provide further feedback. I did not receive any further feedback from the group.

I collated the feedback from the wānanga and the email responses. I also made my own critiques of the prototypes and established a plan for further refinements.

I planned refinements to the design according to the feedback I had received in the wānanga which I was able to action by myself. I also revisited my notes from the earlier co-design workshop, to check if my work was honouring the thoughts shared at that time.

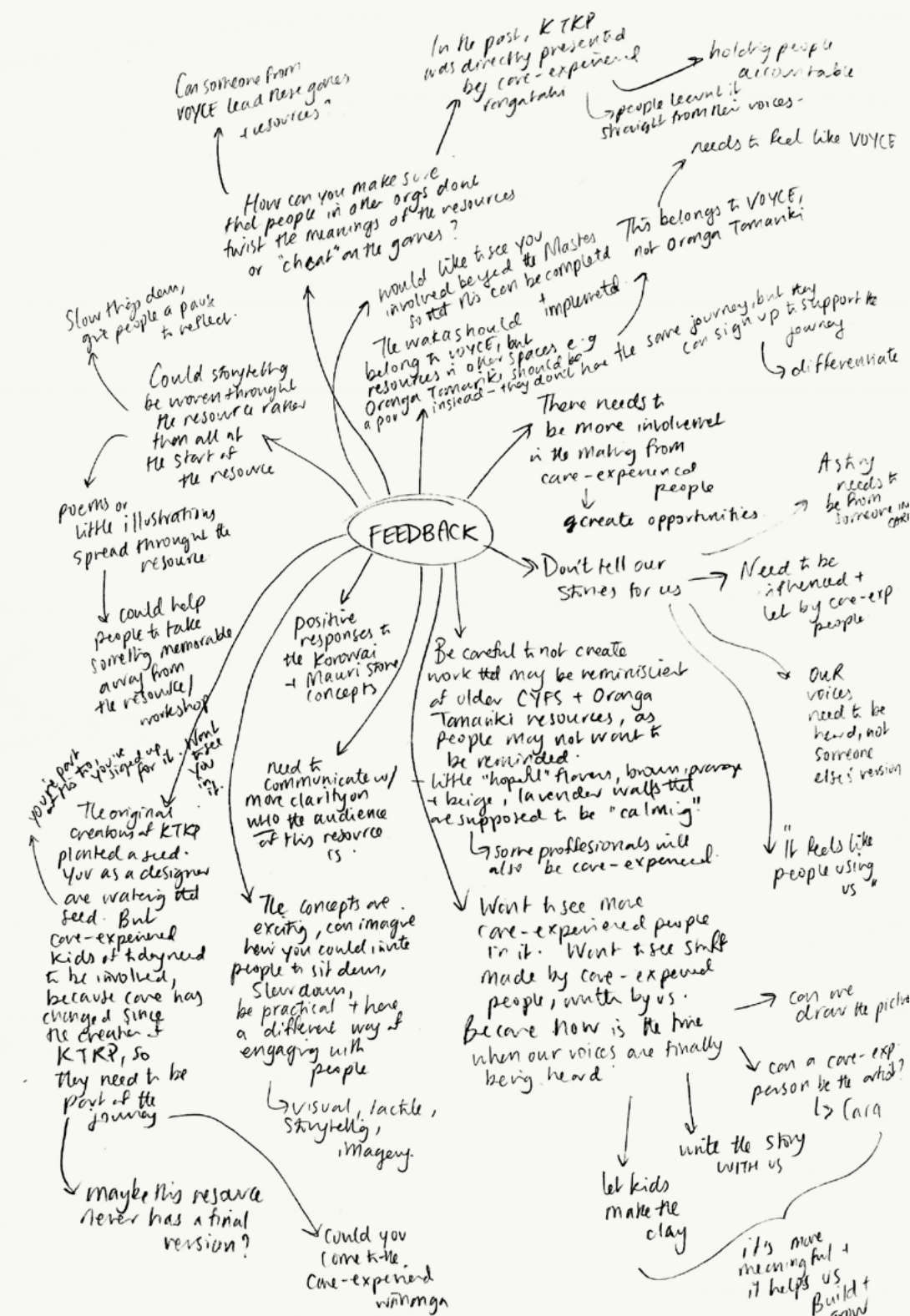


Figure 82:
Map of feedback from online
feedback session



Figure 83:
Planning design developments
according to the feedback

TE MAURI TO DO:

- Write draft kohatu guide
- Check hikanga + korakia
- Woodblock prints of kohatu
- Test 18 layers of fabric
- Design text layout of chesters
- Create clay awa + kohatu textures
- Develops pencil illustrations for guidebooks.

NGA TAONGA TO DO

- Create smaller taonga uku
- Remake some woodblock prints
- Make clay textures for backgrounds
- test print box + cards.

ALL TYPOGRAPHY CONHIE KOROWAI TO DO

- Typography tests
 - ↳ hand-drawn
 - ↳ printed
- New woodblock prints
- Clay textures + photograph
- Experiment with tanioko
- make cards horizontal
- clay button
- test print
- test bind
- buy clay
- design a container for clay.

WAKA TO DO

- Finish carving
- dremill inside
- lid
- engrave lid
- think about lashing/binding
- oil paint (prep too)
- measurements for final
- source wood.

GUIDEBOOK TO DO

- Clay textures
- intro pages using woodblock prints
- pencil diagrams
- ~~plan binding + cover??~~
- Photos for guidebook (this will communicate most clearly)

ILLUSTRATIONS TO DO

- ~~Plan a theme / connect to print~~
- write poems
- ~~plan illustrations~~
- test uku + pencil paintings...
 - ↳ sketch into uku??
 - ↳ sketch to?

Figure 84:
Planning the next steps

I then began to develop the 'final' design – the 'tool' that I would present at the end of my Master's, which would become a scaffold or starting point for further co-design beyond the project.

Figure 85:
Sketches of the waka form

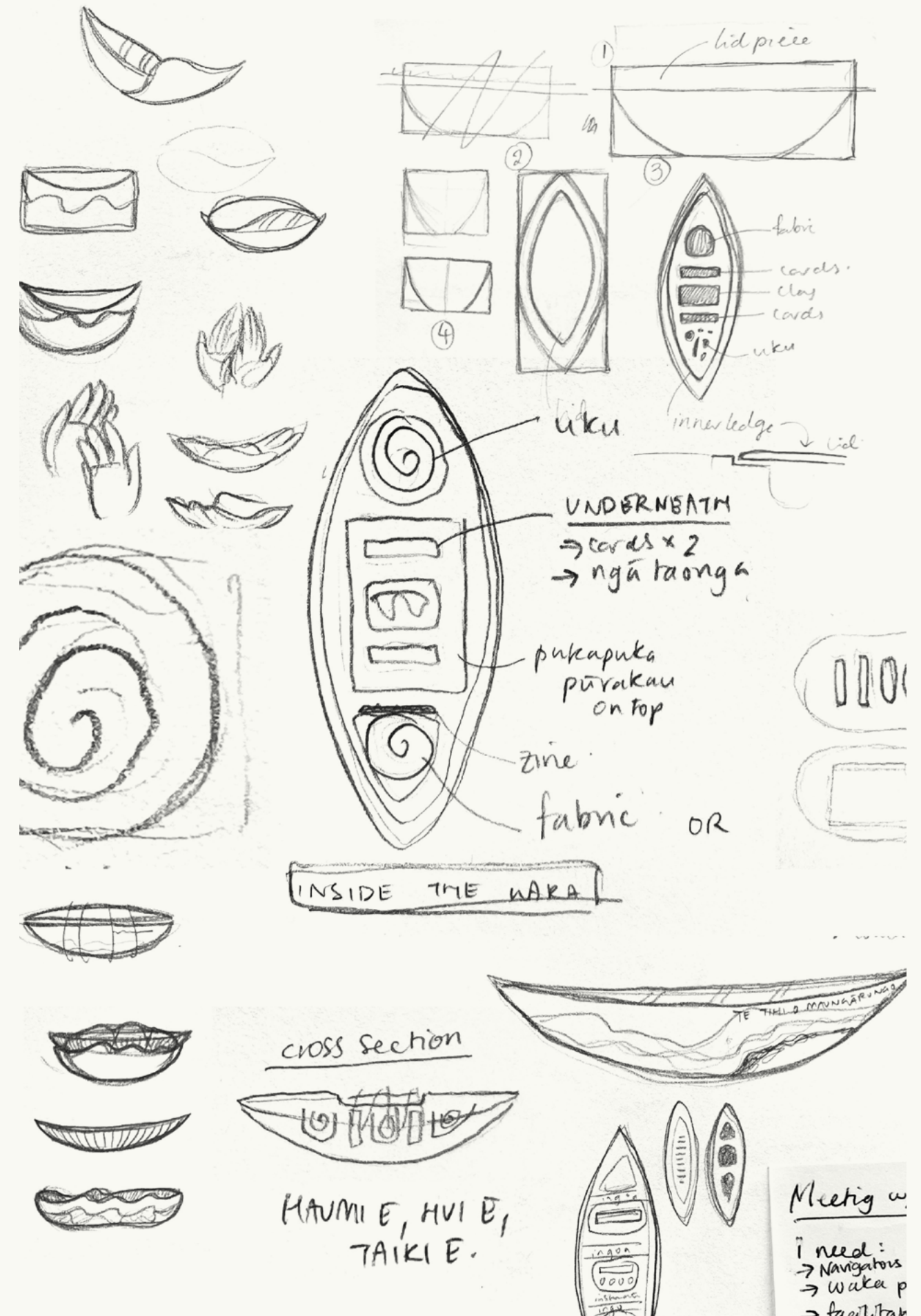


Figure 86:
*Carving a redwood prototype
of the waka.*



Figure 87:
Developing new monoprints.

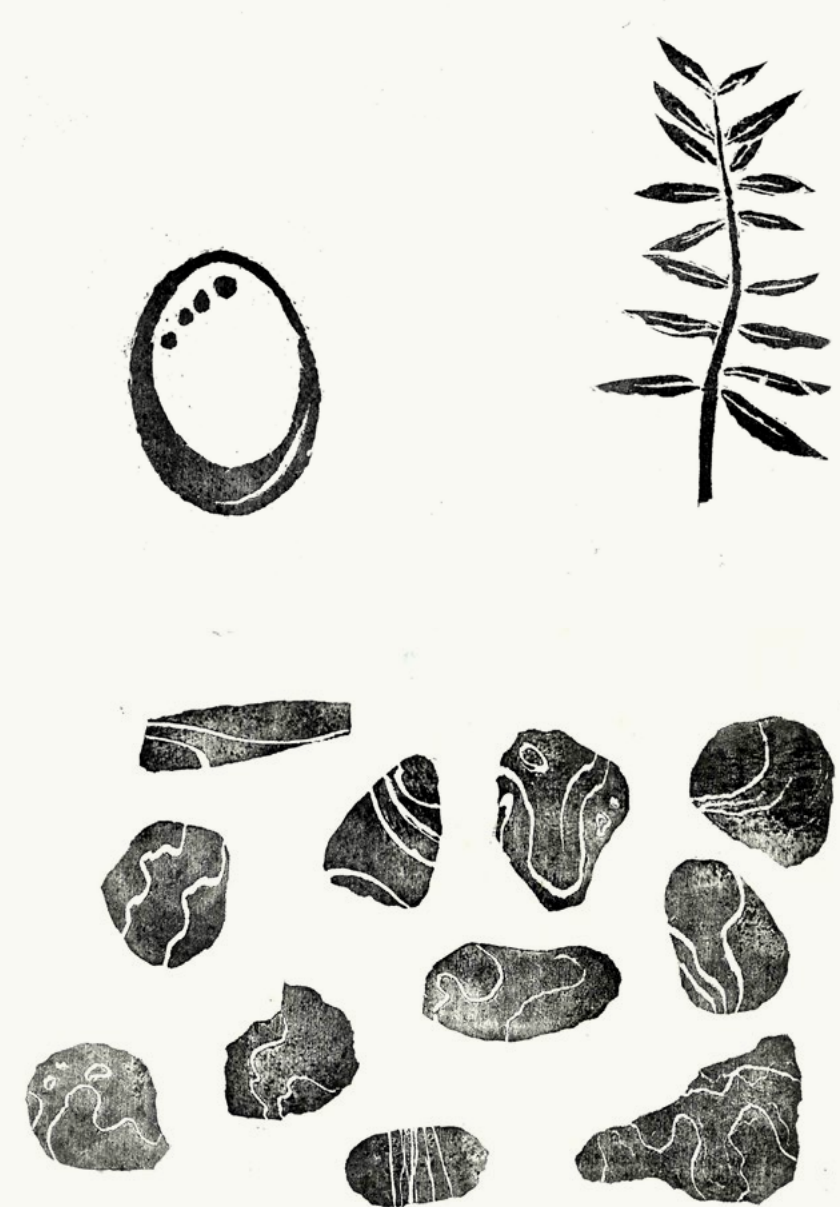


Figure 88:
Glazing the clay textures



Note. I wanted to build a collection of textures and colours to use across the resources. I wanted the resources to be visually cohesive, so I used earthy, texture-rich media across the pieces.

Figure 89:
Glazed textures



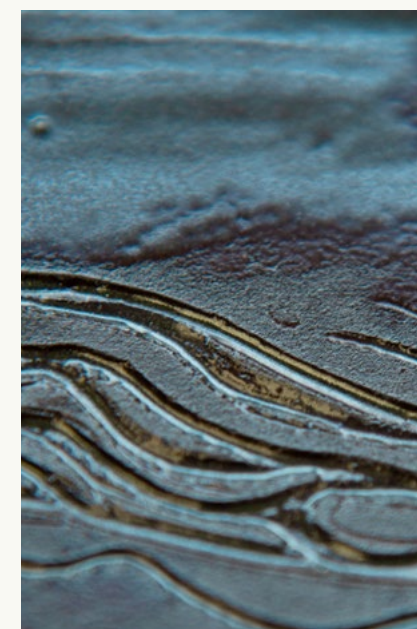
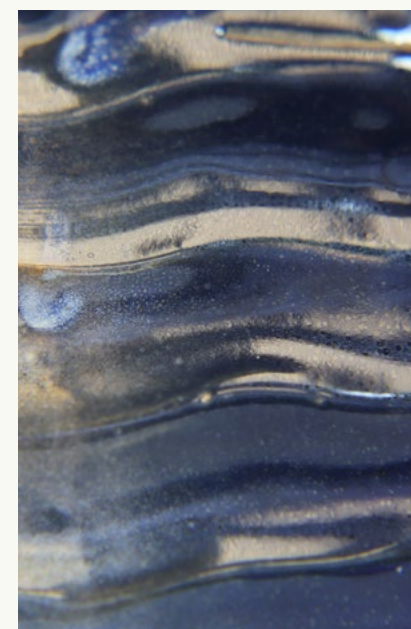
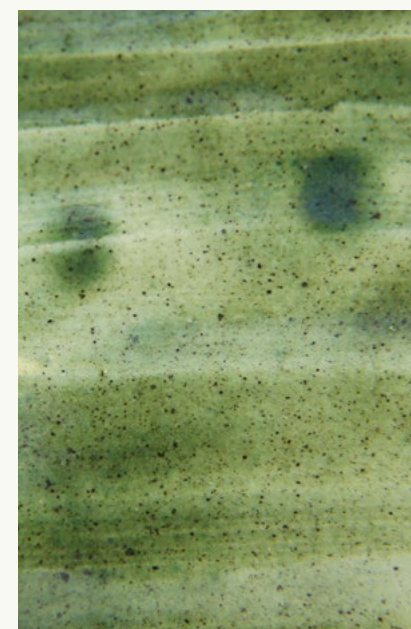
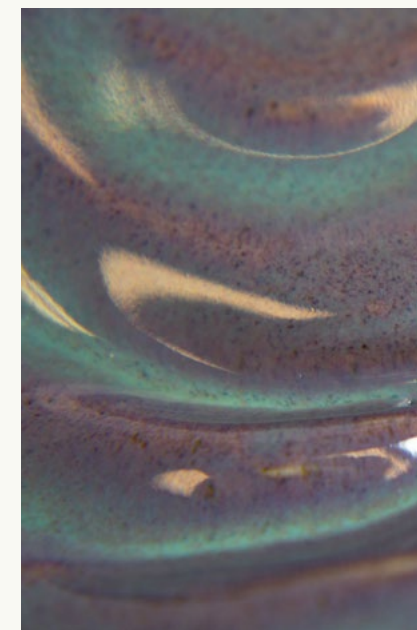
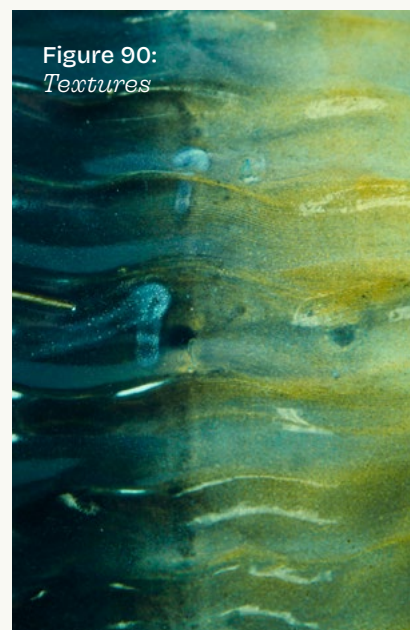
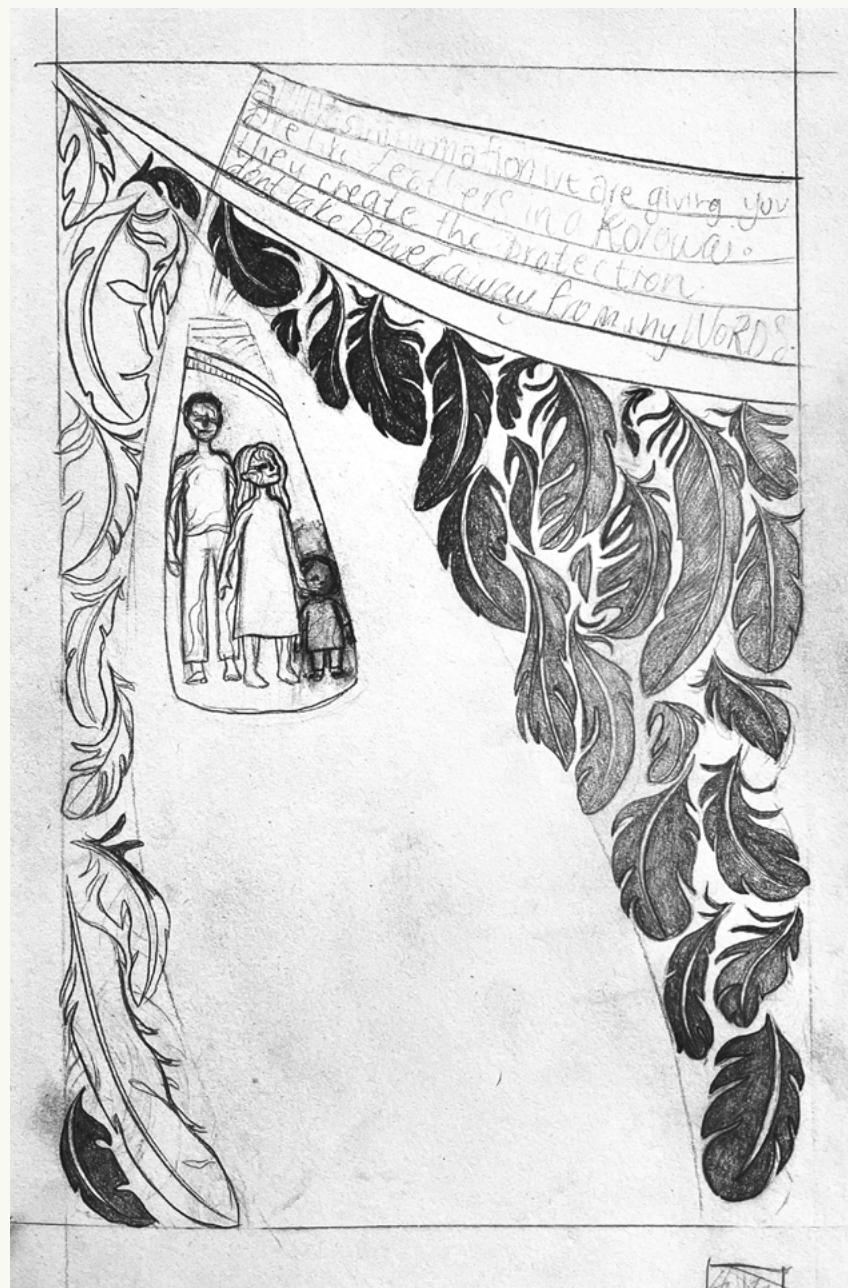


Figure 91:
Illustrative exploration



Note. I sought to develop a series of illustrations as small reflections to sit alongside each of the resources. This was a suggestion from the feedback session, in place of the 'Navigators' booklet. These illustrations were not ultimately included in the final artefact.

Figure 92:
Illustration with clay



Note. I experimented with carving into clay using a sgraffito method for the illustrations.

Figure 93:
Typography exploration

yelling
HE KOROWAI
He Korowai
He Korowai
HE KOROWAI — childish
He Korowai — too geometric
HE KOROWAI — something youthful about the tall lean forms.
He Korowai — I like this but it's too friendly
He Korowai
He Korowai
HE KOROWAI — not serious enough
HE KOROWAI

Note. The typeface I had been using earlier in the project was too clean and commercial feeling – there needed to be more character and voice. I experimented with hand-drawing the typeface to give it tone and variability, and developed a typeface using ink and a brayer. I ultimately decided to use the typeface ‘Mansalva’, designed by Carolina Short. I chose this typeface for its handwritten texture, which gave the project a personal feel without being too childish or fun.



Figure 94:
Ink and brayer
typeface exploration

Figure 95:
Screen-printing fabric

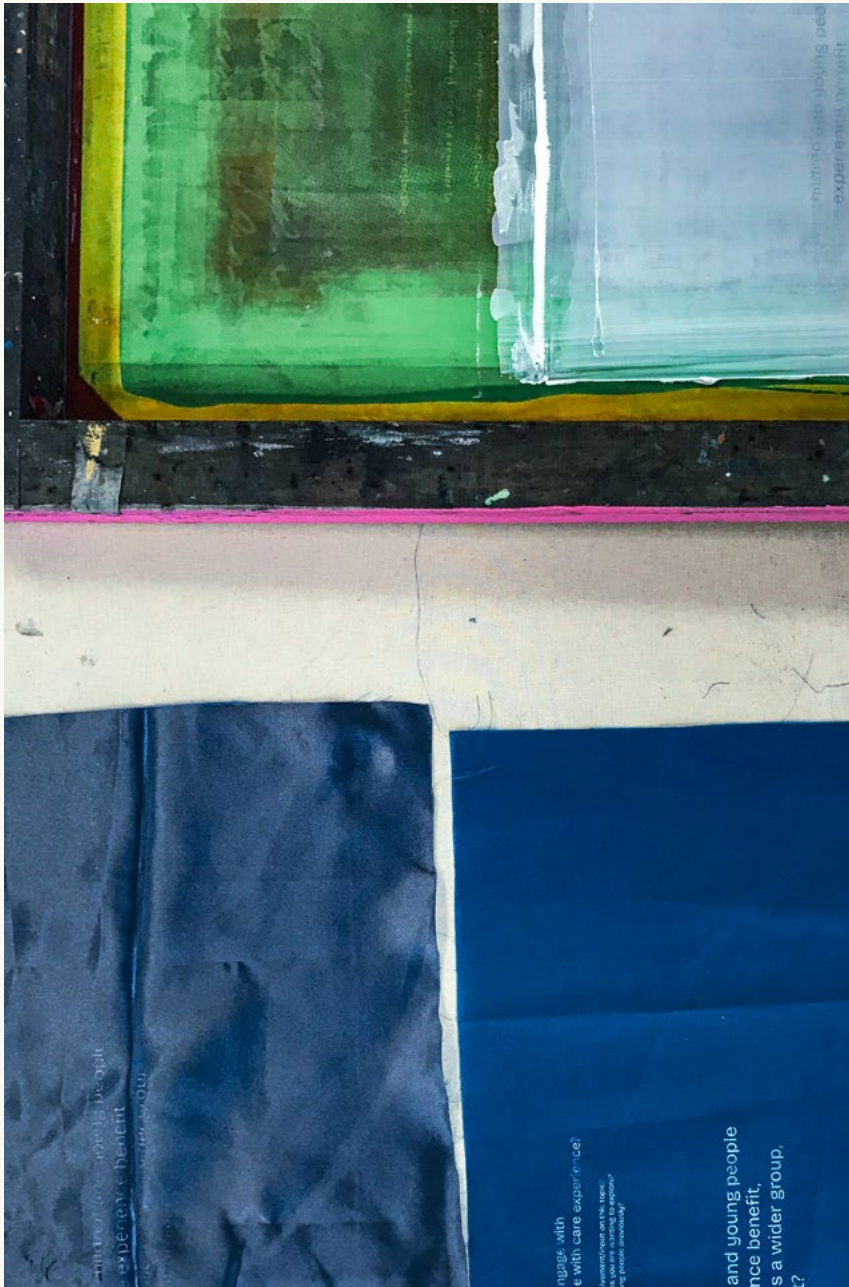


Figure 96:
Hemmed fabric



Note: My Nana hemmed these pieces for me, a reminder of the family support I am privileged to have as I undertake this project.

Figure 97:
*Sculpting and glazing the
final taonga uku*



Figure 98:
*Experimenting with clay
sgraffito techniques*



Figure 99:
Throwing vessels on the wheel



Figure 100:
Glazed vessels



Figure 101:
Diagram planning the
boxes and cards

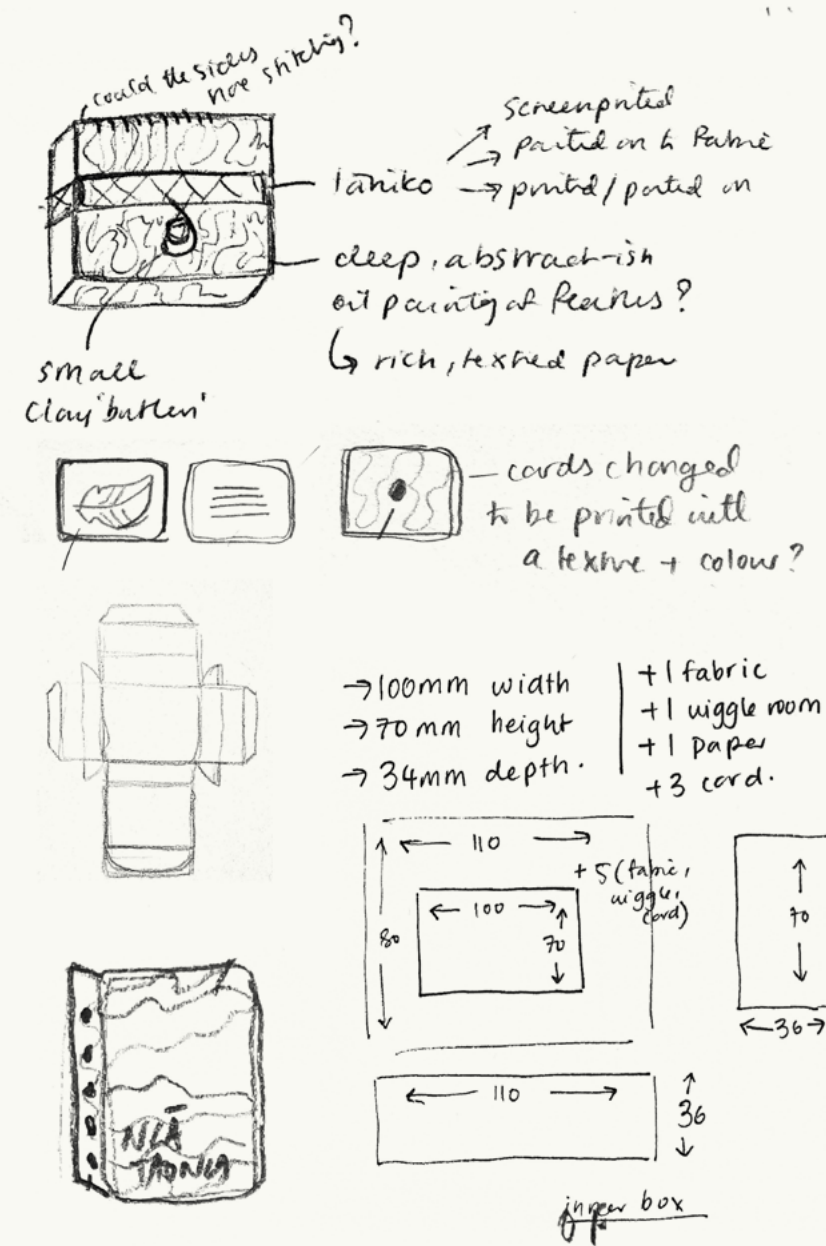


Figure 102:
Binding the boxes



Figure 103:
Sketching the waka outline



Figure 104:
A piece of Kauri gifted to me from a church friend for the project



Figure 105:
*I roughed out the form of the
 waka using the CNC machine*



Figure 106:
*I used chisels to create a
 textured surface on the waka.*



Figure 107:
Carving



Note: I did not approach the waka as a piece of whakairo, recognising that I lacked sufficient knowledge of this art form (see pg. 89). Instead, I viewed my work as the creation of a vessel. It was an ipu for a knowledgeable kaiwhakairo to approach in the future, carving forms and story into its surface. However, using chisels to create a textured surface was an intentional decision. I worked carefully and prayerfully, believing that the heart and hand present in the work would be felt by the rangatahi who would hold the waka.

Figure 108:
Building texture



Figure 109:
Muka binding on waka lid

Note. I purchased muka¹⁰¹ cords from a local kairaranga¹⁰² to bind the waka together, inspired by a comment made by one of the care-experienced participants in the co-design wānanga about the cords around my work 'Aroha' being like an embrace which held the work together.

¹⁰¹ flax fibre

¹⁰² weaver



Figure 110:
Creating a clay button to latch the lid



Part Four: Deliver

Final Artefacts

I created a set of three interactive resources that were designed to present the substance of 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' to people engaging with care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi. These resources are housed in a carved waka. The waka and resources will belong to VOYCE and will be housed at the Auckland VOYCE office. The intention is to ultimately train VOYCE kaimahi and care-experienced rangatahi to be facilitators of the resources. Information on the resources for these facilitators is included in a small accompanying guidebook. The intention is for facilitators to take the resources to organisations or groups seeking to engage with care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi, and use them to run training programmes about 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'.

I collaborated with VOYCE staff and care-experienced people through a co-design workshop, feedback sessions, and consultation to develop the concepts for these resources. Each resource reflects the ideas shared by these collaborators. The annotations on the following pages detail how the resources were informed by the co-design participants.

This short video explains the set of resources.

This video was shared with my examiners, who assessed the work online. The video and voice-over format provided an accessible alternative to reading about the resources, which could support future users with lower literacy levels.

Figure 111:
Final artefacts





Figure 112:
Pieces of a whole



Figure 113:
Collection of resources



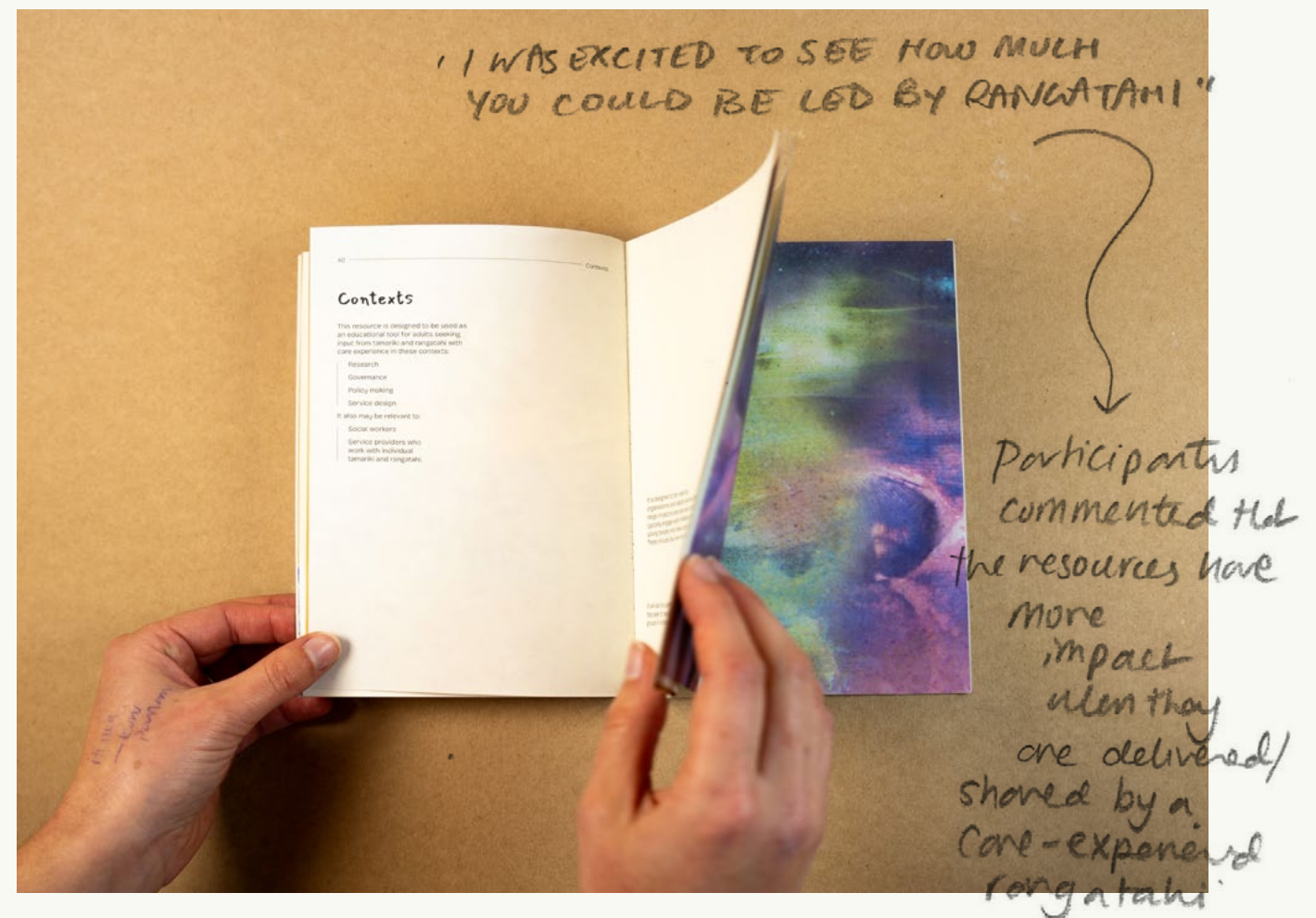


Figure 114:
Facilitator guidebook



Figure 115:
Ngā Taonga

Resource 1: *Ngā Taonga*

VOYCE emphasises that care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi are rangatira, experts on their lived experience in care, and should therefore be included in discussions about their own care and the care system (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2022). However, if people and organisations engaging with 'Kia tika, Kia Pono' do not hold this fundamental perspective on care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi, it would be difficult for them to authentically engage with the content of these ethical guidelines.

'Ngā Taonga' is about breaking down deficit perspectives of care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi. This activity uses objects to invite people working with tamariki and rangatahi to see them as rangatira who are full of potential. Changing perspectives on tamariki and rangatahi from deficit to seeing them as hope-filled sets a foundation for listening to their perspectives shared within the broader 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' framework.

This concept was informed by Tane's (2024) thesis work 'Ko te Mauri he mea Tahuna i te Moana', which emphasised the importance of looking for the light in the darkness of whānau violence. Tane emphasised the strength and mana of whānau by responding to a set of quotes about their experiences of violence, illustrating first the darkness in the quotes, and then revisiting these illustrations to reveal whānau strength and potential hidden within the words. Similar to Tane's work, I sought to shift deficit perspectives by highlighting the strengths and potential of care-experienced rangatahi.

Tangible objects from the
whenua help to ground
our thinking, bringing us
"down to PAPATŪĀNUKU"
- Hūnia.



"IT'S A REALLY TANGIBLE
EXPERIENCE TOUCHING
THESE (TAONGA)"

"YOU CAN DEFINITELY
FEEL THE STORY IN
THESE TAONGA"

Figure 116:
Ngā Taonga annotated

The 'Ngā Taonga' resource includes a set of eight clay taonga, with three corresponding cards for each.

Participants in this activity are invited to interact with the collection of taonga. They then use the prompts on the first card to talk about the associations they have with these taonga, engaging with the activity on a personal level (Zino et al., 2021).



Figure 117:
Taonga Uku



Figure 118:
Engaging with the taonga

These taonga were carefully crafted from clay to reflect pieces of the taiao. Rather than something that could be easily recreated, I invested time in creating beautiful objects by hand to honour the tamariki and rangatahi these taonga represent. The presence of the human hand and human effort in these pieces was intended as a mechanism to help invite the viewer to linger and engage with the taonga. The care and intentional design of the objects invites viewers to slow down. I hoped that by creating beautiful artefacts, I could cause people engaging with these resources to be more intentional and reflective.

Figure 119:
Ngā Taonga - card one



With a second card, the participants are introduced to a whakataukī or kupu whakarite that matches their taonga. The flip side of the card unpacks the deeper layer of meaning within the whakataukī. I felt that it was appropriate to use whakataukī and kupu whakarite because of the prevalence of Te Reo Māori in VOYCE's publications (Te Rōpū Kaitiaki mō ngā Teina e haere ake nei, 2023; VOYCE Whakaron-go Mai, 2022, 2025a), and the rich imagery within these language features.

On a third card, these whakataukī are brought into the context of care-experienced youth. Participants are invited to consider the connection between the taonga, the whakataukī, and care-experienced youth. On the black side of the card, participants are introduced first to a deficit perspective on youth in care. But on the flip side of the card, they are introduced to a more hope-filled perspective on the whakataukī and on care-experienced youth.

As the participants journey through the cards and the taonga, they are invited to shift their perspectives from a deficit or negative view of care-experienced youth to one that is filled with hope and potential -essentially, viewing youth as rangatira.



Figure 120:
Ngā Taonga - card two



Figure 121:
Ngā Taonga - card three

Figure 122:
Ngā Taonga cards



Note. 'Ko te piko o te māhuri,
tērā te tupu o te rākau'
(Te Aho Matua, 2024)

'Ko te mauri he mea
huna ki te moana'
(Elder, 2020)



Figure 123:
He Korowai

Resource 2: *He Korowai*

‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ has three main sections: ‘Our Words’, ‘Ethical Values’, and ‘Reflexive Questions’.

‘Our Words’ is made up of a collection of quotes from the care-experienced rangatahi who co-created ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’. These words provide their perspectives on what ethical engagement with care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi should look like in practice. These words are then summarised into a set of ethical values: rangatira, mana, mauri, ūkaipō¹⁰³, aroha, manaakitanga, whanaungatanga¹⁰⁴, koha, wairuatanga¹⁰⁵, māramatanga¹⁰⁶, pono, and tika.

In the co-design workshop, the co-design participants and I discussed the necessity for people and organisations to be open-minded when engaging with care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi. We discussed how becoming open-minded requires the humility to change perspectives.

‘He Korowai’ is intended to support a better understanding of the ethical values outlined in ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’. Building upon the belief that care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi are rangatira, ‘He Korowai’ emphasises redefining these ethical values according to the perspectives of care-experienced rangatahi. The intention of this resource was to prompt people and organisations to reconsider how they engage with care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi.

The resource includes a deck of cards and a lump of clay.

¹⁰³ belonging
¹⁰⁴ relationships
¹⁰⁵ spirituality and wellbeing
¹⁰⁶ understanding

Firstly, activity participants are introduced to the ethical values from 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'. Each person receives a card with one of the values. Then they are invited to create something out of clay to reflect on what they think this value means to them, and how they practice it in their mahi.

This concept was inspired by AUT's Good Health Design Research Centre 'Making Meaning' toolkit (Good Health Design, n.d.). This toolkit invites participants to use playdough to make something in response to abstract prompts, such as 'Knowledge'. Having participated in this activity myself, I was interested in how sensory and tactile making promoted creative thinking and helped me to consider more deeply my own definition of these abstract concepts. I wanted to similarly invite people to reflect on their own definitions of abstract values, such as 'manaakitanga'. What do these words really mean in practice?

Participants asked for something creative, which would be interesting to children

use of clay makes the activity creative + interactive

"WE DIDN'T WANT SOMETHING THAT WAS JUST WORDS, WE WANTED SOMETHING WHERE KIDS WOULD BE LIKE, 'OH, THAT LOOKS INTERESTING!'"



Figure 124:
Value card and clay

Figure 125:
'Our Words' Cards

every quote from 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'
is included in the original wording.
"FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO COME IN AND
RE-WRITE OUR STORY DIFFERENT TO
OUR WORDING MAKES IT FEEL LIKE
YOU'RE JUST USING US."

Kaimahi participants
commented that the
quotes from rangatahi
in 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'
were the most powerful
part

"HOW AMAZING THE QUOTES
ARE FROM THE 'OUR WORDS'
PART... SPENDING TIME READING
THEM THERE IS SOME
UNLEARNING WHICH
TAKES PLACE"

Participants are then introduced to 'Our Words'
- a set of cards with the quotes from the ranga-
tahi who co-created 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'. These
quotes redefine the ethical values according
to the lived experience of these rangatahi and
provide practical ways to enact them.



Figure 126:
Redefining the values

In the co-design workshop
we talked a lot about
changing people's
perspectives; inviting
people to be humble
+ admit when they were
wrong.

→ This re-making is
an invitation to
humility.



"AN OPEN-NESS TO
SEEING SOMETHING IN
A DIFFERENT WAY,
TO LEARNING SOMETHING
NEW, MAYBE ADMITTING
YOU WERE
WRONG."



Participants are then encouraged to re-create their clay object to reflect the perspectives of the care-experienced rangatahi. They will discuss the quotes and share their new clay objects with the group. The intention of this activity is to encourage participants to reconsider the meaning and enactment of the ethical values. These new perspectives could better inform their engagement with care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi. Squashing up and re-creating these clay objects is a way to enact humility and shift perspectives.

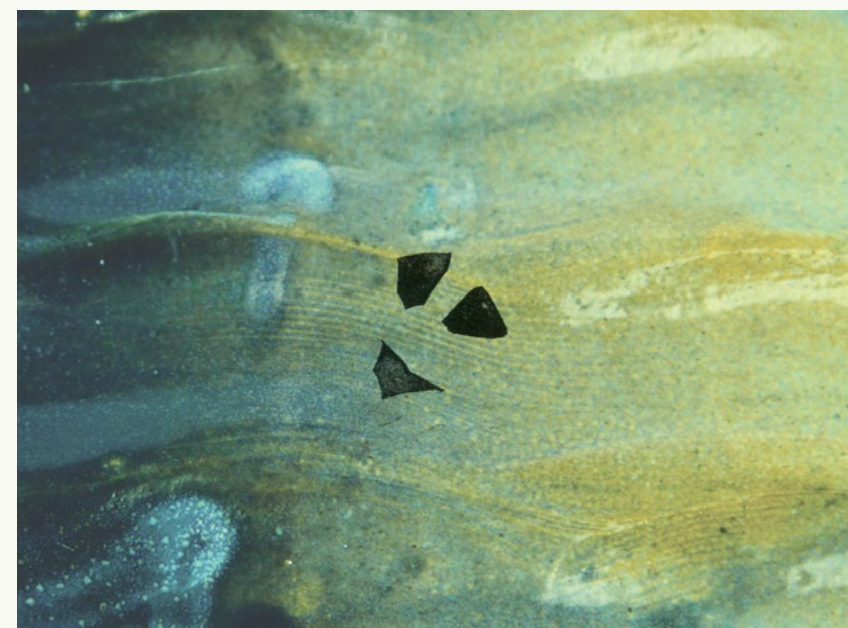
Figure 127:
He Korowai box

Figure 128:
He Korowai cards



The design of the box reflects a korowai, which is a metaphor for the ethical values within 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'. One of the care-experienced co-creators of 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' commented, 'all this information we are giving you are like feathers in a korowai. They create the protection (both sides – the right people, doing the right things). Don't take power away from my words' (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2022, p. 2). In keeping with this metaphor, different kinds of feathers are used as an organising system for the cards.

Participants asked
for use of illustration
in the resources so
"it's not boring"
"so it's not just an
adult book"



Monoprints have been carved from wood for each resource, creating a visual system of illustration. The texture and colour in all the resources were created by sculpting, glazing and photographing clay to reflect parts of the taiao – wai¹⁰⁷, oneone¹⁰⁸, rau¹⁰⁹, pounamu, rākau¹¹⁰. I handcrafted each aspect of the resources from natural materials such as clay and wood to create a system that was consistent in texture and feel. Using natural media and imagery was also consistent with the values of VOYCE. Whakaaro Māori is informed and inspired by the wisdom of the taiao, as seen in whakairo, tā moko, and reo (Salmond, 2018). VOYCE consistently reflects whakaaro Māori within their reports and projects by using metaphor and imagery from the taiao.

¹⁰⁷ Water

¹⁰⁸ Sand, Soil

¹⁰⁹ Leaves, Feathers

¹¹⁰ Trees

Figure 129:
Textures from the taiao



Figure 130:
Te Mauri



Resource 3: *Te Mauri*

The final section of 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' is a set of reflexive questions that invite readers to reflect upon their planned engagement with care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi, and ensure that it is appropriate and aligns with the values laid out in these ethical guidelines.

'Te Mauri' includes layers of fabric printed with the reflexive questions from 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono', a small zine which explains the activity, and a guide to choosing a kōhatu¹¹¹.

Participants are invited to engage with a set of reflexive questions drawn from "Kia Tika, Kia Pono". The questions are printed upon layers of blue fabric. Participants will unfold the layers of fabric, discussing each question as a group, layer by layer. Unfolding the fabric is like peeling back layers to reveal the heart and intentions of their engagement with care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi. Is it Tika, is it Pono?

I thought about the process of reflection like stripping back layers of assumptions to get to the heart. In a sense, my own journey of reflection throughout the project had been the stripping and softening of my own heart. This process reminded me of a kōhatu in an awa¹¹², being slowly softened by the current. The colour, flowing form, and silky feel of the fabric was chosen to reflect an awa.

¹¹¹ Stone

¹¹² River

Figure 131:
Stripping back layers



Figure 132:
Kōhatu

A kōhatu will be nestled within the heart of the layers of fabric. The kōhatu represents the heart of care-experienced rangatahi and tamariki, and is a reminder of the great responsibility it is to engage with care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi in ethical and safe ways. This kōhatu is the mauri of the resource. Mauri can be defined as life essence (Barlowe, 1991). Moko Meade (2025) talks about how all things, both animate and inanimate, have a mauri. Mauri is often in the form of a taonga, such as a pounamu or a stone.

My mum, who works as a teacher at Sacred Heart Girls School in Hamilton, shared with me about how the principal of the school has a large pounamu manawa¹¹³ that was gifted to the school. Every year, the pounamu is passed between the hands of all the graduating students. In this way, this pounamu carries the memory of each person that has passed through the school. In many ways, this pounamu has become the manawa of the school. It has become more precious because of who has held it.

The kōhatu will not be included in the resource when it is gifted to VOYCE. Collecting the kōhatu is the responsibility of VOYCE, as the kaitiaki of this taonga. Included with the resource is a guide that invites the VOYCE office and the rangatahi and tamariki they are working with to choose their own kōhatu from their local awa or tātahi¹¹⁴. The tikanga included in this guide remains to be further developed in partnership with VOYCE. It is to be informed by the process VOYCE followed when collecting kōhatu mauri for another project in 2026.

Being chosen from a local awa or tātahi, the kōhatu could connect the set of resources to the rohe of the VOYCE office. The kōhatu will also carry the mauri of the rangatahi and tamariki involved with the Auckland VOYCE office, because their hands were involved in choosing it. This kōhatu would then become the heart of the resource. Involving the VOYCE office and care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi in the process embodies this co-design partnership, where they have a role in completing the resource and making it their own.

¹¹³ Heart

¹¹⁴ Beach

In the co-design workshop,
we talked about how
inviting people to listen
to care-experienced tamariki
+ rangatahi is about
ARORA

"IF YOU HAVE A
RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMEBODY
THAT BRINGS ABOUT
ARORA - THE NOTICING
OF THE ESSENCE OF
THE OTHER
PERSON"

"at the end of the
day the most important
thing is the children
and them being
listened to."



Figure 133:
Kōhatu and fabric





Figure 134:
The Waka

Figure 135:
Carved compartments

Figure 136:
Surface of the waka

"I THINK IT (KIA TIKA
IS A WAKA... KIA PONO)
BECAUSE IT'S NOT JUST
HOLDING PEOPLE, IT'S
HOLDING THEIR TRUTHS
AS WELL, AND THEIR
JOURNEYS"

"THERE'S KIND OF
A MOVEMENT"

The Waka

During the co-design workshop, one of the care-experienced participants commented that he saw 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' as waka, because 'it has movement' and 'because it's not just holding people, it's holding their truths as well, and their journeys'. This beautiful reflection informed my decision to house all the resources together in a waka.

The waka was CNC machined from a chunk of kauri, and then hand chiseled to create the textured surface. Native timber was used to reflect traditional waka (D. Brown et al., 2024). I did not carve any forms into the surface. I was aware that it would not be appropriate for me to practice any form of whakairo without training or knowledge of the mātauranga of this practice. The handmade textured surface reflects the time and care poured into this object, and I hope that this can be a symbol of the respect I have for the care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi that 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' represents. I hope that in the future a care-experienced kaiwhakairo could carve the waka.





Discussion

Working as a designer in a care-experienced setting.

It was complex to work as a designer in the context of an NGO advocating for tamariki and rangatahi in state care. There were many layers to this context: historical, political, organisational, cultural, and relational. I spent longer than I expected trying to understand the context. Despite these efforts, I would never have the same contextual understanding as those with lived experience of the care system. It is not possible for a designer to enter a context of this complexity and have sufficient understanding of its nuances to independently ‘solve’ any design issue or opportunity. Creative Waikato (2024) urges co-designers to let go of any intention to save communities, encouraging them to work in a humble partnership that uplifts the community's strengths.

Collaboration and relationship were crucial to this project. However, building genuine relationships takes time, potentially more time than is available within the scope of a Master's project.

Partnering with an NGO was an interesting challenge. Staff were busy, schedules constantly changed, and my project was not their priority. I learnt to balance my expectations of their availability and the outcomes of the project. Although we initiated this project with an enthusiastic vision of a set of complete resources, integrated into their organisation, I had to scope this vision and come to terms with a different goal within the timeframe. I learnt to be flexible, working to the priorities of VOYCE, rather than my own. This meant the co-design workshop was pushed back in the delivery schedule, and I decided not to run a second one due to time constraints for all groups involved in the research. These decisions were made to avoid adding extra pressure to their high-demand work context. Being flexible was about prioritising the people over my progress (Bishop, 1996).

I learnt that care-experienced people should be invited to contribute to every part of the project, including the physical making. Too often, care-experienced people have other people telling their stories for them, as was made clear to me during the online feedback session. Whole-project partnership is particularly important when partnering with care-experienced people, as their voices have historically been excluded from many spaces. ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ clearly expressed this. However, it took time and mistakes to better understand what contribution and inclusion really look like, and how contextually nuanced this can be. I should have invited care-experienced people to write and make the creative content in the project.

Reflecting on these limitations, I recommend that any student seeking to practice co-design within a limited time-frame should carefully scope a project, and be realistic about what can be achieved within the time available.

Outputs

I began this project questioning how creating physical artefacts through collaboration could support the work of an NGO in New Zealand.

The physical resources I created enhanced the PDF version of 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' by making it tangible and interactive. During the co-design workshop, I saw the value of the physical resources in the enthusiastic responses I received when I presented my earliest prototypes to the group. Following the release of 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' in 2021, the team at VOYCE recognised the potential to develop these ethical guidelines beyond a written PDF into a more engaging physical artefact. When I presented the subsequent prototypes of the final concept developed through this research to Hunia, he referred to that vision; it was beginning to take form in these prototypes. He believed that resources presented in this way could help make 'Kia tika, Kia Pono' more accessible to both VOYCE kaimahi and external organisations.

I presented the final resources to one of the care-experienced co-creators and her partner, who was also care-experienced. They carefully read through each card, cradling the objects in their hands. They commented that they saw themselves in the artefacts, that they were easy to engage with, and that they were excited to see their own words presented in the work. The participant commented "I really feel like this is going to make a difference".

The depth of resolution in the resources I made comes from the collaboration with VOYCE and care-experienced people. My earliest creative explorations were based upon my assumptions about experiences of care. The co-design workshop and subsequent ongoing engagement guided and grounded my thinking, ultimately shaping the final resources to better reflect the needs and aspirations of VOYCE and the care-experienced participants. The participants clarified the purpose of these resources and how I should focus my effort. The participants also provided beautiful inspiration for the storytelling and feeling of the resources with the words and metaphors they used in the workshop. Without this collaboration, the resources would have fallen short of our collective expectations and would have been based on a limited foundation.

It was my role as a designer to draw the insights of the care-experienced participants together into a cohesive whole (Swann, 2002). Rather than co-designing systems or frameworks, I designed and built a physical output that synthesised these insights with the content of 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'. Following my 2023 project with Professor Denise Wilson, 'Aroha', I believed in the value of design in partnership with research. Following our partnership, Denise carried the box with her to visit government officials, to conferences, and to international research contexts. I have gathered from conversations with Denise and others who have seen the box that it communicated Denise's research in a new, emotive, and tactile way. It resonated with people and left a memorable impression. 'Aroha' was the beginning of my research into the use of design to enhance research dissemination. This project continued that research. This project has deepened my belief in the value that design adds to written research. I hope that this set of resources can have similar impact to 'Aroha' in the future.

Arguably, the project could have been undertaken by a non-designer. However, my technical skills, design training, knowledge of creative processes, and ability to synthesise information transformed participant insights into aesthetically beautiful, emotive resources that communicated clearly. Sanders & Stappers (2008) comment that designers are necessary to the co-design process because of the specialised knowledge they possess.

Learning from co-design practice

Building relationships

I set out to practice co-design with VOYCE and the care-experienced writers of ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’, with an emphasis on working in relationship. Genuine co-design requires an ongoing partnership, in which partners are included at every step of the journey, including the making (Sanders & Stappers, 2014). However, I was unable to involve the care-experienced participants as much as I would have ideally liked (and would be considered best practice). Care-experienced voices informed the final design, but care-experienced people were not actively involved throughout the whole process.

Ideally, building more in-depth relationships should have occurred over many face-to-face meetings, and more opportunities for whakawhanaungatanga with and manaakitanga to the participants. However, there was only time for one co-design workshop within the short timeframe of the project and I was unable to engage with the care-experienced participants across each stage of the project. The university ethics application process added additional pressure due to the time it consumed, as well as the lack of flexibility in the application for changes in response to changing participant needs throughout the process. Despite this, a meaningful and ongoing connection with VOYCE was established, and there remains an opportunity for ongoing engagement beyond the scope of this Master’s.

In-person Co-design

Following the in-person co-design workshop, I met with another group of care-experienced people for an online feedback session. I had not met these participants before, and it was difficult to build rapport in the online forum. I was unable to create a welcoming space by providing kai or chatting casually with them. These participants also had young children they were attending to during the session, and were short on time. Time pressures made it difficult to give sufficient context for the project or seek feedback in interactive/creative ways. I was also only able to show these participants photos of my prototypes. They were unable to touch and interact with the work that they were giving me feedback on.

Although Sanders & Stappers (2012) argue that co-design workshops can be run both online and in person, my experience led me to believe that in-person workshops are preferable. Online interactions lack depth. In-person co-design workshops create space for building relationships over food and casual conversation, opportunities to practice manaakitanga, provide greater flexibility, and invite all participants to be fully engaged in the activities.

Sustained Engagement

I built positive rapport with the participants in the co-design workshop. Sustained engagement with these participants could have supported the co-design partnership throughout the project (Shea, 2012). Unfortunately, there was limited sustained engagement with this group of participants throughout the project. Different people turned up to the following feedback session, and as a result, there was a lack of trust or context for these participants. Despite VOYCE’s enthusiasm for the project, the care-experienced co-design participants did not have the same capacity to be involved; as a result, there was a lack of buy-in to the project. One participant in the feedback session commented on this lack of capacity, suggesting that co-designing with rangatahi in care (rather than with adults with past care experience) could make sustained engagement easier, as the project would be more relevant to their current contexts.

When initiating a co-design project, it is crucial to confirm the commitment of the co-design participants (Mark & Hagen, 2020). Sustained engagement is improved when the opportunity for co-design is initiated by the community, rather than the researcher. In this project, VOYCE had identified the design opportunity, not the care-experienced participants. This may have contributed to the care-experienced participants’ lack of buy-in to the project.

Full Participation

‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ makes it clear that care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi should be included in every aspect of a project about their contexts and provided opportunities for capacity-building (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2021). I only truly understood this in practice after receiving feedback during the feedback session with the care-experienced participants. Upholding ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ within this project should have included much more ownership by care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi, and more opportunities for them to physically make different parts of the project, such as the clay and illustration.

As mentioned earlier, it would have been difficult within the scope of this project to undertake a whole co-design process from building relationship through to concepting and creating content together. Realistically, this project perhaps could have been scoped to be two separate Masters projects – one for co-designing a concept, and one for co-creating the actual artefacts.

Reflexivity

Recognising the necessity to include care-experienced people in the making, I re-evaluated the end-goal of this project. I developed a new plan to continue to develop the resources through a more intentional partnership with care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi. Genuine co-design requires flexibility; a willingness to let go of personal visions to meet the goals and needs of the community one is partnering with (Bishop, 1996). Letting go of control creates space for the community to lead and exhibit their strengths and abilities (Shea, 2012).

Changing the endpoint of the project taught me a humbling lesson in the importance of reflexivity within my co-design practice, as discussed by Moll et al. (2020), and in ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2021). Learning to be honest with myself and change my goals to uphold the needs of the community I was working with was a valuable lesson. Practising reflexivity allowed the co-design process to grow me personally (McKercher, 2020).

The Role of Design

If co-design participants are to also be makers, writers, and illustrators, what is the role of the designer? Should the designer only be a facilitator in a co-design context? Can a design theorist then replace a technically trained designer as facilitator?

If the intended output of a co-design project is a physical artefact, I argue that a technically trained¹¹⁵ designer should remain involved as both a maker and a facilitator. However, in the context of partnership with care-experienced people, it would perhaps be more appropriate for this project to be led (or co-led) by a care-experienced designer with an understanding of co-design methodology. Care-experienced designers should be prioritised in this context, as they have the expertise of lived-experience. Similar to Tuhiwai Smith’s (1999) encouragement to prioritise Māori researchers’ involvement in Māori research projects, care-experienced designers should be granted these opportunities before other designers.

Design and creative communication are highly valued by VOYCE, as is evident in their resources. Creative communication is engaging for children and youth. I saw firsthand how creative communication could support VOYCE’s work, making it interactive, emotive, and tactile. Participatory means are increasingly encouraged in care contexts (Oranga Tamariki Voices of Children and Young People Team, 2023; Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2022). ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ is essentially a guideline for how to practice co-creation in the context of care. There is an exciting opportunity for care-experienced designers to become familiar with co-design methodology and lead future projects in this context. Similarly, there should be an emphasis on building both technical design skills and an understanding of co-design methodology in other contexts that require lived experience and offer limited opportunities.

¹¹⁵ training could be formal or informal

Future research opportunities

Initially, I had sought to create a set of finished resources that were ready to be implemented at VOYCE within the timeframe of the Master’s project. However, the February feedback session shifted this end goal, and I ended up creating a refined set of ‘concept’ resources, which will be further developed through a series of co-design workshops in partnership with care-experienced people.

I presented these resources to the project participants at a small event at VOYCE. This presentation was an opportunity for me to honour them and show them how their input has informed the resources so far. ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’ emphasises that anyone working with care-experienced people must not ‘use and go’, but evidence results from the interactions (Te Rōpū Arotahi, 2021, pg. 34). At this meeting, I also presented to the group my intentions moving forward: to invite care-experienced people to re-make the resources in their own voice and with their own hands.

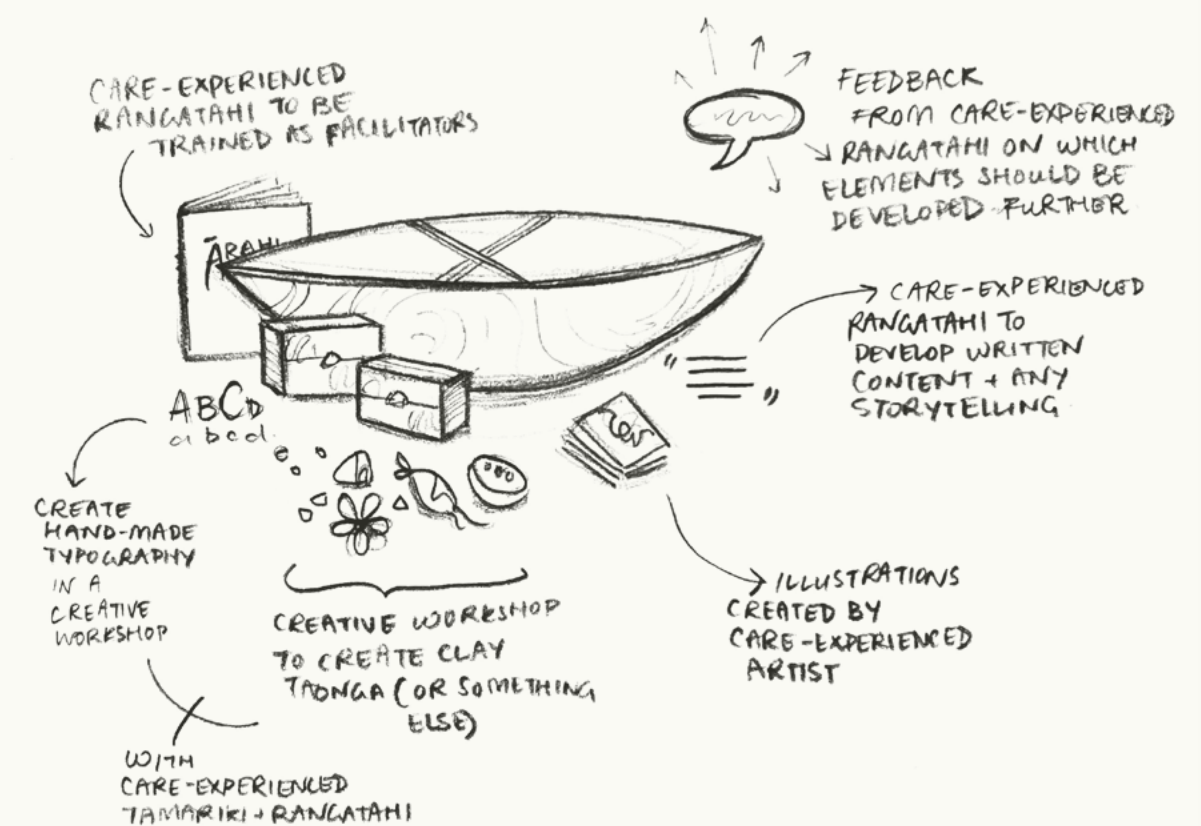
The prototype resources developed in this research will be gifted to VOYCE, and they may use them as they see fit. If VOYCE would like me to remain involved in the project, I hope to run a series of co-design workshops to redevelop the design in partnership with care-experienced people. I am hoping to reach out to both care-experienced adults and tamariki and rangatahi currently in care. This was a suggestion made in the feedback session. These co-design workshops could involve developing copywriting, writing stories or poems to go with the resource, making new clay pieces (or other objects/materials), and creating hand-made typography. We could seek to reach out to care-experienced illustrator to create new illustrations in place of the current imagery. It would also be special to reach out to a care-experienced person with expertise in whakairo, to carve the waka. The waka has been left plain for this purpose. In such a future scenario, I could help facilitate workshops and help draw the new pieces of work together into a cohesive whole.

Following these developments, I hope to help build a full set of resources for all nine VOYCE offices in New Zealand. I want to work with the staff training team and the Impacts and Insights team to develop an implementation plan for how the resources would be utilised within VOYCE and with other organisations and ministries. We could work together to train VOYCE kaimahi and care-experienced youth ambassadors to facilitate workshops with the resources for these outside groups. This may involve training workshops, or a series of training videos. It would be useful to see care-experienced youth leading the use of these resources, as this content would be most impactful delivered by someone with lived-experience.

Once training has been completed, we may seek to launch the resources publicly with an event hosted by VOYCE and led by care-experienced rangatahi. When 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' was initially launched, politicians and organisations were invited. According to the team at VOYCE, the intention of inviting politicians and organisations to this launch event was for them to recognise the value of the resources first-hand. Participants in the co-design workshop commented that it would be particularly powerful for care-experienced rangatahi to present these resources, as 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' represents their stories and experiences.

If the resources were implemented by different groups, we may evaluate this implementation. It would be good to establish whether these resources would inform or change the practice of ministries and organisations who engaged with them. If these resources proved useful, a long-term vision could include embedding them into training for ministries such as Oranga Tamariki.

Figure 137:
Diagram of potential redevelopments



Conclusion

VOYCE works in advocacy, amplifying the voices of the care-experienced. Contributing my expertise in design techniques and thinking, I have helped to amplify these voices in a new physical and creative form. The resources I have created serve as a vessel for these voices – seeking to uphold them, not translate or reimagine. These vessels contribute a new dimension to 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' by making these guidelines interactive. People can now participate in 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono', touching, feeling, discussing and reflecting upon these guidelines in a group context. The beauty and tactility of the resources invite people to engage at an emotional level, slowing them down to reflect upon the content of 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono', and honour the voices of the care-experienced co-creators with greater intentionality. These resources could also be tools for capacity building. Care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi could be invited to further develop these resources. Care-experienced rangatahi could also use these resources to facilitate training workshops with organisations seeking to engage with 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'.

This project explored how creating physical artefacts through collaboration could support the work of an NGO representing care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi in New Zealand. This exegesis has outlined my exploration of physical artefacts, learnings about the meaning of collaboration, and nuances of working as a designer in the context of an NGO supporting care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi. Through reflection I have learnt lessons which will inform my future work as a designer collaborating with communities. A first draft of these resources has been created for return to the community. In the voices of the care-experienced, it will take on a new life, a new form, and grow beyond me.

The seed of this project was planted by the care-experienced creators of 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono', far before I was involved. This seed was formed by their hopes, dreams, and stories. I have had the privilege to nurture this seed for a time, and to become a small part of the story. As this seed is returned to the care-experienced community, it will take on new life and form. More people will water this seed, and it will continue to grow. May it bear fruit, may that fruit feed a hopeful future for care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi in New Zealand.



Karakia Whakakapi

*I poipoia te kākano
E ēnei ringaringa.
E whakawhetai ana
Tēnei ngākau.*

*Hoki atu, e purapura e
Ki ngā ringa rangatira
Puāwaitia ai.*

*Ka putaina he hua,
Ka putaina he tūmanako
He anamata
He awatea hou
Ki ngā tamariki mokopuna.*

*I te mana me te aroha o Īhu Karaiti
Kia tau.*

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Appendices



Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee
(AUTEC)

29 September 2025
Stephen Reay
Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies
Dear Stephen

Ethics Application: 25/294 Co-designing a Vessel for Voices

PROVISIONAL APPROVAL OF APPLICATION

This application was reviewed by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) and **provisionally approved** pending further information.

- 1. Clarify the use of photographs and how they will be used online;
- 2. Clarify what physical data is stored (C.6);
- 3. Include the AUT logo and AUTEC approval statement from the template (prescribed elements) on all public facing documents;
- 4. Changes to the Information Sheet:
 - a. Remove “anonymity”;
 - b. Provide information about photographs taken at the workshop;
 - c. Ensure the AUT logo is placed on all public-facing documentation;
- 5. In the redesigned Information Sheet:
 - a. include what will be recorded and what will be photographed is the participant needs to know theirs to make informed consent;
 - b. include photos in the “what will happen to information” section;
- 6. Include in the workshop outline for participant feedback (Appendix 5) the process to be followed for the participant to contact the researcher and give their feedback.

Responding to requests for further information

Provide a cover letter to respond to all outstanding ethical concerns. This includes addressing concerns raised in the application as the original answers in the application form should not be edited. **Do not resubmit your EA1 application** unless specifically directed to in the conditions.

Please track or highlight changes made to new versions of existing study documentation (Information Sheet, Consent Form, Advertisement etc). Both tracked and clean versions of updated documents should be provided when responding to a provisional approval.

The Committee is always willing to discuss with applicants the points that have been made.

When the conditions have been met, you will be notified of the full approval. Full approval is not effective until all the conditions have been met. Data collection may not commence until full approval has been confirmed. If these conditions are not met within six months, your application will be closed, and a new application will be required.

Please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us

If you have any enquiries about this application, please contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTEC Secretariat
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

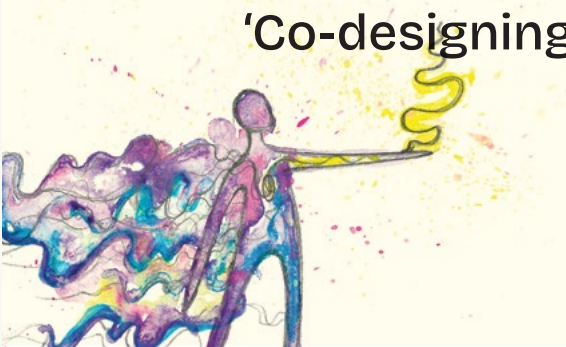
Cc: nsn6338@autuni.ac.nz; lvana.nk@aut.ac.nz



Approved by the Auckland University of Technology
Ethics Committee on 7/10/2025
AUTEC Reference number 25/294 Co-designing a Vessel for Voices

Participant Information

'Co-designing a Vessel for Voices'



Kia ora,

You are invited to take part in a series of co-design wānanga, developing a new creative form for 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'. This project will explore how co-design can be used to support and enhance the work of an NGO in Aotearoa. This project is being led by Bryre Dowling, a Master of Design student from Auckland University of Technology, in partnership with VOYCE Whakarongo Mai. Other research team members include Stephen Reay, Professor of Design at AUT, and Ivana Nakarada-Kordic, senior lecturer at AUT. The study is being carried out as a requirement for a Master's in design.

What is the purpose of this research?

'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' is used all the time by VOYCE. VOYCE wants to make the framework more accessible, so that more people use this framework when working with care-experienced children and youth. This project aims to design a new, creative form for 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' by working in a creative co-design partnership with care-experienced members of the original Rōpū Arotahi, and VOYCE kaiwhakamana.

Date that data collection will start:
November, 2025

The aim of this project is to:
Design a new creative format for 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' to enhance its accessibility, aiming to increase its use. Reflect upon co-design methods in partnership with an NGO in Aotearoa.

The final design produced from these wānanga may be used by VOYCE kaiwhakamana and shared with people seeking to engage with care-experienced youth and children. The findings of this research may also be used for academic publications and presentations. The design and findings may be presented in an exhibition as part of the Master of Design degree.



2020:

Te Rōpū Arotahi co-created 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' with VOYCE and university researchers. The outcome was a document which explained the framework.

This framework is used all the time by VOYCE, and now they want to think of how to move it beyond a document, and into some kind of creative form that is easier for people to engage with (without lots of reading).

Which brings us to...

2025:

This research project!

VOYCE kaiwhakamana, members of Te Rōpū Arotahi & Bryre will co-design a new creative form for 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono.' Creating some kind of interactive, creative tool which communicates the same stuff.

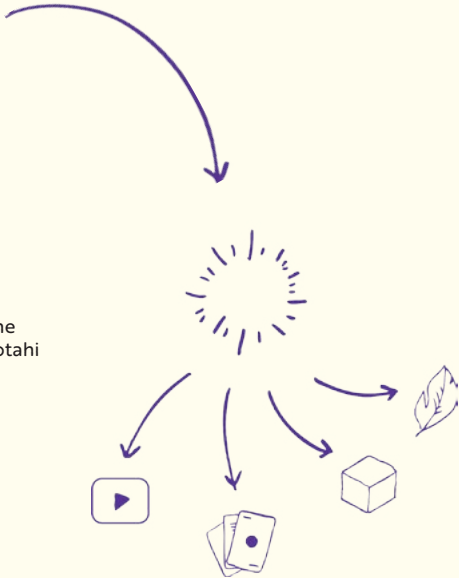


This tool could be...

- An animation
- A card game
- An object
- Or something else!

The form of this tool depends on the perspectives shared by Te Rōpū Arotahi and VOYCE kaiwhakamana.

That's what this research project is all about.



What will my participation involve?

The project will involve one in-person co-design wānanga and one online co-design wānanga. You don't have to participate in both wānanga.

Why me?

You have been identified as a potential participant in these wānanga because you are a member of the original Rōpū Arotahi who designed 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'. 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono' reflects your voice and experience, and so we think it is important that further developments to this framework are informed by your expertise and creativity, if you would like to be involved.

You will able be to participate in this research if you are:

- 18+ years of age.
- No longer a client of VOYCE (as this could be a potential conflict of interest)

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you would like to participate in the wānanga, please fill out the Consent Form attached to this email, and return it to Bryre Dowling at nsn6338@autuni.ac.nz before 8/11/25.

You can choose which wānanga you would like to participate in by ticking the options in the attached consent forms - you don't need to participate in both.

If you are living outside of Auckland, you will only be able to participate in the online wānanga, due to the budget of this research.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You can withdraw from the study at any time by informing the researcher. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you can ask for information collected up until your withdrawal from the study to be deleted unless you withdraw after the study analyses have been undertaken. However, as these wānanga will be conducted in a group setting, it will not be possible to identify and withdraw all your information and ideas from the data collected.



What	Where	When	Activities
Co-design Wānanga One <i>Auckland based participants only</i>	Youthtown Youth Hub, Mt Eden	November (Date TBC) 3-4 hours	• Whakawhanaungatanga • Bryre will share plans for upcoming wānanga and clarify any questions you may have • Discussing questions and mind-mapping ideas about the form of 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'. • Time for making in response to the questions/mind-map: drawing, talking, writing, or other creative methods. • Sharing back to the group about your creative response (optional).
Co-design Wānanga Two	Online – Microsoft Teams	November or early 2026 (Date TBC) 1-1.5 hours	• Feedback via questions and drawing/taking notes on the prototypes that Bryre creates from Wānanga 1.



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Co-design Wānanga Two	Online – Microsoft Teams	November or early 2026 (Date TBC) 1-1.5 hours	Feedback via questions and drawing/taking notes on the prototypes that Bryre creates from Wānanga 1.



What are the costs?

In total, the cost in your time would amount to approximately 6 hours. We will aim to find dates for the wānanga that are accessible for all participants and will not require you to miss work. Travel costs will occur, as 1 of the wānanga will be held at the Youthtown Youth Hub in Mount Eden. These costs will be reimbursed with petrol vouchers.

Please note: you are welcome to bring your tamariki to these wānanga if you need to/ would like to do so. You are also welcome to bring a support person.

Will the results of the study be published?

The results of this research will be published in a Master's thesis. This thesis will be available to the general public through the AUT library. Results may be published in peer-reviewed, academic journals.



What are the discomforts and risks?

It is unlikely that participants will experience significant discomfort or embarrassment from participating in these wānanga. The focus of the wānanga is on the design elements of the framework and therefore should not lead to any triggering discussion. However, there remains a potential emotional risk.

There is a potential risk of discomfort from working in a social group setting in a creative way.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

You are welcome to bring a support person to these wānanga. Space will also be provided for you to take a break if you would like to do so at any point during the wānanga.

A member of VOYCE staff with trauma informed expertise will be present in the wānanga to help navigate any potential emotional distress or triggering conversation.



AUT Student Counselling and Mental Health is able to offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of participation in the research and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

- Drop into our centre at WB203 City Campus, email counselling@aut.ac.nz or call (09) 921 9292.
- Let the receptionist know that you are a research participant and provide the title of my research and my name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet.
- You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on <https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-mental-health>



What are the benefits?

This research hopes to benefit:

- Increasing their awareness around what appropriate ethical engagement looks like. - Increasing the number of people seeking to ethically engage them in conversations around decisions that affect them directly. Care-experienced youth and children in Aotearoa	- Supporting their advocacy work by enhancing the accessibility of their framework 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'. VOYCE Whakarongo Mai - Making ethical practices clearer and more accessible. People seeking to work with care-experienced youth and children in Aotearoa
- Evidencing the ongoing engagement with the guidelines that they co-designed in 2020. - Showing that their voices and lived-experience expertise continue to be honoured and inform the design development of 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'. This aligns with the priorities they identified in 'Kia Tika, Kia Pono'. Participants	A contribution to design research methods, particularly in the field of co-design with non-governmental organisations in Aotearoa. Designers in Aotearoa

What will happen to information about me?



‘Data’ means ideas, conversation, drawings, notes and creative artworks that you would make in the wānanga/ survey.

Identifiable information collected includes:

- Names of participants.
- Emails of participants.
- Voice recording of the in-person wānanga.
- Video recording of the online wānanga.

Recordings from the wānanga will only be used by the researcher to process data. Recordings collected will be individually identifiable. You can ask to receive a copy of the transcript if you would like and decide if you wish any of the info related to you to be changed or deleted

Only the researcher Bryre Dowling will have access to data from the wānanga. Electronic data will be kept for analysis on the AUT OneDrive. Physical data will be kept in a locked cabinet at AUT. All data will be destroyed or deleted after 6 years.

You are being asked to provide consent for the use of your data for this project only. The consent forms will be stored seperately from the data.

Only limited confidentiality of participants will be possible. As the original contributors were named in ‘Kia Tika, Kia Pono’, the identities of all potential participants in the co-design wānanga are already public. The researcher will not disclose individual information about you and your data.



Photographs will be taken of notes, drawings, post it notes and artworks (clay sculptures, paintings) made in the co-design wānanga as a data collection method. Photographs will not be taken of participants. These photographs will be used for:

- **Data processing** – themes for the design will be drawn from the photographs.
- **Inspiration** will be drawn from the photographs i.e.; a clay sculpture made in the wānanga might inspire a drawing which will be included in the designed resource.
- **Photographs will be included in the academic paper** being written by the researcher, to show the process of design development following the co-design wānanga. This paper will be published publicly online on AUT Tuwhera. Participants may ask to have their names credited to photographs in the exegesis if they would like to do so.

Quotes, photographs of creations and notes may be used in the final artefact, which will be published publicly. Quotes, creations and notes will not be individually identifiable, unless names are noted. You may ask to have your names identified if you would like to do so.

In wānanga 2 you will be invited to provide feedback on the designs created from your ideas and contributions in the first wānanga. You will be able to see and correct how your ideas/quotes/creations are used in these wānanga if you would like to do so. **The design will not be finalised until you have seen it and given your feedback.**

By signing the consent form you are agreeing to the use of their information as stated in this Information Sheet. Identifiable information will only be disclosed outside of the study with the participant’s permission, or as required by law.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?



You have two weeks to consider this invitation. If you choose to participate in this study, please email Bryre at nsn6338@autuni.ac.nz before 8/11/25.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

I will send a summary of the research to you at the end of the study, if you request this. I will also share the final design artefact with you, and keep you informed on any future updates regarding the design.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Stephen Reay: stephen.reay@aut.ac.nz 021 2772 332

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTECH, ethics@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Who do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Bryre Dowling:
nsn6338@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Stephen Reay:
stephen.reay@aut.ac.nz

Ivana Nakarada-Kordic:
ivana.nakarada-kordic@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 7/10/2025

*AUTECH Reference number 25/294
Co-designing a Vessel for Voices*