



Manaaki Whenua
Landcare Research

Well-being in a Pā Harakeke

Hauora i roto i te pā harakeke

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This kaupapa will positively affect all areas of hauora (Te Whare Tapa Whā model¹).

It is based on the science of Shinrin Yoku/Forest Therapy.^{2,3}
Please watch videos in the resource section.

Resources for karakia, waiata and wild food gathering are listed at the end of the document.

Preparing for a hauora session in a pā harakeke

- This programme is best suited for students year 3 or 4 and older (New Zealand schools).
- Teach children a karakia or waiata suitable for a pā harakeke before the hauora session.
- Perform a waiata or a karakia at the beginning and at the end of the hauora session.
- Explain to the children the whakapapa of a pā harakeke: tangata = leaves, whānau = fan, hapū = bush, iwi = pā harakeke.
- Give each child a pen and the workbook.
- Leave any electronics behind.
- Explain to the children that this exercise is done in silence. Their experiences can be discussed at the end of the session while sharing kai.
- Check with the children about potential health risks (allergies to plants, pollen).

Vision

Choose a harakeke bush you like and sit down beside it. Observe what happens around you. Write down or draw 3 to 5 things you can see.

Examples:

- dead leaves at outside of fan
- fluffy white stuff at back of leaf
- bird flies over my head



Touch

While sitting beside your chosen harakeke bush, touch 3 to 5 things around you. Write down or draw how they feel to you.

Examples:

- I can feel ribs on the upper side of the leaf.
- I feel wind on the left side of my face.
- I feel cold coming from the soil I am sitting on.



Smell

Walk around the pā harakeke and write down or draw 3 to 5 things you can smell.

Examples:

- I find a fungus and it smells like a dark forest.
- I smell my hands and they smell of the sandwich I ate earlier on.
- I catch the smell of exhaust from a truck driving by.



Hearing

Go back to your bush and sit beside it. Close your eyes and listen. Write down or draw 3 to 5 things you can hear.

Examples:

- bird song
- cars
- leaves moving with the wind

Taste

- If the harakeke bush is flowering (summer), pull off a flower and suck out the nectar. The nectar is called *wai harakeke*. It was used as a sweetener by tangata whenua and is loved by birds, insects and geckos. Write down how it tastes or make a drawing.
- If the bush has formed seed pods, release some of the seeds by snapping the seedpod in half. If the pod is still green, the seeds will be white and fleshy and can be eaten. If the pod is dry and black, the seeds will be black with just a small, fatty 'nut' inside. See if you can chew it out and discover its taste. Spit out the black, fibrous shell. Write down how it tastes or make a drawing.



Seeds

Sharing kai – moving from tapu to noa

After experiencing all five senses, it is traditional in the Shinrin Yoku practice to share tea and food. This also aligns well with the Māori practice of sharing kai after an important occasion or hui. It moves us from a tapu state to a noa state.

This is the time to give children an opportunity to share some of their experiences. Explain to the children that there is no expectation to share anything. Keeping their thoughts as treasures inside is wonderful too.

- Sit in a circle.
- Pass around a selected ‘talking’ stone or stick from the natural environment. The child who holds the talking object can either pass it on or share an experience.

Resources

Karakia suitable for a pā harakeke

Te harakeke

Te kōrari

Ngā taonga whakarere iho

O te rangi, o te whenua, o ngā tīpuna

Homai he oranga mō mātau

Tihei mauri ora

The flax plant

The flower of the harakeke

Are treasures passed down

From the sky, from the land and the
ancestors

Giving us well-being

The breath of life force

Waiata suitable for pā harakeke

[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=vGU4pJZgoWM&t=0s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGU4pJZgoWM&t=0s)



[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=0H4AsZ0f10g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0H4AsZ0f10g)



Information on edible wild plants

http://wildpicnic.blogspot.com/2011/01/harakekenz-flax.html?_smau_=iVVsqTf4NN6HTqQ5R6J7NKHB824Vc



To access this pdf and other teaching resources

<https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/tools-and-resources/education/>



References

1. <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/te-whare-tapa-wha>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-wHq6yY2CI>
3. Juyoung Lee, Yuko Tsunetsugu, Norimasa Takayama, Bum-Jin Park, Qing Li, Chorong Song, Misako Komatsu, Harumi Ikei, Liisa Tyrväinen, Takahide Kagawa, Yoshifumi Miyazaki. Influence of forest therapy on cardiovascular relaxation in young adults. Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine, vol. 2014, Article ID 834360, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2014/834360>

Glossary

hapū:	sub-tribe, clan
harakeke:	flax bush
hauora:	well-being, health
hui:	meeting, gathering
iwi:	tribe, nation
kai:	food
karakia:	blessing, incantation, ritual, prayer
kaupapa:	programme, agenda
noa:	ordinary, unrestricted, free from tapu
pā harakeke:	a group of flax bushes, a flax garden
tangata whenua:	indigenous people of New Zealand
tangata:	people, humans
tapu:	sacred, restricted, forbidden
wai harakeke:	nectar of flax flower
waiata:	song, chant
whānau:	family



Contact

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