

## Community Strengths and Indigenous Resilience as Drivers for Health Reform Change

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**Abstract :** Introductory Statement: South Seas Healthcare is Ōtara's largest Pacific health provider in South Auckland, New Zealand. Our vision is excellent health and well-being for Pacific people and all communities through strong Pacific values. During the DELTA and Omicron outbreak of COVID-19, our Pacific people, indigenous Māori, and the community of South Auckland were disproportionately affected and faced significant hardship with existing inequities magnified. This study highlights the community-based learnings of harnessing community-based strengths such as indigenous resilience, family-informed experiences and stories that provide critical insights that inform health reform changes that will be sustainable and equitable for all indigenous populations. This study is based on critical learnings acquired during COVID-19 that challenge the deficit narrative common in healthcare about indigenous populations. This study shares case studies of marginalised groups and religious groups and the successful application of indigenous cultural strengths, such as collectivism, positive protective factors, and using trusted relationships to create meaningful change in the way healthcare is delivered. The significance of this study highlights the critical conditions needed to adopt a community-informed way of creating integrated healthcare that works and the role that the community can play in being part of the solution. Methodologies: Key methodologies utilised are indigenous and Pacific-informed. To achieve critical learnings from the community, Pacific research methodologies, heavily informed by the Polynesian practice, were applied. Specifically, this includes; Teu Le Va (Understanding the importance of trusted relationships as a way of creating positive health solutions); The Fonofale Methodology (A way of understanding how health incorporates culture, family, the physical, spiritual, mental and other dimensions of health, as well as time, context and environment; The Fonua Methodology - Understanding the overall wellbeing and health of communities, families and individuals and their holistic needs and environmental factors and the Talanoa methodology (Researching through conversation, where understanding the individual and community is through understanding their history and future through stories). Major Findings: Key findings in the study included: 1. The collectivist approach in the community is a strengths-based response specific to populations, which highlights the importance of trusted relationships and cultural values to achieve meaningful outcomes. 2. The development of a "village model" which identified critical components to achieving health reform change; system navigation, a sense of service that was culturally responsive, critical leadership roles, culturally appropriate support, and the ability to influence the system enablers to support an alternative way of working. Concluding Statement: There is a strong connection between community-based strengths being implemented into healthcare strategies and reforms and the sustainable success of indigenous populations and marginalised communities accessing services that are cohesive, equitably resourced, accessible and meaningful for families. This study highlights the successful community-informed approaches and practices used during the COVID-19 response in New Zealand that are now being implemented in the current health reform.

**Keywords :** indigenous voice, community voice, health reform, New Zealand

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