

Understanding Takatāpui



*Takatāpui Family Support:
A Guide to Parenthood, Fertility
& Wellbeing*



Introduction

Takatāpui whānau are just whānau, who deserve the same access, support, and respect as all other parents and families. Whether you're considering parenthood, exploring fertility options, navigating social challenges, or seeking affirming healthcare, this guide provides key information to help you along the journey.

This guide is for:

- Takatāpui and rainbow parents at any stage of their journey.
- Healthcare providers, midwives, & support workers
- Whānau & communities

This resource aims to fill an information gap for rainbow whānau by offering practical advice, culturally grounded insights, and tools for navigating pregnancy, birth, infant care, and mental wellbeing.

This resource is not intended to be a comprehensive resource, instead it seeks to highlight different aspects of care in this space to prompt more investigation where relevant for each individual, whānau and health professional.

About WHA



*Ina oranga te wāhine, ka ora te whānau, ka
ora te hapū, ka ora nga iwi e*

*When women are in good health, the whānau,
hapū and iwi also flourish*

Women's Health Action (WHA) is a charitable trust in its 41st year of operation, formally known as 'Fertility Action'.

We honour the diverse lived experiences of all people, ensuring inclusivity, empowerment, and advocacy in everything we do. We treat others with the same respect and dignity we would expect for ourselves. Although our focus is on women's health, this does not take away from the very real impact we strive for in the rainbow whānau space.

People and their lived experiences are at the core of everything we do. We amplify the voices of whānau, ensuring gender-diverse perspectives and community representation in all aspects of our work.



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Understanding Takatāpui

Takatāpui is a Māori term that, in its original context, meant "intimate companion of the same sex."

Today, it's been reclaimed as an umbrella term for **Māori individuals who identify with diverse genders and sexualities, similar to LGBTQIA+.**

It encompasses Māori who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, and queer, as well as those who identify as whakawāhine (trans women) or tangata ira tane (trans men).

Although this resource is tailored specifically to takatāpui whānau, this resource can be used by anyone who is in or working with rainbow whānau as a whole, in the scope of this resource.

"What works for Māori has the potential to benefit everyone—especially here in Aotearoa New Zealand, where our systems are growing more diverse and inclusive."



A Note for Health Professionals

Affirming Care Starts with Language

As health professionals, your words carry immense power. For Takatāpui and Rainbow whānau, the experience of starting a family can be shaped—for better or worse—by how they are spoken to, seen, and supported. Affirming care is more than being inclusive in policy—it's about everyday interactions that honour identity, whānau structure, and mana.

Affirming Practices:

- Always ask for pronouns respectfully: “Kia ora, can I ask what pronouns you use?”
- Normalise gender diversity in forms and conversations (not just in rainbow-specific spaces).
- When unsure, mirror the language someone uses for themselves.
- Include cultural identity and gender identity as separate fields in intake forms.
- Create space for chosen whānau, recognising that not all support systems are biological.

“Simple, intentional shifts in language can foster trust, reduce harm, and create safe spaces where all people feel valued and respected in their parenting journeys.”

Inclusive Phrasing

Instead of these terms	Use these phrases
Ladies and gentlemen	Everyone, Whānau, Tēnā koutou katoa
Mother and father	Parents, Caregivers, Whānau
Women's health	Reproductive health, or specify if it includes trans men and non-binary people
Normal delivery	Vaginal birth or planned birth
Preferred pronouns	Affirmed pronouns (as it's not just a preference)
Pregnant woman (unless they identify that way)	Pregnant person
Mother or father where relevant	Parent
Breastfeeding	Chestfeeding or feeding your baby, in trans and non-binary contexts

"Affirming language isn't political—it's life-affirming, identity-honouring, and essential to safe, respectful care."

01

Mental Health & Body Image

“I didn’t even think of asking them to correct themselves because I didnt think that was a thing people do.”

Takatāpui and rainbow parents often face additional mental health pressures beyond the general challenges of parenthood. This can include navigating gender dysphoria during pregnancy or postpartum, dealing with societal expectations, and managing the emotional impact of discrimination. Many traditional parenting spaces may not feel inclusive, leading to isolation.

Key Considerations:

- Accessing gender-affirming care and perinatal mental health services.
- Recognising and managing dysphoria or discomfort related to body changes.
- Finding supportive spaces where you feel seen and valued.
- Addressing mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression, or postnatal distress.
- Connection to whānau, hapū, iwi and whenua.

Supportive Practices

Reclaiming body Autonomy:

Focus on what your body can do rather than how it looks. Celebrate its strength in nurturing life, no matter your journey to parenthood.

Mindfulness & Self-Compassion:

Grounding exercises like deep breathing, karakia, or mirimiri (massage) can help centre your wairua and body.

Finding Your Community/connection:

Engaging with other takatāpui and rainbow parents through online forums, local meetups, or support groups. As well as hapū, iwi and marae.

*There is strength in
shared experience, and
hope in knowing that
healing and connection
are possible.*



What else?

- 1** Find affirming therapists and support networks that you resonate with
- 2** Always ask for a second opinion, especially if it doesn't feel right
- 3** Engage in self care that honours you as a person, focused on something you love

02

Fertility & Family-Building Options



There are multiple pathways to parenthood for takatāpui and rainbow whānau, and each journey is unique. Some may conceive biologically, while others may explore assisted reproduction, surrogacy, adoption, co-parenting, or whāngai.

Key Considerations:

- Understanding your legal rights regarding parenting, surrogacy, and adoption in Aotearoa.
- Accessing fertility clinics that provide gender-affirming care.
- Navigating donor or surrogacy agreements and maintaining whakapapa connections.
- Considering the emotional, cultural, and financial aspects of each pathway.
- Navigating whānau wants, needs and expectations.

Connecting with Whānau & Community

Seek guidance from others who have navigated these pathways, including takatāpui elders and mentors.

Tip: Attend community hui or online takatāpui support groups where shared stories, resources, and safe spaces can offer connection, clarity, and encouragement.



Exploring Your Options

Research assisted reproduction, hormone preservation, or donor sperm/egg options with an inclusive specialist.

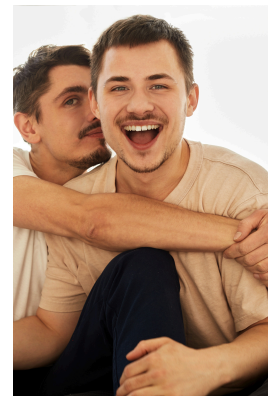
Tip: Create a list of your values and goals before your appointment—this can help guide conversations and ensure your needs are understood and respected.



Advocating for Culturally Responsive Care

If engaging with fertility clinics, request practitioners who honour takatāpui and rainbow identities.

Tip: Take a support person or advocate with you to appointments—they can help amplify your voice, take notes, and ensure your cultural identity is affirmed throughout the process.



Everyone deserves a chance at having a family, and there are so many different family structures out there to support all walks of life

Some Pathways available for takatāpui whānau

Biological Parenthood: If you or your partner can conceive, fertility support, sperm donation, egg donation, and surrogacy are options to explore.

Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART): Involves procedures like intrauterine insemination (IUI) and in vitro fertilisation (IVF), which can help takatāpui whānau conceive.

Adoption & Whāngai: Adoption is a legal process where you become a child's legal parent. Whāngai is a Māori tradition where tamariki are raised by extended whānau members while maintaining biological ties.

Co-Parenting: Some takatāpui individuals or couples share parenting responsibilities with others, including friends or ex-partners.

Fostering: Becoming a foster parent provides tamariki with a safe and loving home, whether short-term or long-term.

Where to Start:

- ✓ Talk to a GP or fertility specialist for medical options.
- ✓ Join chat groups or social media pages that have similar wants and values to you
- ✓ Look into the NZ Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) clinics for guidance.
- ✓ Discuss with whānau and chosen family about your plans and support systems.



03

Pregnancy & Birthing

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Having a baby is hard - rewiring your entire being to do so is even harder. Reassurance and inclusiveness is key!



Pregnancy and birth experiences should be affirming and inclusive. However, takatāpui and rainbow parents may encounter challenges such as misgendering, exclusion of non-biological parents, and a lack of understanding from healthcare providers.

Key Considerations:

- Choosing a midwife or obstetrician who understands and respects your identity.
- Advocating for gender-affirming language in maternity care.
- Incorporating cultural and spiritual traditions into your birthing journey.
- Ensuring your birth plan includes your chosen support people.

Supportive Practices

Finding a Supportive Midwife, Doula, Doctor:

Seek out affirming professionals who respect takatāpui and rainbow parenting journeys. Don't be afraid to ask for someone else.

Gender-Affirming Pregnancy:

Trans and non-binary whānau who carry pregnancies may have unique medical and emotional needs. Find support groups or health providers who respect gender identity.

Using a Birth Plan to Communicate Your Needs:

Clearly outline your preferences, including pronouns, partner roles, and cultural practices such as karakia during labour.

Building a Strong Support System:

Surround yourself with whānau and community who uplift and protect your mana.

Knowing your rights:

Asking for appropriate care may be necessary in some instances, but if this is not respected, you can ask to see the code of conduct and request a different clinician at any time.

"You deserve care that sees all of you—your identity, your whakapapa, your journey. Don't shrink yourself to fit the system. The system must rise to meet your truth."

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"Advocating for yourself as a takatāpui whānau during pregnancy and birth isn't just self-care—it's a radical act of reclaiming space, voice, and mana within a system that wasn't built with our journeys in mind."



04 Infant Feeding & Care

Welcoming a pēpi into the world is a deeply personal journey—one shaped by identity, whakapapa, and whānau values. Infant feeding and care are more than routines; they are acts of connection, nourishment, and bonding. Whether you choose to breastfeed, chestfeed, bottle feed, or use a mix of approaches, what matters most is that you feel supported, seen, and empowered in your decisions.

As takatāpui, and rainbow parents, your pathways may look different from mainstream parenting narratives—and that's not only okay, it's beautiful. This resource honours your unique experiences and provides practical, inclusive guidance grounded in aroha, tino rangatiratanga, and mana motuhake.

Here, you'll find tips, options, and considerations to help you care for your pēpi in ways that affirm who you are and what matters most to you and your whānau.



Feeding your pēpi is a personal journey and there are various options:

Breastfeeding/Chestfeeding: Some trans and non-binary parents prefer 'chestfeeding' as an affirming term. Hormones like testosterone can affect lactation, but lactation consultants can offer guidance.

Induced Lactation: If you haven't given birth but want to nurse, hormones and pumping can stimulate milk production.

Formula & Alternative Feeding:

Some takatāpui whānau choose formula or donor milk as feeding options.

Support Groups: Seek LGBTQIA+ lactation consultants and parent networks for advice.



Steps to Get Started:

- 1** Contact a lactation consultant familiar with diverse families.
- 2** Join breastfeeding/chestfeeding support groups.
- 3** Learn about different feeding methods and choose what feels right.

05

Hormones & Parenthood



Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) can impact fertility and pregnancy. Understanding how different treatments affect your body is crucial.

Hormones play a big role in the parenting journey —impacting mood, energy, connection, and identity. Whether you're the birthing parent, a non-birthing partner, or part of a takatāpui whānau, hormonal changes can shape your experience in powerful ways. Understanding these shifts can help us navigate parenthood with more awareness, support, and care for ourselves and each other.

Tell me more about Hormones

Testosterone

Many trans men and non-binary people pause testosterone to conceive. Fertility can sometimes return after stopping. This can cause unwanted changes and lead to body dysmorphia too.



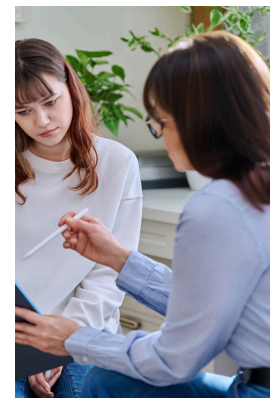
Estrogen & Progesterone

Support pregnancy, but can affect mood, energy, and body image—especially if you experience dysphoria. Taking estrogen can affect sperm count. Freezing sperm before starting HRT is an option.



Oxytocin & Prolactin

Support bonding and milk production. Chest/body changes may bring mixed emotions—both powerful and confronting.



Puberty Blockers & Future Fertility:

Some people who take puberty blockers may have options to preserve fertility later. Freezing eggs or sperm before starting hormones allows options for future biological parenthood.

*Speak to an endocrinologist or GP about your fertility options.
Consider sperm/egg freezing if you're planning for future children.
Find a healthcare provider who respects your gender identity and family goals.*

So whats really going on?

“Hormonal shifts can lead to anxiety, mood swings, or feeling disconnected from your body—especially if your gender identity isn’t affirmed in healthcare spaces. These feelings are valid.”

Pregnancy brings major hormonal changes that affect your body, emotions, and sense of self. For takatāpui, trans, and non-binary parents, these shifts can be layered with both affirming and challenging experiences—especially within a system that doesn’t always reflect who you are.

Pregnancy is not just a physical process—it’s deeply interconnected with emotional, mental, spiritual, and cultural wellbeing. For takatāpui and gender-diverse parents, this journey can also involve navigating systems that may not always reflect or affirm your identity. Understanding the hormonal shifts during pregnancy, and how they affect your body, mood, and health, can help you stay grounded and informed in your choices.

Support & Care Tips

- ✓ Work with affirming midwives and health workers who respect your identity and whakapapa.
- ✓ Prepare for any return to or pause of hormone therapy with clinical support.
- ✓ Use grounding practices (e.g. mirimiri, karakia, maramataka-based rest) to support mental and spiritual hauora.



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Navigating Social Stigma & Barriers

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Whānau deserve safety, respect, and legal recognition—this section helps you navigate the systems that don't always make that easy.



While Aotearoa has made important steps toward inclusion, many takatāpui whānau still face barriers when building and raising their families. From misunderstanding in healthcare settings to lack of recognition in schools or workplaces, navigating these spaces can be exhausting and disheartening.

Action Plan:

- Learn about parental rights under NZ law.
- Connect with other takatāpui parents for support.
- Find inclusive schools and childcare services.

This section aims to:

Equip you with tools, knowledge, and support to stand strong in your identity, protect your rights, and create safe, affirming environments for your tamariki.

Your whānau deserves dignity, safety, and joy—everywhere you go.

Common Stigmas Faced by Takatāpui Whānau in Health Services

“Takatāpui whānau can face unique challenges in healthcare, especially when starting a family – here are some of the most common forms of stigma that impact access and wellbeing.”

Heteronormative Assumptions: Services often default to “mum and dad” models, excluding diverse whānau structures.

Misgendering & Language Issues: Many takatāpui parents face being misnamed or referred to with incorrect pronouns or roles.

Lack of Gender Diversity Awareness: Some clinicians lack understanding about trans, non-binary, or queer people accessing fertility, pregnancy, or infant care.

Bias About Parenting: Takatāpui whānau are sometimes unfairly judged as less capable or questioned about their child’s wellbeing.

Cultural Safety Gaps: Māori takatāpui often experience a lack of both te ao Māori and rainbow-informed care.

Systemic Barriers: Forms, policies, and legal documents can be rigid and don’t always recognise diverse parents or family setups.

Fear of Discrimination: Past negative experiences lead some takatāpui to avoid or delay care altogether.

What can I do to navigate these stigma's?

Navigating the challenges of stigma in healthcare can feel overwhelming, but there are steps you can take to ensure you receive the care and respect you deserve.

By understanding your rights, advocating for yourself, and seeking out supportive, inclusive spaces, whānau can create a path that honours both identity and the whānau journey.



Here's how to prepare:

Know Your Legal Rights: In NZ, same-sex and gender-diverse parents have legal recognition. Ensure your parental rights are documented (e.g. co-parent adoption, guardianship).

Dealing with Discrimination: If you experience bias in healthcare, schools, or workplaces, seek support from LGBTQIA+ advocacy organisations.

Whānau Acceptance: Some family members may struggle with understanding. Providing educational resources can help bridge gaps.

School & Childcare: Find rainbow-friendly schools and daycare centres to ensure a safe environment for your tamariki.

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*"You don't need to justify
your identity to deserve
dignity, rights, and a safe
place to raise your
whānau."*



07 Coping Strategies & Wellbeing

Starting a family is a deeply personal and powerful journey. For Takatāpui and Rainbow whānau, this path can be filled with love, intention, and resilience—but also unique challenges when engaging with a health system that may not always reflect or understand diverse identities and experiences. This chapter offers practical coping strategies and supportive tools for navigating the health system, while affirming your mana, whakapapa, and whānau aspirations. Whether you're exploring pregnancy, adoption, whāngai, surrogacy, or other parenting pathways, your identity matters—and you deserve care that upholds your dignity, safety, and right to be seen.



What are some coping strategies I could use?

Mana-enhancing Practices:

Use karakia, mirimiri, and rongoā Māori for grounding.

Support Groups:

Join takatāpui parenting spaces online or in-person.

Mental Health Support:

Seek takatāpui-affirming therapists or kaupapa Māori mental health services.

Advocacy & Community: Get involved in groups advocating for LGBTQIA+ parental rights.



What Helps

- 1 Establish self-care routines that support emotional and physical health.
- 2 Build a chosen whānau for encouragement and support.
- 3 Celebrate your journey and identity with pride!

08

Building Confidence



Parenthood can bring a lot of uncertainty, especially when you're doing it as a takatāpui or rainbow parent in systems that haven't always reflected or supported who you are. It's normal to question yourself at times. Building confidence isn't about having it all together — it's about backing yourself, learning as you go, and staying connected to your values and identity.

Supportive Practices

Acknowledge Your Journey

Your path to parenthood is valid. Whether it's been simple or complex, joyful or challenging, it's yours. Reflecting on how far you've come — and who walked beside you — can help you feel more grounded and proud of what you're building.



Small Daily Check-ins

Confidence builds over time. Taking a moment each day to check in with yourself can help. This could be writing down one thing you did well, taking five minutes for a breather, or reminding yourself that it's okay not to have all the answers.



Find Real Support

Being in community with others who get it makes a difference. Whether that's one trusted person, a group chat, or a support group of other rainbow or takatāpui parents — connection can help you feel seen and supported without needing to explain your whole self.



Trust Yourself

No one knows your whānau like you do. You bring something unique and strong to your role as a parent, and that matters.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Every parent deserves an affirming, supported, and empowered journey. Whether you are seeking information, community, or advocating for change, know that you are not alone.



Your Feedback is valuable in shaping resources that are current, versatile and meaningful for whānau and health professionals alike. We thank you so much for choosing to be more informed and inclusive in your care and look forward to hearing from you.



www.womens-health.org.nz

Glossary of Terms

For this Takatāpui Resource

Awhi	To support, uplift, or care for someone physically, emotionally, or spiritually.
Affirming Language	Words that support and validate someone's identity, pronouns, and chosen name.
Hapū	Pregnant; also refers to a sub-tribe or kinship group.
Hauora	Holistic wellbeing, encompassing the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and whānau dimensions.
Whakawahine / Tangata ira tāne	Māori terms sometimes used to describe transgender women/men respectively (use with cultural care and individual consent).
Kaimahi	Workers or staff members contributing to a kaupapa.
Mana	Inherent dignity, authority, and strength.
Manaakitanga	Acts of generosity, respect, and care for others.
Takatāpui	A traditional Māori term reclaimed to describe Māori who identify with diverse genders and sexualities.
Te Ao Māori	The Māori worldview, emphasising connection between people, land, wairua, and whakapapa.
Tikanga	The correct way of doing things according to Māori custom.
Whakapapa	Genealogy and relational connections between people, land, and the universe.
MVPFAFF+	Moana-specific acronym that includes Mahu, Vaka sa lewa lewa, Palopa, Fa'afafine, Akava'ine, Fakafifine, Fakaleitī and others.
Whānau	Family, including biological, extended, or chosen family.
Whanaungatanga	The building and maintaining of meaningful relationships.

Pronouns	Words that refer to someone in place of their name (e.g. she/her, he/him, they/them, ia). It's respectful to ask and use correctly.
Deadnaming	Using a trans or non-binary person's former name without consent. Considered harmful.
Misgendering	Using the wrong pronouns or gender terms for someone, often unintentionally but still hurtful.
LGBTQIA+	Acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Aromantic, and others. Inclusive of gender and sexual diversity.
Rainbow Parent	A parent who identifies as LGBTQIA+.
Takatāpui Parent	A Māori LGBTQIA+ parent who lives within both cultural and queer identities.
Chosen Whānau	Non-biological or intentional family based on trust, care, and shared values.
Cisgender (Cis)	A person whose gender identity aligns with the sex assigned at birth.
Transgender (Trans)	A person whose gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.
Agender	A person who does not identify with any gender.
Bigender	A person who identifies with two genders, either simultaneously or switching between them.
Non-Binary	A person whose gender identity does not fall strictly into "male" or "female."
Gender Diverse	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity or expression doesn't conform to binary norms.
Intersex	A person born with physical sex characteristics that don't fit typical definitions of male or female.
Asexual (Ace)	A person who experiences little or no sexual attraction to others
Queer	A reclaimed term used by some to describe diverse gender and sexual identities. Not all use or accept this term.
Two-Spirit	A pan-Indigenous North American term describing people with both masculine and feminine spirits.
Gender Fluid	A person whose gender identity shifts or changes over time or depending on context.

Additional Resources



Takatāpui | A Resource Hub

A comprehensive resource for takatāpui, their whānau, and communities, offering information on identity, wellbeing, and suicide prevention.

InsideOUT Kōaro

A national charity providing resources, workshops, and support for rainbow (LGBTQIA+) communities, including resources for youth and whānau.

Rainbow YOUTH

Offers information and support for whānau of rainbow young people, including connections to peer support groups

Additional Resources



Be There NZ

A hub of information for parents and whānau supporting takatāpui and rainbow young people, developed by the Rainbow Support Collective.

PADA Support

Offers resources and information on supporting transgender and non-binary parents during the perinatal period.

Repromed – Fertility Clinic

New Zealand's first Rainbow Tick-accredited fertility clinic, providing inclusive care for LGBTTQIA+ families, including donor options and support for HIV-positive individuals.

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