



Challenging the status quo: Raising cultural safety, again

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Even thirty years following Dr Irihapeti Ramsden's address, "Moving on", the nursing profession in Aotearoa has significant work to do to realise cultural safety. Recently I undertook doctoral research (Roberts, 2020) exploring experiences and preparedness of nurse educators in working with Māori undergraduate nursing students. I wanted to know if we were in fact, culturally safe in the classroom, and, as a Pākehā, I wanted to learn how the nursing education sector could better serve Māori nursing students and by extension, whānau, hapū, and iwi.

The findings of my research reveal a consistent undercurrent of racism in nursing education and disjointed approaches to cultural safety. Many educators resisted the positioning of Māori as priority learners. Educators had varied understandings and practices of cultural safety and there were significant tensions connected to the historical public backlash to cultural safety in the 1990s. Further, there was a sense that cultural safety was *not* what Dr Ramsden intended of Kawa Whakaruruhau.

On the other hand, educators' practices that were enabling for Māori students were aligned with te ao Māori (Māori world view). These were relationship and values driven teaching and learning practices, which authentically connected students and teachers and helped to affirm the need for te ao Māori in what were mostly Eurocentric, white normative spaces in nursing education. What was most unsettling in the findings, however, was the extent that participants described experiencing racism in nursing, either personally, or through student accounts of their experiences.

These findings tell us that there is certainly work to do. Despite cultural safety being an integral part of nursing education, practice, and regulatory landscapes for decades, we are not yet able to provide nursing education or care that, as Dr Ramsden said, is **truly respectful** of those who seek it. Moving into a new decade, with significant attention rightly turned toward equity, racism, and the structural and attitudinal barriers perpetuating white privilege and white normative environments, now it is time



for nurses in Aotearoa to again challenge the status quo and raise cultural safety to the top of the professional agenda.

References

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