

A YOUTH19 BRIEF

Improving Health & Wellbeing Websites: Views of Rangatahi Māori

Websites for health & wellbeing

Quality health and wellbeing websites can increase access to health information, 24/7, at no costs to users. Globally, there are over 70,000 health related Google searches every minute.¹ In the Youth19 Rangatahi Smart Survey - 'Youth19'² **96% of rangatahi Māori said that they had access to a device that they can use in their own time and 63% had looked up health information online.**³ Many websites are designed for cultural majority users and/or by adults, so they don't always meet the needs of specific groups.⁴ In Youth19, we asked "**How could websites or online tools be more useful for you if you were having a hard time?**" Participants could answer in their own words. This brief summarises responses to this question from rangatahi Māori.

Rangatahi Māori voices

In total, 112 rangatahi Māori (approx. 11% of Māori participants) made a comment or response to this question other than "I don't know" or equivalent. Of these, 50 participants identified as female, 77 were aged under 16, and 35 were 16 years or over. We used a general inductive analysis approach⁵ to analyse this data.

Key themes

Rangatahi Māori indicated that health and wellbeing websites can play an important role. They had key insights regarding how these sites could be improved. These related to:

- accessibility (address barriers such as Wifi or sites being blocked and tell us it's there)
- design features (show us it's trustworthy, make sure it is private, make it clear and appealing)
- helpful content (it must actually help with the issue; be responsive to needs and must facilitate pathways to live human support and connection).

These themes are summarised in Figure 1 and detailed in the following pages.

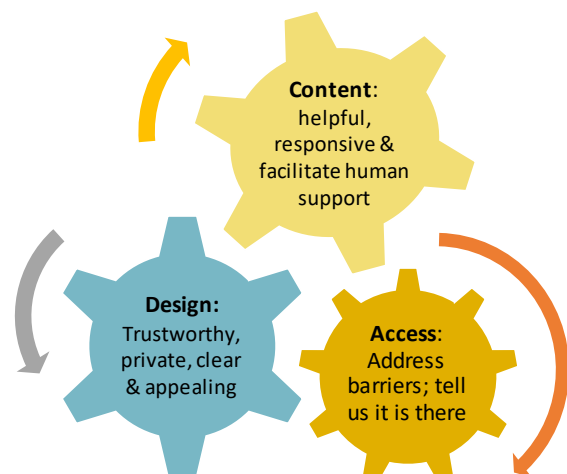


Figure 1: Improving health and wellbeing websites: Māori youth perspectives

Findings

Online tools can open up ways of getting help

Rangatahi Māori described health and wellbeing online tools as helpful for accessing information, especially when feeling uncomfortable or unsure/not knowing where to get help. For some rangatahi, seeking human support remained essential. Overall, these comments indicated the value of digital tools **as part** of providing information and support to rangatahi.

“They can be useful because you don’t feel comfortable asking someone you are able to search it up online”

(Māori female, aged 16 and over, Decile 4-7)

“Because most of the time people write them from experience so you can learn of them plus you don’t have to ask anyone anything so your not scared of bring judged”

(Māori male, aged under 16, Decile 4-7)

“I don’t think the internet will ever be able to help with how someone is feeling because the internet is a robot, it won’t understand feeling. People are the only way to actually get help for when it comes to feelings”

(Māori male, aged under 16, Decile 4-7)

Improving digital tools: Key themes

Rangatahi Māori provided comments for improvements in the area of accessibility, design and content of health and wellbeing websites. These are outlined on the following pages with example comments under each area.



1. Accessibility

a) Address barriers

Rangatahi Māori emphasised the needs for improving accessibility, both in terms of reducing barriers e.g. with internet connections or websites being blocked, as well as in terms of letting people know about online tools. First, here are example quotes about reducing barriers:

"They should do an app for those without Wifi"

(Māori male, aged under 16, Decile 1-3)

"Have reception where I live"

(Māori female, aged under 16, Decile 1-3)

"If hostel did not block every site available to help, make some main sites more known"

(Māori male, aged 16 or over, Decile 8-10)

b) Tell us it is there

Rangatahi Māori highlighted the need to let young people know about quality websites and tools, e.g. via advertising, promotion or via links on sites that they already use.

"Make them more well known like YouTube and facebook. Websites like that."

(Māori male, aged 16 or over, Decile 8-10)

"[websites should be] more advertised"

(Māori male, aged 16 or over, Decile 8-10)

2. Design

a) Trustworthy and private

Rangatahi Māori spoke of there being so many options online and it not always being easy to know which sites had reliable or trustworthy information and privacy. They suggested the use of verification or quality assurance to help identify reliable sites.

"It can be hard to tell what information to trust, maybe some way of telling what is provided by professionals government etc."

(Māori male, aged under 16, Decile 4-7)

"If there was a Google verification patch which would mean that the article you were viewing was true and helpful"

(Māori male, aged under 16, Decile 1-3)

The importance of being anonymous when using a website was strongly emphasised; this included making sure that private information or search history was not shared or made available to others.

"It to be anonymous"

(Māori female, aged under 16, Decile 8-10)

"Make them all anonymous"

(Māori female, aged under 16, Decile 8-10)

b) Clear and Appealing

The need for clear, to the point information and advice was one of the points most commonly expressed by rangatahi Maori.

“Making the information provided easier to access or read by having the layout simple getting straight to the point as to what is wrong but also addressing that the information provided may not be relevant”

(Māori female, aged 16 or over, Decile 1-3)

“Less words as people want a way to quickly learn about what they are searching for and are not bothered to read paragraphs upon paragraphs to find out. Perhaps a “more information” button after a brief explanation”

(Māori male, aged under 16, Decile 8-10)

“Have them get straight to the points not have to much information about in necessary things that U didn’t search for. Or have it all organized...”

(Māori female, aged under 16, Decile 4-7)

Rangatahi Māori shared suggestions for specific design features and improved user experience (UX). They emphasised the need simple layout and usable interfaces, clearly communicated and formatted information; use of multimedia content- pictures, diagrams, movies/other visual aids, and interactive features. One participant emphasised the need for te reo Māori.

“Add pictures or diagrams”

(Māori male, aged 16 or over, Decile 8-10)

“Simplistic designs”

(Māori male, aged 16 or over, Decile 8-10)

“Easy layout. Short and sharp information”

(Māori female, aged 16 or over, Decile 8-10)



3. Content

a) Helpful, Responsive and Providing Pathways to Human Support

As well as comments about accessibility and design, Rangatahi Māori made specific suggestions on the content of sites. This included topics and materials they would find helpful when having a hard time. For example, links to free professional help for support and advice, websites that clearly outlined practical ways to improve mood and general sense of wellbeing when they are having a hard time.

“Websites for encouragement”

(Māori male, aged under 16, Decile 1-3)

“Clearly outlining ways to build up confidence in yourself if you were having a hard time”

(Māori male, aged under 16, Decile 8-10)

“Relax me, and give me tips on what could help improve me in my daily routine”

(Māori female, aged 16 or over, Decile 1-3)

“More in depth or written by actual experienced professionals”

(Māori male, aged 16 or over, Decile 8-10)



b) Make sure it is responsive

A linked theme was the need for responsiveness in online tools. This included the importance of answering the users' questions and, when doing so, providing helpful and meaningful replies. For example, rangatahi said:

“Answer my questions”

(Māori female, aged under 16, Decile 1-3)

“Asking the user a survey of what the problem they have is, and then provide suggestions”

(Māori male, aged 16 or over, Decile 8-10)

c) Facilitate pathways to human support

Finally, responses from rangatahi Māori highlighted the need for digital health and wellbeing tools to connect youth to human supports and interaction including direct access to personal advice and the opportunity to connect with peers. For example, rangatahi said:

“Have a 24/7 person to talk to”

(Māori male, aged under 16, Decile 4-7)

“Have anonymous group chats for people the same age”

(Māori male, aged under 16, Decile 4-7)

“To know that people know what your going through”

(Māori female, aged 16 or over, Decile 4-7)

Method

A general inductive analysis approach⁵ was used to analyse the open-text responses presented in this brief. We first reviewed the responses, grouped like with like to identify different types of responses, then coded and identified the themes presented here.



References

¹ ECH Alliance. (2020). Mental health apps are seeing a surge of downloads — but choosing the right one matters. ECH Alliance. Retrieved from: <https://echalliance.com/mental-health-apps-are-seeing-a-surge-of-downloads- but-choosing-the-right-one-matters/>

² Fleming, T., Peiris-John, R., Crengle, S., Archer, D., Sutcliffe, K., Lewycka, S., & Clark, T. (2020). *Youth19 Rangatahi Smart Survey, Initial Findings: Introduction and Methods*. The Youth19 Research Group, The University of Auckland and Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

³ King-Finau, T., Kuresa, B., Archer, D., & Fleming, T. (2021). Youth19 Digital Access Brief. Youth19 and The Adolescent Health Research Group, Auckland and Wellington.

⁴Fleming, T., Dewhirst, M., Andreae, H., Kafatolu, D., Haase, A., Ormerod, F., Pine, R., Chinn, V., Haenga-O'Brien, A., Da Rocha, M., Sutcliffe, K., O'Brien, K., Szabo, A., Whelan-Turnbull, N., Lucassen, M., & Aspin, C. (2021). *Digital Tools for Mental Health and Wellbeing: Opportunities & Impact. Findings from the Research*. Wellington: The Digital Mental Health Lab, Te Herenga Waka | Victoria University of Wellington.

⁵Thomas D.R. (2006). A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative Evaluation Data. *American Journal of Evaluation*. 27(2):237-246. doi:[10.1177/1098214005283748](https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214005283748)

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For more see www.youth19.ac.nz

Youth19

In 2019, researchers from four Universities collaborated to survey over 7700 New Zealand adolescents in 52 Auckland, Northland and Waikato secondary schools. This is Youth19, the latest survey in the Youth2000 series.²

The survey was a representative, high-quality study about the wellbeing of rangatahi/youth. Schools were randomly selected from the region and then Year 9-13 students were randomly selected from each school roll. A diverse sample of students completed the anonymous survey in English or te reo Māori on handheld internet tablets with optional voiceover.

See the full questionnaire and more at www.youth19.ac.nz.