



Keynote Speaker Promotional Form

Speaker Name: Denise Wilson
Preferred title Professor

Bio

Denise is an Associate Dean Māori Advancement and Professor of Māori Health at the Auckland University of Technology. She advocates for improving health and social outcomes for whānau Māori affected by violence and trauma. She also undertakes research on strengthening health and social service engagement, cultural responsiveness, and workforce development. Using her research, she advocates for whānau Māori in various national forums, where she has served on several advisory groups over the years. Denise is currently a Subject Matter Expert for the Family Violence Death Review Committee, and has served as a member of Te Pūkotahitanga, the Tangata Whenua Ministerial Advisory Group for Family and Sexual Violence Prevention; the Family Violence Death Review Committee, Chair of the Family Violence Prevention Investment Advisory Board, Deputy Chair of the Family Violence Prevention Expert Advisory Group, and a member of the Health Quality & Safety Commission's Te Rōpū Māori (Māori Advisory Group). She is acknowledged as a national and international expert in violence affecting whānau Māori and Indigenous peoples – these achievements have seen her recognised as a Fellow of the Royal Society Te Apārangi, Fellow of the American Academy of Nurses, and a Fellow of the College of Nurses Aotearoa (New Zealand).

Presentation Title:

Culturally responsive approaches to the prevention of Māori family and sexual violence

Presentation Abstract

Customary Māori cultural values, beliefs, and practices ensured wāhine Māori (Māori women) and their tamariki (children) were protected and kept safe because of their status within their whakapapa (genealogy). This is an important place to begin because, like other Indigenous peoples, family and sexual violence within Māori homes is a consequence of colonisation and the loss of land, language, culture, urbanisation, and assimilation. Violence, in all its forms, erodes the fabric of society, especially those whānau Māori affected with high burdens of harm. Indigenous peoples live with disproportionate levels of family and sexual violence and ongoing colonisation compared to others in their respective countries. Continuing to respond to Indigenous family and sexual violence using universal approaches for prevention, disregarding their life realities and expecting different outcomes, is futile. Culturally responsive prevention draws on lessons embedded in customary cultural values and pūrākau. Most of all, it requires re-centring the position of tamariki,

their māmā, and whānau from the margins of society. This presentation shares insights into culturally responsive prevention that draws on customary cultural lessons and recognises the complex and dynamic nature of their historical and contemporary realities and daily lives, especially for those without a primary prevention space.

Get to know our speakers:

1. What key messages will you have for the audience?
 - Tamariki (children) and mokopuna (grandchildren) must always be kept central to all we do.
 - Thriving children need to possess strong cultural identities and learn the protective cultural practices within the sphere of their whānau.
 - We cannot keep doing things that do not work for Indigenous peoples and expect different outcomes.
 - Researchers and practitioners need to acknowledge the complexities of their lives – that is, their colonising histories, intergenerational violence and trauma, and contemporary realities and socioeconomic disenfranchisement.

 2. What makes congresses such as this important?
 - The 2026 IPSCAN Melbourne Congress focuses on pushing the boundaries of research and practice so that all children can thrive.
 - Pushing the boundaries of research and practice means producing new knowledge grounded in the voices, experiences, thinking, and realities of Indigenous whānau (extended family networks), and acknowledging their intergenerational violence and trauma.

 3. What is the best piece of advice you could give a student or early career researcher who is attending their first big congress?
 - Recognise this as a potential opportunity to build networks and make connections with people who speak on or who undertake research in your area of research.
 - This congress is an opportunity to create relationships with leaders in child protection.

 4. What are you most looking forward to at the ISPCAN 2026 congress?
 - Being with like-minded people
 - The Rise-Up Policy Forum

 5. What are you looking forward to exploring during your time in Melbourne/Australia?
 - Exploring Aboriginal culture.
 - Walking along the Yarra River
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