

ENGLISH

Engaging with Samoan Aiga

SOĀLAUPULE FAMILY MEETING GUIDE



Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

How do I implement this in a short time?

It can be challenging to build a connection in a brief time you have with the patient and their family. It may even be your first engagement, so here are some simple steps to consider before, during and after your meeting.

WHY WAS THIS GUIDE CREATED?

Samoan families affected by rheumatic fever say they face difficulties navigating the health system, due to:

- » Cultural and communication barriers
- » Exclusion from decision-making
- » Limited understanding of health system processes and practices e.g. referral and treatment pathways.

This guide explains how using Soālaupule – a process grounded in Fa’asamoa (the Samoan Way) – can help address these challenges to achieve effective health outcomes for Samoan patients and their families.

‘What is Soālaupule?’

The word breaks down as follows:

Soā

to partner or share

Lau

you or yours

Pule

authority or mandate

Taken together, this translates to ‘share your authority or mandate’ in any given setting. Put simply, it’s about consensus building – creating a safe, balanced space for talanoa (dialogue). In the health context, it means giving everyone – staff, patients and their aiga (family) – shared authority in the discussion and outcome(s) of a meeting.

A foundation of respect

At the core of Samoan culture are the concepts of Fa’aaloalo (respect); Ava fatafata (mutual respect); Tausiga o le va (nurturing and protecting the relationship). In a health setting, this means:

- » Respecting people’s time, understanding, worldviews and knowledge
- » Communicating information in ways that can be easily understood
- » Nurturing the relationship with a clear focus on a positive outcome for the patient and aiga



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BEFORE

the Fono (meeting)

Respect:

Give plenty of notice regarding date, time, venue, reason for the meeting

Emphasise that support people are welcome to attend

Communication:

Ensure the patient and aiga are ready for the meeting and have been clearly communicated the correct information in advance

Relationships:

If necessary, be flexible around the meeting time and date

Respect:

- » Provide comfortable seating and private space
- » Acknowledge and welcome aiga/support person
- » Ask patient / aiga if they'd like to open the meeting with a prayer

Communication:

- » Welcome: Greet the patient at the door, ideally in Samoan: Talofa lava (hello), Malo le soifua (hello and good health)
 - Ask for correction pronunciation of names and chiefly titles
 - Clearly introduce yourself, your role and service – try to connect on a personal level
 - If an interpreter is present, let them facilitate the welcome
- » Talanoa (discussion): State the purpose of the meeting clearly; ensure the patient understands what is happening
- » Provide visual aids eg diagrams, glossary

Relationships:

- » Be flexible with time for mutual input / questions
- » Encourage the patient and family to share their opinions and experiences
- » Explain the importance of the referral process, that it's about seeking a second opinion or more expert advice



DURING

the Fono (meeting)



END

of the Fono (meeting)

Respect:

- » Ask patient / aiga if they'd like to close the meeting with a prayer
- » Say thank you for attending, ideally in Samoan: Fa'afetai (informal) or Fa'afetai tele lava (formal) Say goodbye in Samoan – Tofā soifua or Manuia le aso (have a good day)
- » The interpreter can lead the closing comments / process if necessary

Communication:

- » Ensure follow-up care plans are understood.
- » Ask if there are any challenges to actioning them
- » Ensure the patient understands take home instructions / paperwork
- » Offer translated material if available

Relationships:

- » Ask 'Have all your questions been addressed?'
- » Provide a key health worker contact if possible
- » Confirm contact details are correct

Below are the Samoan translations of some key medical terms and phrases

TERMS	TRANSLATED or EXPLANATION
Rheumatic Fever	Fiva Rumatika
Heart Valves	Faitoto'a alatasi
Strep throat	O le fa'a'i tigā e mafua ile siama o le Strep A
Atriums/Ventricles	Atriums – potu e lua pito i luga o le fatu Ventricles – potu e lua pito i lalo o le fatu
Medicines/Antibiotics	Fuāla'au tui (antibiotics) Vaila'au ma fuāla'au tui
Penicillin injection	Tui Penisilini
Erythromycin	Fuāla'au tui e sui ai le fuāla'au penisilini(erotomaisini)
Diagnosis	Ua fa'amaonia ua maua i le Fiva Rumatika ona o sā'ililiga ma su'esu'ega
Inflammation of joints and heart valves	Fulafula so'oga o ponāivi fa'apea ma faitoto'a alatasi o le fatu
Sore joints	Tigā so'oga o ponāivi

A Tale of Two Systems. Phase 3 Report:

Samoa Team, Rheumatic Fever Co-Design Initiative.

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E ui ina sui faiga, ae tumau pea fa'avae.

Though the approaches may change, the foundations remain the same.