



PROTOTYPE

PHASE 3 FINAL REPORT:
A TALE OF TWO SYSTEMS

Soālaupule Family Meeting Guide

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.

Our invitation to you:

As this phase of the journey comes to an end, we reflect on how the co-design initiative has demonstrated the change that Samoans can inspire and lead when given the opportunity. Collectively, we need to continue working in this way if we want our future generations to be freed from the impacts of rheumatic fever.

While an energy has been created among Samoans and non-Samoans who have engaged with this work, there is a risk of the system returning to the status quo. Samoans and allies have put their hands up to champion change and we should continue to acknowledge and recognise their efforts, wisdom and leadership.

We invite you to sit with the knowledge, stories and recommendations included within this report and to continue creating the space for Samoan perspectives to guide our actions in the rheumatic fever prevention and management space.

Prototype: Soālaupule Family Meeting Guide

Introduction

The Soālaupule Family Meeting Guide outlines some principles of Fa’asamoa (The Samoan Way) and recommends ways to enable those values and beliefs to be more thoughtfully considered and applied to enable more effective conversations and engagement of Samoan families experiencing rheumatic fever.

Fa’asamoa (the Samoan Way) refers to cultural values and beliefs that guide and teach individuals how to lead their life. Samoan views on health and wellbeing can be described by the Fonofale model developed by well-known Samoan health practitioner Fuimaono Karl Pulotu-Endemann (Pulotu-Endemann, 2001).^{A1}

For Samoans, the Vā is the space and relationship with others, it defines how one interacts with another person e.g., adult-child, matai-non-matai, brother-sister etc. Tausiga o le Vā is the practice of nurturing, maintaining, and protecting any relationship. Therefore,

Samoans will interact respectfully with health professionals and staff, particularly where they believe they are receiving respect.

What is Soālaupule?

Soālaupule is made up of three different words – soa/lau/pule.

“Soa” which means ‘to partner or share’; “lau” which means ‘your or yours’; and the word “pule”, which means ‘authority’ or “mandate”. The combination of these three words, forming the word Soālaupule, can be translated and interpreted as ‘to share your authority, mandate’ in any given setting.

Soālaupule serves two purposes: to demonstrate the value of applying Samoan principles of dialogue and consensus building; and to create an open and equitable space where all perspectives are being shared, towards a shared outcome, action.

It should be acknowledged that the current clinical practice puts the patient and medical expert in an unequal power dynamic. Soālaupule is an inclusive decision-making process used by Samoans to achieve consensual decisions and outcomes. It is widely used in many settings including aiga

(families – nuclear and extended), the nu’u (village and its different groups such as village council, women’s group) as well as in the Ekalesia (church).

Importantly, the concept recognises the need to equalise the unequal power dynamic between parties. Soālaupule enables issues to be dealt with in a manner that is beneficial to both parties for the betterment of everyone involved. In this case, health staff and patients and their aiga should have shared authority in the discussion, decision-making and outcome(s) of a meeting. For example, patients with rheumatic fever are treated respectfully by health staff and are actively encouraged, supported for their opinions and advice, as well as consulted on all aspects of care and decision-making.

It’s critical to this guideline that Samoan patients and their families (aiga) are treated with respect of their values – ava fatafata (mutual respect), fa’aaloalo (respect), fa’amaoni (faithfulness), and alofa (love) – and beliefs such as their faith. In response, the same respect will be reciprocated for health staff and services.

^{A1} Adapted from Fonofale model developed by Fuimaono Karl Pulotu-Endemann

Samoan families experiencing rheumatic fever have voiced their concerns about the health systems' poor understanding of their health worldview. Several reasons are mentioned including most notably:

- Ineffective communication and engagement with the health sector and staff;
- Poor access to relevant and appropriate health information;
- Lack of inclusion in the decision-making process;
- Poor understanding of the health system, practices and processes e.g. referral and treatment pathways.

These concerns have significantly contributed to the poor health outcomes and status of Samoans experiencing rheumatic fever in Tāmaki Makaurau and Aotearoa.

Understanding Samoan health worldview

Cultural values, beliefs, and worldviews on health have considerable influences on Samoans' health seeking behaviours and how they engage with the health sector.

Their past experiences from Samoa may include a mistrust of medical treatment and the need to seek medical assistance at hospital i.e. people tend to go as a last resort. This also derives from Samoans still practising traditional treatments such as herbal medicine (vai) and fofō (massage) which are used alongside western health remedies.

Community ecosystem: Samoans function in a collectivist culture which are typically interdependent and group centric. Co-operation and collective achievement are emphasised over self-fulfilment and personal gain where Samoans feel a strong sense of responsibility to those around them. Often, individuals can expect their relatives to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. Understanding this 'family/community' outlook and approach will support more meaningful and respectful communications and engagement.

Communication style: Samoans tend to be very polite and modest when communicating to others. They tend to be very shy and respectful, preferring to tell you what they think you want to hear rather than directly telling you the truth and causing offence.

How to apply Soālaupule when meeting Rheumatic Fever patients and their families

This guide explains and gives practical examples of how to apply Soālaupule to help improve communication, engagement, and establish more effective relationships between health staff and Samoan aiga with rheumatic fever.

With Soālaupule, the parties acknowledge that they are partners seeking the best outcome for the patient and their families.



SOĀLAUPULE FAMILY MEETING GUIDE

BEFORE THE Soālaupule

Values	Actions	Sharing power with your partner
Fa'aaloalo (respect)	Health staff to provide sufficient notice of consultation meeting with patient (date/time/location/participants /rationale). Reiterate that support people are welcome to attend.	Patients and aiga involved early, will feel acknowledged and respected and can develop a more trusting relationship with the health team.
Ava Fatafata (mutual respect)	Health staff to check/confirm patient and aiga are ready for consultation meeting.	Patient and aiga can collectively discuss and prepare in advance for consultation. For example, availability of family members to attend, adequate transportation, arrange time off from work, and bringing the right forms.
Tausiga o le va - nurturing, protecting and building the relationship	Health staff to be flexible around consultation meeting date/time.	Patient will appreciate flexibility and receptiveness for an alternative date/time.

INTRODUCING THE Soālaupule

Arrival at meeting venue

Values	Actions	Sharing power with your partner
Fa'aaloalo (respect)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greet patients at the door; provide comfortable seating and private space.• If a Samoan health interpreter is present, allow them to facilitate the welcome, use appropriate traditional Samoan greetings (i.e.) proper pronunciation of names and acknowledgment/understanding of chiefly matai titles.	<p>Being hospitable and acknowledged respectfully is very important to Samoans.</p> <p>Common Samoan greetings you can use; Talofa lava (hello) and Malo le soifua (hello and good health)</p>
Ava Fatafata (mutual respect)	<p>Welcome and salutations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer the choice to the patient and aiga to say a prayer to open the meeting.• Ask for correct pronunciation of their first name / surname/chiefly matai title(s).• Acknowledge and welcome aiga/support person.• Clearly introduce yourself, your role and service – Samoan greetings can be facilitated by an interpreter.	<p>Make sure the patient and aiga understand what is happening, and language resources and visual aids are available to them including speakers of Gagana Samoa, patient advocates and chaplains.</p>

DURING Soālaupule
Soālaupule discussion

Values	Actions	Sharing power with your partner
<p>Fa'aaloalo (respect)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State purpose of meeting clearly. • Make available visual or other aids to support the discussion e.g. glossary, drawings, diagrams. 	<p>Samoans tend to be very polite and modest when communicating with others. Encourage them to speak by asking for their opinions or advice based on their personal behaviours or experiences.</p>
<p>Ava Fatafata (mutual respect)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be flexible with time for mutual input / questions throughout the discussion. • Encourage and support the opinions and advice of the patient and aiga. • Explain the importance of the referral process - which is to seek a second opinion or more expert advice. 	<p>Samoans are visual people. They are more likely to understand the verbal discussion better if they can visualise the spoken words.</p> <p>Use visual aids, glossary, diagrams to explain.</p> <p>Frequently check their understanding of the information being shared.</p>

AFTER THE Soālaupule

At conclusion of meeting

Values	Actions	Sharing power with your partner
Fa'aaloalo (respect)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank all for attending the Soālaupule - Interpreter can lead the closing comments /process.	Important to give patient and aiga the opportunity to acknowledge and thank the health staff for the meeting.
Ava Fatafata (mutual respect)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer the patient and their aiga the choice of having a prayer to close the meeting.• Ask if their questions/concerns have been well addressed.• Ensure follow-up plans are clearly explained and understood.• Ask if there are any barriers to their ability to action the follow-up care plan (i.e. appointments, medication costs).• Review any 'take home' instruction or information documents to ensure their understanding.• If possible, provide a key health worker contact name and number they can call if they need more information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you communicate well, the patient and aiga will have a good understanding of the reasons and benefits of the follow-up plan increasing likelihood of adherence.• Offer translated material if available.• Confirm contact details are current and correct (name, address, phone number, email address).
Alofa (love)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank you in Samoan – Fa'afetai (informal) or Fa'afetai tele lava (formal).• Goodbye in Samoan – Tofā soifua or Manuia le aso (have a good day).	

