

Understanding cat rescue fostering as a reciprocal relationship

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Research Overview



Animal fostering for rescue organisations by older people from a health promotion perspective.

1. What does it mean to being a health promotion perspective to fostering?
2. How we might involve more older people in fostering?



Fostering as Relational Health Promotion

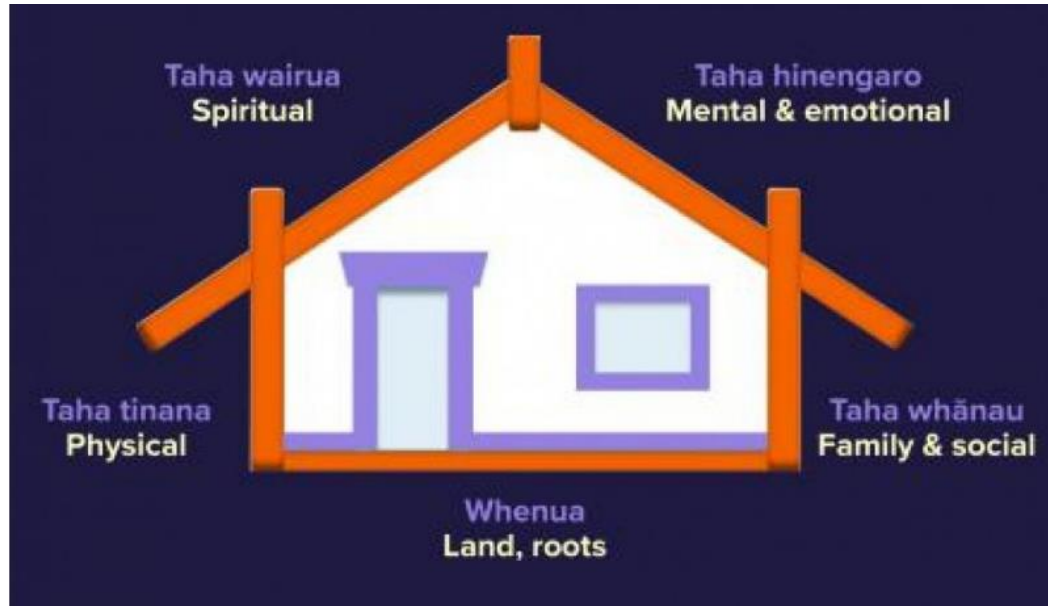
Not just an intervention

A relational practice

Takes place in wider settings

A place for more older people

A Health Promotion Perspective



- Health created in settings
- Through relationships
- Has interconnected dimensions
- Promoted through supportive environments

Te Whare Tapa Wha source: Durie, 2004

Image of Te Whare Tapa Wha NZ Mental Health Foundation <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/te-whare-tapa-wha>.

Fostering in the animal rescue setting



- Rescues care for lost stray and abandoned animals
- Community fosterers live, work, and play with rescue animals
- 59% of animals in foster homes
- Older people not a big part of fosterer pool

Methods



01

14 Interviews:
Foster
programme
coordinators

02

Recruitment:
National Survey
of Rescues

03

Focus:
Foster Programs
Older people

04

Methods:
Template Analysis
(King and Brooks)

1. Its about outcomes.. but relationships too

Dual framework of fostering programmes

Outcomes

- Numbers & capacity
- Rules & routines
- Efficiency processes

Relationships

- Socialisation
- Matching process
- Community building

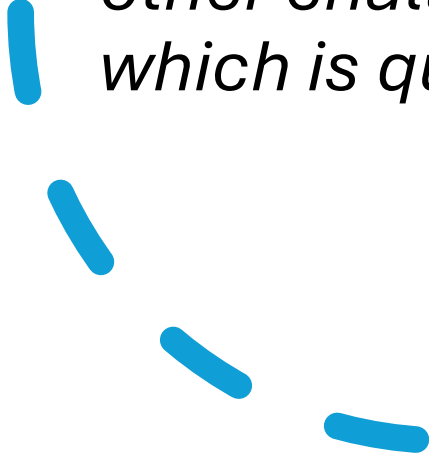
“And our goal is to bring them into care, we place them in foster care, and hopefully find a forever home for each and every one of them.. And now, we rehome about 900 animals every year” ID 103

“We look at the whole, who's a good match on paper, and then when they come in, how do we like them? But more importantly, does the cat like them?” ID9



2. There's challenges at many levels

“Each step, there's kind of a challenge. So getting people interested or reaching people to let them know it's an opportunity, and then onboarding right now, it's still a challenge for us...And one of our other challenges with fostering is the rental climate in New Zealand which is quite challenging” ID 24



3. Creating supportive environments



01

Spreading the load
"when one of us
burns out, the
others wrap
around"

02

Building networks
With vets,
businesses and
community groups

03

Fostering as
"more than just
feeding a cat. It's
becoming part of a
community"

04

Not necessarily
people focused
"Nobody ever
asked me how I
was"



4. Older people great but..

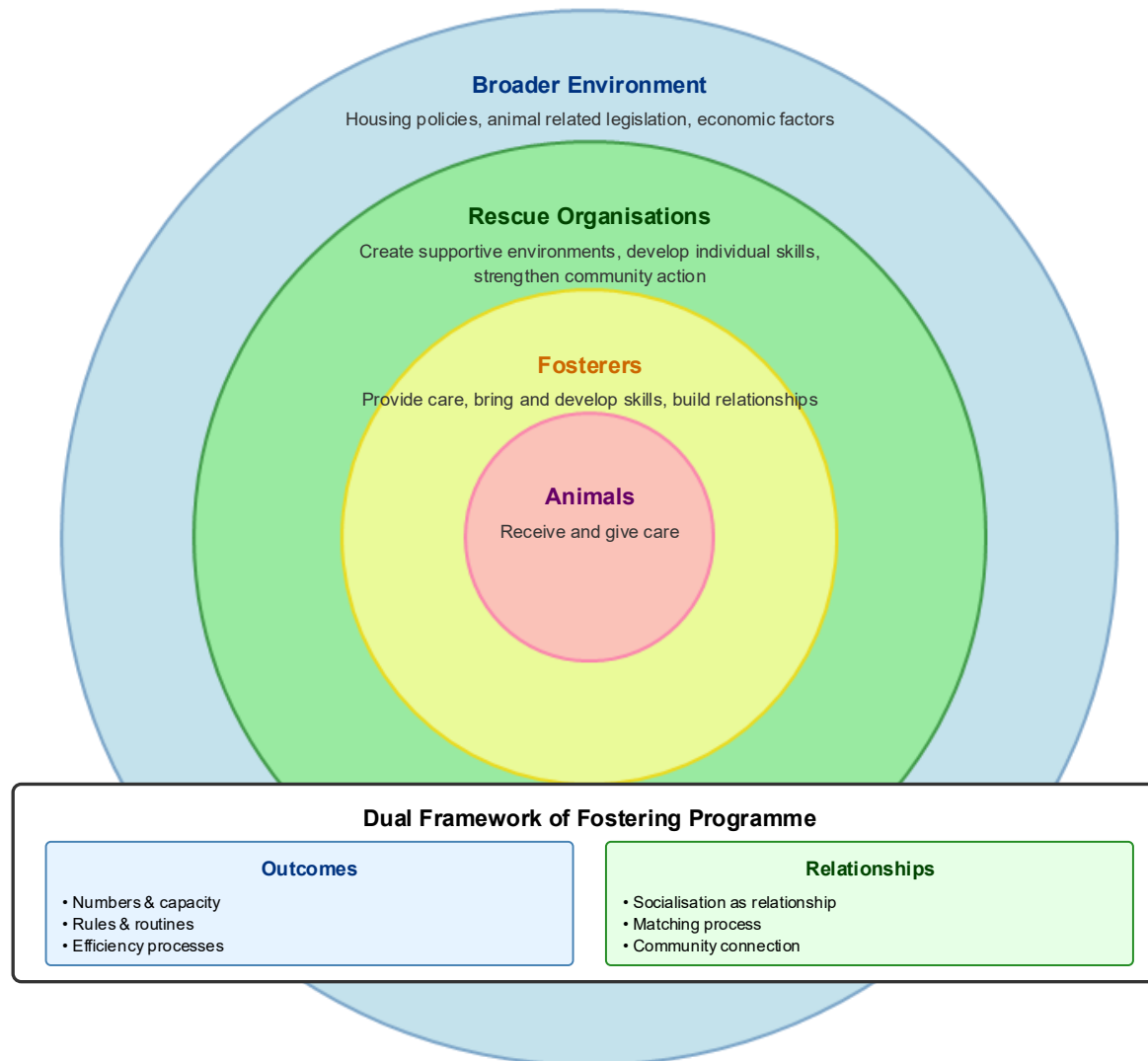
From the perspective of rescue coordinators

What Older People Bring to Fostering	Rescue Environment Considerations
Time Love and emotional capacity Life experience and maturity Ideal match for older, quieter cats	Digital communication - reliance on social media Recruitment methods- limited awareness of fostering as an option Transport requirements - need to drive to vet appointments

5. Solutions through family and community

- *“That could be nice, you know, having the families working with their, you know, the grandparent looks after the cat in the home ..they have the support from their kids or whatever from the computer side or running the cat to [the] vet” – ID 103*
- *“we can work that out, you know, what do you need? You need help with transport? Fantastic. But you're home all day, you can medicate a cat that needs daily medication. So it's give and take. I just, I think it's just about engaging with the people who are interested in doing it, making sure for me that the motivation is noble of intent. And then just working how do we make this work for all of us, with the cat at the centre” – ID 66*

Fostering as relational health promotion in animal rescue settings





Summary and where to from here?

- Fostering is part of a wider setting both challenging and supportive
- Older people have a part to play
- Health as a process - becoming, with non human others

Next

- Interviews with older fosterers

Acknowledgments

- The rescues who took part and shared photos
- My supervisors
- The Hope foundation for Research on Ageing
- Ursa



Call to action – three things you can do

1. **Read** about my work (see handout)
2. **Talk** to me about the model or research
3. **Share** a photo or a story and some chocolate



Te Kāhui o Matariki



Ururangi

Waipuna-ā-rangi

Hīwā-i-te-rangi

Matariki

Waitī

Waitā

Pōhutukawa

Tupu-ā-nuku

Ehara i te mea. No inaianei te
aroha. No nga tupuna. I tuku iho,
i tuku iho

*It is not new this thing, love. It is
passed down from the
ancestors.*

References

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