



THE FOUNDATIONS FOR SAFE SLEEP

UPDATED SAFE SLEEP MESSAGING

P E P E

Place Eliminate Position Encourage

For more than a decade, the P.E.P.E. framework has provided a strong evidence base for safe sleep. However, whānau consistently told us it feels clinical, culturally disconnected, excludes fathers, assumes breastfeeding is always possible, and does not resonate with Māori whānau realities.



Safe sleep for P.E.P.E.

Place

Place baby in their own baby bed in the same room as their parent or caregiver.

Eliminate

Eliminate smoking in pregnancy and protect baby with a smokefree whānau, whare and waka.

Position

Position baby flat on their back to sleep - face clear of bedding.

Encourage

Encourage and support breastfeeding and gentle handling of baby.

WHAT WAS MISSING FOR WHĀNAU?

EXCLUSION

The messaging was found to be exclusive of fathers, partners and wider whānau that would care and help raise a pēpi.

ASSUMPTIONS

The messaging was based on assumptions.
Breastfeeding is always possible.
Every whānau lives in a home where baby can have their own safe sleep space.
Everyone has access to pregnancy, birthing, and early parenting education.

CULTURALLY DISCONNECTED

Does not resonate with Māori, Pacific whānau realities and felt uncomfortably clinical.



THE NEED

01 Refresh messaging so that it is relevant for whānau, culturally grounded, and relatable to their life.

02 Consultation, wānanga and guidance from whānau working groups.

WHĀNAU VOICE

EXPERT ADVICE

03 Continued support and guidance of the SUDI Expert Advisory Group.

04 A harm reduction lens rather than prohibition and judgment is more realistic.

EVIDENCE ALIGNMENT

DESIGN

05 The refreshed framework is whānau driven and centred for relevance and engagement and supported by clinical evidence.

FOUNDATIONS FOR SAFE SLEEP



FOUNDATION 1

FACE UP, FACE CLEAR

Pēpi always on their back, with nothing covering the face.

FOUNDATION 2

FLAT & FIRM

Pēpi on a safe firm sleep surface (wahakura, pēpi-pod, cot/bassinet), not couches or pillows.

FOUNDATION 3

FREE

Smokefree, vape-free, alcohol- and drug-free environments; clear risk information (e.g. ×6 risk from smoking in pregnancy, ×32 risk from smoking plus bedsharing).

Free to thrive and free from harm

FOUNDATION 4

FATHER, PARTNER & FAMILY SUPPORT

Making safe sleep a shared responsibility across whānau, communities, and services.

FACE UP, FACE CLEAR

- Always place pēpi on their back for every sleep.
- Ensure pēpi's face is not covered by blankets, pillows, or soft items



FLAT & FIRM

- Pēpi should sleep on a flat, firm surface, with firm sides, made for pēpi — like a wahakura, baby pod, baby cot or bassinette.
- Avoid anything that isn't made for pēpi sleep e.g. couches, chairs, pillows folded duvets, baby slings/wraps that bring baby's chin to chest during sleep.
- Be careful with second hand baby beds (bassinettes, cots), check for broken parts, repairs may be needed.



This foundation refers to Free to Thrive and Free from Harm

- Smoking during pregnancy increases the risk of SUDI by 6 times, and if baby shares a bed when there has been smoking in pregnancy, the risk can increase by up to 32 times.
- The best safe sleep space for your pēpi
- Keep pēpi space free from anything that makes it hard to breathe, like loose blankets, soft toys, pillows or cords from curtains or blinds.

Other Risk Factors

Babies that weigh less than 2500gm at birth are also more at risk of SUDI.



FATHERS, PARTNERS & FAMILY SUPPORT

Safe sleep is a shared responsibility that involves whānau and carers supporting pēpi to sleep safely.

- Whānau: pāpā, siblings, nannies, aunties, uncles, cousins
- Community: e.g. Te Kohanga Reo, Early Childhood centres and babysitters etc.



THE FOUNDATIONS FOR SAFE SLEEP

NATIONAL LAUNCH

WHEN: 10.00am, 5th December 2025

WHERE: TBC, Tāmaki Makaurau



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RESOURCES

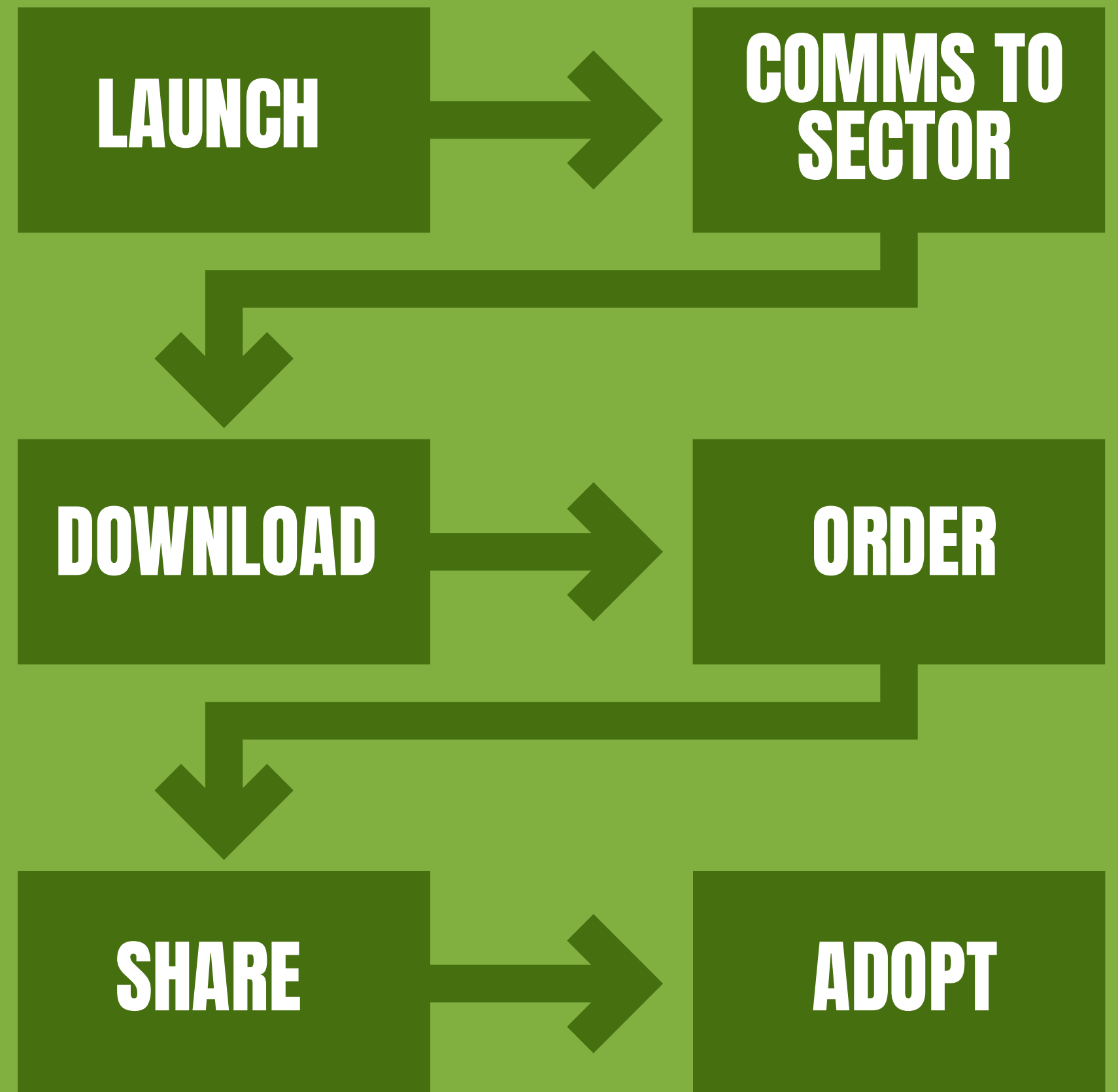
WHAT: Posters, Flyers, Magnets

WHERE: Downloadable on website
(links to be circulated)



THE FOUNDATIONS FOR SAFE SLEEP

MESSAGE & RESOURCE
DISSEMINATION



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PATAI

