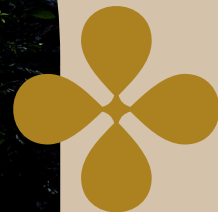




OLA KA HUAKA'ITHELE O HI'IAKA

FORMATIVE EVALUATION



2025



Prepared for Papa Ola Lōkahi

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OLA KA HUAKA'IHELE O HI'IAKA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



2025

INTRODUCTION

Ola ka Huaka'ihele o Hi'iaka (OHH) is a five-month, culturally grounded Train-the-Trainer program developed and delivered by Kanaka 'Ōiwi leaders to support substance use recovery and healing through the integration of ka'ao, Hawai'i lifeways, and reciprocity. This formative evaluation was designed to assess the pilot implementation of OHH, document early outcomes, and guide future program development.

"We are the evidence."



KEY FINDINGS

2

“This isn’t a program—it’s part of a movement. But movements need support to grow.”

1

Transformational Cultural Learning and Healing

All participants reported significant gains in ‘ike (knowledge), confidence, and spiritual reconnection. Learning extended beyond content mastery to include cultural embodiment, ancestral reconnection, and healing from trauma.

2

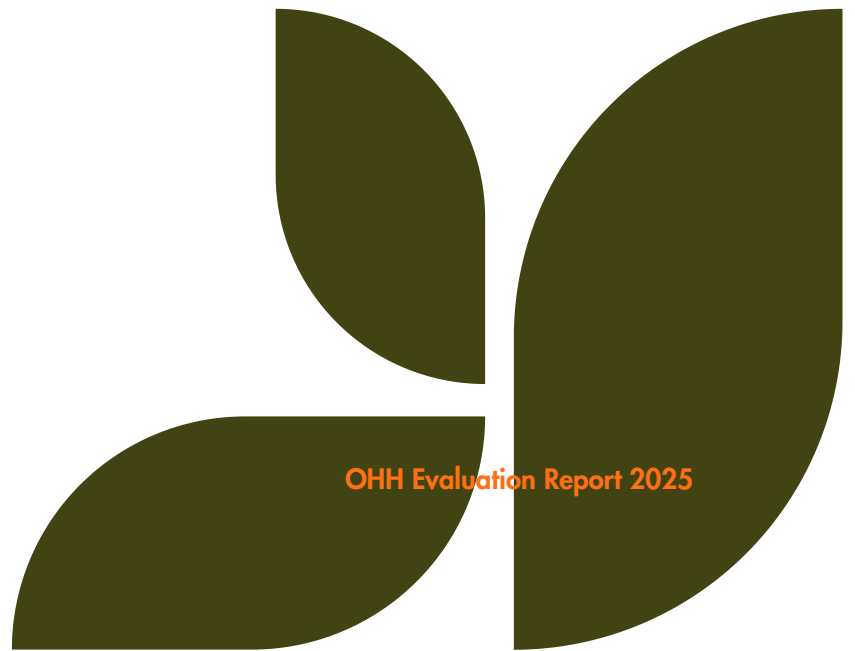
Facilitator & Participant Readiness

By the end of the program, facilitators of OHH demonstrated readiness to lead culturally grounded sessions in diverse settings. Several participants are integrating aspects of OHH into health, education, and community programs, signaling a scalable model for culturally sustaining leadership.

3

Emotional Safety and Pilina (Relational Bonds)

The program created a deeply safe and loving space, described by participants as ‘ohana. These relationships became the foundation for both personal transformation and collaborative facilitation.



KEY FINDINGS

”

“To be honest, I have never been in a space that was so safe and loving.”

4

Support of Mauiola

The program strongly upheld the Kūkulu Kumuhana framework, fostering mauiola (optimal wellbeing) not only as an outcome but as a guiding force. Statistical analysis of the Kukui Mālamalama measure revealed a statistically significant increase in mauiola scores.

5

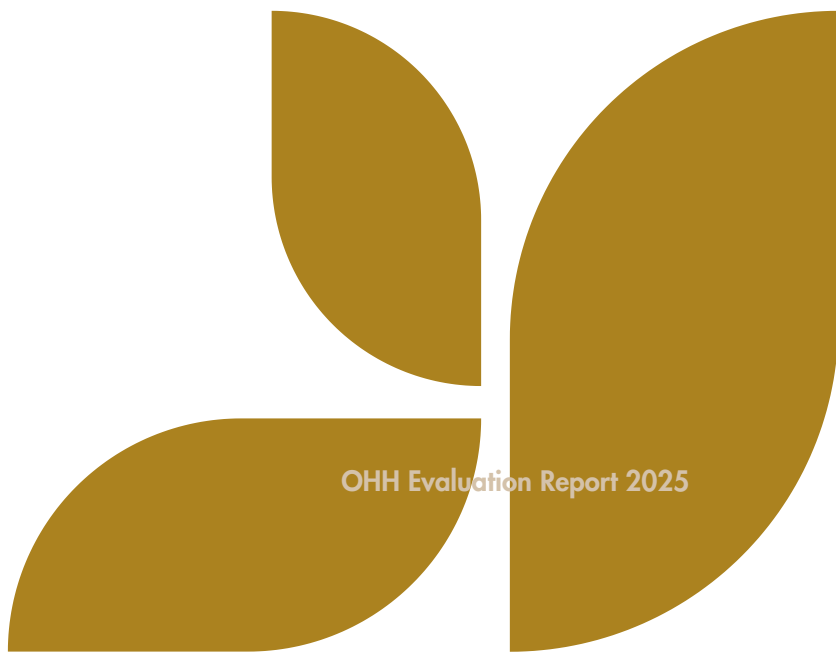
Culturally Rooted Behavior Change

Participants applied what they learned in real-time—leading oli in meetings, mentoring youth through ka’ao, and practicing kilo with their families. Many shared how the program shifted their daily choices, interactions, and professional views and behaviors.

6

Preliminary Systems-Level Impact

Participants began transforming their organizations through curriculum redesign, staff rituals, and decolonial practices. Early indicators suggest a positive ripple effect on substance use prevention and community wellness.



PARTICIPANT VOICE

”

“This program gave me the confidence to weave culture into my clinical practice—something I’ve wanted to do but didn’t know how.”

”

“It helped me with my life ka’ao and hua which weaves into everything I do.”

”

“It supports hope... health by integrating mind, body, spirit, and community through storytelling, connection to ‘āina, and relational dynamics.”

”

“I felt like my kūpuna were walking with me. It wasn’t just a chant—it was a call home.”

”

“I expected to learn about stories and cultural practices, but I didn’t expect how deeply the journey would affect me.”

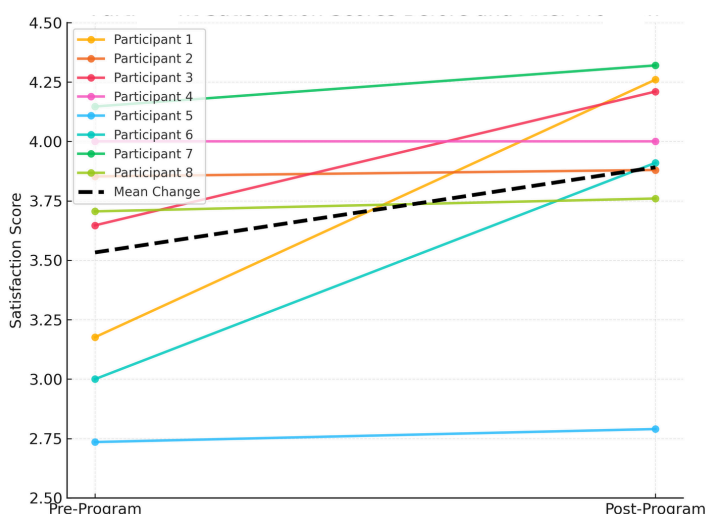




“The place is medicine... we get exactly what we need.”

Mauliola Improvements

Statistically Significant



Ola ka Huaka'ihele o Hi'iaka Improves Mauliola

When using culturally sustaining measures like Kukui Mālamalama, participants' mauliola was significantly improved by OHH. All forms of evidence, quantitative, qualitative, observational, photo-based, and experiential suggest that this program, and these facilitators in particular, provides a safe place that not only supports training in substance use recovery, but also uplifts wellbeing for individuals, families, and communities.

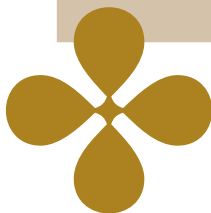


“I'm rewriting my organization's orientation using the Ka'ao framework.”

CHALLENGES

4

Areas for Growth



The immersive structure offered rich experiences but sometimes led to fatigue, which facilitators adapted to iteratively over huaka`i. Participants requested more opportunities for intentional integration in the learning process, including the Hi`iaka ka`ao. While participants made strides in their self-perceptions as stewards of Hawai`i lifeways, they expressed a desire to continue learning cultural practices to better prepare them to bring OHH to their communities. Some struggled to implement what they learned due to institutional constraints, cultural misalignment, or lack of recognition for Indigenous healing modalities. Participants emphasized the need for materials throughout (e.g., manual, resource hub), post-program support, sustained investment in cultural spaces, and facilitator pipelines.

**Pacing &
Integration**



**“Hawaiian Enough” &
Readiness**



**Systemic
Barriers**



**Long-Term
Infrastructure**

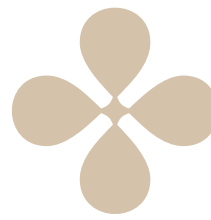
RECOMMENDATIONS



“This isn’t just about us—it’s about shifting the systems we work in.”

Program	Systems	Evaluation
Integrate organized onboarding, more reflection time, paced embodiment, and intentional discussion of integration in work.	Secure multi-year funding to scale facilitator training and site-based programming.	Take a longitudinal approach to evaluation, allowing for sustainable and iteratively optimized program development.
Provide structured post-program support (e.g., manual, resource hub, alumni circles, coaching, facilitator fellowship).	Ensure cultural practitioners and facilitators are compensated well.	Deepen ‘ike kūpuna integration using the Ana Kūkulu Framework as a guide for future evaluation and program refinement.
Add a healer to hold space while facilitators are implementing the program.	Create tools to support participants in systems navigation and policy advocacy.	Include participants, community, and kūpuna in evaluation planning for next stages.

CONCLUSION



“What we created is a model for how to train others—not just in skills, but in spiritual responsibility.”

The Ola ka Huaka’ihele o Hi’iaka program powerfully affirms that substance use recovery and healing grounded in Hawai’i lifeways is not only possible, it is transformative—for facilitators, participants, `ohana, organizations, and communities. This pilot initiative established a vital foundation for a growing network of facilitators who are culturally sustaining, spiritually grounded, and deeply responsive to community needs. To expand this momentum, continued investment—paired with evaluation practices rooted in cultural values—will be critical to developing a lasting, self-determined system of healing for the lāhui. This is not just a program; it is a movement toward collective renewal and mauiola.



MAHALO PIHA

So many stars aligned to make this project and evaluation possible. We are incredibly grateful for the experience of OHH and for the opportunity to evaluate this trailblazing program.

Nā kūpuna

Brilliant facilitators of OHH, Aunty Kekuhi Kanae Kanahele

Keali'ikanaka'oleohaililani, Lilinoe Kauahikaua, Kauilanuimakehaikalani

Keali'ikanaka'oleohaililani, and Camille McComas

Brilliant participants from whom we learned so much

The generous communities and families who helped make this program and evaluation a reality

Papa Ola Lōkahi

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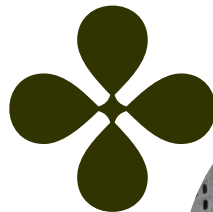




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1. Introduction

Program Overview

In its current iteration, Ola Ka Huaka'ihele O Hi'iaka (OKHH) is a five-month training program rooted in the Ka'ao Framework, a traditional form of Hawai'i storying which guides personal and collective transformation. The program integrates ka'ao, oli (chant), hula (dance), kilo (observation), mele (songs), dialogue and inquiry, hana no'eau (work), hei (energy practice), and 'āina-based (land-based) practices during huaka'i (journeys) to support culturally resonant healing and recovery. Grounded in Hawai'i lifeways, the pilot program advances a culture-as-health approach (Yamane & Helm, 2022) within behavioral health and wellness settings, with the goals to:

- ❖ Ensure participants are equipped with the knowledge and skills to guide recovery and healing groups using the Ka'ao Framework in the context of Hawai'i lifeways.
- ❖ Create the foundation for a community of practitioners who can engage in long term collaboration and support
- ❖ Enhance overall wellbeing of participants.
- ❖ Create an environment for culturally safe intergenerational continuums in respective spaces:
 - Mental and behavioral health supervision
 - Cultural practitioner cross sector relationship building

An additional goal of the pilot implementation includes developing the Ola ka Huaka'ihele o Hi'iaka curriculum to be adaptable to community-specific needs.

The Ka'ao Framework is comprised of 5 stages:

1. Hua the Catalyst, The Why?
2. Ha'alele the Departure, Embodying flight from the community
3. Huaka'i the Journey, A sequence of Life and Deaths
4. Hō'ina the Return, Reintegration back into community
5. Hā'ina the Synthesis, Expansion through realization

For facilitator definitions and participant reflections on the "5 Hs" of the Ka'ao Framework, please see Appendix A. For a draft of OHH's Theory of Change, see Appendix B.

Participants

Participants in the pilot launch of OHH represented a diverse cross-section of facilitators (n = 4) and individuals serving those in substance recovery, including Kanaka 'Ōiwi cultural practitioners (n = 4), health and behavioral health professionals (n = 4), community facilitators

(n = 5), individuals working in systems change (n = 5), and film (n = 1). In total, 18 participants took part in the program, the majority of whom (n = 16) identified as Kanaka 'Ōiwi.

Participants ranged in age from 24 to 64, with most between 35 and 54 years old. Representation spanned multiple islands, including O'ahu (n = 10), Hawai'i Island (n = 6), Maui (n = 2), and Moloka'i (n = 1). The group reflected a range of gender identities, with most identifying as cisgender women (n = 14), and others identifying as cisgender men (n = 1) or gender-nonconforming / māhū / non-binary / two-spirit (n = 2). Of the 17 participants who responded to the sexual orientation question, the majority identified as heterosexual (n = 10), with others identifying as queer (n = 2) or self-describing as "Other: Free agent" (n = 1); four participants chose not to answer. This was a highly educated group with all participants reporting having attained a degree, and most participants reporting attainment of an advanced degree (n = 12).

Spiritual and religious orientations varied, though nearly half (n = 8) described their practices as rooted in traditional Hawaiian spirituality or Hawaiian values. Many participants also reported a strong commitment to 'Ōlelo Hawai'i, with 17 reporting at least beginner-level proficiency. A substantial proportion of the group (n = 14) endorsed having experienced psychological distress at some point in their lives, with over half describing their distress as moderately severe, very severe, or extremely severe. Participants shared rich descriptions of their pre-program engagement in Hawaiian cultural practices. The most frequently reported activities included hula (n = 8), oli (chant) (n = 8), mea 'ai pono—healthy food cultivation and gathering (n = 7), 'Ōlelo Hawai'i (n = 5), aloha 'āina and reforestation activities (n = 5), and lomi lomi (n = 4). Other common practices included pule, ceremony, māla (gardening), mele, hana no'eau (arts and crafts), hunting and fishing, hei, lā'au lapa'au (plant medicine), and ka'ao and mo'olelo. Participants also named a variety of additional cultural practices, demonstrating the breadth of 'ike kūpuna (ancestral knowledge) integrated into their lives and professional roles. *Please see Appendix C: Participant Demographics for a detailed table reflecting demographics.*



Figure 1 Sharing group ka 'ao and learnings with community at hō'ike

This collective profile underscores the importance of centering cultural resilience and community leadership in training approaches and highlights the depth and breadth of experience participants bring to efforts to heal and strengthen individuals in substance use recovery. The diversity of the group also highlights the facilitators' intention to build bridges across role types in the community in service of future interdisciplinary substance use recovery programming.



Purpose of the Evaluation

This evaluation is formative in nature and is designed to:

1. Provide insights to guide the development of the OHH curriculum
2. Strengthen the quality and effectiveness of program implementation
3. Support the growth and capacity of trainers delivering the curriculum

Audience

This evaluation report is intended for multiple audiences involved in the development, implementation, and support OHH. Primary audiences include the program developers and facilitators who designed and delivered the pilot training; leadership and staff at Papa Ola Lōkahi, who provided guidance and cultural stewardship; and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division (ADAD), funders of this initiative. The report is also relevant to additional funders, partners, and stakeholders committed to supporting culturally grounded approaches to substance use recovery, capacity building, and community wellbeing among Kānaka 'Ōiwi. Findings are provided to inform program refinement, demonstrate impact, and guide future planning and resource allocation.

2. Evaluation Approach

Formative Evaluation

Formative evaluation is an approach conducted during the development or early implementation of a program to generate timely information that can improve design, delivery, and effectiveness, especially in complex community contexts (Scriven, 1967). For Indigenous substance recovery programs, formative evaluation plays a critical role in ensuring that interventions are responsive to cultural values, community priorities, and local definitions of wellness (Gone, 2013). This type of evaluation is iterative and participatory, emphasizing respectful engagement with stakeholders to gather feedback on program processes, assess cultural fit, and identify areas for adaptation (Patton, 2008). Methods such as talking circles, pilot activities, process observations, and interviews can help document what is working well and what needs adjustment, supporting continuous learning and refinement (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011). By centering Indigenous knowledge systems and valuing community-led insights, formative evaluation can strengthen cultural relevance and improve the likelihood that substance recovery efforts will be sustainable and meaningful (Kurtz, 2014).

Philosophy and Ethics

This evaluation is grounded in Indigenous and Kanaka 'Ōiwi epistemologies, emphasizing relational accountability, cultural integrity, and meaningful use. Evaluation is not merely a technical exercise but a deeply relational and ethical practice that affirms collective wellbeing and 'ike kūpuna (ancestral knowledge). The philosophy guiding this evaluation is rooted in several interrelated principles:



Indigenous Evaluation Methods

The present evaluation centers **Indigenous ways of knowing**, emphasizing culturally rooted concepts like empirical, traditional, and revealed knowledge, and highlighting the importance of community context, family, and collective outcomes. It is built on a foundation of **core cultural values**—such as respect for sovereignty, honoring strengths, deep community engagement, and moral responsibility in how knowledge is generated and used (Seven Directions, 2023). Worksheets from the Seven Directions Indigenous Toolkit were used to consult with program facilitators in thinking about their Theory of Change and Logic Model.

Research as Ceremony & Transformative Paradigm

This evaluation is rooted in an Indigenous approach to “research as ceremony,” emphasizing relational accountability, reciprocity, and spiritual integrity (Wilson, 2008). It promotes Indigenous methodologies as essential to ethical and globally relevant health practices, supporting justice and reconciliation in knowledge creation. Data collection prioritizes cultural respect through Native language use, art-based methods, and community-led, participatory approaches that ensure data sovereignty.

We apply a transformative paradigm to guide methodology, clarify assumptions, and enhance reflexivity and rigor (Mertens, 2008, 2015). This paradigm centers social justice, cultural context, and marginalized voices, treating research as a political and moral act to dismantle inequities (Chilisa, 2012; Cram, 2009). It supports pluralistic, adaptive methods that empower participants and foster meaningful social change.

Relational Accountability and Contextual Validity

In contrast to extractive or deficit-based models, this evaluation honors pilina—the sacred relationships among people, place, and purpose—as both a method and a measure (LaFrance & Nichols, 2009). Cultural context is not background—it is the foreground. Evaluation is conducted “with” and “for” communities, never “on” them (Morelli & Mataira, 2010). This relational orientation ensures that what counts as evidence is grounded in Kanaka 'Ōiwi values and lived experience. In this case, the evaluation is also being conducted “by” Kanaka 'Ōiwi and Indigenous community members.

'Ike: Gross, Subtle, and Causal Meaning

Building on Meyer’s (2003) framework of Hawaiian hermeneutics, this evaluation respects the multiple layers of knowing:

- Gross (measurable data),
- Subtle (felt experience, emotion, and environment), and
- Causal (spiritual, ancestral, and unseen influences).

As such, it brings forward a **Makawalu approach** (see Figure 3) to defining what constitutes data and how the evaluators might interact with those data. The framework invites mo'olelo,



multiple forms of 'ike (e.g., photos, artwork, dance, oli, experience of the evaluator), and kilo (to watch closely, as a stargazer does) alongside surveys or numeric results, creating a fuller, more pono understanding.

Culturally Grounded Utility

Evaluation should be useful to those most directly involved and should support action grounded in kuleana (responsibility) and pono (rightness). This reflects Patton's (2008) emphasis on utilization-focused evaluation, but in this context, usefulness also includes cultural resonance and spiritual alignment. Recommendations must serve the lāhui and uplift community-defined goals for health, healing, and ea (sovereignty).

Kanaka 'Ōiwi Approaches to Evaluation

The present evaluation engages with decolonial evaluation as a holistic, culturally grounded, and community-driven process rooted in Indigenous epistemologies and values (Kawakami, Aton, Cram, Lai, & Porima, 2007). It calls for collaborative approaches that honor spiritual, relational, and contextual dimensions of value as defined by Indigenous communities themselves. By centering Indigenous sovereignty and ways of knowing, this approach offers a powerful decolonizing alternative to conventional evaluation models (Kawakami et al., 2007). Drawing from the Evaluation with Aloha approach, we center Kanaka 'Ōiwi values, relationships, 'āina, culture, collectivism, strengths, and spirituality (CREA-HI & Lili'uokalani Trust, 2021). This means respecting *and participating* in protocol (e.g., ho'okupu, oli, ho'oponopono), privileging 'Ōiwi ways of knowing, and ensuring that community voices—not external standards—define what counts as success. Cultural sustainability (Paris, 2012), then, is not adaptation to dominant models, but an uplifting of culture, and accountability to 'ike kūpuna. In this work, we recognize that culturally aligned practice requires more than technical rigor; it calls for deep relational accountability. At a minimum, evaluation should support—and ideally, advance—the perpetuation of Kanaka 'Ōiwi culture and ways of knowing and being. This includes not only respecting 'Ōiwi knowledge systems, but also ensuring that evaluation efforts are pili (closely connected) with key stakeholders, especially the communities and individuals who are intended to benefit from the program, service, policy, or initiative being evaluated (CREA-HI & Lili'uokalani Trust, 2021). Through intentional relationship-building and cultural grounding, the evaluation process aims to be both meaningful and restorative.

Critical Consciousness and Equity

Kirkhart (2010) emphasizes the need for “eyes wide open”—a stance that acknowledges power dynamics, colonization, and cultural displacement in evaluation contexts. This evaluation explicitly resists ahistorical approaches and attends to structural factors impacting Kanaka ‘Ōiwi recovery and health. It also supports capacity building so that future evaluation leadership can come from within the community.

In sum, this evaluation is guided by a deep kuleana to ensure that the stories, practices, and aspirations of the people it serves are honored, protected, and returned in ways that foster transformation, not mere documentation.

To read the evaluation team’s positionalities, please see [Appendix S Positionalities of Evaluators](#).

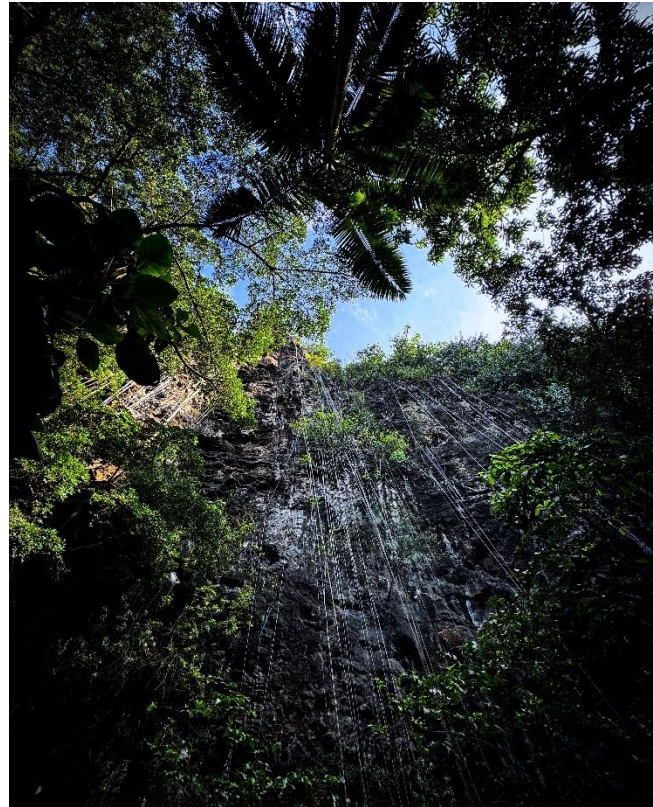


Figure 2 ‘Ike sources from all directions

Methods Overview

This evaluation employed a mixed-methods design to capture a more comprehensive understanding of participant experiences and program outcomes. Multiple data collection approaches were used to gather observational, quantitative, and qualitative information. These included talk story listening sessions, surveys, reflections shared during Zoom meetings, and one-on-one interviews with participants and facilitators. Observational data were collected throughout program activities, and relevant documents were reviewed to contextualize findings. Additionally, photographs taken by evaluators and provided by participants, often accompanied by participant reflections, contributed visual and narrative insights into the process and impact of OHH.

Pre- and Post-Program Surveys

The pre-program survey contained the consent form, multiple choice and open-ended demographics questions, open-ended pre-program questions, and four measures: Kukui Mālamalama, Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE). The post-program survey contained open-ended post-program questions, and four measures: Kukui Mālamalama (n = 8 for matched pre- and post-program data), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; n = 9 matched pre- and post-program data), Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; n = 8 matched pre- and post-program data), Scale of

Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE; $n = 8$ matched pre- and post-program data). Responses were rated on a 4-5-point Likert-type scale.

For each of the four measures, descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize mean scores before and after the program. For participants with matched pre- and post-program data, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether changes in satisfaction scores were statistically significant. Due to the small sample size and potential non-normality of the data, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test was also performed as a non-parametric alternative. To illustrate individual-level changes, a participant-level change plot was created, displaying each participant's scores before and after the program alongside the overall mean change trajectory. *Please see Appendix D for questions and complete findings.*

Formative Post-Huaka`i Surveys

After the hō'aumoe and huaka`i to Hawai`i and Kaua`i islands, brief surveys with open-ended questions were sent to participants over email. These surveys were designed to be formative, to inform the pilot implementation process itself. Participants were reminded to fill out their surveys by evaluation team staff as well as by facilitators. *Please see Appendix E for questions and complete findings.*

For the formative post-huaka`i surveys and the open-ended items from the pre- and post-program surveys, thematic summaries were generated per question. Key themes were identified with relevant quotes included to illustrate participants' responses. More specifically, open-ended survey responses were analyzed using thematic analysis. After data collection, responses were reviewed and coded inductively to identify recurring patterns and themes. Initial codes were grouped into broader categories through iterative comparison and refinement. Themes were developed based on the frequency, relevance, and richness of responses, with representative quotes selected to illustrate each theme. All analysis was conducted manually by one evaluation team member and reviewed for quality assurance by a second team member to ensure close engagement with the data.

Interviews

Eight interviews were conducted (four individual and four focus groups), all facilitated by a single evaluation staff member. Interview questions were shared in advance when possible, and semi-structured discussions were held via Zoom with audio-only recording to protect privacy. Recordings were transcribed verbatim in Otter.ai and reviewed for accuracy. Transcripts were analyzed thematically using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase guide, adapted to center decolonizing principles. This process included familiarization with the data while reflexively examining researcher assumptions; generating inclusive initial codes that captured contradictions; developing and refining themes through iterative comparison and thematic mapping; and defining themes to interpret their broader significance in relation to the research questions and decolonization objectives. The final report presented a clear analytic narrative supported by illustrative quotes, emphasizing the active role of the researcher and aiming to challenge colonial discourses and avoid stereotyping. Analysis was conducted by one evaluation team member and reviewed for quality assurance by a second



team member. *Please see Appendix F for Formative Post Huaka'i Interviews. For a complete qualitative methods description, please see Appendix G.*

Observational Data

Observational data were gathered during five huaka'i on: O'ahu (hō'aumoe, hō'ike), Hawai'i (first huaka'i and Merrie Monarch Festival), and Kaua'i. An ethnographic approach was employed, incorporating participant observation to document community practices, interactions, and expressions of cultural identity in situ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). The observer engaged as an active participant, maintaining a stance of respectful inquiry and cultural humility consistent with Indigenous research protocols (Kovach, 2009). Detailed field notes were recorded contemporaneously, describing environmental context, nonverbal communication, and relevant artifacts, supplemented by reflexive memos capturing the observers' positionality and evolving interpretations (Emerson et al., 2011).

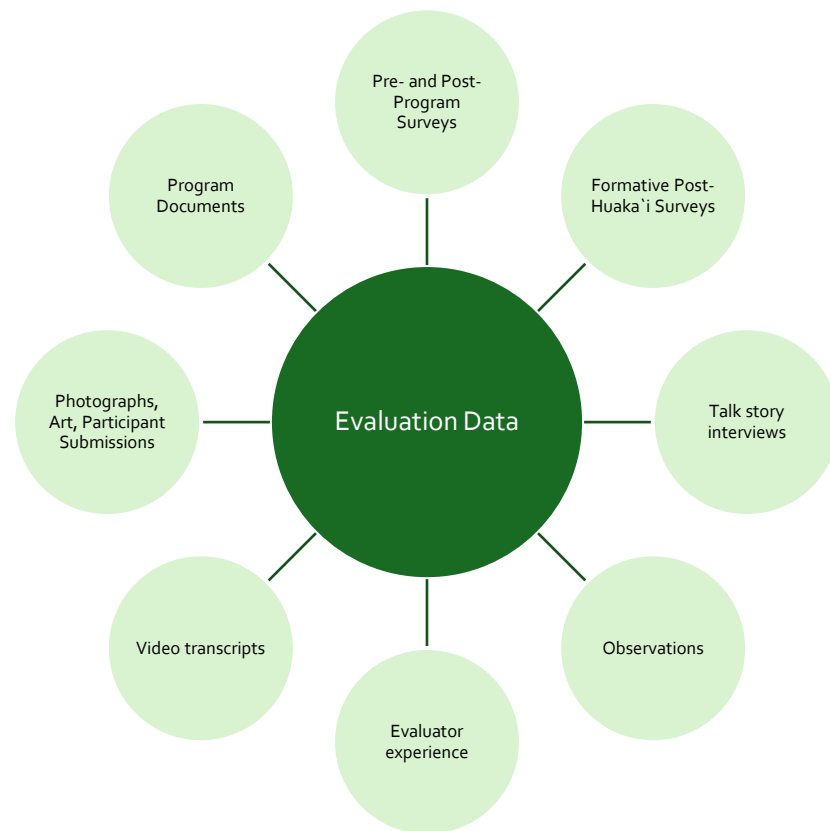
To enhance credibility, observations were triangulated with video transcripts, photographs, mele and other experiences part of the program, informal conversations, and publicly available materials such as event programs and signage. These approaches allowed evaluators to break boundaries of Western evaluation approaches and incorporate suggestions from program participants highlighting how, **"We are the data."** Data analysis followed iterative thematic coding, beginning with open coding to identify salient patterns (Saldaña, 2021), then organizing codes into broader categories representing community strengths, cultural practices, and health-related implications.

Document Analysis

Document analysis was conducted to systematically review materials relevant to the program context and activities, including official emails, huaka'i agendas, and outreach materials. The approach followed established qualitative procedures for document review that treat documents as social artifacts reflecting institutional priorities and cultural meanings (Bowen, 2009). All documents were first cataloged and logged in a secure database with metadata including author, date, intended audience, and purpose. Initial reading focused on familiarization and identification of recurring content areas and language reflecting key themes related to cultural practices, health promotion, and community engagement (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Subsequently, an inductive coding process was applied to extract meaningful units of text, using open coding to capture salient concepts and patterns (Saldaña, 2021).

To enhance trustworthiness, thematic findings from document analysis were triangulated with data from interviews and observations, supporting a comprehensive understanding of the program's implementation and cultural alignment.

Figure 3. Makawalu: Multiple sources of evaluation data



Evaluators were in constant contact with facilitators, ensuring the evaluation process was collaborative and reflected their intended goals for the evaluation. The lead evaluator also served as curriculum consultant, iteratively weaving in facilitator and participant input throughout the process. Care was taken to approach all interactions with aloha and an aim to nourish pilina while walking beside them through the implementation and evaluation process.

3. Program Implementation

Training Structure

Trainers in OHH were prepared and supported through an intentional, relational approach rooted in Kanaka 'Ōiwi pedagogy. Rather than a formalized or hierarchical training model, preparation occurred through **mentorship, co-journeying, and experiential modeling**. Lead facilitators—particularly Aunty Kekuhi—embodied 'ike kūpuna (ancestral knowledge) and served as cultural anchors, allowing other facilitators to learn by witnessing, doing, and reflecting in community.

Emerging trainers were not expected to master content independently but were integrated into an environment where teaching was observed, absorbed, and practiced in real time.



Facilitators often held **multiple roles** (e.g., kumu, evaluator, participant), blurring traditional lines in service of relational learning and healing.

“Just us being together has all those elements.”

— Post-Program Interview

“None of these hats are fully baked... but they’re necessary.”

— Facilitator Reflection

This **intergenerational and non-linear approach to mentoring** mirrored traditional Kanaka 'Ōiwi ways of passing knowledge—through proximity, kuleana (responsibility), and lived pilina (relationship).

Training Structure: How Trainers Were Prepared, Mentored, and Supported

The training team—including cultural practitioners and behavioral health leaders—was carefully composed of individuals with deep cultural grounding and professional expertise. Their preparation was more *experiential and relational* than formalized, aligning with Kanaka 'Ōiwi epistemologies of learning through pilina (relationship), kilo (observation), and hana (practice).

- **Mentorship and Modeling**

Lead facilitator Aunty Kekuhi functioned not only as kumu (teacher), but as a living model of 'ike kūpuna, spiritual presence, and cultural integrity. Emerging facilitators observed her style in real time, learning how to hold space through lived example rather than rigid training.

.....

"Aunty truly is an inspiration to me and one of my heroes in my ka'ao and
has been for decades"

- Post-Program Survey

.....

- **Relational Knowledge Transfer**

Learning was embedded in daily interaction, storytelling, and place-based ceremony. There was no rigid "train-the-trainer" model; instead, co-facilitators were mentored through "osmosis", kuleana, and shared huaka'i (journeys).

- **Team Reflection and Co-Learning**

Observational notes and interviews show facilitators debriefed informally, often co-processing what emerged in the space. This created an organic feedback loop that adapted to the group's needs without compromising cultural integrity.

Fidelity to Hawai'i Lifeways

The program maintained a strong and consistent alignment with traditional Hawaiʻi lifeways across all huakaʻi, activities, and pedagogical approaches. Core practices and values such as **reciprocity**, **mālama ʻāina (stewardship of land)**, **ʻike lawaiʻa (ancestral ecological knowledge)**, **lāʻau lapaʻau (plant-based healing)**, **oli (chant)**, and **moʻolelo (storytelling)** were not taught as content—they were lived.

For example, participants engaged in ritual and oli upon entering sacred spaces, honored place as ancestor (kupuna), and practiced kilo (observation) as a foundational learning tool. The program did not extract these practices from their cultural context; rather, it immersed participants in **ceremonial, place-based, relational experiences** where these values were enacted.

“The place is medicine... we get exactly what we need.”
— Participant, Kauaʻi Huakaʻi Interview

“You are walking into the Kaʻao tonight.”
— Facilitator, Observational Data

“This program is not about becoming more Hawaiian. It is about becoming more yourself.”
— Post-Program Survey



Figure 4 Place as medicine, conduit for becoming

Alignment with Traditional Practices

The program demonstrated *exceptional fidelity* to Hawaiʻi lifeways, not merely using cultural terms but embodying them through action, location, and worldview.

❖ Mālama ʻĀina (Caring for the Land)

- Participants were guided through protocols of entering sacred spaces, cleaning, and offering oli to place guardians.
- Place was treated as teacher and ancestor (e.g., “The place is kūpuna to peoples.”).
- ❖ **‘Ike Lawai’a (Fisher Knowledge)**
 - Observational data noted metaphoric and literal knowledge of water, tides, winds, and food systems—especially in discussions around breath, rhythm, and ocean rituals.
- ❖ **Lā’au Lapa’au (Plant Medicine)**
 - Participants engaged with native plants in ceremonial and healing contexts.
 - There was an emphasis on knowing plants by name, spirit, and story—not just clinical use.
- ❖ **Mo’olelo and Ka’ao**
 - Central to the program was ka’ao, the narrative framework organizing both personal healing and program pacing. It allowed participants to make meaning in culturally congruent ways.

“Ka’ao gives structure to change, helps me reflect more intentionally.”
— Post Program Survey
- ❖ **Pilina, Mana, and Kapu Aloha**
 - The values of aloha ‘āina, kuleana, and kapu aloha were embodied through relationships, mutual care, and sacredness of space.

Teachings were not adapted to Western timelines. The program did not reduce Hawai‘i lifeways into tools; it **amplified them as foundational epistemologies**.



Figure 5 Dying kīhei with ‘olena

Adaptations

Throughout implementation, the program demonstrated **culturally grounded flexibility**, adapting organically to participant needs, environmental conditions, and logistical shifts—without compromising its cultural integrity. Changes in schedule, session pacing, and facilitation style were guided by kilo (attuned observation), reflecting a Kanaka 'Ōiwi ethic of responsiveness and relational accountability.

For example, when illness, travel disruptions, or fatigue arose, facilitators adjusted timing and allowed for individual rest or integration time. Participants missing one huaka'i were still held within the collective ka'ao arc, affirming the validity of their huaka'i even if experienced differently. Facilitators also adapted content delivery based on participants' fluency and readiness, often leaning into **peer learning, story-sharing, and embodied examples** instead of lectures or rigid scripts.

"I have a hard time understanding what is expected of me, but once I hear others respond, then I can follow."

— Participant, Post-Program Survey

"Sometimes the healing happens in the chaos... we just need to hold space for that."

— Facilitator, Observational Notes

Rather than being seen as deviations, these adaptations are best understood as *evidence of cultural fidelity*—reflecting the Kanaka 'Ōiwi value of ho'oikaika (strengthening) through relational balance and attentiveness to context.

Culturally Responsive Adaptations Made During the Program

Adaptations emerged in response to environmental, interpersonal, and logistical dynamics—yet they remained rooted in Kanaka 'Ōiwi cultural foundations.

- ❖ **Logistical Flexibility (e.g., travel, illness, family needs)**
 - When participants missed huaka'i due to illness or home commitments, facilitators acknowledged their journeys as still valid. Missing a physical event did not exclude them from the ka'ao arc.
- ❖ **Content Delivery Adjustments**
 - When fatigue set in (e.g., late nights), facilitators adjusted session times or created more space for silence, journaling, or 'āina time.
- ❖ **Language and Learning Accommodations**
 - Recognizing different levels of fluency and cultural readiness, facilitators often invited peer modeling and "learning by listening."
- ❖ **Meta-Level Role Shifting**

- Facilitators navigated roles as kumu, haumāna, evaluator, and healer, often simultaneously. They embodied 'ike lawai'a by “feeling the tide” of the group and adjusting rhythm accordingly.



Figure 6 Kava'i i Huaka'i Participant Facilitator

4. Trainer Outcomes (Early Indicators)

Knowledge & Confidence Gains

Trainers experienced significant personal and professional development, with notable increases in **cultural literacy, facilitation ability, and clarity** around their role. Even experienced practitioners described the training as a return to foundational learning, sharpening their understanding of the Ka'ao Framework and its application to healing, health, and facilitation.

Some entered the training with limited exposure to ka'ao or cultural instruction and initially felt hesitant or unsure of their role. Over time, they reported feeling empowered to step into leadership and facilitation spaces with greater confidence and purpose.

“Even though I’ve been through this process... it’s always good to refresh. I got to learn it from where I am today, not five years ago.”

— Trainer reflection

“I came from a place of not fear, but discomfort... I had imposter syndrome. But now I know it was something I needed to step into.”

— Trainer, on initial discomfort and eventual growth

“Now I know that... we don’t have the luxury of time in behavioral health. So we had to sharpen the content, increase debriefs, and still hold the quality.”

— Lead trainer, on adjusting her teaching model for behavioral health contexts

Pilina Development

Trainers formed strong, enduring relationships built on trust, vulnerability, and shared growth. These bonds became the emotional infrastructure for implementing the program and navigating challenges. Several trainers noted that the relationships developed during this process now feel like lifelong ‘ohana (family).

“I have gained friends and family for life... this team will always have a place at my table.”

— Final reflection

“We bonded so easily by living, working, and learning together – it just flowed naturally. Then throughout, people would just spontaneously practice hula and teach one another, or check in if something needed to be done or supported. Pilina was embodied straight away.”

— Post-program reflection

“We were all moving in the same direction. That trust was a huge part of me learning to advocate for myself, even in my own home.”

— Facilitator reflection on relational safety and personal growth



Figure 7 Hō‘aumoe: Hana Noeau

Capacity to Deliver Content



Figure 8 Facilitator during niu restoration

By the program's conclusion, trainers demonstrated readiness to deliver the content of ka'ao and Hawai'i lifeways in contextually responsive ways. They acknowledged early hesitation about their facilitation role but ultimately embraced opportunities to step in, lead, and model the practices for others.

The condensed nature of the program demanded rapid learning and flexibility. Trainers became adept at navigating logistics while maintaining cultural fidelity, balancing protocols, participant needs, and administrative realities.

"I usually have a year or more with learners... This was the fastest I've ever done it, but the team pulled it off with integrity."

— Facilitator reflection

"There were times when I wasn't sure if I was supposed to step in. But maybe that's part of the process—to step into it when you're ready."

— On evolving into her facilitation role

"Now that I've worked with behavioral health professionals, I know I can't go back. This is where my work has to live—from now on."

— On expanding the impact of cultural facilitation

Healing & Growth

Several trainers disclosed that the process of teaching and holding space was also deeply healing for them. Whether confronting family trauma, imposter syndrome, or the internalized need to "just do the job," trainers shared that the experience invited personal transformation. The facilitation process became a mirror, revealing wounds and opportunities for renewal.

"Only recently I had a little breakdown... I don't like doing that, but I had to let it happen. That's the work, right?"

— Facilitator, reflecting on emotional release

"Vulnerability doesn't come easy to me. But I learned that I could be open—because I had people I trust around me."

— Facilitator, on stepping into discomfort and healing



"I have to live this day like my hua is right in front of me saying, 'Come. Let's go.' Even if I feel like the most terrible person in the world... that's the journey."

— Lead facilitator, on living ka'ao every day

"This opened me up to advocate for all cultures—not just push my own. Storytelling became my entry point."

— Facilitator, on cultural humility and shared humanity

5. Participant Experience

.....
"This isn't about learning techniques. It's about becoming."

— Post-Program Interview

"I didn't just learn—I remembered. And now I want to help others remember too."

— Post-Program Survey
.....

We adapted the widely used **Kirkpatrick Model** at the ontological, epistemological, and praxis levels to better understand the training's effectiveness from a Kanaka 'Ōiwi lens. These adaptations were implemented across the four levels of training program impact analyzed: reaction, learning, behavior, and results.

Level 1: Reaction (Pili 'Uhane – Spirit and Connection)

Participants' immediate responses to the program, including cultural resonance, sense of belonging, and emotional engagement.

Culturally Aligned Indicators

- Sense of connection to 'ike kūpuna (ancestral knowledge)
- Emotional or spiritual responses to mo'olelo, oli, hula, or pule
- Participant feedback on the cultural safety and relevance of facilitation
- Use of open-ended reflections or pule (prayer-based insight)

Findings

In the post-session survey, quantitative findings included:

100% of participants agree that the training content was **relevant** to their role in substance recovery (89% of participants completely agree; 11% agree)

Participants reported deep emotional resonance, spiritual connection, and a powerful sense of belonging throughout the program. From the first orientation to the final huaka'i, the space cultivated safety, vulnerability, and cultural reawakening. Across surveys, interviews, and observational data, *pili 'uhane*—soulful connection—was repeatedly named as one of the most

meaningful elements of the experience. Participants spoke of laughter, tears, shared stories, and the validation of being in community with others on a cultural healing journey.

“To be honest, I have never been in a space that was so safe and loving.”
— Post-Program Survey

“This feels like ‘ohana... I haven’t felt that in years.”
— Post Hō‘aumoe Interview

“Stewarding the kuahu and being in the middle of so much ‘Ōiwi brilliance opened up a spiritual channel that helped me feel whole again. Coming out of a really traumatic chapter of my life, this was the level of healing I knew I needed but couldn’t access til now.”
— Post-Program Survey

“The space allowed me to finally let go, cry, laugh, be real. And not feel judged.”
— Post Orientation Survey

“And if there is a lesson here, it is this—
You are not what was done to you.
You are what you choose to become.”
— Participant Submission

The collective experience of ka’ao, oli, and time on the ‘āina (land) facilitated an environment where spiritual alignment and emotional vulnerability were possible and celebrated.



Figure 9 Merrie Monarch Kīpaepae, lōkahi

Participants reported powerful spiritual and emotional reactions throughout the program, indicating a strong sense of **connection to ‘ike kūpuna (ancestral knowledge)** and the sacred

elements of Kanaka 'Ōiwi cultural practice. This level of response points to a profound alignment between the curriculum and participants' inner lives—spanning grief, healing, joy, and awakening.

Culturally grounded experiences such as *mo'olelo*, *oli*, *pule*, and *hula* frequently moved participants to tears, laughter, and silence—spiritual expressions not easily measured, but clearly evident across open-ended reflections and group debriefs. These practices stirred ancestral memory and affirmed identity in deeply personal ways.

"I was crying during the oli. It was like something inside me recognized it, even if my mind didn't know the words."

— Post Orientation Survey

"I felt like my kūpuna were walking with me. It wasn't just a chant—it was a call home."

— Post Kaua'i Huaka'i Interview

"When I pray in English, it's different. But when I do pule in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i—even if it's just a few words—I *feel* it in my bones."

— Post Hō'aumoe Interview

"The facilitators didn't just teach—they *held us* in ceremony. It was deeply safe, deeply Hawaiian."

— Post-Program Survey

Participants described the program space as one of **cultural safety**—where vulnerability was welcomed, silence was honored, and spiritual insight was allowed to surface organically. Pule was used not only to open and close sessions, but as a method of self-reflection and meaning-making.



Figure 10 Hō'aumoe: Joyful moments learning together

The environment fostered **pili 'uhane**—not just interpersonal connection, but a deeper spiritual tethering to 'āina, to self, and to lineage.

“Some things I experienced I can’t put into words. It felt ancestral. Like something old in me was waking up.”

— Observational Data

“I didn't know I needed this until I felt it. It felt like my soul remembered.”

— Admin Interview

“This program reminded me of my ancestral kuleana to lift curses, which to me means decolonizing these systems that force people into maladaptive coping like substance misuse in the first place.”

— Observational Data

These insights suggest that participants were not simply reacting to a training—they were undergoing *reconnection*. The use of mo'olelo and oli was not decorative or symbolic; it was the **portal** through which participants re-entered their own cultural and spiritual authority.



Figure 11 Hope



Level 2: Learning ('Ike – Knowledge and Understanding)

The degree to which participants have gained new 'ike (knowledge), skills, or insights—especially related to cultural lifeways and substance use prevention strategies.

Culturally Aligned Indicators

- Increased understanding of Kanaka 'Ōiwi values (e.g., reciprocity, kuleana, pilina)
- Growth in knowledge of cultural practices
- Confidence in applying what was learned in a culturally grounded way

Findings

In the post-session survey, quantitative findings included:

- 100% of participants completely agree that they **learned** a significant amount from this program.
- 100% of participants agree that the training **materials** explained the content well (89% of participants completely agree; 11% agree)

Participants demonstrated significant growth in cultural knowledge and self-awareness. The Ka'ao Framework was frequently cited as a powerful, accessible tool for understanding one's life journey and navigating both healing and leadership roles. Learning was not linear—it was experiential, somatic, and grounded in story, ritual, and reflection. Participants learned about 'ike kūpuna (ancestral wisdom), Kanaka 'Ōiwi values, healing practices, and prevention strategies rooted in cultural strength.

"Ka'ao gives structure to change and helps me reflect more intentionally."
— Post-Program Survey

"I've reclaimed 'ike that was lost in my lineage."
— Pre-Program Survey

"We're not learning about culture. We're living it."
— Observational Data

"Now I can integrate oli, kilo, and Ka'ao into my actual practice as a provider."
— Post Hawai'i Huaka'i Survey

"This isn't just learning. The spiritual context of the programs means we are transmuting trauma into healing and evolution."
— Observational Data

The learning was described as layered: part cultural revitalization, part personal recovery, and part professional development.



Figure 12 Participants teaching community how to dye olena

Culturally Aligned Indicators

Participants demonstrated substantial learning gains that reflected not only intellectual understanding, but also spiritual and cultural embodiment. Learning was evidenced by increased understanding of Kanaka 'Ōiwi values—including kuleana (responsibility), reciprocity, 'ohana, and kapu aloha—as well as enhanced knowledge of cultural practices such as oli, kilo, pule, and Ka'ao.

This learning was rooted in experience and relationship, rather than lecture or instruction. As one participant shared, “We learned by being in it.”

❖ Increased Understanding of Kanaka 'Ōiwi Values

Participants moved from abstract awareness of Kanaka 'Ōiwi values to deeply felt recognition and practice of them in action.

“I thought I knew what kuleana meant. But through this, I felt what kuleana is. It's not a task—it's a commitment to my community, to my healing, and to the land.”

— Post-Program Interview

“We were constantly being shown what 'ohana means. Not by saying it—but by living it.”

— Post-Program Survey

“Reciprocity is at the center of everything. The land gives, we give back.
The people share, we hold them with care.”
— Post Kauaʻi Huakaʻi Interview

❖ Growth in Knowledge of Cultural Practices

Participants gained confidence and clarity in understanding and practicing ancestral cultural traditions, including Kaʻao, moʻolelo, lāʻau lapaʻau, and kilo (deep observation).

“Before this, I never really knew the Kaʻao structure. Now I use it to reflect on my own healing, and I’m using it with my students too.”
— Post-Program Survey

“I had never done kilo in this way—watching the land, the clouds, the wind as part of my learning. It shifted everything.”
— Post Hawaiʻi Huakaʻi Survey

“I finally understood that lāʻau lapaʻau isn’t just about plants—it’s about relationships. With nature. With spirit.”
— Post Hōʻaumoe Interview

❖ Confidence in Applying Knowledge in a Culturally Grounded Way

Participants expressed growing confidence in their ability to apply what they learned—not only in cultural spaces, but also in Western institutions, healing work, and family life. They described this knowledge as practical, transferable, and personally transformative.

“I was nervous at first to lead any chant. Now I’ve done it at work, and people responded. It works because it’s real.”
— Facilitator Group Interview

“This program gave me the confidence to weave culture into my clinical practice—something I’ve wanted to do but didn’t know how.”
— Post-Program Interview

“Even though I’m not fluent in ʻōlelo, I feel more confident using the words I do know—with reverence.”
— Post Orientation Survey

Participants left the program not only more knowledgeable, but more grounded in their ability to embody and apply ʻike kūpuna with intention and humility. Their learning was inseparable from their transformation—elevating not just what they knew, but how they knew, and how they would carry that ʻike forward.



Figure 13 Realizing manu as kupuna

Level 3: Behavior (Kūlana – Application and Practice)

How participants apply what they learned in their homes, communities, or organizations after the training ends.

Culturally Aligned Indicators

- Teaching others (e.g., youth, peers, 'ohana) using traditional methods
- Integration of Kanaka 'Ōiwi values into daily behavior or professional practice
- Continued use of cultural tools for healing, prevention, and recovery

Findings

Post-session survey, quantitative findings

- 100% of participants agree that the training will have impact on their workplace **behaviors** relative to substance recovery (89% of participants completely agree; 11% agree)

Participants reported applying what they learned in tangible ways across professional and personal contexts. Many described implementing Ka'ao in clinical sessions, team meetings, community organizing, and even in their parenting and relationships. The shift in behavior was often described as subtle but deep—participants moved from feeling fragmented or unsure to acting with grounded cultural identity and clarity of purpose.

“It shows up daily—in my work, my family, and my interactions.”

— Post-Program Survey

“I’m rewriting my organization’s orientation using the Ka’ao framework.”

— Post Hō'aumoe Interview

“This has reframed how I think about recovery. It’s about restoring relationships, not fixing symptoms.”

— Post-Program Interview

“I stopped using my Western counseling framework exclusively. Now I start with story and pilina.”

— Post Kaula'i Huaka'i Interview



The program catalyzed behavior change by activating kuleana (responsibility), anchoring identity in ancestral practice, and giving participants tools to integrate 'ike Hawai'i into diverse settings.

Culturally Aligned Indicators

Following the program, participants began applying what they learned in tangible, culturally grounded ways across their personal lives, professional spaces, and communities. These behavioral shifts reflected a deep internalization of Kanaka 'Ōiwi values and traditional healing frameworks—not as abstract ideals, but as everyday practice.

❖ **Teaching Others Using Traditional Methods**

Participants became carriers of 'ike, sharing their experiences with 'ohana, colleagues, clients, and youth through culturally appropriate modalities such as mo'olelo, kilo, Ka'ao, and oli. Several participants began facilitating reflections or trainings in their organizations or homes, often using storytelling and embodied practice rather than Western instruction.

"I sat with my niece and used Ka'ao to talk about her choices. She got it instantly—it wasn't a lecture. It was a story."

— Post-Program Interview

"Now I start my staff meetings with an oli and a prompt from Ka'ao. It sets a different tone—it's grounding."

— Facilitator Group Interview

"I've already brought this to my school—drawing from our huaka'i, we're doing a mo'olelo-based art unit."

— Post Hawai'i Huaka'i Survey

❖ **Integration of Kanaka 'Ōiwi Values into Daily Behavior or Professional Practice**

Participants reported shifts in how they navigate both personal and professional roles. The integration of values such as *kuleana*, *aloha 'āina*, *pilina*, and *kapu aloha* showed up in their decision-making, relationships, and leadership styles. For many, this meant a return to ancestral values in settings historically dominated by Western systems.

"I approach parenting differently now. I pause. I kilo. I ask, what's the story underneath this behavior?"

— Post-Program Survey

"I'm in recovery and work with others in recovery. I've started integrating oli and pule into our group sessions—and it changes everything."

— Post Hō'aumoe Interview

“Instead of fighting with the system, I bring our values into the room. I don’t leave them at the door anymore.”

— Post Kaua’i Huaka’i Interview

❖ Continued Use of Cultural Tools for Healing, Prevention, and Recovery

Participants emphasized that the program equipped them not only with concepts but with usable cultural tools they could integrate into healing spaces. Several described using Ka’ao to reframe trauma, kilo to support mindfulness, and oli or pule to create ceremony in moments of challenge or transition.

“I’m using Ka’ao to help people in recovery re-story their lives—it’s a Hawaiian way of doing narrative therapy.”

— Post-Program Interview

“Even just pausing to pule in the morning changes how I approach the day. It reminds me who I’m accountable to.”

— Post Orientation Survey

“These tools are practical. Not just theory. They’re part of my daily rhythm now.”

— Post-Program Survey



Figure 14 Sharing ka’ao development with community members

The program catalyzed meaningful behavior change among participants, who are now integrating ‘ike kūpuna into their **homes, classrooms, workplaces, and communities**. These applications demonstrate not only retention of knowledge, but a commitment to *living the culture*—teaching others, embodying values, and using traditional tools to support healing and resilience.

Level 4: Results (Pōmaika’i – Collective Impact and Wellbeing)

The broader, potential long-term effects of the program on community resilience, health equity, and cultural revitalization.

Culturally Aligned Indicators

- Increased community engagement in traditional healing practices
- Strengthened networks of culturally competent trainers and leaders
- Reductions in substance-related harm in the community over time
- Restoration of intergenerational cultural transmission



Findings

The broader impact of the program is already emerging in the form of community healing, increased cultural safety in service settings, and strengthened pathways for future generations of practitioners. Participants spoke of being “living evidence” of the program’s success—more culturally anchored, emotionally grounded, and ready to model a new kind of leadership in health, education, and ‘āina-based work. The ripple effects include systemic advocacy, curriculum redesign, and a growing network of culturally rooted healers and changemakers.

“We are the evidence.”

— Observational Data

“This isn’t just about us—it’s about shifting the systems we work in.”

— Post-Program Interview

“This process gives me hope for the future of prevention and recovery in our communities.”

— Post Hawai‘i Huaka‘i Survey

“I now understand my work as decolonizing systems from the inside out.”

— Post-Program Survey

Participants are moving forward as cultural carriers, mentors, and advocates—contributing to a broader movement of cultural restoration, resilience, and justice in Hawai‘i’s behavioral health landscape.

Culturally Aligned Indicators

The Ola Ka Huaka‘ihele o Hi‘iaka program has begun to generate measurable and perceived impacts at the **collective, systemic, and intergenerational levels**. Participants described a growing network of culturally competent leaders, deeper community engagement in traditional practices, and the revival of intergenerational learning pathways.

Though some outcomes (e.g., reductions in substance-related harm) require long-term tracking, early indicators suggest that the program has seeded lasting change in how communities heal, learn, and lead.

❖ **Increased Community Engagement in Traditional Healing Practices**

Participants reported returning to their communities and initiating protocols, storytelling, and cultural rituals as a foundation for healing. These activities created safe spaces for others—especially those in recovery, youth programs, and educational settings—to reconnect with culture as prevention and restoration.

“Since this program, my team opens every outreach circle with oli. It’s becoming part of how we gather.”

— Post-Program Interview

“My community now sees that culture *is* the intervention.”

— Post Hawai‘i Huaka‘i Survey

“We brought kilo and mo‘olelo into our recovery work. People are showing up differently—more grounded, more open.”

— Post Hō‘aumo‘e Interview



Figure 15 Hō‘ike Community engagement, kākou

❖ **Strengthened Networks of Culturally Competent Trainers and Leaders**

The program cultivated a cohort of culturally grounded professionals who now support one another across islands and sectors. Participants described this *'upena* (net) as a living system of support, collaboration, and continued learning—positioning them to respond to future needs and scale impact.

“This isn’t a cohort—it’s a movement. We’re building something that will last.”

— Admin Interview

“I can call any of these folks and know they will *kōkua*. That’s how this network was built—on trust and *piliina*.”

— Post-Program Survey

“What we created is a model for how to train others—not just in skills, but in spiritual responsibility.”

— Post Kauaʻi Huakaʻi Interview



Figure 16 Engaging facilitator leading screen-printing activity for makana – centering reciprocity

❖ **Reductions in Substance-Related Harm (Early Indicators)**

While direct service intervention data is still needed, multiple participants working in recovery and behavioral health shared **early anecdotal evidence** of improved engagement, emotional safety, and harm reduction when using culturally rooted approaches.

“The second we made it about culture—not compliance—people stayed. That’s harm reduction.”

— Post-Program Interview

“One of our clients said, ‘This is the first time I feel like I belong somewhere.’ That happened because we started with moʻolelo and pule.”

— Post Hōʻaumoe Survey

“[When we use culture as foundation,] we’re seeing fewer relapses and more connection. People want to come back.”

— Post Hōʻaumoe Interview

❖ **Restoration of Intergenerational Cultural Transmission**

Many participants described taking what they learned and passing it to their keiki, mo'opuna, students, and clients. They expressed pride in becoming cultural transmitters themselves—bridging a gap that colonization and disconnection had disrupted.

"I sat with my son and taught him how to kilo. He saw the clouds and said, 'It's going to rain, Mama.' That was our first learning together."

— Post Hawai'i Huaka'i Survey

"My daughter saw me chant for the first time. Now she asks me to teach her."

— Post-Program Survey

"This has restored something in my lineage. We're no longer disconnected—we're remembering."

— Post Kaua'i Huaka'i Interview



Figure 17 Intergenerational transmission, kuleana

Ola Ka Huaka'ihele o Hi'iaka has seeded **deep systems of transformation** rooted in culture, care, and collective responsibility. From community practice to leadership development and family healing, participants are not just applying what they've learned—they're *restoring the pathways by which 'ike is passed forward*. These early results affirm the program's long-term potential to shape more resilient, connected, and culturally sovereign communities across Hawai'i.

Alignment with Recovery & Prevention Goals



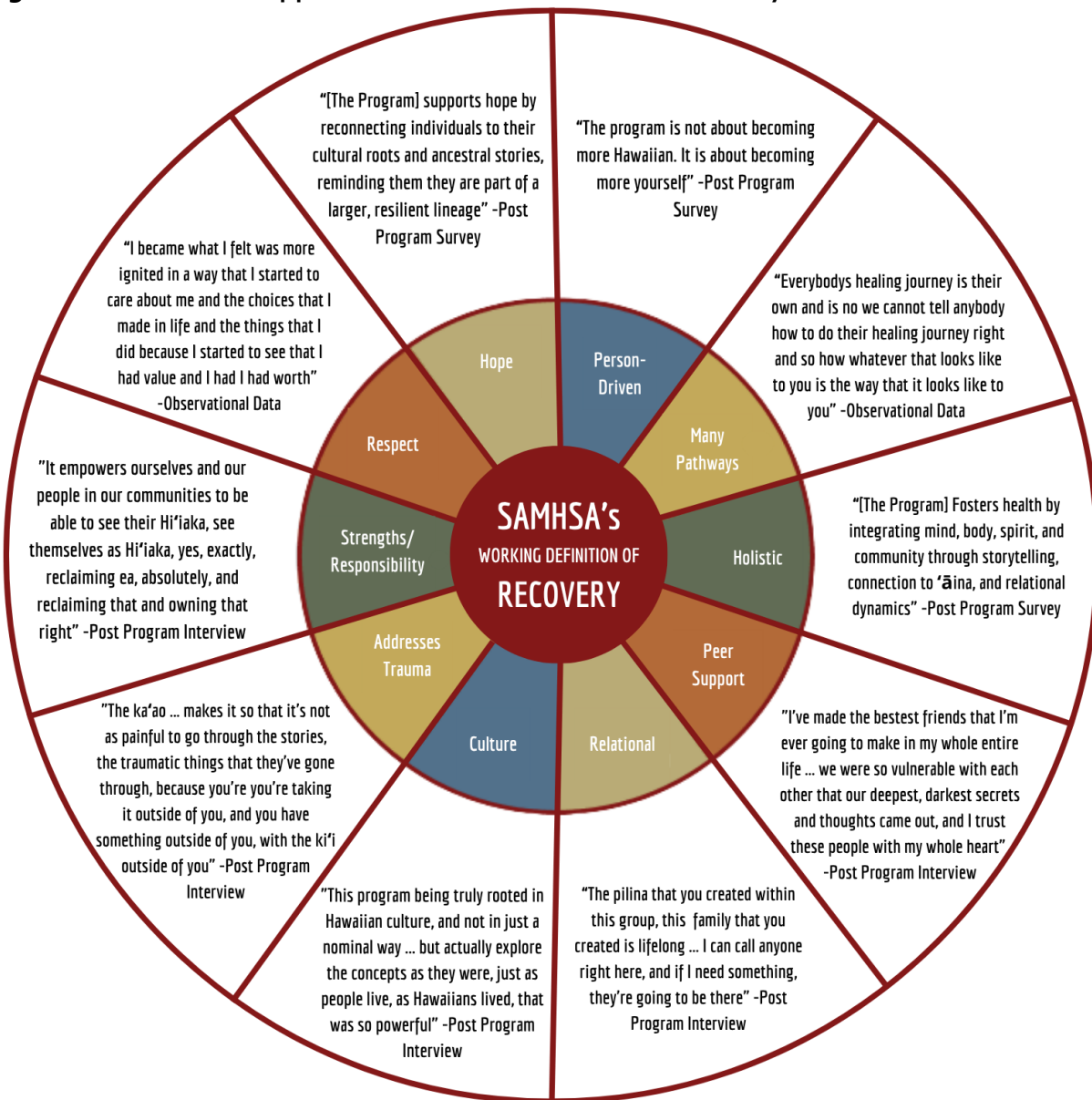
The responses from the Post Program Survey collectively emphasize that the program supports substance recovery through a culturally grounded, holistic approach that aligns with SAMHSA's definition of recovery, emphasizing hope, person-driven paths, many pathways, holistic healing, peer support, relational health, and respect.

OHH program benefits individuals in substance recovery, their 'ohana, communities, and the lāhui by:

- **Building supportive relationships** through hui and collective journeys, reducing self-doubt and promoting shared healing.
- **Fostering resilience and hope** by sharing mo'olelo (personal and ancestral stories), enabling individuals to reflect, make sense of past decisions, and feel empowered to direct their futures.
- **Reconnecting people to their culture, identity, 'āina, and place**, which restores belonging and supports deeper healing.
- **Encouraging active participation** in cultural and community practices, such as aloha 'āina work, which reinforces wellness and purpose.
- **Utilizing storytelling and cultural frameworks** (like ka'ao) to address trauma without retraumatization, focusing on transformation and clarity of self (hua).
- **Strengthening communal bonds**, highlighting that recovery is not just individual but also collective, involving environmental and ancestral kin.

Ultimately, the program serves as a **transformational huaka'i (journey)** rooted in Kanaka 'Ōiwi worldview and values, creating a pathway of recovery that is **integrated, culturally affirming, and deeply relational**.

Figure 18. How OHH Supports SAMHSA's Definition of Recovery



For additional evidence, please see Appendix H: OHH Supports SAMHSA's Definition of Recovery.

Shifts in Relationship to Program

Reasons for Joining OHH

Participants chose to engage in the program out of a **deep desire for personal growth, cultural reconnection, professional responsibility, and system-level change**. Many were drawn by their past experiences with ka'ao, invitations from trusted sources, or a strong sense of kuleana (responsibility) to support their communities and reshape systems of care to better serve Kānaka 'Ōiwi. *See Appendix I for details.*



Expectations About OHH

The program overwhelmingly **exceeded participants' expectations**. Many came in with **few or no expectations**, while others hoped for cultural learning or professional development. However, what they experienced went far beyond, offering profound **personal transformation, meaningful connections**, and a **deeper understanding of ka'ao, self, and place**. See Appendix J for details.

Mauliola

To assess the impact of the program on participant mauliola, scores from a newly developed measure of mauliola for Kānaka 'Ōiwi, Kukui Mālamalama, were collected before and after program participation (Qina'au, 2024). Pre-program surveys were completed by 12 of the Kanaka 'Ōiwi participants, and 8 of these participants also completed post-program surveys, allowing for paired comparisons to evaluate individual change over time for 8 participants.

Descriptive Results

Among the 8 participants with matched pre- and post-program data:

- The average mauliola score increased from 3.53 (SD = 0.51) before the program to 3.89 (SD = 0.49) after the program on a 5-point scale.
- This represents an average increase of 0.36 points, suggesting a positive shift in perceived satisfaction following participation.

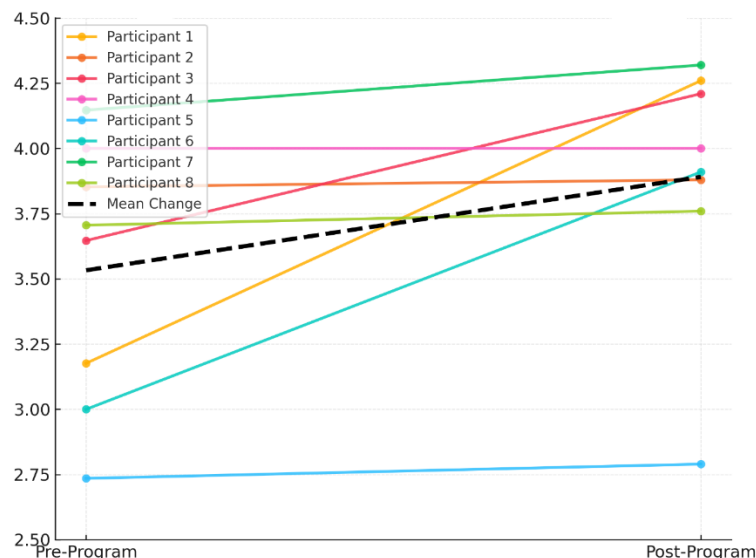
Statistical Analysis

To determine whether this change was statistically meaningful, both parametric and non-parametric analyses were conducted due to the small sample size and the distribution of scores.

- A paired-samples t-test showed that the improvement approached but did not reach conventional significance ($t(7) = 2.32, p = .053$). However, the effect size was large (Cohen's $d = 0.82$), indicating a substantial magnitude of change.
- A Wilcoxon signed-rank test, which does not assume normality and is appropriate for small samples, confirmed that the increase was statistically significant ($W = 0, p = .018$).

Statistical analysis indicated that this improvement was both meaningful and consistent across participants. Although a standard t-test showed that the change approached conventional significance, a non-parametric test—more appropriate for small groups—confirmed that the increase was statistically significant. This suggests that the program had a positive effect on participants' mauliola.

Figure 19. Participant Mauiola Scores Pre- and Post-Program



Interpretation

While sample size limits generalizability, the results provide preliminary evidence that **the program contributed to positive changes in mauiola**. The combination of a large effect size and a statistically significant non-parametric test supports the conclusion that the program had beneficial impacts on the mauiola of those who participated.



Figure 20 Supporting mauiola through kilo and pilina with kūpuna

The program upheld the **Kūkulu Kumuhana wellbeing framework** in both philosophy and practice, ensuring that participants experienced not only cultural knowledge, but also cultural embodiment. *Please see Appendix K for data on Kūkulu Kumuhana engagement by the program. For qualitative evidence further supporting how OHH effectively supports mauiola, health, and wellbeing for participants, see Appendix L.*

Additional Wellbeing Indicators Explored

The following measures were included in the present evaluation based on prior understanding that the program was being piloted primarily with individuals in recovery. Findings presented below may not be as relevant given the present iteration of the program was a pilot train-the-trainer program and evaluation was updated to be formative within the first month of the program's launch.

- **Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)** – measures the degree to which individuals perceive situations in their life as stressful. It assesses feelings of unpredictability, lack of control, and overload over the past month. The PSS is widely used as a general indicator of psychological stress and is sensitive to change following intervention.
- **Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)** – measures global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life.
- **Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE)** – captures the frequency of participants' positive and negative feelings, used here as a balance score (positive minus negative affect).

Perceived Stress

The Perceived Stress Scale was used to measure participants' **subjective stress levels** before and after the program. Among the 14 participants who completed the pre-program survey, 9 also completed the post-program assessment, allowing for matched comparisons. Descriptive statistics showed a slight decrease in mean perceived stress from pre-program ($M = 2.43$) to post-program ($M = 2.23$), indicating a small reduction in reported stress. A paired-samples t -test revealed that this change was not statistically significant, $t(8) = -1.19$, $p = .27$. This result was supported by the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, which also indicated no significant difference, $W = 13.5$, $p > .05$.

Interpretation: While participants reported a slight improvement in perceived stress following the program, the change was not statistically significant. This pattern may reflect early, subtle shifts in stress perception that are not yet robust or consistent across individuals. In culturally grounded health programs, changes in stress and resilience may emerge over time as participants integrate new practices and support systems into their daily lives.

Satisfaction with Life

Participants' **satisfaction with life** was assessed before and after the program using the SWLS. Descriptive statistics indicated a slight decrease in mean scores from pre-program ($M = 5.67$, $SD = 0.85$) to post-program ($M = 5.42$, $SD = 1.15$), suggesting a small decline in perceived life satisfaction. A paired-samples t -test was conducted to evaluate this change and did not reveal a statistically significant difference between pre- and post-program scores, $t(8) = -1.47$, $p = .179$. Similarly, the non-parametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test did not indicate a significant change in scores, $W = 3.00$, $p = .223$.

Interpretation: Although there was a small numerical decline in life satisfaction scores, the change was not statistically significant. These findings suggest that the program did not substantially alter participants' overall life satisfaction in the short term. Given the cultural context of the training, it is possible that deeper shifts in meaning and purpose are not fully captured by this scale immediately following the intervention.



Positive and Negative Experience

The SPANE was used to assess participants' recent **emotional experiences** by balancing reported positive and negative affect. Participants' mean scores decreased from pre-program ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 0.20$) to post-program ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 0.20$), indicating a modest reduction in overall affect balance. A paired-samples t -test showed that this decrease was statistically significant, $t(8) = -2.68$, $p = .028$. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test also confirmed a statistically significant change, $W = 2.00$, $p = .024$.

Interpretation: The statistically significant reduction in SPANE scores suggests that participants experienced a slight decline in positive emotional balance following the training. In the context of culturally grounded programs, such outcomes may reflect participants engaging with complex emotions, including grief, trauma, or identity work, rather than a negative impact of the program. Emotional processing is a necessary component of healing and growth, especially within Indigenous cultural frameworks. As with all measures, the many variables unaccounted for, including life circumstances, likely had impacts on these scores.

Important Considerations:

- **Cultural Factors:** It is important to consider that commonly used psychological instruments may not fully capture the nuanced, culturally-grounded changes that occur through Hawai'i lifeways training. Participants may experience shifts in spiritual, relational, or collective wellbeing not fully reflected in individualistic tools like the PSS, SWLS, and SPANE.
- **Timing & Integration:** The timing of the post-test may not reflect long-term benefits. Some critical outcomes (e.g., improved community relationships, strengthened cultural identity) may require additional time to manifest.
- **Triangulating Data:** Integrating mo'olelo (storytelling) and qualitative interviews provides additional insight into participant experiences and supports culturally aligned evaluation practices. Please see the section on the adapted Kirkpatrick model for evaluating trainings, Level 1: Reaction (Pili 'Uthane – Spirit and Connection) for additional evidence of impacts on emotional state.

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"My personal journey was to find my own reconnection to being complete. And what I found out through this journey is that my the last time I was probably complete was when everything was cared for and all my worries were gone was probably when I was in my mom's womb, and ever since leaving there, through trials and tribulations that started my journey, my huaka'i to try and get back to that place where I'm connected and where I feel complete, and whole... and this journey opened my eyes. To all of that."

--Post-Program Survey

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Hua, Personal Transformation, Take-Aways

The concept of *hua*, one's catalyst or seed, was a central element, with the program helping individuals to identify, understand, and commit to their *hua*.

Keep the flame burning 🔥
 Reawakening 💚
 --Post-Program Survey

- **Identification and Understanding:** The program was instrumental in helping participants **figure out their main *hua*** and even dissect smaller *hua* for specific life journeys (*huaka'i*). For many, it was the **beginning of their journey in discovering their *hua***, realizing the need to spend time learning who they are and what they are about. Some participants were still navigating what their *hua* was but felt the program supported a part of it, "I can feel it in my gut."
- **Deep Self-Discovery:** Knowing and understanding one's *hua* was described as a **"beautiful journey to self-discovery and potentially."** This process involved a lot of deep thinking, analyzing, and talking things out loud with other participants, who, by sharing their different experiences, provided great perspectives on how to look at one's *hua* from all angles.
- **Growth and Nurturing:** One participant likened *hua* to a seed that, when it's "planted in a safe environment, it can grow and in native spaces, it's the native allies that assist in that growth." The connections made during the program were seen as crucial for the growth of their *hua*.
- **Commitment and Boundaries:** The program helped participants decide "what I will commit to unequivocally, and what not to and to set healthy boundaries" in relation to their *hua*.
- **Culturally Grounded Process:** Participants appreciated that the program used a **Kanaka 'Ōiwi Cultural lens and words** to describe and create steps towards understanding their journey and supporting their *hua*.
- **Space for Vulnerability and Intentionality:** The program "provided a space for me to be open, vulnerable, curious, active and intentional in the presence of others doing the same. I have more insight into my *hua*."
- **Daily Integration:** The clarity gained regarding the *hua* and the 5H framework (*hua*, *ha'alele*, *huaka'i*, *hō'ina*, and *hā'ina*) showed up daily in personal and professional lives,

and in interactions with the natural environment. It influenced how participants thought about what their child, place, and work had to teach them. The intensity of self-reflection, asking "What does this place/event/po'e need me to learn?" and "What do I bring to this space and why?" increased, further serving their *hua*.



Figure 21 "It's the native allies that assist in that growth"

When asked about personal transformation, all responding participants (n = 9) reported experiencing personal transformation. This transformation was sometimes attributed to the pilina of the group, the Ka'ao Framework, the safety of the space, and the healing from 'āina. This sometimes looked like a "shedding of my past self," to "introspect and reflect on myself and my growth," or "thinking more deeply, moving slower, listening better." Participants noted this transformation showed up in multiple domains from the home to work and beyond. For a summary figure illustrating participants' key take-aways, [Appendix Q, Three of the most important things you learned from this training program.](#)

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"Yes, Transformative clarity of what, why and how of 5H; hua, ha'alele, huaka'i, ho'ina and ha'ina-how is this huaka'i, action, return in service to my hua. It shows up daily personally, professionally and my interactions with the natural elements in my environment. In my daily mantra practice and how I think about what my child, place, work have to teach me. Transformation for me including how I learn in present as well as how I think about and interact with my past to inform to best serve my hua now and in future. The intensity and frequency of my asking myself, "What does this place/event/po'e need me to learn?" and "What do I bring to this space and why?" have increased since this program."

--Post-Program Survey

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6. Supports and Challenges

Supports: What Helped Implementation Go Well?

The successful implementation of OHH can be attributed to a powerful combination of cultural, relational, and structural factors. These supports not only made day-to-day operations go smoothly but also reinforced the program's transformative potential and cultural integrity.



Figure 22 Positive feedback about OHH

1. Anchoring in Kanaka 'Ōiwi Worldview and Protocol

From beginning to end, the program was guided by foundational Kanaka 'Ōiwi principles—such as *kuleana*, *aloha*, *'āina*, *mālama 'āina*, *'ike kūpuna*, and *pilina*. These values were not layered onto content; they were embedded in every element of the program, from curriculum design to mealtime interactions.

“We didn’t have to talk about cultural alignment—it was already present in the design.”
— Post-Program Interview

"The spiritual and cultural foundation made everything else possible."
— Admin Group Interview



Figure 23 Hula, mele, oli, pule as foundational, mana

2. Skilled, Culturally Grounded Facilitators

Facilitators were both knowledge holders and cultural practitioners, capable of modeling mo'olelo, oli, ceremony, and relational leadership. Participants repeatedly emphasized how the way facilitation was delivered—with humility, spiritual depth, and lived cultural experience—was a core ingredient in their learning and healing. *Please see Appendix M for an account of the importance of Aunty Kekuhi in OHH.*

“The facilitators didn’t just teach—they held us, spiritually.”
— Post-Program Survey

“They embodied the values we were learning. That’s what made it stick.”
— Post Orientation Survey



Figure 24 Aunty Kekuhi preparing group for ceremony

3. Pilina and Psychological Safety

Strong emotional and spiritual connection (*pili 'uhane*) among participants and trainers fostered a culture of trust, vulnerability, and safety. People felt seen, heard, and respected in their full identities, including those navigating recovery, grief, or ancestral reconnection.

"I've never felt safer in a learning space. That allowed me to open up and grow."
— Post Hō'aumoe Interview

"We became 'ohana through this. And that foundation made everything possible."
— Post Kaua'i Huaka'i Interview



Figure 25 Pilina from the start

4. Experiential, 'Āina-Based Learning, Healing

The huaka'i format and immersion in sacred places created visceral learning experiences rooted in land, story, and ceremony. The environment itself became a teacher, and the physical act of traveling together deepened connection and cultural understanding. The importance of silence and presence is highlighted by several participants.

"The 'āina taught me more than any textbook could."

— Post Hawai'i Huaka'i Survey

"We weren't talking about culture—we were living it, in place, with each other."

— Observational Data

"IT's ĀINA that heals."

— Post-Program Survey

"Being isolated in the forest with the manu, no phone, no noise – totally present"

— Observational Data



Figure 26 'Āina as teacher

Places like caves and Kōke'e are described as having "energetic activation" and being "spiritual catalysts," with the idea that the "place 'knows' what each person needs". 'Āina is "like a parent or grandparent," and the program teaches "how to be a guest somewhere".

5. Collective Leadership and Flexibility

The implementation team operated with shared kuleana, adapting responsively to needs as they emerged. This flexible, relational model allowed for pivots without sacrificing cultural fidelity, and supported a strong back-end infrastructure.

"We adjusted in real time—but always based on what the learners and the 'āina were telling us."

— Admin Group Interview

"This wasn't about a hierarchy. Everyone contributed what they had, and that's why it worked."

— Post-Program Interview



Figure 27 Facilitators demonstrating pilina, uplifting lived experience

Challenges: What Hindered Progress?

While the OHH was widely regarded as transformational, several challenges emerged during implementation. These barriers—some logistical, some systemic, and some internal—revealed tensions between the program’s cultural depth and the real-world constraints of time, systems, and readiness. The following summaries from all sources of data are presented to inform future iterations of OHH. However, the reader is encouraged to note the highlighting of systemic issues which are beyond the control of program designers and facilitators.

1. Time Constraints and Scheduling Intensity

Participants and facilitators alike noted the **fast pace** of the program, especially at the beginning, with limited rest periods, and minimal time for processing or integration. While the immersion model was powerful, it occasionally led to emotional fatigue or cognitive overload.

“There wasn’t enough time to sit with what we learned. We were moving so quickly from one deep moment to the next.”

— Post-Program Survey

“People were exhausted—and that made it harder to reflect, to chant, to just be present.”

— Post Hawai’i Huaka’i Survey



However, by the time of the Kauaʻi huakaʻi, participants felt the pacing became a strength, as identified in the post-huakaʻi survey:

"The time and space to reflect."
"The pace. Not rushed."
"Allowing us time to process and rest."

2. Logistical Complexity

Coordinating inter-island travel, housing, meals, and materials presented persistent logistical challenges, especially given participants' diverse needs and the rural or sacred nature of the huakaʻi sites. Some participants experienced delays, unclear communication, or gaps in accommodations.

.....
"We weren't always sure what to pack or expect... It created stress before
the healing could begin."
— Post Orientation Survey

"Sometimes the meals or housing arrangements didn't match what our
bodies needed to be fully present."
— Post-Program Interview
.....

3. Institutional Constraints and Systemic Misalignment

Several participants who work in Western health or education systems expressed tension around applying what they learned in rigid or culturally unsafe environments. Institutional expectations (e.g., documentation, productivity, hierarchy) often clashed with the relational, nonlinear nature of ʻike Hawaiʻi.

.....
"We're trying to do Hawaiian healing in a Western container—and the
container keeps cracking."
— Post Kauaʻi Huakaʻi Interview

"I know what needs to happen. But my workplace doesn't value that kind
of wisdom—yet."
— Post-Program Interview
.....

4. Internalized Doubt or Readiness Gaps

Some participants initially struggled with feelings of unworthiness, imposter syndrome, or cultural disconnection—particularly those still learning ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi or reconnecting after



generational loss. While many overcame this, it sometimes hindered early engagement or willingness to step forward.

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“I felt like I wasn’t Hawaiian enough to belong here—even though my soul knew I was.”

— Post Hō‘aumoe Interview

“I was afraid to lead chant. What if I messed it up? What if I’m not good enough?”

— Facilitator Group Interview

“In a way, it would be great to have some personal one-on-one time with Aunty or Kauila about my place in culture, or as a Hawaiian; though I know time is A Thing!”

— Post-Program Survey

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5. Limited Time for Post-Program Integration

Several participants expressed a desire for structured follow-up or slower reentry after the program’s closing. The depth of transformation required more scaffolding to fully bring ‘ike into their daily lives, especially without a formal post-program bridge.

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“It ended so fast. I wish we had more time to decompress and reconnect afterward.”

— Post-Program Survey

“We had the tools—but it’s easy to lose the rhythm once you’re back in the real world.”

— Post-Program Interview

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These barriers do not detract from the program’s success—but they highlight **key learning points** for future iterations and systems-level efforts. Addressing them may involve building in more spacious timelines, expanding logistical support, preparing systems-facing participants with advocacy tools, and reinforcing post-program continuity through coaching or cohort check-ins.



Figure 28 Conquering challenges together, eyes toward a shared vision, koho `ia

Systemic Supports Needed

While the program was highly impactful at the individual and group level, participants and facilitators identified **broader systemic supports** that are essential to sustain, expand, and institutionalize this work. These needs reflect the tension between **culturally grounded healing** and the realities of operating within **Western, colonial, and bureaucratic systems**.

1. Culturally Safe Institutional Policies and Funding

Many participants emphasized that mainstream health, education, and justice systems lack the policy frameworks and flexible funding models needed to support `ike Hawai`i. Current funding structures often prioritize compliance, documentation, or outcome metrics that do not align with relational, story-based, or long-term healing processes.

“The way we have to report to funders is so disconnected from how we actually help people.”

— Post-Program Interview

“We need funding that values oli, kilo, and pilina—not just PowerPoints and paperwork.”

— Post Hawai`i Huaka`i Survey

Recommendations:

- Advocate for **multi-year unrestricted funding**
- **Train** funders and institutions on cultural safety, decolonialism, and non-extractive evaluation

2. Workforce Development for Culturally Competent Facilitators



Scaling the program requires more facilitators who are culturally grounded, relationally skilled, and supported to lead. This involves long-term mentorship, succession planning, and compensation structures that honor cultural practitioners as both educators and healers.

~~~~~  
"It can't just be the same 3 people doing this work forever. We need to  
build the next generation."

— Admin Interview

~~~~~  
"You need a kumu AND a logistician AND a healer... and they all need to
be paid like professionals."

— Post-Program Interview
~~~~~

#### Recommendations:

- Fund a **Train-the-Trainer pathway** rooted in Kanaka 'Ōiwi pedagogy
- Establish **fellowship or residency programs** for cultural practitioners
- Develop **salary scales and institutional roles** that reflect the value of this knowledge

### 3. Integration into Behavioral Health and Education Systems

Participants working in substance use recovery, mental health, and schools described barriers to integrating the program's teachings into their professional environments. They requested tools to communicate the value of 'ike kūpuna in terms recognizable to funders, supervisors, or boards.

~~~~~  
"This work belongs in prevention and recovery, but we need a bridge to
help systems understand it."

— Post Hō'aumoe Interview
~~~~~

#### Recommendations:

- Create **bilingual ('Ōlelo Hawai'i/Western) toolkits** and position statements
- Offer **cultural translation training** for participants and administrators
- Embed *Ka'ao* and Kanaka 'Ōiwi mauiola frameworks and theories into state-level wellness initiatives

### 4. Support for Long-Term Community Healing Ecosystems

Participants repeatedly emphasized that transformation takes time—and that healing is relational, not transactional. To fully realize the impact of this program, communities need long-term investments in cultural spaces, huaka'i sites, mentorship, and intergenerational transmission.

“This can’t just be a one-time training. Healing like this needs time and continuity.”

— Post-Program Survey

“We’re not doing interventions. We’re restoring lineages.”

— Post Kaua’i Huaka’i Interview

### Recommendations:

- Fund **cultural hubs and learning centers** rooted in place
- Support **ongoing huaka’i, ‘ohana-based programming, and alumni gatherings**
- Create **longitudinal tracking** tools that center relationship and wellbeing

To truly support the outcomes seeded in this program, systems must **shift toward culturally grounded infrastructure**—valuing ancestral wisdom not as a supplement, but as a foundation for health, education, and justice. This includes **structural, financial, and relational support** to expand the ecosystem of healing rooted in ‘ike Hawai’i.

### Participants Perception of Challenges (for self and program)

*Perceived vs. Actual Challenges for Participants*  
**Before the launch of OHH**, participants anticipated a range of personal challenges they might face during the program. Reflecting on these personal barriers will be important for future iterations of OHH to be optimally accessible and feasible.

- **Time management** and being present, rather than getting “wrapped up in all that needs to be done”.
- A personal struggle with their **own mind, imposter syndrome, fear, and anxiety**, including their physicality.
- **Not knowing all the oli and hula.**
- Feeling “**not Hawaiian enough**” or needing to overcome internal feelings of not being enough.
- **Talking about and processing trauma.**
- Being ready to **handle kuleana** (responsibilities).
- Notably, some participants stated they anticipated “**None**” as an obstacle.



Figure 29 Participant submission: In the Bush



Post-program, participants reported experiencing several of these, alongside unexpected challenges:

- **Logistical difficulties** related to time and travel, such as the energy and time required for **flights to outer islands**, managing personal commitments, and communications being long or late. One participant specifically missed a huaka'i due to sickness.
- Challenges with **being present** and **vulnerable**, particularly when dealing with personal logistics or while still processing new cultural concepts and language. Some participants found it hard to articulate feelings to a new group, but noted growth from this.
- The **transition back to "the real world"** after the program's "safe space" was noted as "extremely difficult".
- Practical issues like **motion sickness** and **limited sleep**, as well as a need for more protein in meals such as breakfast, were also mentioned as potential triggers for some.
- The program unexpectedly prompted participants to delve into **personal battles** (e.g., alcoholism) that they had never shared before, highlighting a deep, sometimes uncomfortable, level of vulnerability achieved within the safe space. Some also noted holding "a lot of it in" and not knowing how to "expel the things" they were holding onto.

#### *Perceived vs. Actual Challenges to the Program Overall*

**Comparison and Themes for the Program Overall:** Similarities and shifts occurred between anticipated and actual obstacles for the program:

- **Persistent Obstacles (Overlap):**
  - **Time and Logistical Planning** remained a consistent concern, moving from general "time" and "logistics," "wanting to do all the things but not enough time or capacity," and "Logistics, time and budget that accurately compensates for the value of 'Ike and experience." By the end of the program participants noted more specific challenges like "Stretching the program out for longer duration" due to off-island coordination, feeling like they were "hustling," and "Being mindful of program dates".
  - **Funding/Cost** was consistently identified as an obstacle, from general "budget" to specific mentions of "Cost" and "get[ting] buy in from institutions to fund" the program.
  - **Group Dynamics** was perceived as a potential challenge and confirmed as an actual consideration for future cohorts, especially given the "special" nature of the current group.

- **Emergent Actual Obstacles (Post-Program Specific):**
  - **Clarity of Program Goals:** A significant new insight was that many participants didn't fully understand the deliverables or goals, indicating a need for clearer upfront communication.
  - **Institutional Buy-in and Systems:** The concrete challenges of "navigating institutional systems" and securing "buy in from institutions to fund and back a program like this" became more prominent as actual concerns.
  - **Participant Commitment (Program-level):** While individuals spoke of their own commitments, the program overall recognized "commitment to participate in whole program" as a challenge for future cohorts.
  - **Training Personnel:** The specific need to "Train sub counselors" was identified after the program's completion.
  - **Streamlined Communication for Outreach:** The need for "byte size info/promo chunks for supporters" emerged as a practical challenge for future engagement.

In summary, for **participants**, the program confirmed the ongoing struggle with time and vulnerability but introduced new, significant challenges related to the **logistics of multi-island travel** and the **profound difficulty of reintegrating** into their regular lives after such an immersive experience. For the **program overall**, while logistical and funding concerns were consistently noted, the actual experience highlighted the critical importance of **clear communication regarding program goals**, securing **institutional buy-in**, and the practicalities of **scaling and staffing future iterations**.

## 7. Recommendations

Drawing from the full body of qualitative data (observational, interview, survey), quantitative (measures), and document analysis, the following recommendations are offered to strengthen future iterations of OHH. These insights honor both the cultural integrity of the program and the lived experiences of participants, facilitators, and community partners.

### ❖ *Deepen Cultural Immersion and Mo'olelo Integration*

#### **What we heard:**

Participants consistently desired more time to process mo'olelo (stories) and practice oli (chant), kilo (observation), and other cultural activities. Many expressed that these practices sparked ancestral memory, but needed more repetition, reflection time, and embodiment for full integration.

#### **Recommendation:**

- ✓ Incorporate periods of hā (breath), kilo, journaling, and movement to balance intense activities with quiet, reflective, embodied learning - honor the natural learning flow, "*he 'ai, he hi'u, he moe.*"
- ✓ Provide multimedia learning resources before program begins (e.g., videos of chants, visual maps of Ka'ao).



- ✓ Provide kūpuna mentorship circles to create a consistent structure for participants and emerging facilitators to learn from elder cultural practitioners—not just during program delivery, but before and after.

“I wanted more time to sit with the mo’olelo—not just hear it, but really digest it.”

— Post Hō’aumoe Interview

#### ❖ *Expand Logistical and Onboarding Supports*

##### **What we heard:**

While the huaka’i experiences were impactful, logistical challenges caused pre-program and pre-huaka’i stress. Participants requested more streamlined communication and clear expectations for preparation and travel.

##### **Recommendation:**

- ✓ Create a centralized resource hub where *all* materials are organized, clearly labeled, and accessible (e.g., digital platform or portal, mobile app for both Android and Apple).
- ✓ Send detailed itineraries, packing lists, maps, and FAQs with more advanced notice.
- ✓ Offer virtual pre-huaka’i orientation or checklist walkthroughs.

“I had a hard time pulling up certain oli or mele when I needed them so I tried to create my own folder on my phone; this worked some of the time, but in future it would be ideal to have everything in one place using a naming system that makes it really accessible for on-the-go.”

— Post-Program Survey

#### ❖ *Foster Continued Community and Post-Program Integration*

##### **What we heard:**

After a powerful shared experience, many participants felt a sense of loss or disconnection after the program ended. They expressed a desire for continued pilina, reflection, and practical support for bringing ‘ike back home.

##### **Recommendation:**

- ✓ Develop structured post-program follow-up (e.g., alumni circles, quarterly check-ins).
- ✓ Offer continued access to cultural mentors and resources (e.g., supplement Halau Ohia membership with cultural activity meet-ups).
- ✓ Create a digital platform for sharing mo’olelo and applied practice adaptations.

“I wish there was something after—to help us stay in rhythm.”

— Post-Program Survey

## ❖ *Prepare Participants for Institutional Systems Navigation*

### **What we heard:**

Many participants faced challenges integrating ‘ike Hawai‘i into their workplaces due to institutional resistance, misunderstanding, or lack of cultural safety.

### **Recommendation:**

- ✓ Offer a systems navigation and advocacy module (e.g., “Translating Culture in Western Systems”).
- ✓ Provide bilingual tools and one-pagers to help participants explain the value of program elements in behavioral healthcare settings
- ✓ Include sessions on decolonizing practice, program design, and evaluation.

“The work makes sense, but the systems we’re in don’t support it. We need help bridging that.”  
— Post Kaua‘i Huaka‘i Interview

## ❖ *Expand the Cultural Facilitator Pipeline*

### **What we heard:**

Facilitators and participants noted the need for more trained, confident kumu and guides to lead this work across communities. There is also a need for cultural practitioners to receive adequate compensation and long-term support.

### **Recommendation:**

- ✓ Create an ‘upena (network) of practitioners: A statewide cohort of Ka‘ao-trained facilitators, with access to resources, shared practices, and ongoing mentorship.
- ✓ Develop a cultural facilitation fellowship or mentorship program.
- ✓ Advocate for well-compensated and salaried cultural roles in education, health, social service, and ‘āina-based organizations.

“We need more people who can hold this work with integrity. It can’t just be a handful of us.”  
— Facilitator Interview

## ❖ *Extend Program Duration or Offer Tiered Learning Pathways*

### **What we heard:**

Participants expressed that the program felt “rushed” or “compressed,” especially given the emotional depth and complexity of the learning. There was a desire for more time to process, return to practices, and deepen into ‘ike.

### **Recommendation:**

- ✓ Extend the overall program timeline or space huaka‘i across more months with assigned interim activities.





- ✓ Create multi-phase learning (e.g., Ka'ao Foundations → Ka'ao Facilitation) so participants can deepen at their own pace.
- ✓ Introduce asynchronous/pre-program foundational learning modules.

.....

"This work is deep—it takes time. I wish we had more breathing room."  
— Post-Program Interview

.....

### ❖ ***Secure Long-Term Systemic and Financial Support***

#### **What we heard:**

Staff and participants emphasized that the sustainability of this work depends on long-term investment—not just grants or pilots, but systemic commitment to cultural healing.

#### **Recommendation:**

- ✓ Partner with DOH, DOE, OHA, and others to create long-term funding pipelines.
- ✓ Position the program as part of health equity, cultural revitalization, and recovery strategy.
- ✓ Fund sacred site access, cultural practitioner salaries, and cultural infrastructure.

.....

"This isn't a program—it's part of a movement. But movements need support to grow."  
— Post-Program Interview

.....

### ❖ ***Mālama Facilitators***

#### **What we heard:**

Facilitators expressed the need for ongoing pilina, relational mentorship, and compensated time for debrief and restoration. Many trainers hold spiritual, logistical, and emotional space simultaneously—this requires nourishment and support.

#### **Recommendation:**

- ✓ Establish monthly or quarterly "kilo hui" (observation circles) where facilitators debrief, share protocol updates, and support each other in their growth.  
Offer stipends or sabbatical-style recovery opportunities for cultural workers to heal, learn, and replenish after leading huaka'i or high-intensity trainings.
- ✓ Provide loose scaffolds—not scripts—but protocols and sequences that support facilitation with flexibility and cultural integrity.

.....

"I've never held space like this before. I needed time to be with what was moving through me."

— Facilitator Interview

"We need to mālama the people who mālama everyone else."

— Post Hō'aumoe Interview

.....

#### ❖ **Enhance Curriculum**

##### **What we heard:**

Participants requested more clarity around the intended outcomes of the program. They were also eager to have more time to discuss intentional integration of the program into recovery work.

##### **Recommendation:**

Share program materials with participants from the beginning (e.g., manual, theory of change, logic model)

Build in more time for affinity group discussions around how the program is already being implemented in spaces, or how it could be implemented (e.g., therapist affinity group, culture affinity group, etc.)

.....

"I would like time to talk about how we are seeing the weaving or application of ka'ao within our work spaces."

—Kauai Post-huaka'i Survey

"The learning style would be helpful with more examples of bits and pieces of smaller kaao."

—Kauai Post-huaka'i Survey

"Being clear on the steps of kaao framework (maybe there are resources already)."

—Kauai Post-huaka'i Survey

.....

## **8. Next Steps**

This evaluation marks an important step in understanding the impacts and potentials of OHH. The findings point to promising outcomes related to cultural (re-)connection, facilitator readiness, and early indicators of 'ohana and community impact. This evaluation was especially unique in that the lead evaluator was also a participant, engaging in full immersion with the program and enhancing the makawalu approach honoring multiple data sources, including that which is experiential.



Building upon this foundation, the next phase of evaluation should emphasize sustainability, long-term impact, and deep alignment with 'ike kūpuna and culturally grounded frameworks of wellbeing.

### **Continued Evaluation and Timeline**

To ensure that evaluation efforts remain responsive and generative, we propose a multi-tiered evaluation timeline over the next 12–24 months:

- **6–12 months:** Conduct follow-up interviews and surveys with facilitators and participants to assess implementation in their respective communities, fidelity to the cultural and experiential components, and perceived impact.
- **12–18 months:** Initiate qualitative data collection from 'ohana and community members who have engaged with trainer-led activities, with a focus on narrative evidence of mauiola, shifts in community engagement, and observed recovery pathways. Potentially launch the next iteration of the training.
- **18–24 months:** Facilitate an iterative evaluation hui that includes trainers, kūpuna, filmmakers, participants, and community leaders to reflect on findings and co-develop next steps for program adaptation and expansion.

### **Future Data Sources**

To deepen understanding of the program's reach and cultural integrity, additional data sources can be integrated into future evaluation efforts. These include:

- Hold participatory sessions with participants to ensure their understanding of the evaluation process and to invite their input before the evaluation begins.
- Long-term facilitator reflections on design and implementation experiences, barriers and enablers in local implementation, and their own wellbeing and transformation over time.
- 'Ohana and community observations, especially from kūpuna and local leaders, regarding visible changes in relational health, cultural connection, and substance use-related stigma.
- Multimedia and participatory storytelling captured through future huaka'i, recovery gatherings, and community events, with appropriate consent and collaboration.

### **Further Integration of 'Ike Kūpuna and the Ana Kūkulu Model**

The current evaluation weaves in Indigenous evaluation methods from multiple sources (e.g., Evaluation with Aloha, Hawaiian hermeneutics, Makawalu approach, and UW's Indigenous Evaluation Toolkit). The next phase of evaluation should explicitly integrate the Ana Kūkulu Framework, an 'Ōiwi evaluation approach rooted in the Kūkulu Kumuhana dimensions that emphasizes mauiola in the very process of evaluation. This includes recognizing mauiola not only as a desired outcome but as an ongoing experiential and spiritual resource that informs how the evaluation itself is conducted, and how data is collected, interpreted, and shared.

'Ike kūpuna can be more deeply included through:

- Engagement of cultural practitioners as evaluation consultants
- Holding community evaluation gatherings which include protocols (e.g., pule, etc.)
- Continued development of indicators and reflective prompts rooted in 'Ōiwi values

"Trust in the process and to listen to my kūpuna now when they speak,  
because if you don't listen, they yell"  
--Observational Data

This culturally anchored and community-validated approach ensures that evaluation continues to serve the highest goals of healing, connection, and transformation in ways that are relevant and respectful to Kānaka 'Ōiwi communities navigating recovery. As the program evolves, evaluation will remain a living process, deeply rooted in aloha 'āina, guided by the wisdom of kūpuna, and accountable to the collective vision of mauiola for all.



*Figure 30 Ka wā mahope, the time which comes after or behind.*

## Appendix A

### Perspectives on the 5 Hs

# Perspectives on the 5 Hs

The Ka'ao framework served as a fundamental and deeply embedded guiding principle for the entire program, shaping its design, activities, and transformative outcomes. The program utilized the "5H" framework (Hua, Ha'alele, Huaka'i, Hō'ina, and Hā'ina) to organize and guide participants' journeys.



**HUA**



**CATALYST**

"What is it in your core that makes you that kumu, that kumu hula? What is it that you would be doing all of your life and wake up to do no matter where you are? And if you had all of the resources that you needed to live comfortably, but you'd still be doing it."

"I think for me... that is where we were really focusing on our hua and like, you know, when we get our hua breakthrough, we're like, oh, like, you know, at least the core one that we're like, working through from childhood... but the one hua that is like our why, I think for me, what was one was even like, having a moment to, like, go back, like, you know, once you think, like, oh, okay, you know, mine was like, oh, us. Like, for me, my why, of is, is just holding safe space for people, right? [...] And so the why is, like, you know, perhaps feeling judged from like... wanting to hold space for space for unconditional love. And like, you know, once we find our hua, it's like, okay, this is my hua, because somebody did this to me."



**HA'ALELE**



**DEPARTURE**

"So looking back at the ha'alele where you made the decision to separate from the everyday and get into this journey."

"And then my ha'alele. When I said yes to go on this huaka'i, I was, initially, I was like, oh yeah, I can do this program and see how ka'ao and 'ike Hawaii is implemented into, or is the driver, or is the medium to share about mauiola... and then I was like oh, during the huaka'i I was like oh this is for me this is for me."



**HUAKA'I**



**JOURNEY**

"But the huaka'i is a seeded journey, so this is every single one of us have multiple huaka'i in our life. On the daily. Okay, so we have our professional huaka'i... you could be doing tons of micro huaka'i along the way, but all it is sort of this really cyclic journey."

"I connected with 'aina in a way... But until I went through the journey of Hi'iaka with Auntie Kekuhi to Hawaii Island, where the Pele was and the whole and that experience that took me to that that connected me to 'aina and to ancestral beings in a way that I have, and the and the manu, the manu people, and some of the it makes me want to cry now, some of like, there's like the last things on they're like the last ones, they might not live, right? Like, those kinds of things just blew me out of the water. And, like Auntie Lahela said, ignited my fire in a whole new way, and then just rewriting that call my own ka'ao and focusing on my hua and and then the all of us together, supporting each other through that process, was something really beautiful and and extremely masterful."



**HŌ'INA**



**RETURN**

"Hō'ina means the return. Okay. So, your ho'ina is all about your reintegration. [...] I'm going to be like, whoa, I learned many things in my huaka'i. Now, time to apply. OK? So this is the reintegration process. A lot of us live there. We live there. This is the part where we bring back what we learn directly to our community. And we're like, let's do it."

"So this is definitely a time for me to figure out what the heck I'm doing so that I can get to the hō'ina and so that I can do share the things that I'm learning that I've cultivated that I've foundationally built and add to it and so that I can share that with our youth"



**HĀ'INA**



**REFRAIN**

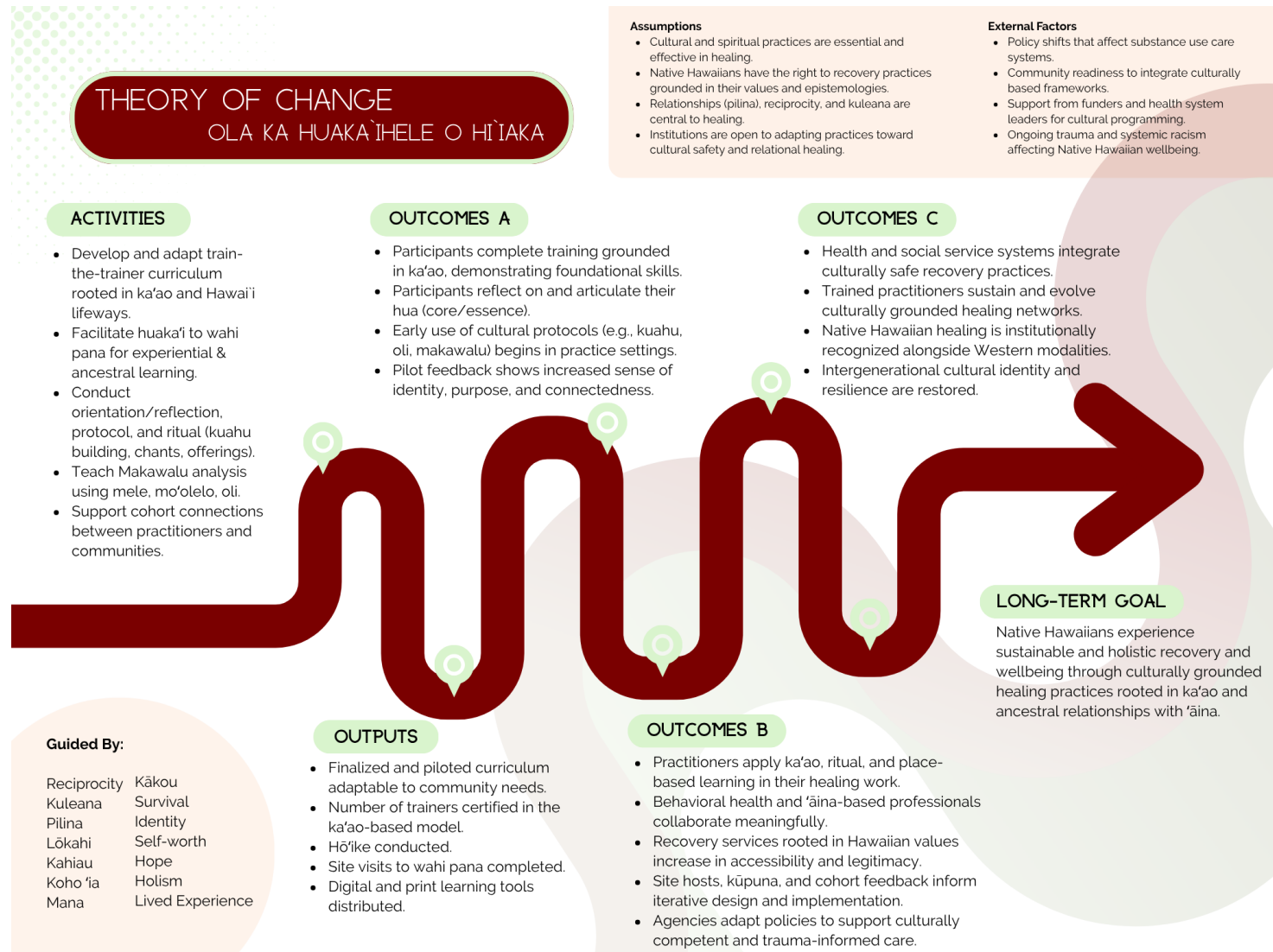
"The final piece is called the hā'ina... it's the to talk to tell the story it's the refrain the refrain is to tell the story this is your self actualization piece. That, my dear lovelies, nobody else can do."

"We're taking it through a and writing a story, like a mythological story. And I think using Hi'iaka was just such a beautiful way to do that, and... teaching that and moving that down to so that we can train others to do it right, so we're not going to lose this. It'll just expand and grow"



## Appendix B

### Draft Theory of Change





### **Problem Statement (for future logic model)**

Native Hawaiians are disproportionately impacted by substance use and face a lack of culturally rooted recovery services. Existing services are often disconnected from cultural practices, ancestral knowledge, and ‘āina (land), creating barriers to meaningful healing.

### **Inputs (for future logic model)**

- Cultural practitioners, kūpuna, and facilitators trained in ka'ao.
- Behavioral health and ‘āina workers.
- Sacred sites (wahi pana), plants (e.g., ‘olena, ‘ulu), and ceremonial elements.
- Curriculum designers and support staff (logistics, transportation, catering, etc.).
- Digital tools for accessing and disseminating content.
- Funding from agencies that value holistic, person-driven, and culturally relevant recovery.

## Appendix C

### Participant Demographics

| Variable                        | Category                                             | n  |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Role                            | Facilitator                                          | 4  |
|                                 | Cultural                                             | 4  |
|                                 | Health/Behavioral Health                             | 4  |
|                                 | Systems                                              | 5  |
|                                 | Film                                                 | 1  |
|                                 |                                                      |    |
| Native Hawaiian                 | Yes                                                  | 16 |
|                                 | No                                                   | 2  |
| Age Group                       | 24–34                                                | 3  |
|                                 | 35–44                                                | 7  |
|                                 | 45–54                                                | 5  |
|                                 | 55–64                                                | 4  |
| Island                          | Hawaiʻi                                              | 6  |
|                                 | Oʻahu                                                | 10 |
|                                 | Maui                                                 | 2  |
|                                 | Molokaʻi                                             | 1  |
| Gender Identity                 | Cisgender Female                                     | 14 |
|                                 | Cisgender Male                                       | 1  |
|                                 | Gender-nonconforming / Māhū /                        | 2  |
|                                 | Non-binary / Two-spirit                              |    |
|                                 | Prefer not to answer                                 | 2  |
| Sexuality                       | Sexual                                               | 13 |
|                                 | Heterosexual                                         | 10 |
|                                 | Queer                                                | 2  |
|                                 | Other: Free agent                                    | 1  |
|                                 | Prefer not to answer                                 | 4  |
| Spiritual/Religious Orientation | Traditional Hawaiian spirituality or Hawaiian values | 8  |
|                                 | Spiritual not religious / evolving spirituality      | 4  |
|                                 | Other named (e.g., universal, mixed)                 | 4  |
|                                 | Christian/Catholic                                   | 2  |
|                                 | Agnostic                                             | 1  |
|                                 | Not specified                                        | 1  |



| Variable                                 | Category                                                                                                                                               | n      |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i Proficiency</b>        | Yes: beginner                                                                                                                                          | 13     |
|                                          | Yes: intermediate                                                                                                                                      | 2      |
|                                          | Yes: fluent                                                                                                                                            | 2      |
|                                          | No / May be interested                                                                                                                                 | 2      |
| <b>Degree Level</b>                      | Master’s                                                                                                                                               | 9      |
|                                          | Doctorate                                                                                                                                              | 3      |
|                                          | Associate                                                                                                                                              | 2      |
|                                          | Technical Degree                                                                                                                                       | 1      |
|                                          | Bachelor’s                                                                                                                                             | 1      |
|                                          | Other Degree                                                                                                                                           | 1      |
| <b>Psychological Distress (Lifetime)</b> | Yes                                                                                                                                                    | 14     |
|                                          | No                                                                                                                                                     | 3      |
| <b>Severity of Distress</b>              | Moderately severe                                                                                                                                      | 5      |
|                                          | Very severe                                                                                                                                            | 4      |
|                                          | Extremely severe                                                                                                                                       | 5      |
| <b>Cultural Practice Engagement</b>      | Hula                                                                                                                                                   | 8      |
|                                          | Oli                                                                                                                                                    | 8      |
|                                          | Mea ‘ai pono (food cultivation/gathering)                                                                                                              | 7      |
|                                          | ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i                                                                                                                                         | 5      |
|                                          | Aloha ‘Āina & Reforestation                                                                                                                            | 5      |
|                                          | Lomi lomi                                                                                                                                              | 4      |
|                                          | Pule / Ceremony / Ritual                                                                                                                               | 3      |
|                                          | Māla / planting / gardening                                                                                                                            | 3      |
|                                          | Mele                                                                                                                                                   | 3      |
|                                          | Hunting & Fishing                                                                                                                                      | 2      |
|                                          | Hana no‘eau / arts / crafts                                                                                                                            | 3      |
|                                          | Hei                                                                                                                                                    | 2      |
|                                          | Lā‘au Lapa‘au (plant medicine)                                                                                                                         | 2      |
|                                          | Ka‘ao & Mo‘olelo                                                                                                                                       | 2      |
|                                          | Remaining (lei making, ulana, kapa, kilo mahina, hale building, uhau humu pōhaku, loko i‘a restoration, kalai wa‘a, teaching keiki, haku ho‘oponopono, | 1 each |



**Variable**

**Category**

**n**

supporting family in hula, history, being in  
'āina/kai/wai, all kine, mea 'ai pono)





## Appendix D

### Pre- and Post-Program Open-Ended Survey Questions

#### Pre Program Survey Open-Ended Questions:

- *Please share why you decided to participate in this program.*
- *What are you most looking forward to about this program?*
- *What might be some obstacles or challenges \*you'll experience in this program?*
- *What might be some obstacles or challenges to the program \*overall?*
- *What does Ka 'ao mean to you?*
- *Anything else you care to share before embarking on the program?*

#### Post-Program Survey Open-Ended Questions:

- *Did you experience personal transformation as a result of this program? If so, please describe in any format you like - storytelling, bullet points, whatever feels right. How might this transformation show up in other parts of your life (e.g., 'ohana, daily activities, etc.).*
- *Did this program support your hua? Please explain.*
- *What does Ka 'ao mean to you?*
- *What did you observe about participant interactions? (e.g., pilina, communication style, connections, relational dynamics)*
- *What were obstacles or challenges \*you experienced in this program?*
- *What might be some obstacles or challenges to the program \*overall (in the next delivery)? Think about how this might inform improving the program.*
- *Did the program meet expectations? Please describe how it did and/or didn't. You might reflect on what surprised you or what was missing.*
- *As a result of this training program, how might you do your work differently? Please think about your work as it relates to substance use recovery.*
- *As a result of this training program, how might you view your work differently? Please think about your work as it relates to substance use recovery.*
- *Now that it is complete, what are three of the most important things you learned from this training program (e.g., concepts, skills, etc.)*
- *How do you imagine this program will benefit people in substance recovery, 'ohana, communities, lāhui? You might use SAMHSA's definition of recovery in your reflection.*
- *Anything else you'd care to share after completing the program?*



## Appendix E

### Formative Post-Huaka'i Survey Questions

#### Post-Hō'aumoe Survey

Questions:

- *When you reflect on the orientations and the Hō'aumoe, what were their strengths, things you would definitely want to keep in future iterations?*
- *When you reflect on the orientations and the Hō'aumoe, what were the things you would want to improve for future trainings?*

Results

10 participant surveys fully completed

#### Post-Hawai'i Huaka'i Survey

Questions:

- *When you reflect on the huaka'i Hawai'i, what were their strengths, things you would definitely want to keep in future iterations?*
- *When you reflect on the huaka'i Hawai'i, what were the things you would want to improve for future trainings?*
- *How are you feeling in your kino (body)? Wailua (spirit)? Mana'o (thoughts)? Moemoea (dreams)? Feel free to just answer what's present for you now, where you're at.*

Results

10 participant surveys completed

#### Post-Kaua'i Huaka'i Survey

Questions:

- *When you reflect on the huaka'i Kaua'i, what were their strengths, things you would definitely want to keep in future iterations?*
- *When you reflect on the huaka'i Kaua'i, what were the things you would want to improve for future trainings?*
- *How are you feeling in your kino (body)? Wailua (spirit)? Mana'o (thoughts)? Moemoea (dreams)? Feel free to just answer what's present for you now, where you're at.*

Results

8 participant surveys completed



## Appendix F

### Formative Post-Huaka`i Interviews

#### Post Hō`aumoe Interview

##### Questions:

- So what is present for you in your na`au? Now that the program is launched and we're here on our first weekend?
- When you imagine folks here going through this program, for folks with substance use recovery issues, how would you imagine it to be at this stage?
- What kind of tips, advice, or anything else you want to offer about the program so far?
- Do you have any questions about the evaluation, or anything else you want to add your any mana`o?

#### Post Kaua`i Huaka`i Interview

##### Questions:

- What is present for you in your na`au about the Kaua`i Huaka`i in particular?
- How do you see elements of this huaka`i informing your work in behavioral healthcare?



## Appendix G

### Post-Program Interview Timeline, Protocol, Methods

#### Timeline

- 3 days prior- send questions
- 1 day prior- send reminder email/ text (with KK image and explanation)
- Interview: 60 minutes on Zoom

#### Protocol

##### General Guidelines

Talk story style, semi structured

Please ensure all questions are addressed, unless otherwise noted

##### Introduction

Interviewer positionality (brief)

Interview to learn names of participants

##### Purpose of Interview

- Called an evaluation but it's also an opportunity for reflection.
- POL wants this evaluation to assist them in their efforts to optimize the program.
- Information for future funding

This is an opportunity for you to tell the story of the program from your view, for the benefit of the program's development, and ultimately to benefit community mauiola.

We'll use your data to help POL and HO with their program development, presentations, and likely in a written paper we'll submit to a journal in future. Your names will not be disclosed and your identities will be anonymous. If you don't feel like answering a question, you are not required to do so, everything here is optional.

Timing - remind them we only have 60min for the 5-8 questions, so please be mindful of the length of answers so everyone has a chance to contribute.

##### Didactics on KK

They were introduced to the KK model of wellbeing early on in the program. They received 6 postcards with the dimension on them - say dimensions. Showing KK framework, provide some didactic on each level and dimension. Emphasize ke akua mana is really about spirituality broadly, could be nā akua, could be a mix of religions or spiritualities, etc..



## Questions for all

- *How did KK show up during the program for you, if at all? (they don't need to address each one)*
- *How do you imagine the program will impact folx recovering from substance use challenges? This could be "positive" or "negative" - any impact you could foresee.*
- *What are the most powerful and relevant parts (key takeaways?) of the program to the work you do with folx experiencing substance use recovery?*
- *How do you plan to use program elements in your work?*
- *Do some elements require adaptation? How do you plan to adapt those elements?*
- *What do you need to better adapt or adapt more aspects of program for your work? Please offer examples like templates/checklists (if they want these, ask them for what topic exactly)*

\*If there's time - Introduce the SAMHSA model of recovery. Go through each pie slice briefly.

How would you adapt this model of recovery to be more culturally safe:

<https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/pep12-recdef.pdf>

\*can be asked after bolded group specific question(s)

## Questions for mental/behavioral healthcare provider group:

- What considerations should be taken to adapt the program for people in substance use recovery – consider:
  - severity
  - developmental age
  - comorbidities
- If there's time: Do you feel these measures could be adequately adapted for our community in Hawai'i? Addiction Severity Index (ASI): A comprehensive assessment tool measuring various aspects of substance use, including severity, social functioning, and legal issues. And the Timeline Followback (TLFB): A self-report method for tracking substance use patterns over a specified period.
- If there's time: Under state and federal regulations, using something like ka'ao might be challenging - how might we overcome those challenges?/what kind of language would you use to justify using ka'ao as a recovery/healing/treatment/therapeutic tool?
- If there's time: What are your thoughts on how we can get cultural activities covered by insurance?

## Questions for systems group:

- Under state and federal regulations, using something like ka'ao might be challenging - how might we overcome those challenges?/what kind of language would you use to justify using ka'ao as a recovery/healing/treatment/therapeutic tool?



- If there's time - Do you feel these measures could be adequately adapted for our community in Hawai'i? Addiction Severity Index (ASI): A comprehensive assessment tool measuring various aspects of substance use, including severity, social functioning, and legal issues. And the Timeline Followback (TLFB): A self-report method for tracking substance use patterns over a specified period. Can put this in the chat. If they don't know, that's ok.
- Only if there's time: What are your thoughts on getting cultural activities covered by insurance?

#### **For facilitator group (these questions only)**

- What was your experience in the process of providing the training (what was that like for you)?
- What did you learn through the process?
- How did KK show up during the program for you, if at all? (they don't need to address each one)
- How can the experience of the facilitator be improved for next time?
- If there's time: Introduce the SAMHSA model of recovery. Go through each pie slice briefly. How would you adapt this model of recovery to be more culturally safe: <https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/pep12-recdef.pdf>

## **Methods**

A total of eight interviews were conducted, including four individual interviews and four focus groups, all facilitated by a single evaluation staff member. Whenever possible, interview questions were shared with participants in advance. The semi-structured interviews followed a prepared script and were conducted online via Zoom, with only audio recordings captured to safeguard participants' privacy; video and any identifying information were intentionally excluded. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim using Otter.ai, then carefully reviewed and edited for accuracy. The transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis, beginning with inductive coding to identify initial codes, which were subsequently refined and grouped into themes through an iterative process of comparison across interviews.

### **Data Analysis: A Six-Phase Guide with Decolonizing Lens**

The thematic analysis followed the six-phase guide outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), adapted to explicitly foreground decolonizing principles:

1. Familiarizing yourself with your data: This phase involved repeated and active reading of the entire data set to immerse the researchers in the depth and breadth of the content. Initial ideas and potential patterns were noted. From a decolonizing perspective, this immersion also involved being reflexive about preconceived notions

and acknowledging the active role of the researcher in interpretation, rather than assuming themes simply "emerge" passively from the data.

2. **Generating initial codes:** Following familiarization, interesting features (semantic content or latent meanings) were systematically identified and coded across the entire data set. Codes were generated inclusively, retaining surrounding data where relevant, and individual extracts could be coded multiple times if they fit different potential themes. This phase also actively sought out contradictions and inconsistencies within the data, recognizing that such variations are crucial for a nuanced understanding of experiences within colonized contexts.
  3. **Searching for themes:** Once initial coding was complete, codes were sorted into potential themes, and all relevant coded data extracts were collated under these themes. Visual representations, such as thematic maps, were used to explore relationships between codes and conceptualize overarching themes and sub-themes. This process considered how emergent themes might reflect or challenge existing colonial discourses and narratives of resistance.
  4. **Reviewing themes:** This phase involved a two-level refinement process.
    - Level one reviewed the coherence of themes at the level of coded data extracts, ensuring data within themes meaningfully cohered.
    - Level two involved re-reading the entire data set to assess the validity of individual themes in relation to the whole, and to code any additional missed data. This rigorous review ensured that themes were internally consistent, distinctive, and adequately captured the meanings evident in the data set, aligning with the project's decolonizing objectives.
  5. **Defining and naming themes:** Once a satisfactory thematic map was established, themes were defined and refined, identifying the "essence" of each theme and its contribution to the overall narrative. Theme names were kept concise and evocative. The analysis for each theme went beyond mere description, interpreting the significance of patterns and their broader implications, particularly in relation to the research questions and the decolonization agenda.
  6. **Producing the report:** The final phase involved presenting the analysis as a concise, coherent, and compelling narrative. The report provided sufficient illustrative data extracts to demonstrate themes, embedding them within an analytic narrative that made arguments in relation to the research questions. Emphasis was placed on ensuring the analysis contributed to a deeper understanding of indigenous realities, challenging perceived wisdom and avoiding the perpetuation of stereotypes. The researcher's active role in constructing the analysis was made transparent.
- 6 total interviews were conducted
  - 4 Focus Group Interviews
    - Facilitators (4 participants)
    - Culture (3 participants)
    - Mental/Behavioral Health Providers (3 participants)
    - Systems/ Organizational (4 participants)
    - 2 Individual Interviews

## Appendix H

### OHH Supports SAMHSA's Definition of Recovery

| Summary Point                                                                      | Supportive Quote(s)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Builds supportive relationships and community</b>                            | <p>"Having a hui to lean on and journey with builds family and community outside of the ones we assume."</p> <p>"You do not journey alone, Hi'iaka and Wahine 'Oma'o, witness to accompany, embedded in 'āina with and of 'āina."</p>                                                                                                |
| <b>2. Cultivates resilience and hope through storytelling and lived experience</b> | <p>"By telling my story and being an example of resilience and hope."</p> <p>"Hope—hua, the deep desire, spark transformation, relation to place restores <b>hope</b>."</p> <p>"It supports hope... health by integrating mind, body, spirit, and community through storytelling, connection to 'āina, and relational dynamics."</p> |
| <b>3. Encourages self-reflection and empowerment</b>                               | <p>"I can see a reduction in self-sabotage and self-doubt."</p> <p>"Taking charge of life decisions with better confidence."</p> <p>"Helping people recognize their own hua and empowering them to navigate their journey with intention and support."</p>                                                                           |
| <b>4. Promotes cultural and ancestral reconnection</b>                             | <p>"Reconnect them to themselves, their 'ohana, their stories, culture, identity."</p> <p>"Cultural reclamation is healing."</p> <p>"<b>Relational</b>, reciprocal exchange with place/'āina, people seen and unseen, elements."</p>                                                                                                 |
| <b>5. Provides a holistic and integrated approach to healing</b>                   | <p>"The program is also a holistic approach to health and healing."</p> <p>"Transform mind, body, spirit, embody and kin to place."</p>                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>6. Encourages participation and connection to 'āina</b>                         | <p>"I can see our community being more open and wanting to take charge... such as just talking more or participating more in aloha 'āina work."</p>                                                                                                                                                                                  |

|                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                             | "Embedded in 'āina with and of 'āina."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>7. Offers healing from trauma through culture and ka'ao (myth/story)</b> | <p>"Healing through ritual, oli, movement... without iterating the specific traumas/insults but delving into self through ka'ao iteration and transformation."</p> <p>"Grounding those with lived experience and use a storytelling framework to better reflect on their own lives and what has happened to them that led them here."</p> |
| <b>8. Strengthens the lāhui through revitalization and service</b>          | <p>"Strengths/responsibilities, ho'ina, the return to community revitalized, clarity of hua, grounded resonance, receptive and in service of your hua."</p> <p>"For the lāhui, it revitalizes cultural knowledge and practice, ensuring that healing happens within the context of identity, place, and belonging."</p>                   |

## Appendix I

### Participants' reasons for joining the program: Key themes & participant motivations

| Theme                                           | Summary                                                                                                                                                 | Supportive Insights from Responses                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Personal Transformation &amp; Healing</b>    | Participants saw the program as a way to deepen their own healing and reconnect with their story through Ka'ao.                                         | <p>"Ka'ao helped me to see the beauty and strength in my own story, rather than the shame and anger..."</p> <p>"To experience 'kaaolapaau'"</p>                                                                                      |
| <b>Cultural Learning &amp; Reconnection</b>     | Many joined to learn more about Hawaiian culture, epistemology, and healing practices.                                                                  | <p>"Love learning and how I can incorporate [it] back into life and work."</p> <p>"I appreciate learning and learning different methods to broaden my 'ike."</p>                                                                     |
| <b>Invitation &amp; Relationship</b>            | Several were personally invited and joined out of respect, curiosity, or love for the people/place.                                                     | <p>"I was invited and I love learning about this place and people and want to support my son better."</p> <p>"I am honored by the invitation."</p>                                                                                   |
| <b>Kuleana &amp; Advocacy</b>                   | A strong sense of responsibility motivated participants to use what they learn to support their communities and advocate for culturally safe practices. | <p>"I decided to participate so I can learn and be able to better advocate for change in the places I work."</p> <p>"I think it is extremely important to provide programs that are tailored for our people to heal our people."</p> |
| <b>Professional Growth &amp; Systems Change</b> | Some wanted to influence how substance use treatment and institutional systems serve Kānaka 'Ōiwi, using cultural frameworks as a foundation.           | <p>"I am passionate about changing the system of care for substance use treatment..."</p> <p>"It's a challenging opportunity to simplify Hawai'i practice &amp; epistemology to be useful to people around me."</p>                  |
| <b>Inspiration for Community Impact</b>         | Participants hoped to bring what they learned back to their                                                                                             | "I want to experience a program to inspire change that I can make in                                                                                                                                                                 |



|  |                                                     |                                               |
|--|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
|  | communities for collective healing and empowerment. | my community using our cultural practices..." |
|--|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|

## Appendix J

### Expectations About OHH

| Theme                                   | Description                                                                                                                                                    | Supportive Reflections                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Exceeded Expectations</b>            | Participants consistently expressed surprise at the depth, impact, and beauty of the experience.                                                               | <p>"It exceeded my expectations... the connections I have made, the life long relationships... the stories—the list goes on."</p> <p>"I came in with very few expectations, and left with more than I ever imagined."</p> <p>"I had no idea how it would change my life."</p>                                     |
| <b>Personal Growth &amp; Reflection</b> | The program helped participants better understand their own life journey (ka'ao) and hua (purpose), often in unexpected ways.                                  | <p>"The Ka'ao would help me reflect on my own personal growth and transformation."</p> <p>"It helped me with my life ka'ao and hua which weaves into everything I do."</p> <p>"I learned a lot about who I am and what feeds my soul."</p>                                                                        |
| <b>Meaningful Relationships</b>         | Participants formed deep bonds, feeling seen and supported, which added value beyond the curriculum.                                                           | <p>"The connections I have made, the lifelong relationships I formed..."</p> <p>"I loved the connections and the foreseeing of individuals in the workforce that I am starting."</p>                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Holistic Learning</b>                | The integration of mele, hula, ritual, and storytelling brought learning to life and made it personally resonant.                                              | <p>"The duality of light and heavy conversations all through Ka'ao framework with mele and hula."</p> <p>"The learning and the ritual helped me ground."</p>                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Surprising Impact</b>                | Several participants were surprised at how emotionally and spiritually powerful the experience was, even if they came for professional or educational reasons. | <p>"I was looking to deepen my understanding... but the program offered so many opportunities for personal, professional, interpersonal and interprofessional revitalization."</p> <p>"I expected to learn about stories and cultural practices, but I didn't expect how deeply the journey would affect me."</p> |



## What Was Missing or Surprising?

- **Most participants didn't express anything missing**—rather, they shared surprise at how much more they received than expected.
- The **depth of personal transformation, emotional resonance, and spiritual grounding** were **unexpected gifts** for many.



## Appendix K

### Kūkulu Kumuhana Engagement by OHH

The OHH program upheld the Kūkulu Kumuhana framework, fostering both cultural knowledge and deep cultural embodiment among participants. Kūkulu Kumuhana is described as a **multi-dimensional framework for wellbeing** with six interconnected tenets: Ea (self-determination and agency), 'Āina Momona (healthy and productive lands and people), Pilina (mutually sustaining relationships), Waiwai (ancestral abundance and collective wealth), 'Ōiwi (cultural identity and native intelligence), and Ke Akua Mana (spirituality and sacredness of mana). These tenets operate on individual, Ohana, community, organizational, and policy levels. The core essence of this framework, as applied in the program, is about **"pulling energy collectively, for a wholeness and spirit, a shared purpose"**.

Here's how the program demonstrated this in philosophy and practice:

- **Philosophical Grounding in Hawai'i Lifeways:**
  - The program is "truly rooted in Hawaiian culture" and aims to explore concepts as "Hawaiians lived and lived these things". Participants expressed happiness to be "in this line of work with other Kānaka who are steeped in culture".
  - Auntie Kekuhi's pedagogy, referred to as "Hawai'i Life Ways," is described as "very thoughtful and systematic", going beyond superficial understanding to deep self-reflection.
  - The **Ka'ao framework** itself is central to the program's philosophy, viewed as "the essence of our people, it's the language and transmission of knowledge, of scientific knowledge, of lifeways, of events, of lessons, of everything that tangible and intangible, animate and inanimate". It is explicitly stated that Ka'ao is "not meant to be documented like that. Ka'ao is meant to be lived".
- **Embodiment Through Practice and Experience (Across Kūkulu Kumuhana Tenets):**
  - **Pilina (Mutually Sustaining Relationships):** This tenet was profoundly embodied. Participants consistently highlighted the **deep connections and relationships built** within the group, describing it as forming a "family" and creating "lifelong" pilina. The program fostered a sense of "belonging, connection" and trust, with participants feeling able to share "our deepest, darkest secrets and thoughts and and things". It extended to the kumu, with one participant stating, "no matter what she's teaching, it's always going to be an honor to be in those spaces".
  - **'Āina Momona (Healthy and Productive Lands and People):** The program actively engaged participants with the land. Activities involved visiting "different moku, puni'i, and mokus to be able to connect and follow Hi'iaka's journey", including "wahi pana or pulsing places". Experiential learning through activities like those involving niu (coconut) and manu (birds) brought this concept to life. Participants learned about "the spiritual and an affirmation from our ancestors

that we are on the right path" through cleansing at the ocean and felt grounded through "ritual at sunrise grounding self with relationship to place".

- **Ea (Self-determination and Agency):** The program empowered participants to engage in deep personal exploration and self-discovery. A key practice was **writing one's own Ka'ao** and "finding their Hua" (core purpose). This process supported self-reflection and confidence, allowing individuals to navigate their journeys with intention and "own their identity". The program encouraged participants to recognize their personal power and agency in their own healing and growth.
- **‘Ōiwi (Cultural Identity and Native Intelligence):** The program strengthened participants' sense of cultural identity. One non-Native Hawaiian participant even felt "more Korean and more rooted in my own indigenusness," leading to "more respectful of the host culture here". The curriculum helped individuals "dive deep into ourselves - our internal huaka'i that is enmeshed with the physical one", fostering a deeper connection to their "native intelligence".
- **Ke Akua Mana (Spirituality and Sacredness of Mana):** This was experienced through rituals, protocols, and connection to the "more than human people". Participants described the experience as "spiritual, intellectual, visceral", and "magical". The program helped in "remembering and embodying the spiritual domain", recognizing the "mana" that can be cultivated and used for good.
- **Waiwai (Ancestral Abundance and Collective Wealth):** While less explicit in direct action, this tenet was upheld by providing access to profound cultural knowledge and tools passed down through generations. The collaborative learning environment, where participants shared and built upon each other's knowledge and lived experiences, contributed to a collective wealth of understanding and support.
- **Program Design Fostering Embodiment:**
  - The program intentionally created a **"safe and non judging"** space, which was crucial for vulnerability and authentic learning.
  - The "learning process was deep and rich thanks to all the creative pedagogical approaches", including "talking story in big circles, had a pair activity where we were also able to do some writing and drawing and presenting, and there were many experiential opportunities for synthesizing life ways with our work".
  - The emphasis on "Ma Ka Hana Ka 'Ike — learning by doing" ensured active participation rather than being a "spectator activity".
  - The program incorporated rituals and ceremonies, such as the "aha makana" (gifting), which fostered reciprocal exchange and deeper connection.
  - The program's "improvisational" nature, guided by Aunty Kekuhi, allowed it to "evolve as people start sharing things," making it "so personal" and responsive to the group's needs, enhancing the lived experience. Aunty Kekuhi's "unending amount of anecdotes and stories from Hawaii history, but just from like her life and references" provided invaluable guidance.
  - The continuous reflection and debriefing processes after the huaka'i (journeys) helped participants to internalize and synthesize their experiences.





In summary, the program, with Aunty Kekuhi's profound wisdom and the intentional design, didn't just teach about Kūkulu Kumuhana; it immersed participants in its philosophy and enabled them to embody its principles through direct cultural experiences and practices, leading to significant personal and professional transformation.

## Appendix L

### OHH Supports Wellbeing, Wellness, Health, Mauiola

There were abundant references to the **wellbeing**, **health**, and **mauliola** of the participants, often emphasizing a holistic and culturally integrated approach to healing and personal growth.

- **Wellbeing & Wellness:**
  - The program is recognized as a comprehensive approach to **wellbeing**. Participants felt immense satisfaction and happiness to be involved in work alongside other Kānaka deeply rooted in culture, emphasizing a sense of family and belonging
    - The Ka'ao process facilitates personal growth by fostering "strength, sense of community, familiarity, authenticity, ease, safety."
  - One participant noted feeling "held because the program, or healed because the program is so intentional". The integration of joy is explicitly mentioned, with "Much healing through joy and shared purpose. Laughter" contributing to the overall sense of wellness. The experience can be "life saving" for individuals.
- **Health:**
  - The program actively addresses **health** concerns, particularly where existing Western "mental health and healthcare systems are often insufficient" and "what we have now no work". It emphasizes the interconnectedness of **health**, including "the health and wellbeing of our people". Cultural practices are presented as essential, with a focus on "cultural reclamation is healing". The Ka'ao process is highlighted as a therapeutic tool applicable across the spectrum of "substance use and mental health clients", helping individuals "reorganize and retell their story in present time without getting hijacked to another time that was too painful". The program encourages treating individuals as Haumāna (students) rather than "clients" or "patients," aiming to "remove those labels off of them" to foster healing. A participant in public health emphasized the importance of learning "why our land is so important, why and how that's directly related to the health and wellbeing of our people." The experiences help participants "modulate that voltage so that I don't blow myself up or blow somebody else up".
- **Mauiola:**
  - The concept of mauiola is central to the program's impact. One participant defines it directly: "I have **mauiola**, healthy individuals, healthy family, healthy communities, and my love for plants and food as medicine". The program helps people "regain their **mauli** and their focus", indicating a return to a vibrant, authentic self. Poetic descriptions link spiritual nourishment to **mauiola**, contributing to a sense of being "robust, vigorous of breath" and "less fearful in the face of fear". The work aims to "share about **mauiola** or to... have that context integrate with the context and understanding of **mauiola** so that I can figure out how to do that in my own way". The intensive reflections and self-



discovery within the program are seen as crucial for supporting one's personal journey towards **mauliola**.

## Appendix M

### Aunty Kekuhi as Vital for OHH

# MAHALO AUNTY KEKUHI

#### The Indispensable Role of the Kumu, Aunty Kekuhi

Aunty Kekuhi's "unending amount of anecdotes and stories from Hawaii history," combined with her personal life references, made her "voice being the guide" and the program profoundly effective. She is seen as a "master" who "live[s] it and intimately" and her ability to be "nimble" and adapt the program based on group needs, following her "heart," was highly valued. Aunty Kekuhi is consistently described as a profoundly knowledgeable and inspirational figure, often referred to as a "master" due to her deep understanding and embodied experience of Hawaiian lifeways and the Ka'ao framework.

Aunty Kekuhi is consistently identified as a central figure and guide within the program, with participants expressing deep respect, gratitude, and admiration for her teachings and presence. Here are several quotes and messages directed to or about Auntie Kekuhi, along with their sources:

"Kekuhi- Mahalo for being just you [...] Your words, your being, is powerful without even having to say anything, you provide a space that I yearn to be like. I want to to look up to somebody. I want to have that person that I can go. That's what I want to be when I grow up and and Kekuhi, you're that for me. And I have a long ways to go, but I know that if I keep being at it, and I keep doing what I'm doing, and I know that you're there to support and aloha me and all of us in a way that's super nurturing, I know we can get there"  
-Post Program Interview

"Being in Kekuhi spaces is is precious to me. You know, I look up to her, and have always looked up to her. And you know, to to be able to see the capacity in which she works in. To observe her space, to observe how she moves, to understand how she views life today versus how she's like in the past, from like 20 years ago, you know, she becomes the Hi'iaka in that space."  
-Post Program Interview

"Aunty Kekuhi definitely grounding the whole thing [...] but the 'ike she brings, and also just the vibe, just the vibe to like, you're sort of opening it up, but then it's a lot of self reflect." -Post Program Interview

Aunty Kekuhi went create one safe space where strangers could be vulnerable, so that we could learn." -Post Program Interview

Mahalo to Aunty Kekuhi and the team!!! Aunty truly is an inspiration to me and one of my heroes in my ka'ao and has been for decades. I am grateful and I deeply hope we continue this journey somehow...some way."  
-Post Program Survey

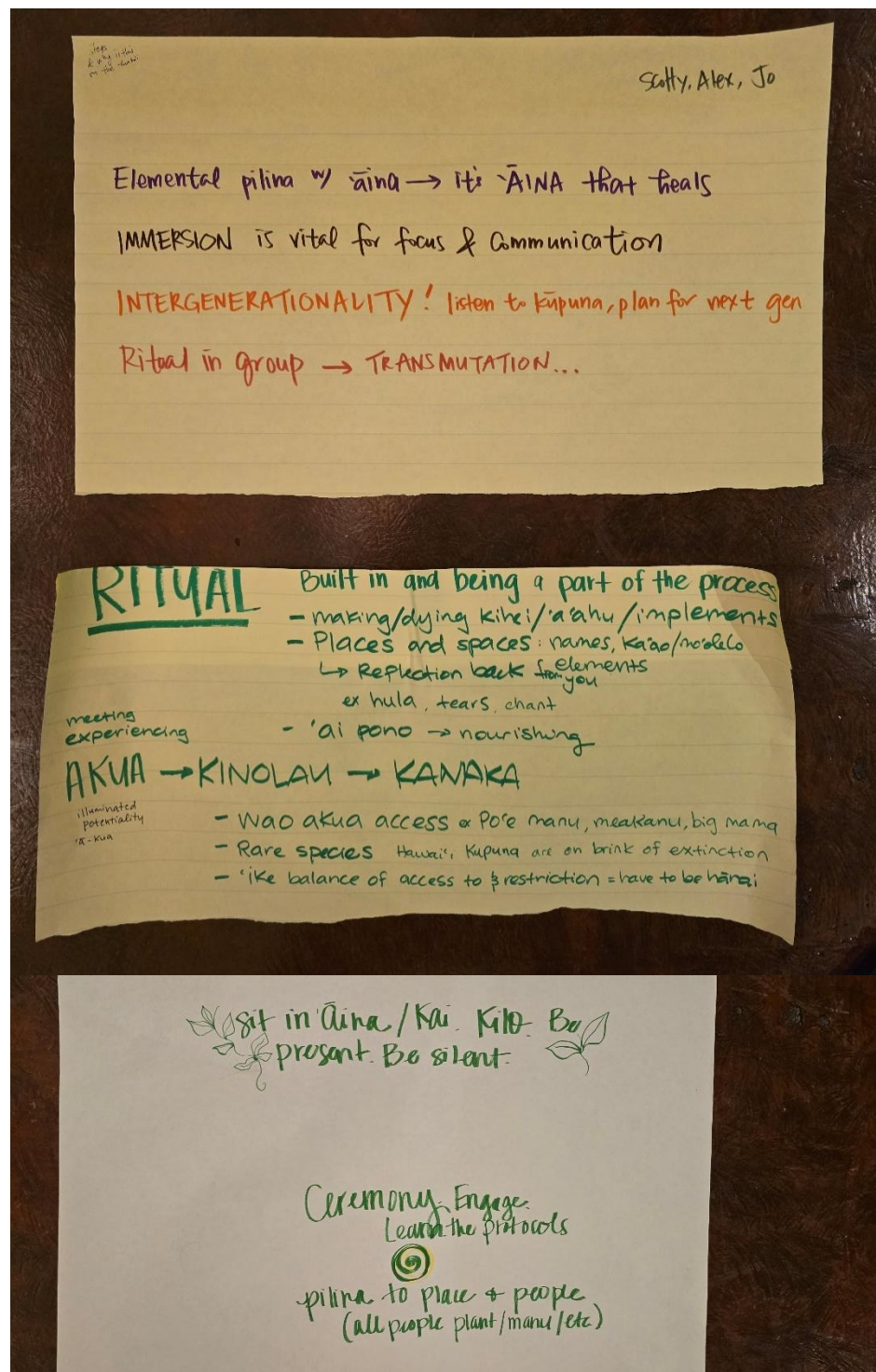


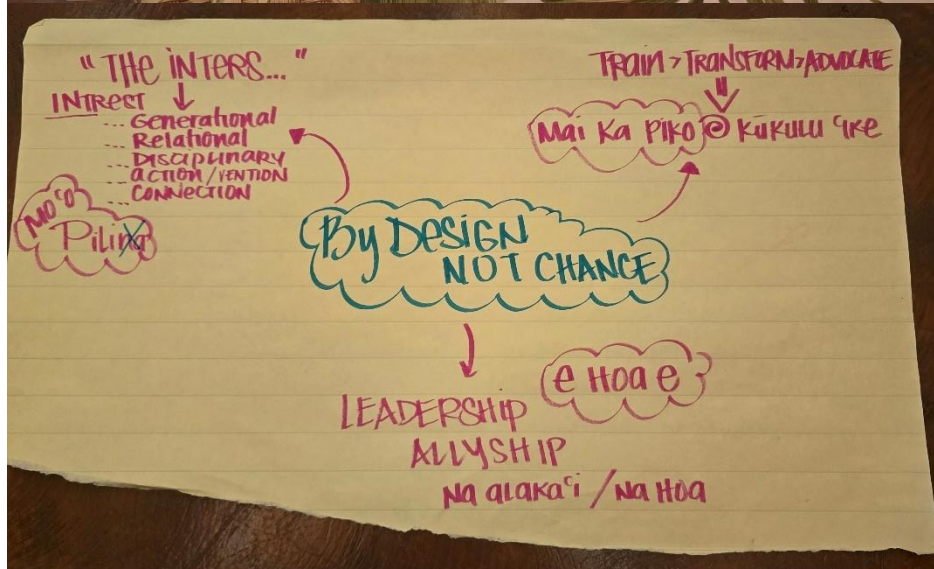
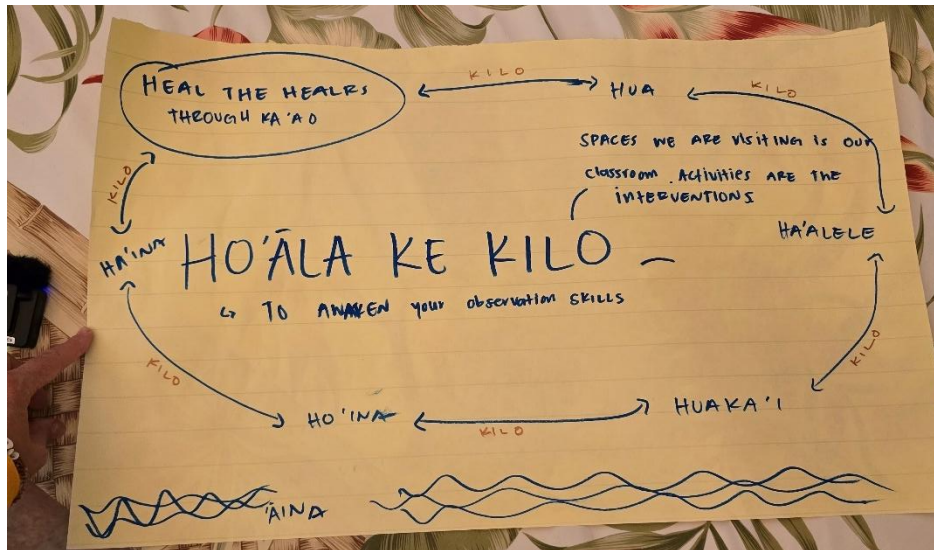
*Figure 31 Aunty Kekuhi leading pule*



## Appendix N

Mid-Program Reflection: *If you could keep just four things about this program, what would it be?*



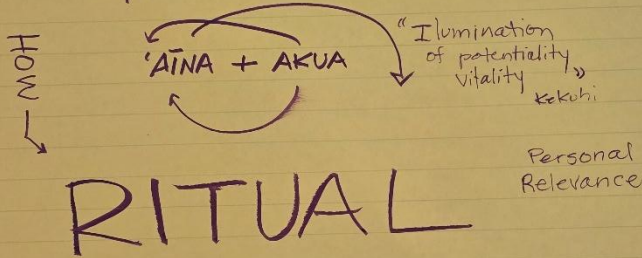




HEAL THE HEALER, THEREFORE A in every home

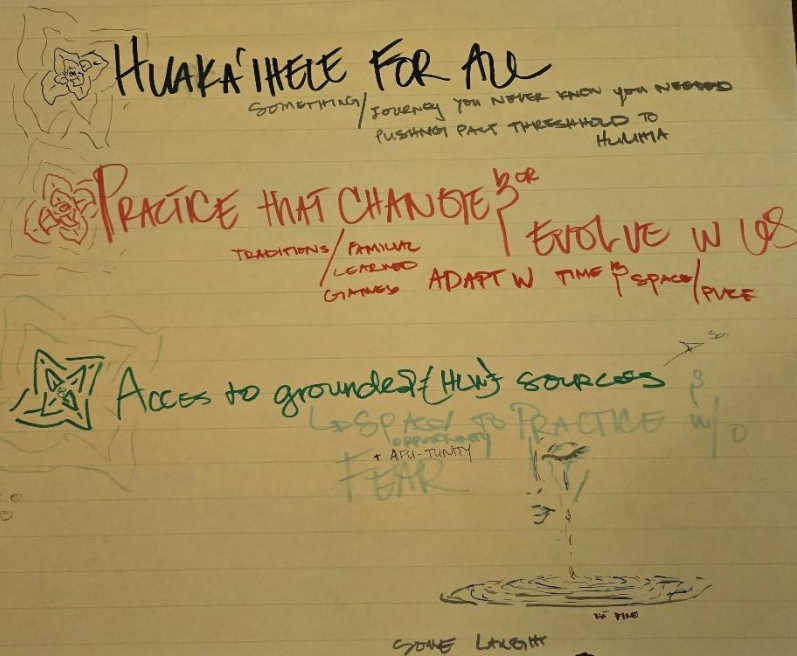
pilina  
ME - PEOPLE PLACE \* IDENTITY

Paytenshen + Wachichada



Involving sound, ACTION, CONSISTENT GIVE + TAKE

FIRM SENSE OF SELF IN RELATION...





## Appendix O

### Document Analysis

This document analysis of the provided sources reveals key insights into OHH, encompassing its institutional priorities, embedded cultural meanings, and strategies for community engagement. It also sheds light on the comprehensive communication methods employed by the facilitators.

### Institutional Priorities

The primary institutional priority of the organizing bodies, Papa Ola Lōkahi and Lonoa Honua, is to improve the health and wellbeing of Kānaka 'Ōiwi. This is specifically achieved through OHH, which is described as a "transformative process" and "transformative opportunity". The program is particularly focused on substance use and mental health through a Kanaka 'Ōiwi cultural lens.

Ensuring smooth logistics and operations is another significant priority for all events, including the multi-day huaka'i (journeys), Hō'aumoe summits, and Kīpaepae ceremonies. This involves meticulous planning for:

- **Transportation:** Coordinating airport pickups, shuttles, and managing vehicle capacity, with a preference for provided transport to reduce personal vehicle use at sites.
- **Accommodation:** Arranging lodging and addressing specific participant needs, such as sleeping arrangements.
- **Meals:** Planning menus through meal surveys and organizing potluck contributions, especially for O'ahu residents.
- **Supply Management:** Requesting shared supplies for activities.

Participant safety and health are paramount, with clear requirements for COVID-19 testing prior to travel and daily testing encouraged during the huaka'i. Emphasis is also placed on thorough cleaning and sanitization of all gear to prevent the introduction of invasive species and diseases into Hawai'i.

Continuous program improvement and documentation are evident through the collection of participant feedback via surveys. This input is valued as "invaluable" for optimizing the program and tracking its growth, with the potential for insights to be included in a published manuscript. Financial accountability is maintained through strict reimbursement processes requiring detailed flight and lodging documentation within a specific timeframe.

### Cultural Meanings



The program is deeply imbued with Hawaiian cultural meanings, as evidenced by the consistent use of 'Ōlelo Hawai'i, traditional practices, and a focus on connection to the land and community:

- **'Ōlelo Hawai'i Integration:** The sources frequently use Hawaiian terms, reflecting their integral role in the program. Examples include Huaka'ihele (journey/travel), Hō'aumoe (in-person summit), Kīpaepae (ceremony), Makana (gifts), Mahalo (thank you), 'Ohana (family), Kūpuna mauna (mountain elders), Ka'ao (stories/narratives), Hua (catalyst), Hālau 'Ōhi'a (a cohort/group), Mele (songs), Hula (dance), Hei (traditional lei making/netting), 'A'ahu (garments), Pā'ū (skirt), Kīhei (shawl), 'Ōlena (turmeric), Mana'o (thoughts/input), Kuleana (responsibility), Kuahu (altar), and 'Aha 'āina (feast).
- **Ceremonial Practices:** The itinerary includes specific cultural activities such as sunrise ceremonies and presenting learned offerings to the kūpuna mauna. Participation in the Kīpaepae ceremony is highlighted as an "extreme honor" and involves learning specific oli (chants) and hula, along with preparation of traditional attire like 'olena-dyed pā'ū and kīhei. This ceremony is described as bringing together communities for a "reciprocal exchange to mālama the kuahu and open the Merrie Monarch events".
- **Ka'ao as a Framework:** The concept of Ka'ao is central to the program's transformative process, with participants encouraged to develop their "OWN ka'ao" by identifying stages like Hua, Ha'alele, Huaka'i, Hō'ina, and Hā'ina. The program culminates in a "Meta Ka'ao" created collectively by a large group, incorporating mele, hei, and hula learned throughout the journey.
- **Connection to 'Āina (Land):** The program emphasizes visiting "pristine" Hawaiian spaces and stresses the kuleana (responsibility) of participants to prevent the spread of invasive species and diseases (such as ROD, fire ants, coqui) through diligent gear cleaning and sanitization. Activities like 'āina aloha invasive control and niu collection are integrated into the itinerary.
- **Reflection and Synthesis:** Daily reflection and synthesis sessions are built into the schedule to help participants process their experiences and integrate the learned knowledge. This fosters deeper understanding and personal growth within the cultural context.

## Community Engagement

Community engagement is a cornerstone of OHH, fostering a sense of collective participation and shared responsibility:

- **'Ohana and Guest Inclusion:** Participants are actively encouraged to invite guests and 'ohana to key events like the Hō'ike, with options for both in-person and virtual attendance. Papa Ola Lōkahi even covered airfare for one invited guest for off-island participants at the final Hō'ike, demonstrating a commitment to wider community involvement.
- **Shared Meals and Resources:** The program encourages potluck contributions from O'ahu residents for certain dinners, promoting shared meals and cultural exchange.

Participants are also asked if they can share supplies (e.g., sewing machines, fabrics, plastic tables) rather than purchasing them, fostering a spirit of communal support and resourcefulness.

- **Collective Responsibilities:** All participants are expected to engage in group activities such as transporting luggage (halihali 'ukana), cleaning, and cooking, reinforcing collective responsibility and bonding among the cohort.
- **Interactions with Hosts and Elders:** The itinerary includes dedicated time for meeting hosts and kūpuna (elders), facilitating direct engagement and reciprocal relationships. Makana (gifts) are to be given to hosts and teachers as a gesture of gratitude and respect.
- **Collaborative Learning and Creation:** For the Hō'ike, participants are divided into small groups to create workshops and presentations ("Ki'i Honua") and also work as a large group to create a "Meta Ka'ao" ("Ki'i Ākea"), emphasizing collaborative knowledge sharing and creative expression.
- **Continuous Communication and Support:** The creation of a WhatsApp group allows participants to share, reflect, and ask questions, providing an ongoing platform for community connection and mutual support outside of scheduled events.
- **Valued Input:** The program actively solicits feedback from participants through surveys, highlighting that their "mana'o is invaluable" and directly contributes to the program's future growth and success. Participation in certain cultural ceremonies like Kīpaepae is voluntary, acknowledging individual choice while still offering pathways for engagement.

## How Facilitators Communicate with Participants

The facilitators employed a comprehensive and highly organized communication strategy, largely relying on email:

- **Primary Communication Channel:** Email is the predominant method for disseminating information, ranging from initial invitations and orientation details to crucial reminders and logistical updates.
- **Clear and Urgent Subject Lines:** Emails frequently use direct and attention-grabbing subject lines such as "Another IMPORTANT ho'ike email", "Countdown to Ho'aumoe – Don't Forget to Complete Your Surveys and Waivers!", and "!!REMINDERS - Ho'aumoe begins tomorrow!!" to convey urgency and importance.
- **Frequent and Detailed Reminders:** Facilitators send multiple reminders for critical actions like submitting waivers, flight details, completing surveys, and bringing specific items. They sometimes acknowledge the high volume of emails, noting, "Yes, I know... I'm dropping another important email into your inbox" or "Kala mai again for the billion emails".
- **Proactive Information Sharing:** Detailed itineraries and packing lists are shared well in advance of events. Information regarding transportation, pick-up points, and event schedules is communicated clearly before travel dates.



- **Structured Format:** Information within emails is often presented in bullet points or numbered lists for enhanced readability and clarity, such as outlining required actions or packing list items.
- **Direct Contact and Accessibility:** Contact information, including email addresses and phone numbers for key organizers, is consistently provided for questions and concerns, reinforcing accessibility for participants.
- **Digital Tools for Efficiency:** The use of online forms and links for surveys (Qualtrics, Office Forms) and sign-ups (Evite, Google Forms) streamlines data collection and registration processes.
- **Personalized and Grateful Tone:** While maintaining professionalism, the communications often adopt a warm and appreciative tone, using 'Ōlelo Hawai'i greetings like "Aloha kākou" and signing off with expressions like "Me ke aloha pumehana" or "Mahalo nui loa". Facilitators express excitement and gratitude for participants' time and commitment.
- **Flexibility and Responsiveness:** Facilitators demonstrate responsiveness to individual needs, such as addressing sleeping accommodations and offering flexibility for off-island participants unable to bring potluck dishes. They also clarify expectations regarding voluntary participation in ceremonies.
- **Supplementary Communication Channels:** Beyond email, a WhatsApp group is established for more informal communication, sharing, and immediate questions, fostering a continuous connection among participants. Virtual attendance options via Zoom are also provided for certain events, ensuring broader participation.

Beyond the themes of institutional priorities, cultural meanings, community engagement, and facilitator communication, the document analysis reveals several other notable qualitative themes that enhance our understanding of OHH:

- **1. Meticulous and Iterative Logistical Coordination** The sources consistently highlight an intense focus on detailed logistical planning and frequent communication of these details. Facilitators send numerous emails with specific instructions and deadlines. This includes meticulous arrangements for:
  - Transportation
  - Accommodation
  - Resource Management
  - Documentation
- **2. Emphasis on Participant Responsibility and Accountability** Participants are not merely passive recipients but are expected to actively contribute to the success and integrity of the program. This theme is evident through:
  - Collective Tasks:
  - Health and Safety Compliance
  - Environmental Stewardship
  - Timely Information Submission

- Engagement with Cultural Learning
- **3. Transformative Learning and Personal Journey through Ka'ao** The program is explicitly framed as a **"transformative process"** and **"transformative opportunity"**. **This personal growth is intrinsically linked to the 'Ōiwi concept of ka'ao:**
  - Individualized Ka'ao Development
  - Collective Meta Ka'ao
  - Integrated Reflection
  - Program Improvement through Feedback
- **4. Hybrid Model of Engagement and Resource Accessibility** The program effectively leverages a blend of in-person and virtual modalities to facilitate participation and provide resources:
  - Virtual Orientations and Check-ins
  - Online Platforms
  - Virtual Event Attendance
  - Digital Surveys and Forms
- **5. Profound Sense of Reciprocity and Gratitude** A pervasive theme throughout the communications is a deep sense of gratitude and the practice of reciprocal exchange, integral to Kanaka 'Ōiwi culture:
  - Frequent "Mahalo"
  - Makana (Gifts)
  - Reciprocal Exchange in Ceremony
  - Acknowledgment of Participant Commitment
- **6. Responsive and Adaptive Program Management** Despite the rigorous planning, the facilitators demonstrate flexibility and a willingness to adapt to unforeseen circumstances and individual needs:
  - Addressing Individual Concerns
  - Flexibility in Contributions
  - Clarification on Voluntary Participation
  - Open Channels for Questions

## Recommendations:

A deeper analysis of the provided documents reveals several other key qualitative themes that offer further insights and potential recommendations for OHH:

- **1. Proactive and Redundant Communication as a Strategic Tool** The program demonstrates an exceptional reliance on proactive and often redundant communication of vital information. Facilitators sent multiple emails reiterating deadlines for flight details, survey completion, waiver submissions, and guest RSVPs. This consistent, almost insistent, communication strategy serves to mitigate potential logistical issues by ensuring information is received and acted upon, despite the inherent "busyness" of participants' lives.
  - **Recommendation:** Continue this robust communication strategy, potentially by integrating all necessary information into a single, evolving digital hub (like

Kajabi) with push notifications, reducing reliance solely on email for time-sensitive actions.

- **2. Embracing a Collective, Resource-Sharing Ethos** The program actively fosters a sense of collective responsibility and resourcefulness among participants. This is evident in the specific requests for participants to contribute "small makana items" as gifts for hosts and teachers, as well as the explicit call for sharing supplies like sewing machines, fabrics, yardsticks, and plastic tables rather than purchasing new ones. Participants are also expected to engage in "all group activities such as hali hali 'ukana (transporting luggage), clean, cook etc". This approach not only manages costs but also reinforces a communal spirit central to Kanaka 'Ōiwi cultural values.
  - **Recommendation:** Formalize a system for "resource sharing circles" or "supply pools" at the start of future cohorts, making this communal aspect an explicit and celebrated part of the program's operational model.
- **3. Environmental Stewardship as a Core Kuleana (Responsibility)** A prominent finding is the program's deep commitment to environmental protection, which is framed as a "kuleana" or responsibility for "kānaka" (Hawaiians). Participants are given explicit and strict instructions to thoroughly clean and sanitize all gear—including footwear, equipment, and tools—to prevent the spread of invasive species and diseases such as Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death (ROD), fire ants, and coqui frogs into Hawai'i's "pristine spaces". This reflects a profound cultural and ecological awareness that goes beyond mere compliance.
  - **Recommendation:** Develop dedicated educational modules or interactive workshops on Kanaka 'Ōiwi environmental ethics and specific invasive species prevention techniques, integrating these critical "kuleana" more explicitly into the cultural curriculum rather than solely as a packing/logistical requirement.
- **4. Iterative and Reflective Learning Cycles for Personal and Programmatic Growth** The program design actively integrates structured reflection and feedback at multiple stages. Participants are encouraged to engage in "Reflection & Synthesis" sessions during the huaka'i and are consistently asked to complete "Program Feedback Surveys". The stated purpose is to "optimize the program" and track its "growth and development," with the possibility of contributing to a "published manuscript". This demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement based on participant experience and academic rigor. The "Ha'awina (Homework) Ka'ao" reinforces an iterative personal journey of self-discovery through the stages of Hua, Ha'alele, Huaka'i, Hō'ina, and Hā'ina.
  - **Recommendation:** Implement a transparent process for how collected feedback directly informs program changes and communicate these changes back to past and future participants to reinforce the value of their contributions and foster a stronger sense of co-ownership in the program's evolution.
- **5. Intentional Design for Hybrid Engagement and Accessibility** The program effectively leverages a hybrid approach to engagement, blending intensive in-person gatherings with virtual preparatory and follow-up sessions. Zoom is used for "Orientation" sessions and for virtual attendance at events like the Hō'ike. Online platforms like Qualtrics and Office Forms are used for surveys and sign-up sheets, while

Kajabi hosts course content and resources and WhatsApp is used for ongoing communication and reflection among participants. This multi-platform strategy enhances accessibility and continuous learning.

- **Recommendation:** Document best practices for managing this hybrid model, especially regarding technology use and ensuring equitable access for all participants, regardless of their comfort with digital tools. This could include offering technical support or tutorials for the various platforms used.
- **6. Centrality of Reciprocity and Gratitude** The theme of reciprocity and gratitude is deeply ingrained in the program's operations and communication. The 'Ōlelo Hawai'i word "Mahalo" (thank you) and its intensifiers like "Mahalo nui loa" are ubiquitous in nearly every message from the facilitators. Participants are asked to bring "makana" (gifts) to "mahalo our hosts & teachers", illustrating a tangible practice of reciprocal exchange. This emphasis on gratitude fosters a positive and respectful environment, acknowledging the contributions of all involved.
  - **Recommendation:** Consider creating a "Mahalo Wall" or digital space where participants can share their expressions of gratitude for specific experiences, individuals, or learnings, further embedding this core value into the program's living narrative.

## Appendix P

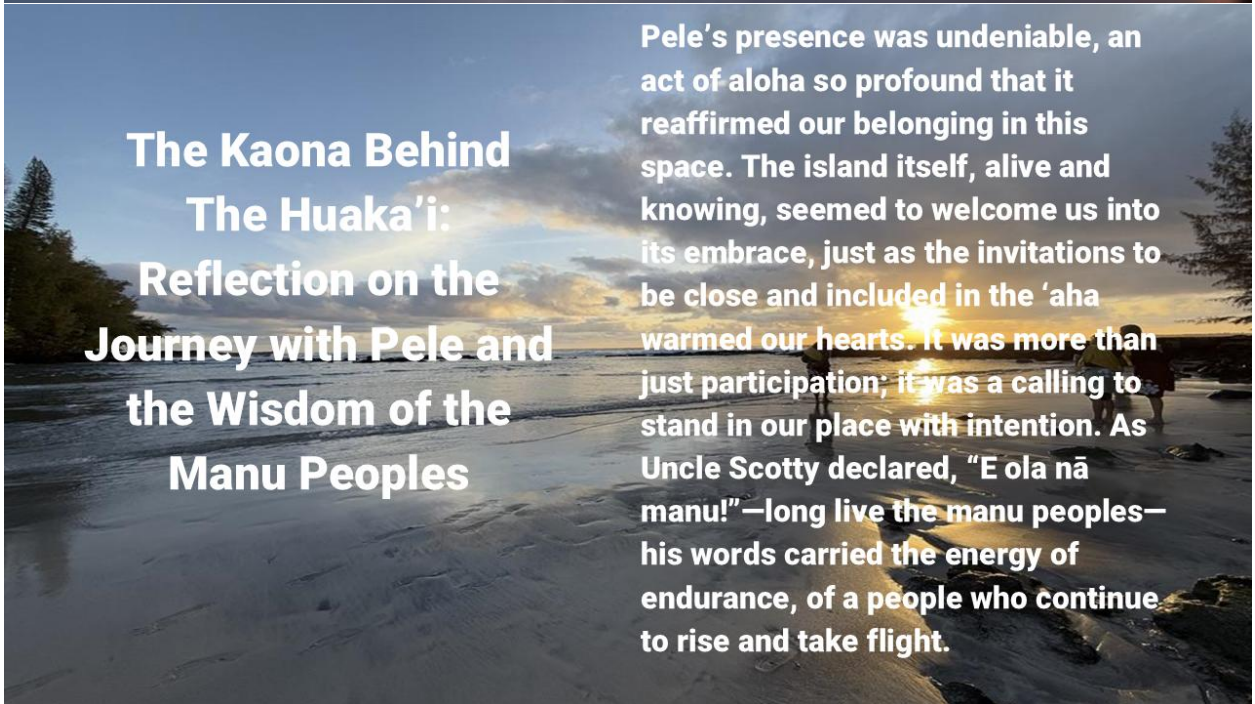
### Participant Submissions

#### Excerpt from Participant 1: The Kaona Behind the Huaka`i



### **The Kaona Behind The Huaka`i: Reflection on the Journey with Pele and the Wisdom of the Manu Peoples**

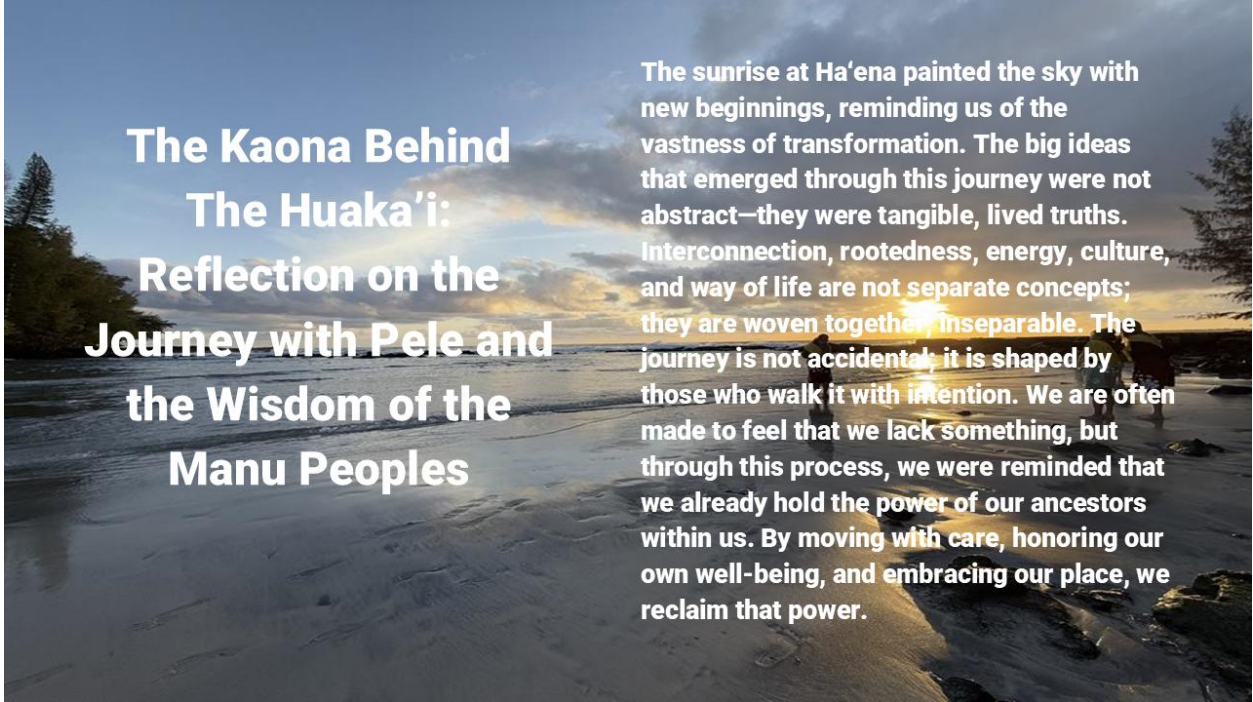
The journey we embarked upon was not by chance—it was by design, an intentional unfolding of connection, rootedness, and transformation. From the very start, the island provided the perfect timing for our arrival, allowing us to move seamlessly onto the vans, as if guided by unseen hands. The generosity of mea'ai, thoughtfully prepared and shared, reflected not just sustenance but aloha—a reminder that nourishment is more than just physical; it is cultural, emotional, and spiritual.



### **The Kaona Behind The Huaka`i: Reflection on the Journey with Pele and the Wisdom of the Manu Peoples**

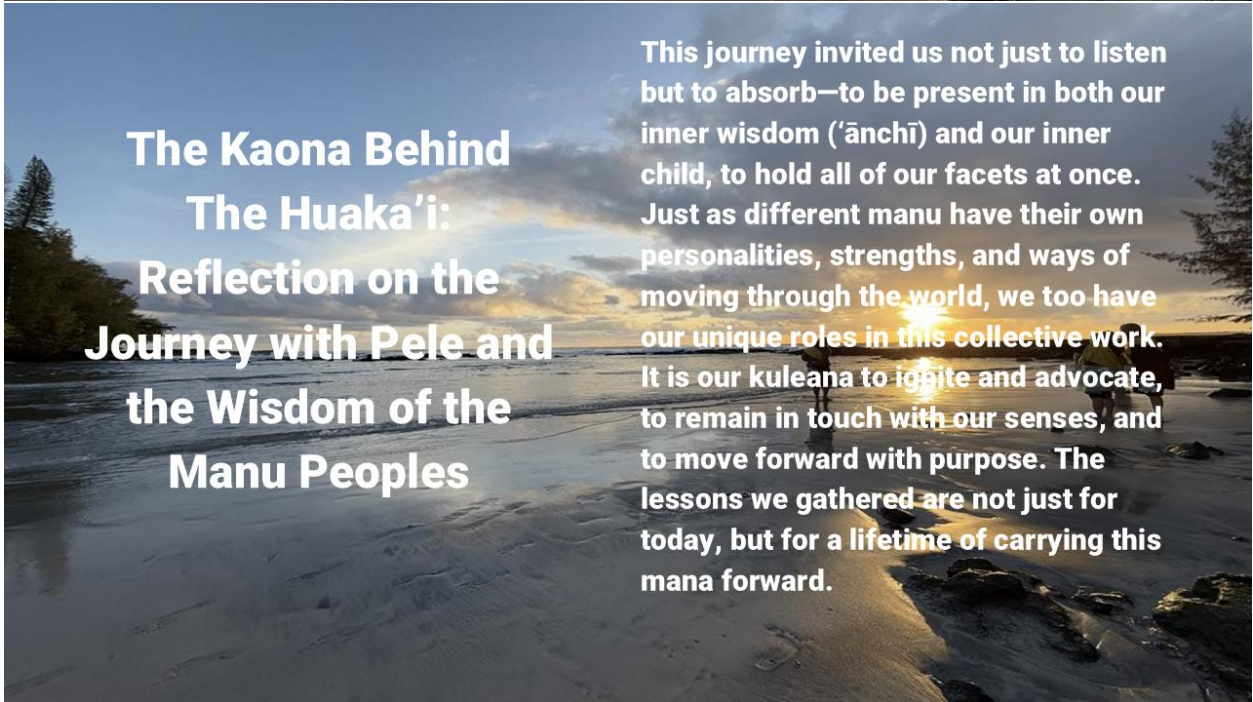
Pele's presence was undeniable, an act of aloha so profound that it reaffirmed our belonging in this space. The island itself, alive and knowing, seemed to welcome us into its embrace, just as the invitations to be close and included in the 'aha warmed our hearts. It was more than just participation; it was a calling to stand in our place with intention. As Uncle Scotty declared, "E ola nā manu!"—long live the manu peoples—his words carried the energy of endurance, of a people who continue to rise and take flight.





## **The Kaona Behind The Huaka'i: Reflection on the Journey with Pele and the Wisdom of the Manu Peoples**

The sunrise at Ha'ena painted the sky with new beginnings, reminding us of the vastness of transformation. The big ideas that emerged through this journey were not abstract—they were tangible, lived truths. Interconnection, rootedness, energy, culture, and way of life are not separate concepts; they are woven together, inseparable. The journey is not accidental; it is shaped by those who walk it with intention. We are often made to feel that we lack something, but through this process, we were reminded that we already hold the power of our ancestors within us. By moving with care, honoring our own well-being, and embracing our place, we reclaim that power.



## **The Kaona Behind The Huaka'i: Reflection on the Journey with Pele and the Wisdom of the Manu Peoples**

This journey invited us not just to listen but to absorb—to be present in both our inner wisdom ('ānchī) and our inner child, to hold all of our facets at once. Just as different manu have their own personalities, strengths, and ways of moving through the world, we too have our unique roles in this collective work. It is our kuleana to ignite and advocate, to remain in touch with our senses, and to move forward with purpose. The lessons we gathered are not just for today, but for a lifetime of carrying this mana forward.

### Excerpt from Participant 2: Hi'iaka Tears Feed They Spirit

My journey in Ola Ka Huaka'ihele o Hi'iaka was and still is challenging. A much needed and appropriate time in my life. Healing demands effort, discipline, and commitment. It also asks for patience, forgiveness, and letting go. I when let go plenty during this huaka'i. My tear ducts were overflowing Every time I spoke aloud. Emotions all over, unpacking things I thought I when go through already. And saying them with certainty, no hesitations! Talk about my Feelings. With me myself, my family, hanai family! I'm ecstatic and honored that I was chosen to be apart of this process and chose to be here every time.

This is a poem compiled from mele that we learned, wahipana that we pulsed with, and my own internal reflections. Some lines in the poem are directly pulled from the raw data and others were written during the synthesis process.

E Ho'onanea mai...





Intense heat bubbling up  
Flying firing fragments in every direction  
Jumping off, diving deep into the abyss  
Full of no apologies  
Unapologetic to be myself and search  
Kū mākou e hele me ku'u mau pōki'i aloha  
Who stands beside me, in front of, behind

Creating, igniting, inspiring  
Kā'ena ke aloha o nā hulu manu  
Waiko'olihilihi o Nānāhuki ē  
Blazing eyes light up the night sky  
Mai ka pō mai ka 'oia'i'o  
Kau mai nā hui hōkū  
Eia mākou, kou lau kaula lā

E hō mai ka lā'au  
Speak truth from a place of abundance  
Ho'oku'u  
E Maui, e Maui pa'a ka lā  
Urging to redefine our narrative  
Twisting insides and hurling movements  
Uneasy feelings of doubt, mistrust, fear

Illuminated potentiality, how do I unlock  
Articulating vulnerability  
Holding space for self  
Reflecting on reflections  
Maui, Muku, Hilo  
Hi'iaka tears feeding thy spirit  
Kino wailua release

Ke'e kino i ka mālie  
Less fearful in the face of fear  
I am robust  
Vigorous breath  
Ha'aha'a ka lani  
Growing pains cultivated  
E Hi'iaka kū

Excerpt from Participant 3: Woman of the Moon



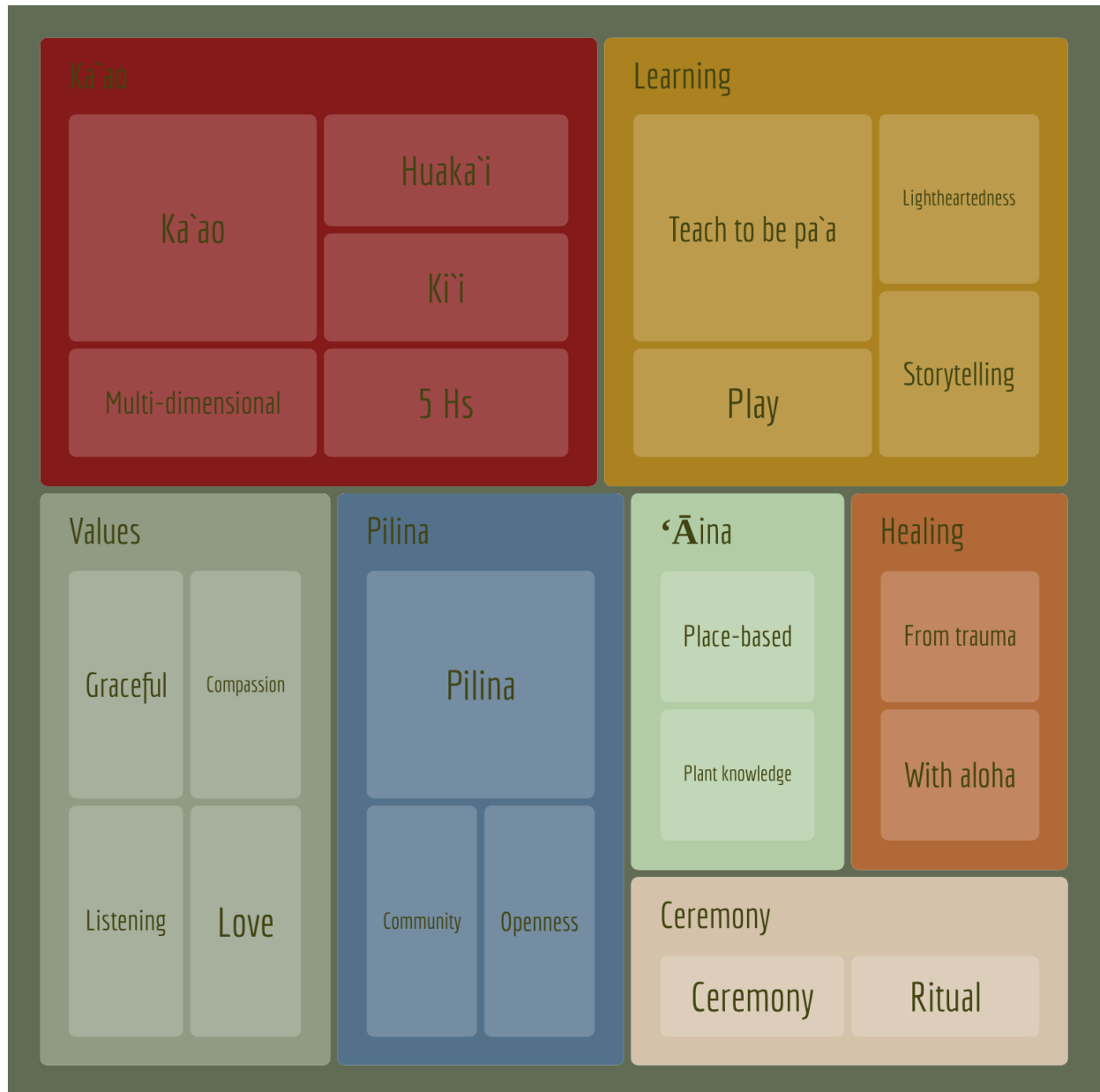






## Appendix Q

*Three of the most important things you learned from this training program*





## Appendix R

### Cohort Ka`ao

No Kīhei`olena

Wahine akua, wahine o Wākea  
Kau a`ela i ka moku a Lua, o Ahu a Lua  
O Haumea o ka lihi o Ko`olau  
Noho no i ka lihi i kapa `ia o KalihilihioLaumiha

Haumea and Wākea once lived on O`ahu in the moku of Kou, in the `ili `āina of Kilohana that sits at the edge of Ko`olau.

It is here that they enjoyed the momona, the abundance of this ka`anani`au o KalihilihioLaumiha, and enjoyed partaking in the hua of the `āina and the `i`a, especially the `o`opu of the kahawai.

-`O`opu nui

It is in the cool waters of KalihilihioLaumiha that Haumea realizes the hua that grows within her, ua laulau `ia, she is with child. du du du duuuun

“Wakea, we are expecting a child...again! I am going to Ka`ena to observe the ouli to come.

At Ka`ena, Haumea sits at Moka`ena Heiau on the ridge of Kuaokalā. She receives revelation that this child will bring life and inspiration to Hawai`i pae`aina, and help animate the maui within.

“Ok,” says Haumea “let’s do dis!”

At Uluhulu, Haumea feels the pains of labor. She stops here to make her preparations, and at the base of this `oawa she births her child, a daughter, and gives her the name `Ōlena.

`Olena, a child full of wander and awe, an observant child of the animated life around her. A curious child to the happenings of life. She was gifted an `eke by her Mama, Pō Mahina is it’s name, to help carry `ukana she may need throughout her lifes travel; and a compass called Hua, gifted to her by her friend Mōlī so she may always find her way.

Shortly after `Olena received these gifts, her lako, she heard a hissing in the distance “Tsssss, tssssss” and a rumbling vibration pulling at her na`au, her core.

`Ōlena gathered her lako, and left her home to follow the beats that call her.

---

‘Uhi, ‘uhā, ‘uhī, ‘uhā: ‘Olena follows the ‘uhī, ‘uhā that she hears and it leads her to Palikapu o Kamohoali‘i.

—> ‘Ai Kamumu Keke

It is here that Pele chooses to hānai ‘Olena and begins to teach her in Hawai‘i lifeways and the importance of mo‘okū‘auhau, genealogical connection, to honua, to kanaka, to mo‘olelo.

—> Mele Mo‘okū

Aloha e Hawai‘i

Aloha e Mauna Kea, Mauna Loa, me Hualalai

E

Eia au ‘o Ka‘ena

‘O Kuaokalā

‘O Kaiona

I ola ‘oukou, i ola mākou nei

Pele observes ‘Olenas growth and feels it is time for her to grow her knowledge, before she leaves, she is gifted a pa‘ū to record the stories from her travels.<sup>3</sup> Pele calls Koa‘e to fly ‘Olena down dea, ma o aku i Hā‘ena, to Big Mamas house.

—> Ke Ha‘a lā Puna

It is with Big Mama, the wise honu of Hā‘ena, that ‘Olena learns the importance of ritual, protocol and ceremony; and the kuleana or responsibility to nurture and cultivate this knowledge for her community.

Big Mama gifts ‘Olena with ‘ūhāloa; leaves to use as lā‘au lapa‘au, and seeds to share in her travels. Big Mama knows it’s time for ‘Olena to continue her learning and sends her to Ka‘akepa to learn from Kāneloa, the keeper of ‘awa. Bia Mama calls ‘Ulili to fly ‘Olena to Ka‘akepa.

When ‘Olena arrives there she shares her kāhea so that Kāneloa might hear her call.

—> Ua Lū Kinikini

Kāneloa accepts her kāhea and calls out for her to komo. Here she learns about wai and the life-giving waters of Kāne, and the importance of ‘awa in bringing people together to reflect, to share truths, to celebrate accomplishments, to grieve lost, to recognize illnesses, and provide space for solutions.

It is here that Kāneloa gifts ‘Olena an ‘apu. It is here that she grows confidence in self-reflection. She sees herself, and although this part of her kuleana can be scary, she chooses to ask for her first ‘apu ‘awa. Ua noa ka ‘awa.



Kāneloa calls out to his friend 'Akikiki. "'Akikiki, come grab 'Olena...she's redeh."  
'Akikiki fertches 'Olena and flies her to Kaua'i, and a new lesson begins.

When 'Akikiki and 'Olena arrive on Kaua'i, they land at Koke'e.

'Akikiki gifts 'Olena a hei and teaches her a chant to prepare her for the challenges ahead.  
—> E Maui

'Akikiki shares with 'Olena, "You've learned many things 'Olena. It is time to rest your kino, but your wailua going like wander. You going fall into one deep sleep, hoi, and your wailua will need to find it's way back to your kino! Remember the lessons you've been taught."

'Olena fell into a deep sleep. In the distance she hears chanting. As she follows the voice, she reaches Ke Ana o Kapalae; group of keiki come into view. Oh look, they have hei, I just got one from 'Akikiki. Let me go odea and learn this hei as well.  
—>A pō ē

'Olena doesn't want to leave and continue to play in hei with her new friends, not realizing that it is Makana, the trickster that is keeping her wailua there.

'Olena continues to play, until she is at her end of playing no more. Hua tries to redirect her wailua but fails. She searches for help and finds Lohi'au, who has been in this space before.

"We need to call her back" Lohi'au shares, "we need to call her NOW!"

—> E Hō Mai  
—> Lei Hā'ena i ka 'Olena

It is here that 'Olenas wailua is pushed back into her kino by her kupuna and kumu that came to answer the pule. 'Akikiki greets her with a big smile, and ka 'ai a me ka i'a to nourish her.

Back on O'ahu, in the ahupuaa of Hauula at Kalaeokapalaoa, ohana were gathering where a big palaoa had beached itself. The kaiaulu could not get the palaoa to return to the hohonu of Kanaloa.

Lanakila heard of 'Olena and the 'ike she has gained in her travels. He travelled to Kauai as his kino makani and swooped in to pick up 'Olena at Kokee and bring her back to Kalaeokapalaoa.

When she arrived, she understood her kuleana to restore Kanaloa on aina to hoopaa Kanaloa i kai. 'Olena opened her eke Po Mahina and used Hua to locate the best spaces to plant the uhaloa she had received from Big Mama. 'Olena, along with the kaiaulu o Hauula, was able to kanu uhaloa seeds at Mauna Uila, the mauna that stands above Kalaeokapalaoa.



It is here that 'Olena receives a kihei from the community to share their gratitude and aloha. She remembers the huaka'i that has nurtured her, and she is renamed Kīhei'olena



## Appendix S

### Evaluator Hui Positionalities & CVs

**Joanne 'Okika Shigeko Qina'au, PhD, MA, E-YT750**

Nourished by the wai of Pu'uloa and the mauna of Wa'ahila on the island of O'ahu, I (she/they) use research, clinical practice, and wisdom traditions to fulfill my kuleana as a Kanaka 'Ōiwi, illuminating paths toward mauiola for all. Lived experience with trauma and low socioeconomic background deeply informs my research choices and use of research as ceremony is born from powerful healing experiences rooted in the spiritual domain. My recent work on transformative approaches to decolonial and indigenized wellbeing measurement (Kukui Mālamalama) and theory for Kānaka 'Ōiwi with behavioral health challenges (Ke Ao Nōweo 'Ula, KANU) aligns in lōkahi with Ola ka huaka'ihele o Hi'iaka, aiming to reimagine integrative behavioral healthcare for generations to come.



*Figure 32 Jo's CV*

**Mei Linn Park** is a Native Hawaiian evaluator and researcher whose identity, cultural practices, and academic background—including a BBA, MSW, and ongoing PhD in Social Welfare—shape her role in the Ola ka huaka'ihele o Hi'iaka pilot project. Born and raised in Waialua, O'ahu, she was raised by a matriarch mother and fisherman father and committed to community-led approaches to Native Hawaiian health, healing, and wellness. Her work integrates business-minded evaluation strategies with Indigenous and decolonizing methodologies, centering cultural integrity and community voice. Park navigates her dual role as both insider and outsider with humility, aiming to produce findings that honor community wisdom and promote generational healing.

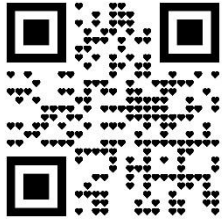


*Figure 33 Mei Linn's CV*

**Paula Toki Tanemura Araullo Morelli, MSW, PhD**

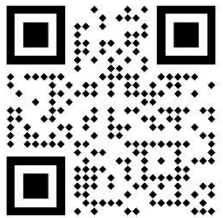
I am deeply grateful to our Indigenous ancestors who gifted me with spiritual strength to continue their work of aloha, honoring earth, life and each other. Small contributions made over 30 years in research, teaching and service were possible through collective work, aloha,

creativity and vision. The difficulties we face today pale in comparison to what our ancestors fought, endured and transcended to thrive. I ask for guidance: How are our actions today ensuring Kūkulu Kumuhana wellbeing for the next seven generations?



*Figure 34 Paula's CV*

**Valerie J. Clack** MA, BCBA, LBA (she/her) is an enrolled member of the Oglala Lakota Nation raised in Northern California where she was taught intertribal traditions and protocols in the context of the Wintu and Pit River Nations. The Lakota and Oceti Šakowin concept of Mitákuye Oyás'ın meaning, 'we are all related' or 'all my relations,' guides Valerie's worldview as well as her participation in research benefitting indigenous and native communities. Just as she endeavors to be a good relative supported by 'āina and Kanaka 'Ōiwi and as a practicing behavior analyst, Valerie's participation in Ola ka huaka'ihele o Hi'iaka pilot project centers a prioritization of indigenous community-led supports for meaningful and lasting behavior change.



*Figure 35 Val's CV*

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