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“Creating Breathing Spaces” goes to Hawaii

14th Hawaii International Summit on Preventing, Assessing & Treating Trauma Across Lifespan—
“Spirit of Aloha in Trauma Informed Care”

By Anne Purcell & Revd Brenda Reed

*In March 2017 Anne Purcell and Brenda Reed travelled to Hawaii to share the story of **Creating Breathing Spaces in the Tamaki community of Auckland** through workshops at the 14th Hawaii International Summit on Preventing, Assessing and Treating Trauma Across Lifespan. Brenda took an influential role in the Pacific Women’s Indigenous Network (Pac-WIN) faith sessions during the pre-summit. Both took the opportunity to separately explore different workshops outside of their own joint presentation during the four-day conference and they share some of their reflections in this edition of AWSC newsletter.*



Brenda Reed (standing centre) and Anne Purcell (standing right) with some workshop attendees of the 14th Hawaii International Summit on Preventing, Assessing & Treating Trauma Across Lifespan conference

Anne Purcell writes ...

I have never had quite so many offers from people to jump in my suitcase as I did travelling to Hawaii. I got there and then I began to

understand why. It was first and foremost the people that I met who shared and expressed a beautiful welcome and sharing of themselves and their Hawaiian cultural practices that fostered a deep connection with the place in a short window of time.

I felt very much at home with a real stirring of my own Celtic roots and spirituality as I sat with and learned from local Hawaiian artists and community activists about their ways of being, their challenges and how they are working through local Hawaiian cultural practices to find collective healing

and create transformation within their families and their own lives.

The spirit of aloha permeated all aspects of the conference organisation and I particularly



followed a stream of workshops focused on impact of trauma in relation to experiences of indigenous people. I connected with people working within Pacific Woman’s Indigenous Network, with woman who have moved from being survivors to thrivers. There were several threads of connection that ran through the conference and stood out for me:

- Creating Peace
- Collective healing
- Connection through action
- Collaborative change

These are shared here as four separate strands, which were woven through the whole of the conference. I am delighted to bring this learning back to the Tamaki community and everyone connected with *Breathing Spaces* as well as to my own family circle.



Ho’omaluhia - Creating Peace

The summit was co-hosted by the following organisations Institute of Violence, Abuse and Trauma (IVAT), the National partnership to End Interpersonal Violence Across Lifespan (NPEIV), Family, Violence and Sexual Assault Institute (FVSAI) and the new Hawaii Branch, Ho’omaluhia.

Ho’omaluhia has been set up as a centre of excellence where east meets west, indigenous voices are valued and diversity is honoured. The mission is to improve the quality of life and contribute to violence-free, abuse-free living for all peoples of Hawai’i. Ho’omaluhia will focus on addressing systemic poverty and inequality and will work collaboratively to improve systems responses for our most vulnerable populations. Ho’omaluhia’s name reflects its purpose, holding the meaning ‘creating peace’, gifted by Hawaiian elder Lynette Paglinawan.

“Ho’omaluhia endeavours to bridge the divide in the Pacific region between front-line professionals responding to violence and partners in education, health, cultural practice, environment, the arts and community advocacy.”

It is with Ho’omaluhia, Hawai’i Pacific Branch FVSAI where I believe we who are engaged in seeking ways to create opportunities for community wellbeing to grow in the Tamaki community of Auckland may consider building a more longstanding relationship going forward.

So, what does creating peace look like for me?

Ho’oponopono, principles of chiefly leadership introduced and explored the concept of Hawaiian cultural practice of Ho’oponopono, a holistic, restorative practice that is place-based, and steeped in local cultural values, principles and philosophy that are key to helping actively address blocks and barriers to restoring right order in relationships and healthy living.

I found this concept really challenging. It made me really consider the ways in which my own wider family has become disconnected and also the times where we have back off in silence when we have perhaps needed to move through a process of discussion together to try to find a way for different perspectives to be heard. We are learning over and over that silence in families around mental health issues, and family violence inhibit healing and opportunity to move forward. These themes come up time and again within *Breathing Spaces* sessions. How families deal with conflict, with responsibility, with how they raise children often lead to impact of trauma past and present weaving in through our conversations and activities. Parents often talk about how they find themselves parenting alone, even when there is a partner in their lives.

My mother used to say on days when there had been more than her fair share of bickering and conflict within the family that she would just like *a bit of peace*.

I wonder what that ‘bit of peace’ really looked like for Mum?

Creating peace and peace building is more than an individual pursuit. It is what happens in relation to and in relationship with others that is vitally important. How we create space to explore what’s happening to vent, to share and to learn some new skills to help us in our parenting journey.

What does a bit of peace look like for you?

Collective Healing

Transformations - Pacific Women’s Indigenous Network

Transformations: Integrating art into our lives and learning to thrive sponsored by Pacific Women’s Indigenous Network. This workshop featured the work of a collaborative mobile mural about collective healing. The work features Ku’u ‘Aina Aloha, beloved land, beloved country, a 6 x 20-foot mural in acrylic on canvas. One of the six collaborating artists Melanna Myer shared how the mural is meant to be used as a pathway to community healing. The canvas is painted on both sides, allowing viewers to walk around and see two very different scenes (see photo’s be-



low). One side is representational, portraying Native Hawaiian faces in a natural setting, the other is mostly abstract, red and ivory, jagged shapes evoking breakage and blood.

‘Painting together is like being in an orchestra, there is an unforced cohesiveness.’



This collaborative approach to community healing resonated for me with the process of how we are creating *Breathing Spaces* in Tamaki. Each person who engages becomes part of the design, everyone contributes to the unfolding story. As Meleanna described how all the artists contributed, they touched all parts of the canvas, simultaneously all making their own unique contribution. Our *Breathing Spaces* are community wellbeing spaces that open up a place where everyone is part of the design, what happens session to session and reflecting on those experiences. In creating the mural, the artists prayed together, sang together and painted through the pain. In *Breathing Spaces*, we have our own ways of sharing together and in a sense, we are ‘painting through pain’ as we create space for women who are raising children in our local community to explore their parenting journey, and carve out some space to recharge and restore themselves.

Connection through Action

Active practices –

One of lasting impacts from the conference was an early morning selfcare session that introduced a daily practice of mindfulness that I have been doing regularly since I returned home to New Zealand.

The mindfulness exercise was simple enough, it involved some time to breath, some imagery, journaling and setting an intention for the day. What’s interesting for me is that even though I have been introduced to mindful practices on many occasions this time a practice has stuck. I have definitely shifted from head knowing that practicing these skills can really help in dealing with stressful stuff that comes my way to actually doing this often and noticing the difference.

Being present, tuning in to ourselves is different for different people. Whatever your daily routines and practices, I really encourage ways that we tune in. Practicing being present ourselves can really help in moments when situations arise in our lives that really push our buttons. Practicing and observing what

calm looks like and feels like regularly, really helps when the heat is on.

At *Breathing Spaces*, we try different approaches to check out how we can find calm in our parenting. Sometimes it’s a cup of tea, or a couple of minutes in the shower that is the only res-



pite. Paying attention with kindness is core to what *Breathing Spaces* is about.

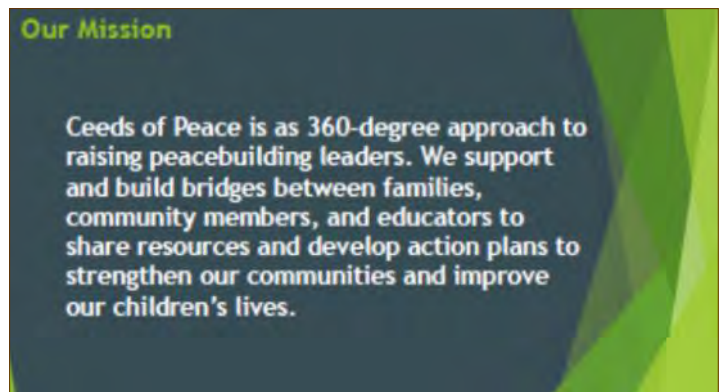
Whatever your practice how can you build in this space to help you to be present with yourself and others?

Another call to action was from presenters from **Ceeds of Peace**.



A community organisation committed to active peace building. I recommend that you can check out their website to access their toolkit and ideas of how to connect and create peace plans and active peace building activities in your community on www.ceedsofpeace.org

Collaborative change model





Mary Jo Barrett from the Chicago Centre for Contextual Change has developed a collaborative change model out of feedback from a huge number of people, (about 4000 over 25 years) who have received support services around trauma they have experienced. The research highlights five essential ingredients that are present when that support **has** worked for people. These findings are relevant to us all regardless of what context we live or work in.

- **Attachment and Connection:** To build and rebuild relationships where there is a felt sense of belonging, mutual curiosity, compassion, empathy, connecting to a deep set of values to self and other that provide a meaningful vision of the present and future
- **Safety and Empowerment:** Building a safe context/boundaries/structure within and between themselves and their relationships- collaboration and predictability
- **Value:** Through Collaboration/Strength based guidance/ Understanding and Identifying Vulnerability and Resources/ and Recognizing the universal nature of challenge and change
- **Skills:** Learning and Experience -Psycho educational and experiences/cognitive behavioral/ neuro-mind-body/communication/mindfulness/ self-regulation within and between (need to reword)
- **Hope:** Creation of workable realities – experiencing the possibility of change

Mary Jo presented this research within a session about ethical attunement. This session highlighted what is going on when we are really, present with people. She explored with the group ways to keep an eye, within the day on our energy levels and how to bring ourselves back when we get lost. Mary Jo is passionate about keeping good people engaged in working with others, and that selfcare is an ongoing daily practice of attunement.

“Life is a repeated cycle of getting lost and then finding yourself again. There are many smaller cycles within that cycle where you get lost to a smaller degree and then remember yourself again. Sometimes you do it to yourself on purpose, consciously or unconsciously. Every time you get lost it is so that you can learn something or experience something from a different perspective.” — Jay Woodman

The model presented of Collaborative change has three stages that repeat—

- Setting context for change
- Challenging patterns
- Expanding realities and consolidation.

Breathing Spaces also has patterns and rhythms emerging – the navigation by which we keep coming back to our core values of ako, alofa and acceptance.

The Collaborative change model is in a way embedded – we set the context, by our values, we explore through sharing of our parenting journeys the kind of areas where we want expansion, and we return in reflection to our experiences, in the light of our core values.

There is no set programme, there is a rhythm of expand and contract-the natural breath of the group. Each term now on our return, we map out where we have been and where to from here - of getting lost and finding ourselves again. *Breathing Spaces* is an invitational space where we practice Hono Heke – to invite willingness which has a nice synergy with the Hawaiian conference theme - *Spirit Of Aloha In Trauma Informed Care*.

The way in which I experienced the spirit of aloha theme for me is well expressed in this whakatoki -

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Ula a'e ke welina a ke aloha
 Loving is the practice of an awake mind

Summed up key words – connection, collective healing, inviting willingness.

Wondering...

*I wonder what a bit of peace looks like for you?
 What comes to mind for you when you hear the terms creating peace or peace building?
 How do you tune in and find ways to boost your energy or pause during the day?
 How do you bring yourself back when you find yourself out of tune with people?*

Hawaiian Cultural Wisdom shared:

Ho'oponopono – to actively put things in right order...
 Kono heke – to invite willingness
 Aloha – a word that encompasses hello, welcome, a reciprocal relationship and respect. Aloha is a big-hearted word
 Mahalo – thank-you

Thanks – Gratitude – Mahalo – Appreciation - Aloha

We would like to express huge gratitude to those who have contributed to making it possible for Brenda and I to travel to the IVAT conference in Hawai'i – Glen Innes Family Centre, St. Johns College, Anglican Woman's Studies Centre and Auckland DHB, Tamaki Wellbeing Project all contributed and made our participation and contribution to the 14th Hawai'i Summit on Preventing, Assessing and treating Trauma Across Lifespan possible. We also acknowledge here Suzanna Tipula for the invitation and all the presenters at the summit who shared of themselves and their work. I am full of gratitude and thanks to have been a part of this summit. Mahalo

Ohi Mahalo -a chant of gratitude

'Uhola 'ia ka makaloa la
 Pū 'ai I ke aloha ā
 Kū ka'i 'ia ka hā loa lā
 Pāwehi lai nā lehua
 Mai ka ho'oku'i a ka hāhāwai lā
 Mahalo e nā kupuna lā, 'eā
 Mahalo me ke aloha lā
 Mahalo me ke aloha lā

*The makaloa mat has been unfurled
 In love, (food is/was shared) we share*

*The great breath has been exchanged
 Honoured and adorned is the Lehua
 From Zenith to horizon
 Gratitude and thanks to our Akua
 Gratitude and thanks to our beloved ancestors
 Gratitude, admiration, thanks and love
 To all who are present, both seen and unseen*

Kehua Camara

This chant has become recognised in Hawaiian communities to acknowledge and honour a kupuna, a speaker, an event, a gathering. Many times, it is spontaneously started by someone who feels moved to offer gratitude. Anyone who knows the chant immediately joins in. The *Oli Mahalo* is appropriate to share at any time; it helps us remember and acknowledge the interconnectivity of all life forms with spirit, and to be grateful.



Participants at the Pre-Summit Workshop on Trauma, Mental Health and the Pacific Church (Brenda is seated 2nd from the right)

Brenda Reed writes ...

When I was planning to attend the 14th International Hawaii Summit, I knew I had two specific parts to play. First to attend the 2-day Pre-Summit on Trauma, Mental Health and the Pacific Church and facilitate with Anne Purcell a workshop on Creating Breathing Spaces in Tamaki. I could also check out other sessions that were available.

It was wonderful to be in Hawaii but as a Priest I knew I could be there to work too. Thankfully, I love joining the Lord in ministry wherever I go. It gives me joy. I was also doing the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) training and went expecting to have great encounters.



Rev. Brenda leading prayer after a session on "Abuse in the Church." On the left is June Pouesi and Suzanne Tiapula, Director of Ho'omaluhia, Family Violence & Sexual Assault Institute, Hawaii.

Pre-Summit on Trauma, Mental Health and the Pacific Church

I had attended the 2015 Conference as part of a newly formed Pacific Women's Indigenous Network (Pac-WIN) established in Auckland. Three of us, women Ministers from The Presbyterian, Anglican and Catholic denominations provided Ministry and pastoral care for Conference attendees during a three-day Pre-Summit meeting. Feedback from the 2015 Conference suggested more was needed on the work of the Church in the area of trauma, especially looking at the Church in the Pacific. This was the reason for this pre-summit Workshop.

My Presbyterian colleague and I had offered to again provide ministry and pastoral care to the Conference attendees if needed. We were asked to lead thirty-minute morning and afternoon sessions under the heading 'Exploration of Faith' - Pacific Women's Indigenous Network, which were basically morning and evening devotions. This was the week prior to Holy week so we chose to use the Collect and readings from the Lectionary and sing "Be still and know that I am God" as a theme song for our devotions.

On day two I led the session and used items (that I found or fashioned together like a wooden cross - made of sticks) that are generally associated with Easter to stimulate discussion on our faith walk and the symbols we use. I was mindful that not all of the participants were Christians but we had an insightful discussion.

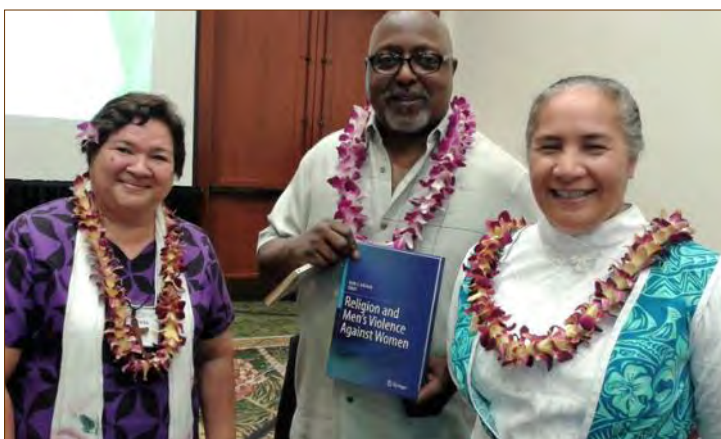
We also facilitated a session on 'Abuse in the Church' which opened up some hurtful memories from members in the audience. At the end, I was privileged to offer prayer for all who had been hurt by the leaders and workers in the Church setting. I was also a panellist in a session called "Effective Community Based Responses to Domestic Violence" which allowed me to

share about some initiatives in Glen Innes, Tamaki including the *Breathing Spaces* programme.

Self-care

The Conference emphasized the need for and offered self-care programmes throughout the four days. I couldn't attend any of these but really needed 'care' after the pre-summit meeting. Praise God I was able to get a full body massage, Hawaiian style and a pedicure which was awesome. God does provide our needs. I am also very thankful for our sponsors for having a room to myself so I could rest and pray and prepare for sessions in peace.

Most of the Participants were Pacific Islanders from American Samoa, Guam, Micronesia, Hawaii and the USA mainland. I was the only Samoan (Western) and my Tokelauan Colleague from New Zealand. It was a great opportunity to catch up with friends and colleagues I had met in 2015 and to learn more about what's happening in this area of the Pacific.



Rev. Brenda with Dr Oliver Williams & Rev. Linda Hope, showing a book that is lacking information about Violence, Abuse and Trauma in the Pacific.

Other highlights

I had opportunities to use some of my listening and reflecting skills that I was learning in CPE. These happened after workshop hours and endorsed for me the fact that pastoral care is part and parcel of a priest's life and we can be called to provide care for others outside our delegated flock.

There was a wide range of sessions at the Pre-Summit - from a theological examination of child abuse; a Pacific Peace Plan launched in Guam as part of the National Partnership to end Interpersonal Violence across the Lifespan; and programs working from the Grassroots Up to build Sustainable Collaboration. There was emphasis in many of the papers on the involvement and support of people in the community for treating all types of trauma.

A Samoan Writer and independent documentary Film producer Daniel Pouesi from California, showed a film called 'Searching



for *Tagalod*’ which looked at issues to do with pre-Christian spiritual beliefs in the islands.

A Professor of the School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota who had also been the Executive Director of the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community, ran two sessions looking at “Engaging Faith Communities to address Violence” and “A Faith based Response to Domestic Violence.” He talked about programmes in the USA where the issues of domestic violence were being addressed in Churches and Church communities were out in the community helping victims and educating about domestic violence. The pastors and congregations were giving out information and having discussions as part of the service. I would love to see that happening in our churches. The videos he showed were from Black American congregations but I am sure this can happen in our congregations.

I picked up some helpful gems from a session on “Teen Dating Violence: Guidelines and Warning Signs for Parents and Spiritual Leaders.” This was facilitated by The Revd Al Miles. Of interest, he found many young people (in USA) especially boys are unaware that being ‘intimate’ can mean just talking or hanging out. In today’s world of ‘sex texting,’ teens can pick their dates by looking at naked body images and think intimacy is only genital sexual activity. He gave some key warning signs that we can look out for in teenage boys and girls who may be in abusive dating relationships and also gave guidelines of how professional Chaplains could help if they suspected a teen was being victimised by an intimate partner.

Le Taupou

Le Taupou - a metaphorical discourse using the concept of the *taupou* was performed at the closing of the Conference by Ipu Lefiti an Advocate and counsellor from American Samoa and her niece who was the *taupou*. It had a powerful message of hope and well-being for all who participated. A *Taupou* is the Samoan equivalent of a princess. She is the chief’s daughter, is the hostess at Village functions and dances the ‘*taualuga*’ which is the final dance at a *fiafia* night or special occasion and there is an invitation for members of the family and community to join in and celebrate the event. The image or concept of the *taupou* and her regalia was used by one of the American Samoan Advocates to represent how a woman who is sexually abused is

stripped of her identity, her status, her dreams, her self-esteem and more. Each of these values is represented by an item of her clothing that is stripped off one by one. When she is helped and supported by her community and professionals – she is healed and everything that is lost is restored back until she once again takes her place as the honoured *taupou* in the family and village - so she dances to celebrate her resurrection and the community join her in the *taualuga*.

Anne and I watched this together and danced as part of the community to symbolise our willingness to be part of the healing process for all victims of abuse.

Final thoughts

The Conference was a smorgasbord of presentations on everything connected to Trauma across the life span from babies to the elderly. It was impossible to cover everything. However, for those who work in the field or are interested in Abuse, Violence and Trauma it is a wonderful opportunity for further training. I noticed that for many of the sessions the organisers had linked up with companies and Universities so that participants could earn Continuing Education points by attending certain sessions including our session on *Breathing Spaces*. I wonder whether this can be organised for NZ and Pasifika nations?

The USA Pacific Island territories have funds for programmes and training in Health and Social Services that allows their employees to attend. Funding may be the hindering agent preventing more participants from other Pacific Nations but lack of awareness and information about this conference may also be another reason.

Some of the presenters are willing to come to the Pacific Islands and NZ to run workshops and may require some further investigation and negotiation. Please let us know if you wish any more information on what is mentioned in this report.

Faafetai tele lava to the Anglican Women’s Studies Centre and St John the Evangelist Theological College whose sponsorship enabled me to attend.



Le Taupou with Robert Geffner PhD, Founding President of IVAT and Ipu Lefiti





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The Centre for Anglican Women's Studies, commonly known as the Anglican Women's Studies Centre was set up to serve and to advance the interests and needs of the women of this Church particularly those undertaking Theological training.

The Link Representatives from each Diocese and Hui Amorangi have been chosen for their leadership ability to identify, gather, facilitate, resource and encourage women in their educational preparation for ministry whether lay or ordained. It is hoped that the Anglican Women's Studies Centre can continue to enjoy the support of each Diocese and Hui Amorangi in this endeavour.

The issue of increasing numbers of women in representative positions across the councils and committees of the Church is seen as a high priority and the practice of intentional mentoring by those already in national and international representative roles is seen as a good way to expose women of this Church to fulfil their potential as leaders.

Ensuring that women's voices and stories are heard now and in the future is also one of our continued aims whether it be by traditional methods of publication or using more contemporary technologies like web publication. We remain optimistic that through continued support, the needs of women throughout this Province will be valued and recognized.

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