And How Are the Children?

A 2011 STATEWIDE RESEARCH STUDY IN HAWAI’I
Consuelo Foundation

Since 1988, Consuelo Foundation has been following the vision and mission of its benefactress, Consuelo Zobel Alger. Much of the work has focused on services in the Philippines, where Consuelo was raised and lived much of her life. At the same time, Consuelo had a great love for Hawai‘i, where she also had a home. She wanted some of the beneficiaries of her foundation to be women, children, and families in Hawai‘i, with a special emphasis on the needs of Native Hawaiians. Consuelo Foundation has contributed to “renew hope for those who have lost it and give hope to those who never had it”, as is Consuelo’s vision. All this drives the mission of Consuelo Foundation:

“To operate or support programs in the Philippines and Hawai‘i that prevent and treat abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children, women, and families.”

Here in Hawai‘i, Consuelo Foundation has undertaken numerous new initiatives, piloting and evaluation of promising practices, and family strengthening and community building efforts such as with Ke Aka Ho‘ona, the housing development they sponsored in Wai‘anae.

Dedication

This research report is dedicated to Patti Lyons in honor of her many contributions to the children of Hawai‘i, as well as for her inspiration to those who continue in her footsteps today.

Research conducted by Carol A. Plummer, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work and Consuelo Foundation Research Affiliate. This research was made possible through a joint effort of the University of Hawai‘i Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work and Consuelo Foundation.
ABOUT THE RESEARCH STUDY

Consuelo Foundation decided that in addition to spearheading certain efforts to prevent and treat abuse and neglect, it was important to learn the most effective ways to accomplish these goals by investigating in research and evaluation. The charge for this research project was to focus on the vision and mission, but to further ground this work in quality research to deepen an understanding of the current needs in Hawai’i regarding children and families. This study aimed to identify some gaps in services, and learn what knowledgeable people believe contribute to child abuse or prevent it. Specifically, the work was aimed to:

1. Collect exploratory data on the current situation regarding child maltreatment and responses to it.
2. Make the research “applied”, that is, that it provides information that is useful and could have practical application in Hawai’i.
3. Focus on the Native Hawaiian community.
4. Provide information that is not available elsewhere and taps into both formal and informal organizations and experiences.

The Advisory Committee: A community-based networking approach drove the pace, design, and analysis of this study. Under the guidance and support of a Research Advisory Committee, developed specifically to guide research endeavors, decisions were driven by input from statewide leaders in issues of children and families. This input proved invaluable to learn about other research/evaluation studies recently conducted or underway (to avoid redundancy or wasted resources) but also provided a long-term historical context for child welfare/wellbeing issues, service delivery challenges, and community’s past experience with research. Additionally, these influential individuals, who donated their own time and input, but each provided the researcher with additional input, but each provided the researcher with additional input, allowed the community to determine the direction, and collect the richest possible research data, it was clear that a qualitative study was required. Once this was determined, we decided to collect data on each island, with two sites selected on both O'ahu and Big Island due to geographic distance and numbers. Further, two type of individuals were selected for group inquiries: kupuna living in the area and service providers attending to the needs of children and families in those communities.

Kupuna were selected for their wisdom and long-view perspective, as well as for their particular knowledge of Hawaiian culture and family strengths. Service providers were a group selected for their unique knowledge and regular interaction with children and families in need, those receiving services and struggling to survive. Together the input was seen as critical to best understand current issues and needs in that particular community.

The approach and questions, as well as letters of invitation to attend, were slightly different for each group. With kupuna (defined and selected solely by our local partner organizations), we took a more open-ended approach. Generally we informed them of our interests and raised the discussion questions at the beginning raise that topic. Generally we informed them of our interests and raised the discussion questions at the beginning raise that topic. With service providers, those who often work with family violence, child removal, prevention of abuse, or reuniting of families, we were more explicit and explicit. However, even with this group, the focus groups were conducted in a “talk story” manner, with directions and emphasis dependent upon the group process rather than rigid research directives.

The Research Participants: While there was no standard recruitment protocol, we trusted our community partners to invite a cross-section of service providers, relying on their superior knowledge to make certain public and private agencies were well-represented and included a wide range of perspectives and opinions. While it is difficult to determine why people volunteered to attend, work demands, scheduling possibilities, curiosity, and a desire to contribute to the discussion (and to make a difference) are all probable factors. All major Hawaiian service provider groups were represented including education, health, law enforcement, social services, mental health, abuse prevention, etc.

By design, we did not constrain the definition of kupuna. We did provide an expansion of the definition to include those who are Hawaiian cultural leaders or knowledgeable about Hawaiian traditions and practices. In fact, the range of kupuna definitions included: people raising grandchildren or great-grandchildren; kupuna who provided cultural expertise and programming to the schools, and people who worked for or led Hawaiian-focused cultural programming. Service providers generally were people currently employed in the helping professions.

Research Questions: The central aim of the study was to learn from community stakeholders more about how children and families in Hawai’i are coping in 2011, and to see what were identified as their strengths and challenges. Specifically, we were interested in any discussion of child abuse and neglect, but also in factors people perceive to contribute to, interface with, or prevent abuse. Secondly, the aim was to learn about resources, both formal and informal, that work to keep children safe and build strong families. This included what is perceived as working and what is not seen as beneficial, or what may even be harmful, in both formal organizational responses and informal community response.

Because storytelling and gift-giving are both strong traditions in Hawai’i, dark blue bracelets were distributed to all attendees. These were embossed with the message, “And How Are the Children?” When receiving these bracelets, groups were told about the story of the Masai tribe in Kenya. Rather than greeting one another with a “Hello”, members of this tribe first ask “And How Are the Children?” This focus on children happens because children are important to the community. This well-received story helped link participants with others worldwide who raise and care for children, and also acknowledged the fact that children’s functioning is strongly connected to how the entire community is doing. Further, it emphasized that the focus group participants are the experts on their children in their communities and that their experience and opinions would be valued in considering interventions, programs, and future directions.

Although the primary starting place for each focus group was “And How Are the Children?”, formal procedures and questions were approved per University of Hawai’i research policy. In fact, in nearly all cases that initial question provided a rich and full discussion, requiring no additional questions. Most issues addressed spontaneously by respondents as they emerged in the discussions. On occasion as follow-up or to redirect discussion toward topics of interest or clarification, approved questions were used as back-up.

The policy was to ask follow-up questions or respond to kupuna mention of child abuse or family violence, but not to bring it up early in the group. Later if this topic had not been raised by a group participant, we may direct questions toward abuse (i.e.: In some communities we have heard about child abuse. How much of an issue do you think that is here?). With service providers, we asked much more directly what services were being offered, how families were faring, how beneficial programs were, since this was their professional domain. While a range of questions were permitted, often the discussion made asking questions redundant, since topics were adequately covered. Not all questions were used with each group. The range of questions approved for the study included:

FOR KUPUNA

1. What are currently the major issues for Native Hawaiian families?
2. What are the greatest strengths you see in Native Hawaiian families?
3. What are the barriers to success for Native Hawaiian families in 2011?
4. What, if anything, are changes you have seen between the past and now regarding parenting practices in the Native Hawaiian community?
5. What community resources can you identify that have been most helpful in strengthening and supporting families in the Native Hawaiian community?
6. To what extent do you think child abuse and neglect is an important problem in the Hawaiian community? Please explain.
7. What challenges are unique to this community in addressing child abuse and neglect?
8. That community and cultural strengths keep children safe in your community?
9. What community and cultural risks (for child abuse) exist for children in your community?


10. What informal or formal networks assist parents and children in the community where you live?

**F O R   S E R V I C E   P R O V I D E R S**

1. What are currently the major trends, (past, present, and future) in the prevention of child abuse and neglect in Hawai‘i?
2. What are the challenges in responding to child abuse and neglect?
3. What, if anything, are changes you have seen between now and problems in the past with child abuse and neglect? Are there any new or emerging issues you see?
4. What interventions can you identify that have been most helpful in reducing child abuse and neglect?
5. What challenges are unique to this community in addressing child abuse and neglect?
6. What community and cultural strengths keep children safe in the areas you serve?
7. What community risks exist for children in the areas you serve?

**Data Collection:** Following the months of preparation and relationship building with partner organizations, dates and sites were selected that were perceived to be convenient and comfortable for participants. Queen Lili‘uokalani Children’s Center, Neighborhood Place, and several other non-profit organizations graciously provided space in their communities that were familiar to participants and used for many community functions. Generally, kupuna groups were held in mornings for ease of grandparents raising grandchildren who needed to be home for afternoon childcare. Professional service providers most often gathered in afternoons. In all cases, a meal and snacks were provided for all participants in gratitude for their participation.

All attendees received either an email or printed invitation with details of the study and when and where we were meeting for this voluntary study. Upon arrival, additional materials were distributed about the voluntary nature of the study, risks and benefits, and about Consuelo Foundation. Consent forms and a participant list were also signed, with all questions answered at that time. Permission was also requested to audiorecord the sessions, and was granted in all cases. At times, discussion proceeded before audio-taping to adequately and appropriately provide. Due to our backup of tapes, all data was captured, with the exception of the Moloka‘i kupuna group, where both tapes failed. As a result, we attempted individual phone interviews with each participant and used notes taken in the focus group in order to capture the data to the best of our ability. After transcriptions were finished, each group participant received a copy of the transcript and was provided a minimum of two weeks to read and make comments or corrections. These comments and corrections were incorporated into the final report. This iterative process is recommended in community-based research, particularly in indigenous communities. In this way a “guest” researcher has the opportunity to be corrected and directed by community members who better know the said and meant.

Once again these feedback sessions were conducted in collaboration with our community partner. All focus group participants were personally invited to attend either a daytime or evening discussion about the findings. The results focused on that particular community’s responses. In all cases, community members who had been unable to attend the focus groups were also invited to attend if they were interested in the topic. This final iterative process allowed the research team to check their materials with community members before publishing this booklet. Additions were made, and in some cases updates or relevant comments were able to be incorporated into this report.

A coding schema was then created using the framework of the ecological model. The ecological model is often used to understand levels of community issues and provided a familiar framework that could be easily understood. The ecological model includes changes and issues at the level of society, the community, the family/relationships, and the individual. Identified themes were coded on these four levels as well as based on whether they referred to a positive or negative aspect (i.e.: high value on families would be coded as a family level, positive, high rates of drug abuse would be coded as a negative on the community level). Finally, they were coded by the particular strength or challenge (teen pregnancies, valuable system-level services). Comments were also noted that directly addressed the question, “And How Are the Children?” All transcripts were double blind coded (two coders who did not know each other’s ratings of one another), with discrepancies examined and re-coded by joint agreement. In many cases the triangulation (use of multiple sources of data—kupuna, service providers) strengthened confidence in the data. Additionally, saturation was reached, meaning that as we proceeded in our focus groups, repetition was frequent regarding themes and subthemes and after a point, no new issues arose. This builds confidence that all relevant topics have been addressed. Not all stories are too negative, skewing the public’s view of an overall community. We have therefore highlighted some of the positive stories provided. However, numerous community members, even when they were disturbed by some of the stories told, said that we should tell the stories as they were given since they are also real, even if people are uncomfortable with, as one said, “the elephant in the living room”.

• It should be noted that this organized collection of stories, complete with summaries and recommendations, in no way compares how children are doing between Hawaiian communities or between Hawai‘i and other states.

11. Deep problems are widespread; however, it is the solutions that may need to be unique to each community. Note that focus group participants not only identified challenges, but also suggested remedies. We offer this research as one current snapshot in time that may lead to addressing the range of crises and opportunities faced in Hawaiian communities.

• Working to both strengthen communities and families and ameliorate problems will take a cooperative effort of government, community groups, nonprofits, business, and religious and civic organizations.

Important Considerations

When Reading the Report:
• Choosing kupuna, as well as service providers who work with struggling families, provides an important view of a community. However, this view can have limitations. It is possible that this report focuses more on problems than successes because of the lens of the participants. Clearly, community and family strengths are apparent amongst all communities. Although the question was “And How Are the Children?”, some respondents may have wanted to be helpful by identifying difficulties that need to be addressed. Not all voices in the community were gathered for this study, so future studies may want to include more types of focus groups.

• Quotations were transcribed and printed as near to the spoken word as possible. In some cases, phrasing and words incorporated pidgin-English.

• Because this is a mosaic of stories, contradictory experiences may co-exist in a community, and not all agree on “how it is”. This study aimed to collect and organize issues, not determine any one truth. This research is offered to promote discussion and ongoing work on these raised concerns.

• When we returned to communities to gain feedback on our findings, in almost all cases those who participated either provided necessary corrections or felt the study reflected what they wanted to say. In some cases, readers may feel that the stories are too negative, skewing the public’s view of an overall community. We have therefore highlighted some of the positive stories provided. However, numerous community members, even when they were disturbed by some of the stories told, said that we should tell the stories as they were given since they are also real, even if people are uncomfortable with, as one said, “the elephant in the living room”.

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HAUʻULA

Intergenerational Family Dysfunction

It was clear from both kupuna focus groups that many families have personally experienced the effects of interpersonal violence, destructive family patterns, confusion regarding system responses, the promotion of aggression, and trauma. Like many other kupuna groups, they report grandparents taking on much of the responsibility of raising children.

•Kupuna are able to jump over this horrendous business that has happened to all of us with drugs and still embrace the family.

•There’s a lot of neglect, and I’m talking to you by experience. I seen the neglect.

•My granddaughter, she going to be three. At six months old, my daughter them living next door and she already in the system because the mother tested positive for marijuana. Child addicted, had nicotine seizures, CPS come in.

•They have sex education in school and it doesn’t help the kids. They still do it. Why have those kind programs? The child going do it. Babies having babies. I think it needs to come from the home. Our children see their aunts and uncles having children upon children and hanging out late at night. It’s OK.

Increased focus on parenting and involving parents was recommended by kupuna in Hauʻula.

•Most of the time the parents are working and the kids are home alone and they just go off and do whatever they want and be home before the parents get home. The parents don’t see what their kids are doing until it gets out of hand. So it’s like most of the time the children are raising themselves. And that’s why they have no respect for the parents.

•The challenge is the parents. They were not really nurtured as children. And so the role they come into, they are not prepared for it.

Current and Historical Political Forces that Impact Family Functioning

This focus group expressed a great deal of dissatisfaction with the political and personal consequences that stemmed from the overthrow of the Hawaiian government and the results of moving from traditional Hawaiian ways to “western” lifestyles. They discussed wrongs committed long ago as well as prejudices and policies that harm Hawaiians today in the “system”.

•If you ask how’s the Hawaiian family, you going all the way back to an unhealthy foundation from colonization. What are we going to get healthy? When the wrong is rectified. Right now all of our cultural practices, everything that we do is jeopardized. Our people need help, they sick, they stuck in a disease and it goes all the way back to colonization. You disconnect from the ‘aina, you disconnect period.

The way current intervention system functions in line with western rather than Hawaiian values also drew a great deal of criticism. Sometimes the criticism was for lack of action, other times for inappropriate action, and sometimes for culturally insensitive interactions.

•The judicial system is really flawed. Also, they stigmatize us because we’re Hawaiians.

Homelessness and Drugs

Acknowledging and assisting those who are most needy was a concern of the Hauʻula kupuna.

•Who looks after the young children of the homeless, like Hauʻula beach park? That’s what bothers me is the little ones when you see them running around. Who is looking after them?

Kupuna expressed grief regarding how the status of Hawaiians in relation to other groups in Hawaii has impacted how youth view being Hawaiian.

•One day my son come home. How come your friends call you Jim and not Kimo? “don’t want to be called Kimo I like to be called Jim.” If you talk to him, he sounds haole. He acts haole. I said, what you acting like that for? He said, ‘Because you know what? I don’t want to be Hawaiian. Because Hawaiian is not successful. Haoles are. I want to be my white name’.

KEY CHALLENGES

1) Intergenerational family dysfunction
2) Historical trauma and loss
3) Homelessness and drugs
4) Discouragement

KEY REMEDIES

1) Focus on healing and family restoration
2) Right historical injustice
3) Address the needs of the neediest
4) Implement Hawaiian values of caring

•They need to learn to be culturally sensitive, especially coming into this community. Don’t come in here and blast me. I’m not the guilty party. I’m here to work with you. We went thru all this mea mea with my daughter, but it was the neighbors that reported her. CPS said, did you see him hit the girl? They could hear the hit and this six month old screaming and he’s telling her to shut the F up. Hello, CPS, that’s not good enough for you?

Hawaiian culture-based educational opportunities were also critiqued.

•You would think the kid that need the education would get in. Not the high and mighty who pass the test with flying colors. Except Kamehameha has always said that they’re trying to develop the Hawaiian leaders. So at one level, they’re trying to do that. But when that happens, they all leave for the mainland.

•Now it’s almost like 911. The children just give call, ‘child abuse, child abuse, I’m being abused.’ And the system come, not even seeing both sides of the story, just snatch the children. See the children don’t understand that the consequences of doing those kind of stuff is going to affect you, me, and everything else.

Like some other focus groups, this group expressed some concern that children can and do inappropriately accuse adults of child abuse, and once this is in the hands of the system, more problems than solutions occur.

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•It (the ‘aina) is supposed to be for us, for them, for generations to come. And we don’t see that. And that is why we get plenty Hawaiians all hiding in the bushes, CPS looking for the children. Not all of them druggie. They just cannot make it. Rent is high.
HAU‘ULA

The effects of drugs and their role in the removal of children from homes, and addiction problems were also explored by kupuna attending the focus group. Many participants shared in detail how drugs had personally affected them and their families.

• You can’t count on parents. Because most of the parents are doing drugs. They are homeless and they get kids in the tents. I know of one person who had two kids in the tent with them. No blanket, nothing, raining and with the girlfriend. No pillow, no change clothes and the first thing they think of in the morning is who is going watch their kids cause they gotta get money cause they like take a hit.

Discouragement

Regarding Solutions

Both personal and collective history, as perceived by group participants, seemed to create a sense of discouragement and lack of confidence that things could change for the better, or that improvements were truly possible. However, looking to the children and the hope for them in the future was seen as one bright spot.

• You guys ever went to Makua lately? Makua side. You cannot go through, our Hawaiians they’re devastated, they so depressed. Even me sometime.

• It’s sad, and sometime I cry. People cannot rent a house, they put up a tent and boom, you cannot be here. It’s against the law. Before when I was little, we go to the park and no such thing as you get a permit. No, you just go down there and camp wherever you want. Now the park and no such thing as you get a permit. No, you cannot go through, our Hawaiians they’re devastated, they the future was seen as one bright spot.

Remedies

At the same time, some participants clearly stated ways they had positively responded to their trauma or how in seeing the pain of others they were able to empathize and help.

• So I’ve always taken what we call hānai people in, children. I started that when I got newly married. So I’ve seen a lot of children that got abused, or how their families discarded them. I think the beautiful thing was that, after I raised them, I got them back with their families and they mended very well.

• We had a hard time growing up. Very, very hard. My dad was an alcoholic. My grandma and grandpa took care of us. My dad and mom got a divorce. Kids kind of tear up the family real bad. We struggle, throughout our life we struggle. Everything we wanted we had to do on our own. But it taught me a lot of values.

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• So you face defeat at so many levels, that when you come home, your child not doing good at school or your job is not paying enough. And then they turn to things that can relax them, be it drugs, pornography, be it whatever.

So you have to be his friend to touch that family. Got to be a good example. They will feel that spirit about you. All of us can get involved with community and help those who have fallen.

Additional Quotes from Hau’ula Kupuna

• Intergenerational Family Dysfunction

“When you ask “Where is our Hawaiian families today?”, they are not thriving but they are surviving. Today one of the biggest challenges is crystal methamphetamine with our Hawaiian people. Especially in this community when I look at how our communities are deteriorating. And it’s not only that drug, but it’s generational dysfunction.”

• The dad called me and says “I want you to beat my son because he did that to your daughter (got her pregnant). If a boy did that to my daughter I would beat him up too.” I cannot. If he wants to beat up his son it’s up to him. But I don’t touch your son. Teach him the correct way. He is going to be the father to my grandchild. I don’t want him to be abusing my grandchild or my daughter.”

• Even the court system I really don’t understand. They give the abuser back the child. And yet we fighting for them and we can’t have them. Our own grandchildren. But the court give them back to the abuser. This system stinks here.”

• My oldest stepson, age 20, is into drugs now because his mom got him into it. He got a job and was doing good. Then he went to see his mom and ended up losing his job and everything. We already have problems with their mom. He went off on us at ten this morning, on his little rampage. We are not going to put up with this anymore.”

• Millama to our children, especially our grandchildren. For me, my children, they never listen to me. So now I gotta make sure that my grandchildren get taken care of. My daughter, my son, didn’t listen to me for instructions. But they don’t take care of their children.”

• Current and Historical Political Forces that Impact Family Functioning

“Hau’ula is now getting populated by these mainland people. And getting fights in the park. Where you come from? Braddah go back to where you was, we getting hard time already without resources taking care of our own peeps. You need to go back where you came from.”

• I’ve got this youngest one that is hanging around with the nerds. The nerds are not Hawaiians and haole. And he said those are the dominant races. That’s how sad it is. I talked to somebody and they said, he’s right. That leaves us our job as parents to say, hold up brother, you are Hawaiian also.”

• Homelessness and Drugs

“We’re telling you the families are not doing well. How do you help the families?”

• Because they are homeless, sometimes they get hungry. Had one of the boys that stole, he was stealing from people’s cars. I said, the next time you hungry, don’t go steal. You come over here and eat. “

• When police see these ladies with substance abuse and they got a couple children with them, the police don’t want to go into the problem of trying to protect the child. If I was an officer and I suspected she was on drugs and she had a little baby, I’d say, come in this car, we going down. This is not good for the little child, what she’s doing.”

• The kids were taken away because I guess both mom and dad were on drugs too. And I told him, I don’t want no drugs over here. If I have drugs coming into the house by you guys, you guys don’t come here no more.”

• Discouragement

“Many concerns especially in this rural area that we live in. Young pregnancy. Babies having babies. Grandparents, no matter how sick, whatever strength they have left have to raise their grandchildrens. No help from the system. It’s almost like, it’s your problem, you guys take care of it. I believe all of us here have one or two (children or grandchildren) who are fading away, spiritually, physically, and mentally. How do you reach them again?”
**Economic Survival**

Economic distress is currently being faced by many families, and thus also affects children. One kupuna spoke articulately about what many shared in the group: Lack of child supervision, exhaustion, tight schedules, and stress all contribute to children being left to their own devices.

• I have a granddaughter in Honolulu and she’s working three jobs from eight to eight, just to survive. When the parents are not there for guidance, I think the children just kind of do their own thing.

• When I think about what the foundations are about, it has to do with, I hate to say, but dysfunctional families that we try to service, we try to help. Right in our backyard we have that, sometimes in our families become dysfunctional.

• Or they can’t afford (the programs). A lot of time the problem is because they can’t afford it. It’s a struggle. Some of our families are struggling.

**Negative Influences**

There was a clear recognition that many negative influences bombard children. At the same time, children absorb both good and bad messages, such that guidance and support for them is incredibly important.

• You sit there and oh my goodness; you have your 13 year olds coming in hapai.

• There’s a lot to say about learned behaviors and the role models behind them.

• There’s a lot of influence in schools. There was this, a couple of days ago, friends that I know from church. They’re good kids, but they hung around the wrong people, so they went to school with knives and got expelled from school.

While some reclamation of the “old ways” is recommended, there is also acknowledgement that family communication, including influencing children positively from the youngest years, also needs to recognize the world is a changing place.

• But this age and time we have to live the way we are, we cannot give back the cars. We cannot give back the money, how we gonna get fed? Heck no. Educate the kids now, because a lot of them are lost, and that’s the ones that

**Creating Connections**

Many families and individuals have become so overwhelmed with their responsibilities and stresses that their connections with the broader community have been strained or severed. Restoring connections among people and tapping into the strong communities, building on the extended ‘ohana may help provide much-needed support and healing.

• When you look at strengths of Native Hawaiians of our family, our ‘ohana, it’s something like, we hard workers. A lot of that is rooted in more than custom and tradition. It’s almost like going back. That’s what we got to do, go back to the roots. Because was good.

• I look at my family and, sure they’re drugs involved, but with lot of support, they just move away from it. There’s not only these Hawaiian families that are not doing well, but there are Hawaiian families that are doing very well. They’re well educated and they have respect for each other, and that’s the way I look at the Hawaiian family.

**Remedies**

Solutions to the problems identified included those done at an individual, family, and community level. Learning skills for sustenance was deemed an important, as was providing healthy role models to children.

• It’s really important that as adults, we have to realize the influence we have on our children. Not just our own, other children.

• You need to get back into the body, you need to do stuff. You need to fix things if it’s broken, you cannot just be relying on everybody else, you just got to help each other. So it’s a helping system that’s going on, what I see in the Hawaiian system.

“**Our children, Japanese, Filipino, whatever are still ours. Hawaiian or not. They live here, they’re going to grow up here, they’re going to have their families here. Most likely they were born here. They are from here. So they deserve that sense of place as well. So when you talk about our children, it’s OUR, inclusive.”**
HILO KUPUNA

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Additional Quotes from Hilo Kupuna

• Economic Survival and the Role it Plays in Neglect and Abuse

"I see some families now trying to get back to sustainability. Gardening on their own, raising their own cattle."

"Hawaiians no scared show love. That’s a positive. There are Hawaiians out there that are trying to help and give back, so that’s another strength."

"Too much technology right now. They forget the old ways."

• Negative Influences

“When I say struggling, I mean financially, emotionally in relationships with each other, mother father, whether you’re a nuclear family and you’re raising your own children, or you hanai, or you kupuna raising the children. And sometimes if the communication’s not there, they go to the ones they’re closest to, their peers. So that influence is much stronger."

“I don’t know if it’s just generational, I notice the younger kids now, lack of respect. For themselves, for their elders, the kupuna, for their parents."

“Too much drug babies we see coming through, and you have the parents who are hooked on drugs, and every time she has a relapse, the baby’s having a relapse.”

• Creating Connections within the Community

“We have a land base. This is our home, our sense of place. Many of our children have that sense of place, but they may not understand the place. Even if their home is sleeping on the beach, as Hawaiian this is our home, this is our land."

“So I decided that we are going to have a family meeting once a month and during that family meeting, you let out the good, the bad. Because when you live with that many people, you feel the tension that’s around you.”

“My grandchildren are looking for colleges to go to, and applying. But it’s not that easy for the Hawaiian children to get the assistance and grants and scholarships that they want.”

“Unfortunately, maybe the Hawaiian population, the native population, is those troubled, has the most troubles, is troubled the most. That’s part of being native people at the start leading to disenfranchisement of us.”

• Expanding Opportunities for Help and Advancement

“If we could make more people understand that you get your foster child, that is your child for that time, and you treat it as your child, not “You go do the dishes, you clean house, you do this, you do that.” Too many times I saw our children doing chores that their other siblings, other children in the family didn’t do. They were treated like less than. I thought that was wrong. But we grow up, we survive, we become educators, even with that.”

“Our people love to learn things. I learned that when our language became a written one, people loved learning to read and by the 1860’s Hawaii was the most literate country in the world.”

“And our parenting, what is our kuleana, what is our responsibility? Our children need to know what kuleana is also. We need to step up and take our kuleana. We can do it, just make up your mind to do it.”

E lauhoe mai na wa’a; i ke ka, i ka hoe; i ka hoe, i ke ka; pae aku i ka ‘aina.

Paddle together, bail; paddle; paddle, bail; paddle towards the land.

If everybody works together the work will be done quickly. On interisland trips, the two most important tools besides the sail were the paddles and the bailer. In heavy seas, the water would wash over the boat and so one or more natives would be constant bailing. Others would be paddling together on command to reach their destination in the shortest time.
HILO SERVICE PROVIDERS

Worker Burnout and Service Deficits
Hilo service providers acknowledged the consequences of program reductions and inadequacies. Given the recent cutbacks, most workers remembered times when much more was available to offer families. They also voiced the belief that the state should re-fund the prevention services that had been eliminated and, with the current cutbacks, the state is not addressing the prevention aspect of child welfare.

• All of a sudden our program got restricted to the point where it’s like why would we even have a program?
• And it’s the same thing with sex assault. Restrict the program enough then you go ok we’re just going to put an ad in the paper saying “No rapes on Friday” because we’re closed.
• Then you also read an article in the newspaper about the five year old that gets drowned. So you kind of go, well this person could have been in this program (if it was still funded).
• I just feel absolutely terrible, you know we tell these people you need to be self sufficient, and encourage them, and get through this program, and when they get through, oh we can’t help you anymore, you’re not abusing your kid. For the work they were providing, Hilo service providers believed they were asked to deal with cases that required intervention beyond the scope of their training and abilities. Additionally, service providers questioned the efficacy of an over-emphasis on paperwork and "official process" rather than effective interventions and time with clients.

• I’m not educated to be the counselor. But I end up having a sobbing women and a couple of tearful men on my shoulder while I tell them, we can work through this, keep open, we’ll find a way kind of thing.
• The audits that we go through are not about whether we’ve had a success with the family. Our audits are about, did you get this piece of paper filled out right, did your narrative look sufficient, did you refer to the right agency, and it’s all about somebody going through paper work to say, yup I think you were effective, and that’s really not effective.

Addressing Mental Health, Parenting Styles and Abuse
Hilo service providers attributed many parenting deficiencies to unmet mental health needs of parents and family members who resorted to violence in their discipline methods as well as poor family communication.

• We’re seeing a lot more mental health problems. Often times the mother has a serious diagnosed mental health problem. It worsens, and the children are removed, and often times they haven’t the slightest idea of why the children are removed. “
• The children clearly understand that they don’t want to be in that situation. But the parents are in denial or they’re blaming someone else, or they disagree with their diagnosis, and they have a very difficult time getting the help that they need, accepting the help that they need, so it’s real difficult. But we’re seeing a lot of mental health problems and this is all ethnic groups.
• I have a caseload of 24 and I’d say that 80% of them are mental health…

By no means did group participants think unaddressed mental health issues were driving all child abuse cases. Some abuse, they reported, seemed linked to poor coping, intergenerational experiences, emotional neediness, and a lack of understanding of the harm being suffered.

• From our perspective, we’re seeing a lot more children dead because of somebody within their family.
• Their idea of discipline is yelling, spanking, and taking it to the extreme. I have a client that uses anything that he knows that the child will be scared of, and he builds that fear in the child.

Countering Negative Influences
Drug use and its interface with abusiveness, as well as how abuse impacts children were viewed as two very significant negative influences on families. Further, the inappropriate role models, as well as silence and secrecy about abuse keep violence alive and well.

• When you have ice, you almost always have some type of domestic abuse tied into it because the crystal meth makes people feel paranoid.
• I grew up watching their brothers beat their wives, my mom’s ex husbands beat her, I grew up watching a lot of violence, I also was I guess you could say abused, with guava sticks, whatever she could find we got it you know we got it.
• Isolating themselves or not sharing anything is protecting themselves, their families, but what they don’t realize is it can also cause so much more.

The influence of exposure to the media was also cited as a major negative influence, especially on children.

• I watch TV, and they glamorize violence and sex, and they glamorize having babies at young ages, the reality shows and stuff like that, so our media is glamorizing all of this. “
• A prevention educator walked into a classroom in Paloa or Keaau, and they did a survey and it says, will having a baby prove that you are loved? We’re getting back from the kids that they have this idea that it’s glamorous to be a mom, and it’s going to bring your boyfriend closer to you.

Falling Through the Cracks
Through a variety of problems, from cutbacks to large caseloads, as well as an overabundance of problems, service providers in the Hilo area see too many families unable to meet their basic needs.

• I keep thinking about Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, that you know when families don’t have their basic needs met, it’s very hard to think about all the other stuff about am I promoting my child’s self esteem today, when I’m really worried about if I’m going to be able to feed them today.
• Suits the needs of a lower income family to have their child at an after school facility that is – the staff there are trained to do no smoking, which to me leads to no drugs, healthy life styles, having a routine to do homework, a safe place to go…

Remedies
Budget cuts and service reductions and the drying up of personal resources and family support are happening simultaneously. Several providers discussed how providing basic services like transportation, food, safety, and a safe location for after school activities, can significantly benefit their clients.

Communication with children as well as
education, for both adults and children, were prioritized as remedies for avoiding a lack in parent skills. In particular, Hilo service providers believed that education that starts at a very young age was essential to making a difference.

If they can legislate so much math and English, I don’t understand why they don’t put a parenting piece in there. If you don’t become a parent, you are an aunty and uncle to somebody, and I think child development and parenting can go a long ways with more information early on, not just talking about family planning, but what does it take to be a parent so you can be a good parent?

We’re seeing a lot of young teens who are getting pregnant so they’re starting their families early. But yet they don’t have the foundation of life skills, financial planning, so when they move out of their home and go into an apartment building they think they’ve got it all there, but they just need to know so much more.

The ideas of encouraging strong values and a strong sense of identity were key to the discussion surrounding alternatives to the negative influences.

If we can develop systems that help individuals try to determine their own values, their own value in life, maybe that might have some impact in eliminating some of these other things that we’re talking about.

Get the preteens to get excited about what they can do to contribute in the world. How can they be positive. Maybe it’s too late for them to do that. How do you get the young kids to do anything because that generation you could do that. It took them three or four generations before they figured out you can’t do that.

The focus group participants felt that creative solutions that provide child abuse prevention and early intervention must be developed. We need to find ways to implement them in a way that is tangible and sustainably help families in need. Hilo service providers made a strong case for making prevention services essential and supporting those quality programs we do have.

The head honcho of the agency took it upon herself to think outside of the box and provided this kid with what he needed for the length of time that he needed it, he successfully completed what he needed to do and he’s graduating, going to nursing school. We take that one thing, and we share it and share it and share it with everybody, cause you need those things to happen. And if it’s not happening in your own caseload, and somebody else tells you, guess what happened? It’s worth it to stop what you’re doing and breathe and realize that there are some good things happening.

I present our program too as a candy, you know this is the type of service. That doesn’t always make sense.

In regards to sex abuse prevention I have to chase the funding every single year. And this year our master contractors stated we’re not going to pay for any prevention education, period.

“Upon reflection, I can’t think of at least 5 or 6 children that were either killed or were seriously lifelong handicap kind of injuries. And we’ve probably had at least 4 or 5 women killed in the last couple of years, I mean that’s not something good for our community to be known for.”

Sometimes people feel that having children validates their existence so we’ve got people who have children that they can’t take care of. Guys with children all over the place that they can’t take care of. You’re a man cause you got six kids, but are you supporting them?

I can probably think of at least 5 or 6 children that were either killed or were seriously lifelong handicap kind of injuries. And we’ve probably had at least 4 or 5 women killed in the last couple of years, I mean that’s not something good for our community to be known for.

In order to keep us open, our contractors have restricted the services we can provide or they’ve cut off at an age or they’ve cut this type of service. That doesn’t always make sense.

“We work with an immigrant family, the children were totally undisciplined because the mother couldn’t hit them with a shoe because that generation you could do that. It took them three or four generations before they figured out you can’t do that kind of stuff in the United States.”

“We have a bunch of mothers who are in abusive relationships, and maybe the boyfriend goes to jail, and services are going well, they constantly say, I’m pau, this is over and the minute the boyfriend gets out of jail, they knock on the door, please come in.”

“I was talking to a Japanese guy and he said his grandfather could beat his wife up or tie his wife up and nobody would say anything because that generation you could do that. It took them three or four generations before they figured out you can’t do that kind of stuff in the United States.”

“We work with an immigrant family, the children were totally undisciplined because the mother couldn’t hit them with a shoe anymore. So we had a real difficult time to help her reestablish family control and discipline when the only discipline that she knew was throwing the shoe at the kids, hitting them…”

I have this word written down values, cultural values, value themselves.

“People come into our office asking for parent education classes and we have to turn them away because they are not referred to us from Child Protective Services. Which translates into, yes you have to beat your child in order to get our services.

“Everybody’s in the position that they’re in for a million different reasons, and if you go back generations, I have grandmas that are 40, 45, and you go back and see what happened in their life, they’ve got CPS cases, they were abused by their parents, and then you see them abusing their own children, then their children have children, it’s so amazing.”
The Importance of Hawaiian Culture and Values

Kupuna stressed that Hawaiian culture is central to building and maintaining strong families. In particular, there was much discussion of how the Hawaiian language had been forgotten and how it is now being revived may positively impact community health. Kupuna also expressed that the reach of “Hawaiian culture” extends and should extend beyond only those who are of Hawaiian ancestry. In addition, many kupuna discussed their own lives pointing to how the old ways and a lack of material things made them work hard, appreciate what they had, share more regularly, and build community. For instance one respondent stated, “This money is not mine, it’s ours” and another said, “The house is never full” (if family need a place to stay). The community’s “turning away from religion and spirituality” was seen as part of what contributed to an intergenerational downward spiral.

• Our island has different mokus. And in each moku, there are different kupuna. When people don’t value the practices that happen in each area, the support of the outside kind of goes right over the head. The needs are so deep seated. We have a blending, a mixed plate lunch, that children are brought up with many thoughts and many ideas, depending on which moku they are raised with, which family. It kind of provides the foundation.

• When we think of Hawaiian, all children who are born in our islands, raised with, which family. It kind of provides the foundation.

Grandparents Raising Children

While raising grandchildren was often thought to be beneficial for children, there was significant time spent discussing the burden on grandparents who care for their grandchildren or other extended family. Like kupuna at other sites, Kaua’i’s elders shared that grandparents are stressed, are often tired, and must step up to care for the family’s children because no one else is doing so. Another prominent stressor includes parents who have been incarcerated coming home and are stressed, are often tired, and must step up to care for the family’s grandparents who care for their grandchildren or other extended family. In addition, many kupuna discussed their own lives pointing to how the old ways and a lack of material things made them work hard, appreciate what they had, share more regularly, and build community. For instance one respondent stated, “This money is not mine, it’s ours” and another said, “The house is never full” (if family need a place to stay). The community’s “turning away from religion and spirituality” was seen as part of what contributed to an intergenerational downward spiral.

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Suffering from Drug Abuse and Child Abuse

Regarding the major problems families and communities face, drug abuse and child abuse were at the top of the list for Kaua’i’s kupuna. Homelessness, mental health, domestic violence, and general crime were scarcely mentioned, but the effects of incarcerations and drug related issues on family functioning was a prevalent topic.

• I used to go to O’ahu all the time to make sure everything was all pono. So one time I went there and could see my granddaughter sitting in the corner and she was shaking. She saw me and ran to me, and she ran to get a pack and throw all her things inside. I said, “what’s going on girl?” She said, “I don’t like it here, I don’t like it and something wrong with my mother. So I told the mother, I’m taking this girl home.

• Drugs was a very easy way to make fast money, and for people who were struggling, it became the way to go. So what resulted is what we see today. Turning it around is not gonna be easy. No matter how much support we have from the outside, the only way it is gonna work is from the inside out. There is no quick fix.

• We have many of our children and our families, the parents that are in prison, go through a lot of rehab and get prepared to come home. And the children are not prepared there to receive the parents when they come home. And so it’s a situation that really, it’s gonna fail because there’s no support.”
Confusion about Child Abuse—What it is, What to do

There was substantial discussion about spanking and corporal punishment, including how physical discipline could be constructive, though there were differing ideas about when hitting crossed the line from discipline to abuse. There was less confusion about sexual abuse as conveyed about the importance of intervening and adult protection. Sexual abuse was seen as a real problem as “there are too many abusers” and it “happens every day,” “usually within the family.” And, as one kupuna stated, “it’s not just the Hawaiians having all these problems”.

“No matter how you look at abuse, in my house we didn’t get spanked, just the look was enough to know, you don’t more. But in other homes that grew up next door to me and across the street, their parents spanked them, but it wasn’t considered abuse.

And for some of the families that I worked with, they should never have been put into the system. Because what the parents or grandparents were trying to do was to discipline.

And going back to spanking children, I believe in physical discipline, but I don’t believe in beating kids. You know, there’s a difference. There’s a big difference between a swat on the butt and beating your child.

Remedies

Positive trends were noted by kupuna including children having rights, adults being good role models, and the potential for change. Individual successes were noticed with parents who grew up and eventually got it together and got their children back, and grandchildren who blossomed under the care and guidance of kupuna.

• I think that children are being more encouraged in today’s time to speak up, where before, that wasn’t the normal thing to do— I shouldn’t say normal, but wasn’t the thing that was done…

• Modeling respect, encouraging each other what is right, what is wrong, just a simple chore, simple task, just stressing it over and over again, am I think is one way to help strengthen families.

• Respect is one value that needs more reinforcement, on every level.

• The need to keep working with parents because, no matter what, the children love them and want their attention.

• Parenting skills are needed, including learning to be the adult.

Economic woes led to drug dealing for some families and kupuna both showed compassion for those trapped in addiction and suggested that other employment options with reasonable pay would help. Strengthening and helping parents was seen as key for the safety and health of their children.

• Motivation on the part of both parents and children is sometimes lacking. Good morals are needed, and lacking due to influence of the broader world.

The removal of children from the home has not been an effective solution the children may need protection, but “the process was wrong,” say kupuna. Sometimes minimal support and family involvement is what is actually needed. Not help with “strings attached”.

Confirm about Child Abuse—What it is, What to do

Additional Quotes Kaua‘i Kupuna

• The Importance of Hawaiian Culture and Values

“I get to learn the language, being that my cousin is the kumu there, so great. And on Wednesday I teach ukulele and hula to the seniors. The only reason I’m at school is cause my mo’opuna want me at school with her and the Kawaikini allows it.”

“I went to the lo‘i and had to get in there and pick lono leaf and we had to go to the beach, ocean to go get food for us because there was so many of us. We cook the taro, we had a special poi machine, generated with a car motor. And my father made sure we had enough poi for all the Hawaiians in our area.”

“And so what I’ve found through actual experience was that as the foundation of family disappears, and you don’t have the components of both parents, and a sense of pride and the children are not surrounded with that sense of pride, and given the history of our island people, the influences, the ability to hold onto simple values never, never take root.”

“Although they learn their Hawaiian ways, their values, where they’re from, the type of music or video that is coming from the TV, their mother is watching it, it’s not appropriate. They are young. The influence is great on TV. It just takes them over.”

“I’m not gonna change. It’s too late for me to change. I tell my children, you take care of yourself first and when you cannot do it, you come to me. The other day my husband says, “I think that’s enough already.” I told him, don’t you tell me when it’s enough. That’s my children. That’s what mothers do. That’s the Hawaiian in me. That’s how Hawaiians are. We take care.”

• Grandparents Raising Children

“And how are the children? is a very good question. They’re not motivated. I’m finally at the end of my rope with that one, cause she’ll take advantage of my good nature, always taking um back, yeah? But this time I’m really gonna try to stick to my guns cause she has to learn how to help herself. I’m not always gonna be there for her. I’m going to be seventy-four this year.”

“He always crying, nobody to pick him up, and I would go over there, I would feel sorry. So one day I just told my daughter I going take him. So I took him home and this is how I got my grandson.”

“Things like that was against my better judgment, I would send him home (to parents), it’s a tugging you know, but I shouldn’t have let him do that. I should have kept him home and said no, you know, this is it, cause when you go home you come back you act ugly.”

• Suffering from Drug Abuse and Child Abuse

“They keep carrying on with drugs and the people they shouldn’t be with. It’s not like they don’t know. These kids know, even before they started doing drugs what the drugs were gonna do to them because they were educated and talked to and they chose to do what they’re doing anyway.”

• Confusion about Child Abuse—What it is, What to do

“When we were brought up, we were brought up in a way that what happens in the family stays in that family. I remember that. We never went out and asked for help.”

“Spanking was a type of discipline. I know that my neighbor kids, if they didn’t have that kind of spanking, I don’t know. Not one of those kids ever got into trouble. I’m not saying it was because of the spanking they got, but it was the understanding in the home.”

Ka hana a ka makua, no ka hana no ia a keiki.

What parents do, children will do.
Intergenerational Challenges

Difficulties were seen by service providers as often being transmitted from parents to children down generational chains. This can range from drug use, to poor choices, to child molestation, as well as other problems.

- There’s so many young parents, they’re kids themselves basically, raising kids. A lot of it is generational too. Their parents had them young, and they’re having children young, too.
- I realize growing up there’s one of two things go happen. You either go be just like your parents, or you gonna try really hard to not he like your parents.
- He molested all of her daughters, four daughters, yeah it was hard for her to put her youngest brother [in prison], but she went ballistic. He was never raised with a family, unfortunately. And she just feels very bad that, obviously he had learned that kind of stuff when he was raised.
- And a lot of us culturally, we do it to our own kids. We go to a luau, "I’m too drunk to get my own beer, eh boy, go get me one.” We having our kids already conditioned, go through the motion, go stick your hand in the cooler, grab me beer.

Family Stress as Risk Factor for Abuse

A wide array of stressors are faced by families today on Kaua‘i. These stressors contribute to child abuse but also contribute to other problems that may result in family violence or neglect, such as drug use. Additionally, the systemic problems of lack of jobs and economic options contribute to drug involvement.

- I see neglect. I think they’re so busy with the day in and day out, that maybe TV’s babysitting, or just their emotional needs, their being able to sit down and do homework with them, the parents don’t have the time for that. It’s not intentional, but maybe they don’t realize that that kind of neglect really affects them later on, even immediately.
- Ice. Ice is a big problem. It’s connected with almost every person in prison now. We get drug dealers sitting right across the street at the golf course. That they can sit there, knowing they got a repeat customer walking right out the door, all the ice to do is dangle them there.
- And guys will pimp out their wife and kids for the drug. So when the wife and kids are getting pimped out for the drug, nothing else is sacred. We are not normal people, just commodities for the drug. Something to be manipulated and used so you get can get more of that drug.

Challenges of a Rural Location

Being in a rural community was viewed as both desirable and also sometimes creating specific difficulties. Opportunities may be lacking, but it is “home”. Families may need to be separated just to get an education. In addition, services are more difficult to provide or to access.

- Oh what are we going to do about these drug abusers over there? It’s like what are we going to do about these drug abusers here in our house, and not what are we going to do with the prisoner coming home who’s living across town. What are we going to do about the prisoner coming home in our own extended family?
- Because they come right back to the same friends, the same community, the same lifestyle. They can’t quit the drug. They say, “Don’t go back to your old friends”, but when you’re in a small community, even Honolulu, it’s not big enough for you to get new friends.

At the same time, families select rural life and enjoy it because it offers unique advantages. These include a sense of safety, positive values, and being part of the community.

- The children themselves, we are fortunate over here, the family values, have always been strong. I think Kaua‘i is still one of the safer places to have families.
- I tell you this is the most resilient place I’ve ever lived in my life, and people have been more aloha than I could ever imagine in my lifetime. I have no fear about Kaua‘i because I know we’re going to be just fine.

Poverty

Increasingly, core basic needs of children and families are harder to meet on Kaua‘i, which impacts the safety and health of keiki, family identity, and thus increases the complexity of the issues facing the larger community.

- What’s happening to the child? A lot of them if they don’t get their basic needs met, then what do they do, they go out and steal, they go out and find something and it’s just survival for a lot of them.
- They live in the beaches. They live in the tents. They’re not going to school. Their parents are in prison. Their parents should be in prison. Their parents are going in and out.

Other Key Issues

Kaua‘i service providers echoed challenges of living in a small community and noted that given the current economy, many are currently struggling with just meeting the basic needs of their families, with needs rising as services dwindle. Children, they state, are doing “good and bad”, depending on their family. Drugs were reported to be a significant issue, with one service provider stating, “drugs are the worst problem for families”. Reference was made to a rash of suicides in Anahola, at least some prompted by the aftermath of unaddressed child sexual abuse. Teen pregnancies were all too frequent.

One topic that received particular attention was experiences with teachers discouraging children from big dreams and trying to direct them to more “realistic” options. Parents/grandparents found this upsetting, feeling it discourages youth from trying. In fact, numerous examples were given of where children were told they were not capable of certain tasks, which they later accom-
Looking to the past as a way to examine the present, and a return to having no time with their children.

Remedies

Suggested solutions included change in parenting techniques, investing in children’s needs, and staying spiritually connected.

• I think people are just losing that core spiritual connection. We don’t have the time anymore for Grandma and Grandpa to explain to us the importance of family, the importance of kuleana, the importance of aloha, the importance of ohana, and we don’t have the time to express that anymore in our families.

• Strengthen the families, strengthen the parents so that they strengthen the kids. I think our kids are the residual effect of our own lackness, so we created this, so we have to help it. With every little bit we do, it’s good.

• I would want every parent to love their children, teach their children well, about responsibility, respect, and all those other great values. Our makua generation and under that would go to the kupuna for advice, and seek out their knowledge, and obey.

Advocacy for those who have little must be done sensitively. The state must provide funds for those most in need, but it should be coupled with community generosity. Services provided by Tutu and Me, QLCC, Healthy Start, Good Beginnings, Kukui Keiki, Parent project, Family solutions and Big Brothers/Big Sisters were seen as beneficial and helpful services. In essence, service providers felt “hope” was the most important intervention with discouraged families, often paired with parent education infused with traditional Hawaiian values.

• I think the most important thing we can do is be available and build a trust level, but we can't get the way that we service because I think that’s an important key, they feel like they can trust you, tell you anything, you can help on whatever you can.

When you’re nurturing them, they change. They have the hope. They see a light. It gives them something to look forward to.

“How do we do our work as important as the work we do.”

• You need to bring in sustainable jobs that will increase the quality of life. Just putting everything into the tourism doesn’t cut it when we have single parent households working three jobs, literally almost 20 hours a day, they have no time with their children.

Looking to the past as a way to examine the present, and a return to village and you’ve turned it into ‘I only care about me’.

A barrier to dealing with child abuse is that “it’s hidden as much as it can be. I hear stories about it but I don’t always see it. But I know it’s happening. Maybe not enough information or education about it is out there.”

• But my final thought is to not get discouraged in what we’re doing and to celebrate. Celebrate with ourselves and celebrate with our families and celebrate with our clients. It’s the only valuable thing we have in this world.

Additional Quotes Kaua’i Service Providers

• Intergenerational Challenges

“What I think contributes to abuse is teen parents. They don’t know how to raise, for them to have a child, that’s abuse already, because they don’t know how to teach that child.”

“I had a eleven year old niece that came, “I’m smoking ice, I need help,” and I had no clue then but you do what you have to do and you say, “Ok, I had enough. It stops here.” Because in the generation of my husband’s family, it’s generation after generation of drug users. We’ll do what we need to do to just to try and break the cycle.”

“And giving them skills to be able to say, “Don’t touch me”, or whatever, but how do you say that to your dad? Or to your uncle or whatever? Or to your mom? It’s like we’re giving kids skills but they’re still, they shouldn’t have that responsibility.”

“And not only we working, we not sleeping, we not taking care of our kids.”

“I think that our children are better off than when I was a kid. But I also see that they’re influenced a lot more. I was kind of sheltered as a kid I think but, media, drugs, and alcohol, that poses a different threat than how it was when I was kid.”

“There’s more than one way to kill a child. By the words, destroying their self esteem.”

• Family Stress as Risk Factor for Abuse

“The guy’s living in a tent, homeless, he doesn’t have the safety of the walls to keep his child safe in the house, so now other people are there. Parents can’t go work because they gon leave their kids home alone in the tent, drug dealers all around.”

“I think that they’re at high risk, like you were saying because you don’t have that program in place anymore. And I think when people call they’re at that desperate point already, when they need the help, the intervention right away, it’s not there. I think more abuse is going to happen.”

“Like court ordered service plans, things like that don’t necessarily work as well as things that are more relational, relationship based, it is who you know, it is your neighbors, it is your church, it’s your programs in your community that directly engage youths. Those are the things that are more effective and I think we hear that from the community.”

• Challenges of a Rural Location

“That’s something that you also got to work on, is making sure that when people do call and they turn em in, that it’s confidential. Because it’s one of the downfalls of having a small community, you know everybody. It’s hard to make that call.”

“I was just dealing with someone today, they’re coming home. They’re not going to finish college. It’s a cultural thing. They just don’t feel what is important to them, it’s cultural or family, whatever, they just want to come home. They left the opportunities and that sort of thing just to come home.”

• Poverty

“The whole village is related to these kids, but because they’re from the night, the parents not doing well, they’re shame, they’re halualu, they’re hiding in the bushes and living in trees.”

“The community, the village owns the child, gifted by God. That’s not your kid, that’s our kid. So how come you don’t know that kid? So that’s what we’re doing, is simple little once a month gathering, where their own family embraced them again.”

I ulu no ka laalai ke kumu.

The branches grow because of the trunk.

Without our ancestors we would not be here.
Grandparents Raising Children

Kupuna in Kona had a great deal to say about both the considerable needs of children and the inadequacy of relying solely on grandparents to meet all their needs. Limits to the patience, resilience, and energy levels of grandparents were acknowledged.

• There’s a lot of kids getting pregnant in high school. Looking for love. The baby’s supposed to love them. And then we grandparents tend to take the child because you don’t want the child to be left outside, raised somewhere else.
• I don’t abuse them, hitting them or anything. But I do abuse them with my tongue and that I have to learn to control. I’m trying and because my great-granddaughter is now laughing at me because they’ve never seen that of great-grandma. But great-grandma has no patience and I’m looking for something other than that.
• Great grandparents gotta take time out too.

Grandparents also expressed regret that children seem to have lost some connection to their cultural heritage. However, their belief about the importance of cultural identity also provides a direction for helping the children in the Kona community.

• Nowadays children don’t know their heritage. They don’t know their culture.
• It’s like the old folks say, it takes a whole village to raise a child. Because when growing up, everyone was in the community, took care of everyone. If you get in trouble, before you get home your parents knew already. Wireless.
• With our Hawaiians, our kupuna, everything we did we know there’s that spiritual connection. You have to be grounded in it no matter what happens to the family, you come back as a unit. But there’s always someone there, more powerful than we are, that will take care of our ‘ohana.

System Unresponsiveness/Economic Woes

While the economic crisis has resulted in reduced funding and cutbacks in services, Kona kupuna also expressed dissatisfaction with system responses that had more to do with a lack of adherence to quality standards and poor implementation. They also discussed that problems within the system operate across multiple domains: the police, judges, schools, prisons, etc.

• The judge let em go. There’s not enough evidence. What more evidence? The lady is beat up to the max.
• For our Hawaiian moms and dads, some of them are incarcerated. So the bonding and attachment is not there. Because the fathers are pretty much not there. They are usually out in Arizona. A lot of kids are suffering, but the Hawaiian kids are suffering more.
• Great grandparents gotta take time out too.

The impact of program cutbacks appeared to be hurting families who are most needy in the Kona area, much as they are elsewhere statewide.

• Then with the recession there’s not enough money. And then that brings out the drugs, lot of stress. Taking it out on usually the ones that are home, the kids. Because there’s not enough programs, a lot of budget cuts, programs get shut down. And it’s always the kids programs that get cut first.

The Effects of Victimization and Offending

Kupuna took a strong stance against abuse, yet definitions of abuse were not always clear or agreed upon.

• There’s a difference between discipline and beatings. Yeah, I understand the child, but sometimes kids will use that against the family. And they get braver as they get older, they know that they can use all this kind stuff, yeah, on the family.
• I remember growing up, only one time they would talk to us. They would explain it to us and the consequences of our actions. At times if we need a little pat on the bottom, we already knew what we did wrong. Yes, we shouldn’t hit our children because sometimes it gets out of control and we don’t know how to handle it. If they don’t feel like we care or love them, then they start to test us a little bit more.

In this group, some members acknowledged that they had personally been affected by abuse, both by being victims of abuse, and also by having hurt others. Fortunately, they saw that change was possible and working to help others was part of their change process. Others expressed that they have been affected by the abuse experiences of friends or family members, and especially by violence against women.

• I used to be one abuser too before. I used to be that person. So now I stay in recovery. I got married, started drinking, and did the same thing my dad did to my mom.
• (My 17 year old granddaughter) is a runaway, staying with her boyfriend. She comes home off and on. And the boy is very violent, so I try to tell her, you have hurt now, it’s not love. Because with love, he won’t touch you. He’d be there for support, he’d take you to school and help you out. So I put a TR on him, but it doesn’t work. She goes right back to him. So I don’t know, my hands are tied, I’m supposed to do things that is right and best for even myself and her, I will pray about that.
KONA

• Teenage girls (keep) trying to get into a relationship, but it is a bad relationship. And trying to get out of it is more hard. And if she’s pregnant or have children, boyfriends just take off, and they crack up a little bit, you know, at a young age.

Discussion also went to barriers to helping those who have or are suffering from abuse.

• You know Hawaiian families, they don’t trust, yeah. And they’re ashamed to ask for help. They just let it go until CPS is at their door. Then they’re forced into it, but when they’re forced, there’s that resistance. Until they see how it’s going to help them, they’ll resist.

The Inter-relatedness of Family Problems

The Kona kupuna group recognized the complexity of problems families in their community face. Addressing the entirety of the family within its context was emphasized, rather than addressing one problem at a time.

• We have a lot of hidden homeless here. We have families just crowded together, living together just to try to make ends meet. Physical, sexual abuse, all this other stuff because you know you need your space. We all need our space sometimes, so housing is a big one.

• How the children are doing right now? With the economy, the family struggles. There’s no jobs and even to put food on the table is a challenge.

• Everybody’s trying to get by, yeah? They spend more time trying to make a living and not spending their time with their family or going church. It’s always just trying to get by, trying to live. So then they lose that what we had before, with the kids growing up, yeah?

Remedies

These complex family issues should be approached in a step by step manner that recognizes how issues are interlinked and examined in the environmental context. The solutions proposed included education, working together, and remembering cultural values. Kupuna agreed that just tackling one problem in isolation from others was ineffectual.

• So learn (values) from home. If home no work, then from school. Need somebody over there too. That’s how you learn all the way up the steps. You gotta take one step at a time. You cannot use the elevator, the elevator broken.

• It’s bringing them back to their roots. Even the ahupua’a there. And from the flow, from the top of the mountain. Whatever happens up here trickles down. That’s always been a Hawaiian value. You tend from the top, because once you make it pilau, you don’t take care of it, you mess it up from the top, it trickles all the way down. And that’s the systems. But if you take care of it from the very beginning, and that’s why it goes hand in hand with our ke ala ho’omana [spirituality]. It’s that spiritual connection. You need to understand that first and build your family unit with it. And it will trickle down to everything else. You always know you have something to go back to, to fall on, when things are not going good. It needs to get back in the family that there is hope. Yes right now, you don’t see the light at the end of the tunnel, but it is there. I think it’s giving families the hope, giving them the information, the tools that they need, but also to help them know that there is hope.

• No matter what race we are, we still gotta come together. Because we live on the Hawaiian islands. This is an aloha island. This is what we need to put out to everybody who’s asking to come in and put in their mana’o or whatever, money, and see these things work out. If everybody could work together, I hope and pray that we can get together and work together like in the old way.

The kupuna voiced that a partial solution to lack of system responsiveness could be community members taking action themselves, and advocating for the kinds of services that they want.

• We need more programs where the family has any concerns, they can come to. So family can come to a neutral area where it’s safe and be able to get services that they don’t have to pay for, cause (at Neighborhood Place) they don’t have to pay. To strengthen the family without getting into the system.

• We need to give the family the tools so that they will be able to continue when there’s no other program. At home, they need the resources, and we need to do it from Day One, when they first start their families. Very early.

Additional Quotes from Kona Kupuna

• Grandparents Raising Children

“School has always helped. But those were the years that you really had to fight for everything that you wanted. And get it if you were persistent. Nowadays they say “wait” and you can go on waiting and waiting. But you have to be the one to go (advocate). Grandma’s getting tired.”

“I tried to get the food stamps. My social security is “too high”, and it’s not that high cause I still gotta pay rent. They are going to try and take away welfare from me. It’s not that much for my great-grandson.”

• System Unresponsiveness/Economic Woes

“We have people who are supposed to get served their TRO and don’t get served. If they do get served, they supposed to go to anger management, drug program, but they no go. And nothing happens to them. The courts gotta get down more, get a bit stricter. I mean the system need to fix up a lot of stuff.”

“In the school, soon as you do something wrong, you suspended. What the kid going to learn from being suspended? How long they suspend them? 20 days. 40 days. What they gonna learn from that?”

“We’re out there doing direct services. How can the nonprofit continue to provide? We continue to do it, but then we have contracts and the state don’t pay us. There’s 11 other agencies on the island that the state hasn’t paid. So we’re seeing it all dwindle down, and you know who’s gonna suffer, the families. The community. We gonna see so much rise in crime, domestic violence, everything.”

• The Effects of Victimization and Offending

“This morning I was at Target getting food and there was a young woman stacking items on a shelf and she turned around and I was just shocked. She had the biggest black and blue eye. And you knew she was shame because she turned around really quick and I wanted to go up and talk to her. . .”

“Homelessness is everywhere. In the bushes, down at the beach, a very big issue.”

• The Inter-relatedness of Family Problems

“I see all kind families going down because of the drug problems, abuse problems, mostly abuse I see. The drug, certain areas where you going into you see the drugs. But most of it is all abuse. That’s all I hear. There is a lot of abuse.”

“All the drugs going around, and then the recession. And that brings out the drug use, and a lot of stress.”

A’ole I ke’ei kapua’i ike one o Hauiki.

Has not set foot on the sands of Hauiki.

One does not know much about a place until one has been there.
The Centrality of Education of Children

Service providers in Kona were concerned about both the quality of public education and the recent furloughs that kept children from time in school. In fact, the importance of education was stressed more than any other topic by this group.

- Why aren’t these children going to school? What is going on down here? What is with these furlough days every Friday? So how are the children? Not going to school. That’s how the children are. I think that is a big problem and it’s probably contributing to a lot of other problems.

- Schools are for parents too. I think especially for parents who don’t go to church, that may be their only nexus of community. I remember that as a kid, that’s how my mom met other parents.

- What we see is huge schools. All the research tells us that children do better in smaller schools, but we keep having bigger schools. Community based schools are really a thing of the past and that’s why parents won’t get involved. And children escape. They go to school and run around the halls instead of going to class. It’s a big problem here.

They also discussed the importance of going back to school when it is truly valued, as well as realizing children can learn outside of the school setting.

- I was the only kupuna in my class. There was a total of 12, most sixteen year olds and three of us maybe like 30. These kids would roue her (teacher) up. And I turned around and said, “You! I’m here to learn. If you don’t want to be here, get out. And he turned around and said ‘Ho, auntie’. And I says, maybe it’s not your time.

- What’s happening in the school is whatever they’re doing. The main thing is our children started looking forward to furlough days because they knew they were gonna be taken care of; they had other things. This lady came from one of the shops and she taught them to make cards, she taught them art. We take them dance hula and sell cards and made almost $300 because the tourists came out and helped us.

Teen Pregnancy

Teen pregnancy was a prominent topic in this group perhaps, we were told, "Because the pregnancy rates in Ka‘u and Kona are the highest on the Big Island. And this is obviously because there is nothing to do down there at all.” Thus, much of the discussion included the need for reaching some adult consensus on how to teach sex education, since youth are exposed to sexual information by the broader culture.

- There’s got to be education. We can talk to kids or we cannot talk to them. But television is talking to them, every show they see and every podcast they see is talking to them about it (sex).

- He can’t agree. Many people all want the same outcome, but we really struggle with what we are comfortable with kids being told. We all know that the ideal that it’s a sacred thing between parent and child, and then we know that there’s parents who are just not there to step up into it.

- I don’t think I’ve ever been in a conference or work shop that didn’t come up with sex education/ pregnancy prevention as one of its top three recommendations. And I do not know why there is not yet a systematic comprehensive program that starts in elementary school to provide children with this information.

Mental Health

Providing supports to maintain good mental health, as well as services for those who suffer from mental illness was reported to be critical to healthy Hawaiian families. Connections between mental health functioning and child abuse, domestic violence, and drug use were noted.

- Addressing abuse and neglect, (we need) adequate mental health services. I’m just terrified about what’s happening to our mental health system, and some sort of respite care—we need it, for the kupuna who are taking care of the kids, like the auntie who’s taking in all of her sister’s and her brother’s kids.

- I’ve seen too many depressions in my family. And you want to help but you’re afraid because we’ve already had two family members commit suicide.

- There are three big risk factors (for child abuse). That is mental illness, substance abuse, and then, of course, domestic violence. And those are hard things to change.

Early education and interventions in problems were recommended by Kona service providers.

- And whether the risk is domestic violence, mental health, or substance abuse, attachment is the one factor across all those risks that makes the difference.

- We all know, the earlier you intervene, whether it’s a learning disability or a relationship problem or a physical illness, the earlier you intervene, the better.
Service providers also noted that helping those in need see possibility and have faith in their capacity to change and experience better times has incredible power.

“I think what’s really important is to send a message of hope. And really look for a positive point in a person, whether it’s an adult or a child. Just looking at people positively will really help.

“We as adults have to start looking positive. Like Reverend says, we have to tell them the world is not bad. It’s just a handful of parents. I worry, now it’s 5 pm, we gonna send this kid home, we know the parents drug, we know the parents have domestic violence. Oh my god, what’s gonna happen to Keoki. That’s OK, let’s take it to prayer and hopefully everything will be OK and we look forward to Keoki coming tomorrow. And that’s the attitude we go out with.

Solutions for teen pregnancy were also seen in passing on Hawaiian values as well as providing programs for youth, including ones where the youth can contribute to others.

“I think a lot of the immigrants who have come here have done a lot better in some ways than our Hawaiian population. But our Hawaiian values and traditions are really beautiful. I think that they are being revved through the years. The westerners come in with capitalism and just took over the land, a very profitable land. And the ways of the Hawaiian people were squelched.

So working with our Hawaiian children, it’s a real challenge and a pleasure to see them become stronger in their Hawaiian identity and their pride.

• These kids come out here and thank you, they learn customer service, work, they learn to feed families. We as adults, we have to start looking positive. We have to tell them the world is not bad.

• They used the kids from our church as mentors. And because they’re young, they can communicate with these kids. Use your own children to be mentors to help the other ones.

Remedies suggested for economic and system challenges included reliance on the family, and community values that have “heart”.

• Here in Hawaii we lucky because ‘ohana. . . when a girl gets pregnant the whole ‘ohana comes together. They’re not going to give that baby for adoption, they’re gonna make sure the family takes care and raises that child.

• Number one: you have to come out there and you have to have heart.

• The phrases that I heard today that really turned me on were civic engagement, community values. A lot of us know the economy is changing and a lot of us would like to develop a stronger local economy and maybe that promises the best hope for healthy children and families.

• It’s the culture. And you have to be a role model, and you guys are all role models.

“E hana a pa’a ke kahua mamua o ke a’o ana ia ha’i.

Build yourself a firm foundation before teaching others.

“Additional Quotes Kona Service Providers

• The Centrality of Education of Children

“Even when they go to school they often wish they weren’t. The kids are so checked out. Too many times teachers don’t know how or don’t have the energy or the will or interest to make an effort. And the kids, who know the night before if they were awakened by a domestic violence situation in the home or maybe someone came into their room looking for something that they didn’t want to give. . . I’d love to focus on the schools as a conduit to providing really useful services, resources, information to these kids.”

“Parents can’t get involved (at schools) because they’re losing their homes, they’re trying to survive, so it’s gotta be a community thing.”

“The family is the core. If these girls and boys felt like they had parents that cared about them and they could talk to and were there for them. The school do their part, but you can’t just throw it all on the schools.”

• Teen Pregnancy

“My son was on an approved website, approved by my wife and I. A hacker posted a link on a kids website. It says new game, my ten year old clicked on it, and up comes pornography. So he’s seeing all these naked women. His little brother ratted him out. And so we got to sit down and talk about this.”

“In our days, when we’re growing up, you talk about sex in your house and heaven help you, you know what you gonna get. We were not taught that, we were taught different things: how to clean house, how to cook, how to wash clothes. And then sex education came into school and my grandchildren say, . . . and my eyes opened wide and I said, ‘Don’t you dare talk about that in this home!’

“I’m not for teaching sex ed from the standpoint of now go out and put into practice what I’ve taught you. But my wish is that they would teach the children the responsibility that comes with having sex. Girls will say to me, “I’m pregnant Pastor, and I don’t know how this happened.” Well, they thought they were taking the proper precautions. We can not talk about sex and say sex isn’t gonna happen, but sex is gonna happen. We have to educate to it.”

“Teenagers are a subculture of itself, the world has kind of come and taken our children from us. And the brain hasn’t developed, but they’re a major consumer, they all have cell phones and ipods but they don’t know the first thing about how to make decisions in their own self-interest.”

• Mental Health

“So as much as the Hawaiian values says take care of your ‘ohana, sometimes you just cannot.

“It’s a sense of hopelessness that comes into the situation. And once hopelessness is there, despair sets in. And once despair’s there, then abuse, neglect, all of these things come cascading that just happen.”

“One of the things that I see is so many of our programs have been shrunk and are so small, we can only afford a little piece of a therapist. So I’m trying to find a consultant to do about 5 hours a week but it’s really not the best offer . . .”

• System and Economic Issues

“So she comes in with 2-3 kids, all different last names, and about the first week they’re there, they call the cops, we have domestic violence. What happened? Well as soon as the girls gets the apartment, the boyfriend moves in the boyfriend doesn’t work. The girls goes to work at Jack in the box or whatever, she goes home one hour late, did not bring his beer, heaven forbid, so you get domestic violence. The cops pick up the boyfriend and the next day they say, are you gonna charge or TRO him and she says, “I don’t know, auntie.” And this goes on and on.”

“This one Filipino boy, he goes home and he learns from school how to say “f you”. He goes home and he tells his daddy ‘f you’ and daddy gives him whacks. And the next day he goes to school and the teacher say, how come you? The boy says, my daddy hit me. From that the teacher immediately send him to the principal’s office. The principal calls the cops, they call CPS, but pretty soon they take the sister, the brother, and the Filipino families work very, very hard. Education is top. They feel their kids, they’re responsible. Anyway, they have this meeting, and the daddy says, I don’t understand what they are going to do to my children.”
Pros and Cons of a Small Community

Kupuna agree with service providers that life on a small island with a small community brings unique opportunities and frustrations. Knowing everyone creates challenges of privacy and confidentiality, a limited economy, but also a connectedness not always found elsewhere.

• In my job, listening to police friends and whatnot, I hear it, but then you still have that confidentiality. Because it’s a small community, it’s even worse. If we were in Wa’ianae, it’s big. You can hide. Certain people here, it depends I guess. Anything happens on Lana’s, everybody knows.

• Drama. That’s just how the relationships are here, though. Everybody’s involved in it, if there’s a problem they’ll talk about it, but they won’t go and look for help. They’ll just (say), ‘that’s just the relationship.’

• It’s kind of difficult here because, especially with relationship abuse, they always end back together, so you feel like everything you’ve done was for nothing. Now you’re going to be in trouble because they’re back together now.

• All of Hawai‘i, from two economists that we heard, says basically, tourism is our number one driving engine. So everything is meant for them. And I go, ‘Dude, you don’t take care of the community, you gon have unhappy community, you gon have unhappy tourists.’

• One of our strengths is when you piss a group off, they all stand up and say, ‘You know what, we can do it.’ Or if you give them encouragement or some sort of, a goal to get to, we just come out and it’s fun.

Parent Awareness and Involvement

Kupuna stated that the same parents and adults tend to take a great deal of responsibility, and are expected to show up for and support everything. Others seem to rarely get involved. This can be difficult because in a small community, one person dropping an activity can mean that entire project no longer occurs.

• Experimental age, Mom and Dad is not home, Uncle, Aunty’s working, because usually you get Uncle, Aunties out there and look for help. They’ll just (say), ‘that’s just the relationship.

• In my job, listening to police friends and whatnot, I hear it, but then you still have that confidentiality. Because it’s a small community, it’s even worse. If we were in Wa’ianae, it’s big. You can hide. Certain people here, it depends I guess. Anything happens on Lana’s, everybody knows.

• Because sometimes when you say, “Oh no, you’re Filipino too.” “I’m not Filipino.”

Cultural Pride

Kupuna reported that there are more cultural programs and events for Hawaiians than for Filipinos, even though more families are Filipino. In fact, some Filipino students claim they wish they were not Filipino. Expanding cultural events to bring ethnic pride to other groups, as well as Native Hawaiians, was recommended.

• The students have the interest to, like you said, learn the language, or learn cultural things, whether it’s the Hawaiian kids or the Filipino kids. Again it’s tapping resources that, either we don’t have the resource on the island, or if there is a resource that resource person is so tapped out with what they’re doing, that sometimes it becomes difficult to offer our kids things to do.

• Because sometimes when you say, “Oh no, you’re Filipino too.” “I’m not Filipino.”

• That’s the shame part. Yeah, I’m like, “You are.” Or even like telling one kid, “No, you’re half Hawaiian.” Because when they have to fill out these forms, there’s no room to put everything, right? So they only put the main one, Filipino. And then when you tell them, “No, you get Hawaiian too.”

• I feel like we still need to work on our Hawaiian culture too, building our pride in the kids, but at the same time, building pride and not forgetting that you’re not only Hawaiian.

Stress

The high level of parental burden, especially with job demands, results in less energy for their children, and this is coupled with a lack of knowledge about stress management. With parents uninvolved or overworked, youth often become needy or involved in self-injurious behavior. This also results in early sexual activity.

• Experimental age, Mom and Dad is not home, Uncle, Aunties working, because usually you get Uncle, Aunties out there that, “Oh, what you doing?” But that they don’t have because everybody’s working, so there’s really nobody around.

• I think it’s, well I think that for girls it’s important for, over here, it’s important for them to have a boyfriend because of their home situation. Maybe, they don’t have that male figure because their parents is always working and they just need somebody.
Like I said, it comes back to the kids. Nobody taught em so when we get to adults, we stress out.

**Remedies**

Solutions to the challenges faced by families were also suggested by Lana‘i’s kupuna. First of all, breaking them down into workable pieces was seen as a way to not become overwhelmed. Recognizing that there are others who will help is another community resource.

- You have these big problems and you know what, look at it, and say it’s there, it’s going to be there tomorrow, and just pick one piece and move forward. Don’t look at it as a big piece.
- Yeah. That’s another one of the strengths of a small community. That sense of everybody being an Auntie and an Uncle, right?
- We do functions and activities for the students. It’s great when the parents come out, it’s just getting them to come out, and you can see that the students, they like having the parents there. Working alongside them a project, especially if it’s a project or an activity where it’s hands on. That they really enjoy. I get parents who tell me, “Oh, tell me when the next one.”

Stress management skills and other educational efforts, for both adults and youth, were seen as another important component to survival during stressful times. But a key to that is finding effective ways to reach those hesitant to seek help.

- The scary part is, talk about the high school kids doing it (sex), the ways to reach those hesitant to seek help.
- One pathway expressed toward an improved future is focusing more on the family, and asking employers to implement friendly policies, such as reductions in mandatory overtime, or time off for school functions.
- They get to allow for the family time. It comes down to that. And it’s those CEO’s of today that is all money hungry, this and that. From an elementary side, I see pretty much they’re kind of on it (grades, attitudes). I’ve been hearing in fifth grade it changes. Even in the school charts and systems, fifth grade just drops right off. They don’t know why. I’m thinking, that’s puberty time.
- “He didn’t want to go to school because these kids were teasing him. And he’s always the type that loves school. When he starts taking sickness just to stay home then the bells start to go off, “Ok, what’s going on?” So over time we learned when he starts doing this fake illness thing, something’s wrong at school.”

“Stress
- "Oh, why she helping me now? What I got to do for her next?" Creation of job options and ways to contribute for both adults and youth is also needed.
- One of the things that I’m trying to do, I’m trying to create things that if you gonna stay, this is what you gonna do. I’m gon give you the opportunity, but you need the education abroad to come back and help restoration of Lana‘i. So that’s what I’m trying to help on.
- "Fishing, or volunteering at a non-profit. Projects, trying to get them where they can earn some money, so they start learning the value of earning that dollar. That’s the only way, for the future, we gon make our economy better. Because these people one day gon become the politicians, the lawmakers or what not, or CEO’s."
- "One of the biggest struggles I see is, in the Hawaiian culture, they’re taught that the older one takes care of the younger sibling. And that can be very frustrating and a challenge for the older ones because they want to be able to go out and do things, but yet they need to stay home and watch the younger ones because parents are working. Or even when the parents are not working, that’s still their kula.”

Cultural Pride
- "It’s not that our Hawaiian kids cannot do it, it’s just that they prefer, when it comes time for their homework, they would prefer in a tutoring session to come and sit down and then do their homework together. Some of them, instead of doing it individually."
- But yeah, that’s something I think we need to work on, is our Filipino students, too. Trying to build pride in them about their culture.”

**Pros and Cons of a Small Community**

- "I work with the Hawaiian community, and our community is so small so our services on Lana‘i benefits the whole community. So if we throw an event, it’s not only for the Hawaiian, it’s for everyone.”
- "Now we don’t have that kind of funding, so a lot of students are at home alone, during the summer time…and they really are home alone.”
- "It’s kind of difficult here because, especially with relationship abuse, they always end back together, so you feel like everything you’ve done was for nothing. Now you’re going to be in trouble because they’re back together now.”

**Parent Awareness and Involvement**

- "I would think that the parents would be more concerned with what the kids are doing with their time. Get involved or something. Just because they’re in high school doesn’t mean that they’re ready to do their own thing.”
- "One of the biggest struggles I see is, in the Hawaiian culture, they’re taught that the older one takes care of the younger sibling. And that can be very frustrating and a challenge for the older ones because they want to be able to go out and do things, but yet they need to stay home and watch the younger ones because parents are working. Or even when the parents are not working, that’s still their kula.”

Our families do have cultural values. The thing is for the adults to actually show it and do it. And then the kids can see it.”
Pros and Cons of a Small Community

Small communities have both benefits and disadvantages. Service providers discussed their sense of Lana’i’s “community,” reflecting on both the challenges to having a small population as well as increased opportunities for building on small-town strengths.

• So you have communities within communities, and everybody has their own cultures, and I don’t want to be a naysayer or a downer but the bottom line is that there’s a lot of challenges to trying to have even a small community work together.

• But there is an advantage to that, Lana’i is small, and we are at the point where there’s so much intermarriage that almost everybody’s related. And, because of that families can depend on each other. But at the same time families tend to turn a blind eye sometimes, when something bad happens. They sometimes tend to cover up the symptoms and not address the source.

• The number game is always a real problem because it’s not that we don’t have the need for the services, but we can’t justify with numbers to get the services or to get them in a regular routine basis. Because I do think if you have someone traveling from somewhere, that person’s been traveling to this community and really has a vested interest in the community in their heart and mind, they’re gonna get to know the community.

• As one person operations, you don’t have the time to attend to systems issues. You cannot go to the legislature and and lobby for policy changes or more funds. And the decision makers for our organizations are on other islands. So we’re removed from not only the decision making opportunities, sometimes we don’t even get a chance to attend the meeting when it’s being discussed.

Discipline/Abuse

Distinctions between abuse and child guidance or discipline were not always clear. However there was consensus that adults’ behavior and ability to empathize are more effective in discipline than parental directives or spanking.

• Regarding teenagers, some parents told me “it’s really hard for me to discipline my kid because they don’t listen and I don’t want to give them licken because of child abuse”. And so that’s the hardest part, to discipline. And even I see the little ones and I see the parents trying to yell at them, and I said, did your parents yell at you? How did that make you feel? So think about it and imagine what your child’s feeling right now.

• I think in the past it was a learned behavior that carried on from generation to generation, and now there is some awareness of what is abuse. For people coming from another country it’s a normal thing for them because that’s all they learned. But if they’re coming here and they’re saying oh if you’re hitting your child that’s considered abuse, or domestic violence, if you’re hitting your wife or you’re yelling at her, that’s having an awareness now, that’s good where in the past it was a normal thing—liken because she didn’t do what you were told.

• But I think culturally there’s still shame, a lot of shame.

Reductions in services also appear to make attitudes about and services for families where child abuse occurs seen as less essential.

• When I gave an example of the last keiki network meeting, it used to be a father had knifed a child’s belly threatening to eviscerate the child, that would be an investigation. Now they get referred for parenting class. So that’s what I’m talking about…

Lana’i’s service providers saw abuse as correlated with the status of and value given to females in society.

• I see the girls as being very insecure. I don’t think they have a lot of self-worth, I think that they figure that if they’re accepted by a boy, then that gives them some presence. And I’ve watched girls as you know as they’re pleading with their boyfriends, these are young kids, they’re probably not even 15 years old, and I just think to myself that kid’s going to be pregnant within the next year.

• I think like any campaign, I mean it’s gonna take time, we’re talking about attitude change, we’re talking about basic philosophy change, you know, not just the fact that it’s illegal, and I’m not supposed to do it, um, as long as women and children continue to be second class and property, we’re always gonna have it. Yet it’s getting better, there’s more awareness, but it’s a long, slow process. I mean, like how long it took Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Have they made an impact? Yes. Have any of our services our agencies, our fields made a difference? Yes. But there’s still a lot there.

Stress

Providers focused on direct and indirect stress and how it has impacted parents and children. The primary sources of stress on Lana’i were reportedly the restricted economy, unemployment, crowded conditions, reduced family time, and poor coping mechanisms, including drug use.

• I guess the way I would describe some of the children on our island is stressed. I think that the adults are stressed and then in turn it leads to a lot of stress on the kids.

• I think that I would say drugs (most need to be addressed). I really think that drugs are a problem and I think that drugs are a problem for the adults, which then teach the kids that hey, this is ok.

• The other thing that I’ve heard and I don’t know if it’s true or not, but it makes logical sense to me is that a lot of families have moved in together because they’ve lost either their housing or money to pay for separate housing and that crowded living condition also creates additional stressors on the whole family, including the kids.

• And yes, you can’t focus on money, but the reality is that money is a big factor. Because you can’t engage the parents in a higher amount of time with their kids if they’re not able to do that because they’re working.

Looking Out for the Children

Lana’i’s service providers shared that one community strength is that they care for one another. This is especially crucial in light of the recent service reductions the island has faced. A communication breakdown was also
identified that related to youth’s decreased physical and interpersonal activities as they focus on technological forms of entertainment. Additionally, several service providers believed that rebuilding their community’s connection to the ‘āina could be a remedy for the intergenerational barriers created by technology.

• The downside of the kids now is there’s too much TV, computer, smart phones, and so on. So you don’t see as many kids going hiking, stuff like that. Still a lot go fishing and hunting, but used to see the kids going hiking, down to the beach, and staying all day like we used to. So I think there’s a down side to technology. Fortunately, I think we’re shielded from more, not being on Maui or O’ahu.

In addition to informal caring for each other and especially for children, service delivery systems reportedly work very well together on behalf of children. Collaboration was described as excellent.

• But we’re lucky when you say gaps, I don’t think we really have too many gaps. And at every level, every agency is really conscientious about the kids.

• There’s almost this silent (acceptance), if you become pregnant, you don’t have to leave, and the family doesn’t have to let go of you. And that’s what I see and there’s an acceptance around that.

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“Because of all this tight knit, and our school is really conscientious about kids, the kids get better. So we’re also known for that.

Teaching and learning skills to build citizenship and a stronger community were also recommended, especially since the cohesiveness of the community is not as strong as it has been in the past.

In terms of how the children are doing here, I think our children are extremely fortunate living here. And if despite all the challenges, the community does help parents take care of their children. Not as much as when John and I were growing up here, but they still do.

• You should learn how to be a citizen. You can go to college to learn how to be a scientist. But to have a society with a feeling of community you gotta start with the kids, so that when they have kids and you know you don’t start, you don’t stop having this program in school just because you have one generation of one-time thing parents, you just make sure you carry it over from generation to generation and keep it in the schools.

In addition, families reportedly need support and to see there is hope for better days, even when they are struggling. One suggestion that was concrete was to provide more reintegration of those released from prison or drug treatment back into the community and into their families. Aftercare services are needed on the island rather than only off island.

• So we’re just supporting our families, just letting everybody know our families that it’s ok, and there’s light at the end of the tunnel if we all hang in together, and, so I’m saying we’re lucky we all share the same kids and families.

• Because of all this tight knit, and our school is really conscientious about kids, the kids get better. So we’re also known for that.

Remedies

Service providers on Lana‘i indicated that many remedies for challenges facing children and families are already being implemented. In particular, continuing the strong provider network collaboration and mutual trust was seen as central to this success.

• We work together at the school, but we provide counseling and support for every child, every family, every staff member of the school.

“Our cultural values, our families do have cultural values, the thing is for the adults to actually show it and do it. And then the kids can see it.”

Additional Quotes Lana‘i Service Providers

• Pros and Cons of a Small Community

“Tik to kind of balance off some of the challenges, it’s being able to sit around a table like this, know everybody and know we figure out a way of kind of getting it done. And that to me is what makes it kind of worth living in a small community.”

“So an example would be the child sexual assault therapist. For a long time, they didn’t come at all, it was very inconsistent, then we had an excellent provider that was very consistent, that did provide the services, and here came the funding cut, and again, we’ve been without services.”

“There’s a down side to technology. Fortunately, I think we’re shielded from more, not being on Maui or O’ahu.

“Yeah. For me, collaboration is an attitude. It’s a way of being with each other.”

• Discipline/Abuse

“No, it seems like the level of harm has to be so high in order for a family to be referred for services. So, that’s a huge concern because I think the children at this level of harm, that family needs intervention and services and it’s really really dangerous to wait till you know we have blood and broken bones, and so that’s a concern and it’s a change that’s urgent in the work that I do here.”

“It’s pretty common knowledge that in abuse cases, I think it’s 75% or higher, in those cases where drugs were involved. It’s not necessarily the cause, but it could be a parallel thing with the behavior patterns. If you use drugs you’re more likely to abuse or if you abuse you’re more likely to use drugs.”

• Stress

“They’re happy, there’s some happy children, there’s some sad children and heartbroken children, it’s just really hard with the economics being really low, and a lot of our families are unemployed and working really hard just to survive here on this island. It’s very hard. “We don’t have a sense of community as we had in the past, and again it goes to economics. People are working, and emphasize working so hard to get the dollar because they want their kids to have all the financial things that they didn’t have, that they lose sight of the sense of community which we don’t have right now.”

“So definitely the money, which leads to stress which leads to less time which leads to less time for families to spend together…”

• Looking Out for the Children

“What happens in the community or their family situations can affect their emotional behavior on a day to day basis, so that’s something I try to be aware of and support the families as well as the children.”

“The downfall, they’re always waiting to use the computer, it’s like too much of that. We try to encourage them to play outside, just do some little walking around the city, or go take some detour around through the trees. But “when we going back, we wanna play video games” and so that’s always something that they’re always waiting for.”

“And how are our children doing? I think they’re doing well in many ways but they’re also having a lot of challenges.”

‘Ike aku, ‘ike mai, kokua aku kokua mai; pela iho la ka nohana ‘ohana.

Recognize others, be recognized, help others, be helped; such is a family relationship.

Many native Hawaiians live with their extended family and family is the most important part of life for them. This saying teaches why they should put family first…In the ‘Ohana or family, you know others and they know you, you help each other and know you will be helped if there is anything you need.
Hawaiian Cultural Loss and Oppression

Perhaps more than any other group, the kupuna on Maui shared about the role of historical and intergenerational trauma in the lives of children and parents today. Around the circle, kupuna discussed the pains of changes in Hawaiian rights, respect for Hawaiians, and their traditions and language. These dynamics were seen as contributing to increased interpersonal violence in Hawaiian families.

- We’re probably three generations now without family having been taught the solid foundation of our culture on which they can stand.
- Our hurting heart, that really is the problem. It’s because of historical things that have happened.
- I come from a point of disappointment and frustration. When I see cars that have on their bumper “Proud to be Hawaiian” but they’re an alcoholic or drug addict and tossing out trash. (This is) not from the Hawaiian foundation.
- You do things that are self-destructive, then the oppressor no longer needs to oppress you because you can do it yourself.

Intergenerational Violence

Additionally, kupuna bravely shared personal stories of abuse that were repeated in their families over generations that included stories about the physical and sexual abuse of female and male children, defining their own past behavior as domestic violence or child abuse, incidents of observing domestic violence dating back to at least 1800, and hiding experiences of being victimized through presenting one’s self as capable and competent.

- My mother lived with my father all of her life, because she chose not to leave him because that’s what the church said. So she’s getting all these beating and lickings and still moving on with her life. We (the children) were able to witness that. It was nuts.
- The abuse stopped with me. Why? Because I had to learn there was something else besides beating up my kids. It took my husband to teach me that because that’s not where I came from.

- I believe that to make any changes you have to start with yourself. Many times you can be abusive and you don’t know it.

Community Connectedness

Maui kupuna did not see things going well for today’s children in Hawai‘i, but emphasized the need for hope as well as compassion and guidance from parents. Much of this “not too well” answer to the question of “And how Are the Children?” is attributed to a lack of grounding in a family’s Hawaiian (or other) ancestry, as well as the need for everyone to make changes by “start(ing) with yourself”.

- Children don’t have a say, they just got to follow. If you’re a bad person, they gon follow the bad person.
- My children have a future, but I’m concerned for them because of the turmoil in our community, our lives. There is great hope, but we can’t ignore the deep-seeded problem within our own culture.

- Children have minds like sponges. Nothing’s written on it. So everything is impressed upon them. Solutions: Parents should learn how to parent.

Parental Stress

The levels of distress parents feel were seen as complicated and substantial, and perhaps even worse now than in the past.

- The families I see today, from the past five six years ago, is so different. There’s domestic violence, there’s a lot of child abuse because of the economy, father gets laid off from work, they no more job, they gotta move. I see families on the beach, in the car, the childcare subsidy got cut. They no more money. When I go into the home and I’m supposed to share all this child development stuff, their mind not even there.

- Bonding with the baby the last thing they gonna focus on because they gon get evicted, their car gon get reposessed, they no more food. They cannot focus on this baby right now.

Remedies

Clearly, for these kupuna, identification of the problems also helps to bring solutions to the surface. Discovery of “who are we,” one’s identity within the family and community helps to give individuals a sense of place, belonging, and interconnected responsibility. Further reclamation of old historical ways, including a deeper connection to food, land, music, dance, and other traditions was seen as critical in re-grounding children and families that may have lost their way. As in other kupuna groups surveyed, the spiritual component to life was frequently mentioned, in part as
they discussed transformation from drug or alcohol abuse or past abusive experiences as grounded in their faith, but also as they linked their religious or spiritual beliefs to a sense of hope or feeling of being “blessed.” Kupuna further explained the need to increase pride in being Hawaiian, to provide every person with a job to do and a way to contribute, and empower individuals to work rather than take handouts.

• Part of my work today is to give voice to those who are abused.

• We’re meeting the kids that came out of this system that have total life changes, and we need to be able to focus a lot on the victories, as well as all the bumps. But there is hope. For local people, that means we get a chance.

• We just get in there right away, because when you form that kind of bonding of that child, there’s less likely to be child abuse or neglect, so that’s the mission where I work. (kupuna who also works as a service provider)

• I started making a stake in my neighborhood and I have seen change. I’ve seen change through being nicer to our neighbors, through prayer, through taking people muffins and stew. Now I partner with my kahuna and I see change in our entire valley. We don’t need programs, we need people to know about the help.

• In the Hawaiian culture, you need to understand when they give you something to do, it’s not necessarily a book. It’s, “Come, let me teach you.”

• Hawaiian Cultural Loss and Oppression

“(People) need to know the history of, first Hawai‘i, and themselves. If the parents don’t know their history they’ll always have this urge to do whatever was superimposed upon them and not know what’s the bottom line, the solid values they can take ahead.”

“When my father came here he told us, ‘I’m in America,’ at which point food, language, and traditions were restricted to English and American ways.”

• Intergenerational Violence

“But if you don’t teach the parents, how are the parents gonna turn that around? Do not spank your children. Do not abuse your children. How are you going to stop it? The parents themselves were abused. The thing is, how do you get to the parent?”

“A great deal of my abuse was not physical, it was verbal. I’d rather be punched than be told ‘you’re ugly’, ‘you stupid’, ‘you fat, you good for nothing’.”

“Ice is a real epidemic in Hawaii. You see our daughter, our nieces, nephews, grandkids all dying. Their mind is gone. You look at em, you only see a shadow, you don’t see a human person.”

• Community Connectedness

“I was doing a lot of things wrong”, said one kupuna.

“And How Are the Children? Teach them by example.”

“Kuleana is responsibility. So it’s part of the mālama thing, it’s part of the kōkua thing. Your parents, your grandparents, have observed you as a child to learn your talents. And then they help to hone those talents so you can do all of these things. Have aloha for yourself and aloha for the elements, and those who have gone before us, and those who are coming behind us.”

• Parental Stress

“Our kupuna proverb, ‘A man who has a hook that catches fish can stand very proudly and share the fish’. But if you don’t have the skill, which is the hook, then you can’t be proud as a person and share. Especially today. Which then comes to a whole economic situation of capitalism without the humanity part attached to capitalism.”

“As far as welfare, that was a no no. Hawaiians were proud. So for you to go to the welfare and ask for help, that was no. You put your kids out there and you get to work.”

“I was getting so busy trying to make money and pay the bills that I didn’t pay attention to the specific needs of my children.”

‘O ka makapō wale nō ka mea e hāpapa i ka pōuli.

Only the blind grope in the dark.

If you have no direction in life, you will get nowhere.
MAUI

Service Reductions/Great Needs

The main theme of the Maui service provider groups (two) was the severe impact of decreased services on families and children. Participants saw the poor economy, limited employment, the cuts in benefits or reductions in eligibility for services as adversely and significantly affecting the fate of children and families. Limited services also results in fewer options for types of services or providers; service providers also saw this as failing to meet the needs of many. Reduced options for referrals, people falling through the cracks, and extreme needs that exceeded resources were commonly cited. In addition, a problem related to staff burnout (due to often dealing with problems beyond their training or capacity) insinuated that the level of service needed may not match that which is able to be given.

• Three case managers right now, at DHS. Three. Only three. I don’t know how those people are living. I am not kidding, because those three workers are just, it’s out of control.
• I come from strengths-based, I’m not one of those people that’s like, “I’m a down person.” I’m always like, “There’s light at the end of the tunnel. Everything’s good.” But now, it is really just Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, we’re not even on that first level. We are below that level. So how can we get them one step up? They can’t. They’re all on survival mode. They are, and barely.
• I see all the prevention being cut, which is really horrific.

Child Abuse and Family Violence

Beyond the general strain on families and children resulting from the combination of economic woes and service cutbacks, service providers on Maui were very concerned about child abuse, neglect, and family violence. They saw other cuts in programs increasing the likelihood of abuse and neglect, such as reduced mental health services. They explained that only the most severe cases are being addressed quickly and effectively, and that those who do not meet the changing criteria for direct child protective services involvement don’t receive needed help. Consequently, service providers expressed great concern over the current predicament in which they now must function: there are fewer options for types of services or providers; service providers also saw this as failing to meet the needs of many.

• We’re getting a lot of families who have been cut from mental health services who are raising young children. And now the children are at risk because their parents who are caring for them are not getting the treatment that they need in order to be functional parents. So the children are more at risk.
• Within our shelter itself, there’s been abuse. Child abuse. As young as three years old. Little kid. It’s child abuse and it’s sexual abuse.
• Teens running away, on the run, sex for drugs. Sometimes, not always, there is something that propelled them in that direction. Some incest situation is going on with uncle, or there is that family thing and not wanting to expose your family members because of what it’s going to cause on the family. I think that keeps a lot of people from coming out and sharing those kinds of things.
• I’m also hearing that from CPS here on Maui unit is that there’s an increase, not just an increase in numbers, but increase in intensity and complexity of their cases. They have more and more children with disabilities in their caseload now that has been abused and neglected.

MAUI SERVICE PROVIDERS

MAUI SERVICE PROVIDERS
Providers felt that the lack of effective communication skills and limited outreach are significant barriers to service provision and to reduction of risk factors.

- Those who are alone are the ones most at risk. The problem is being isolated. And I think that is where we have to focus our energies.

**Remedies**

Even with the complex problems families face, several service providers gave examples of effective parenting interventions that keep parents active in the ever-changing world in which their children and grandchildren live. Further, their optimism about the importance of these parent-child interactions came through in their words:

- I think that parents do have a lot more control than they realize. They could if they were just responsible about it and follow through, and be on their kid’s case and know who their friends are and know who they are texting and block their computer and all their things. There’s a lot of control that we can will have.

- To say it’s in the home, I think it’s in society. And it’s part of the next generation. But what I’ve also learned along with the porn, along with the cell phone, they are also learning to recycle. They are more conscious about the earth. No matter what generation we were in there was always something. And so on that I hang my trust and I look at the strength and I say, well yea she is learning to recycle. So every once in a while I get to drag her to church. Once in 2 or 3 months and that’s because she is tired of her mother and father and she knows where the value is. So it’s about role modeling.

Service providers also wove solutions into their discussions, including the possibilities to focus on building family protective factors, lobbying for more prevent programs, involving families in prevention/protection, and decreasing isolation and alienation which can place individuals and families at risk for interpersonal violence. For example, several recognized that the increasing immigrant, population more children are targeted for bullying and are at risk due to their isolation. Community education about the seriousness of child abuse and its long term effects was also emphasized.

- Prevention is always cut. And the mentality from Congress, I would say 99%, is usually to work on after the effect. Money comes for after. Something has to happen, and it’s not prevention.

- Get the whole extended family involved when there is child abuse and neglect because when more is involved it is preventative because there are more eyes on the situation in the home. And all the time. Not just once a month when somebody shows up for a visit. They have to kind of put on a good show for the professionals. But there is family that’s really involved in helping and supporting long term. It’s definitely a trend. And also, professionals aren’t there since they are being cut too, so it’s even more important that families get involved.

One other thing we learn in the Hawaiian movement is, Hawaiian leaders is to recognize that it’s not an “us” and “them.” We teach everyone that I am your sister, I am your mother, I am your cousin. We all live on an island, we’re all related, we all run into each other and it’s how we deal.

Despite the challenges, personally and professionally, workers displayed resilience and attempted to find the silver lining. They listed some promising trends and recognized the benefits of living on Maui, such as the willingness to work collaboratively and often knowing and trusting other agency workers.

- Yeah, I think it (homelessness) has gone down. As far as individuals, maybe, that might be because I’m seeing more and more people in their cars. These are working individuals living in their cars.

- There’s a lot of people doing a lot of good work and we don’t always know each other. I think if there was a way we could all get together and talk more. Because we are so limited, not duplicate our services.
Additional Quotes from Maui Service Providers

• Service Reductions/Great Needs

“It’s hard to work with families when there’s not a lot of options out there. And yet we’re supposed to give out resources, but there’s not much to give out now.”

“The first two agencies to get cut, health and welfare, and education. Always see the cuts there. I keep thinking, doesn’t government understand need a healthy population, citizenry, to have a good governing body? And educated citizenry to have a good governing position in this world? And those are the first two things they cut all the time.”

“Funding has been cut and all that so the services are less while there is increasing demand for the family. Just to keep housing together and food for the children.”

“In responding to child abuse and neglect, I would say one challenge is the reduced staff.”

• Child Abuse and Family Violence

“We’re getting women that are making choices to stay in abuse. Because it’s safer. Because they’re sheltered.”

“So many women that don’t know how to recognize abuse and particularly when they’re in it. Because of the economy they are so dependent on this person to survival they put up with it.”

“Do ice in front of your kids and hey, what, no problem. That’s what we’re seeing. And we’re seeing teens who are females who are selling themselves. So it’s not the familial, central abuse in the home. It’s the sex or drugs.”

“Children can’t tell because of the fact of all the threats of what is going to happen to their family if they mention anything. So I think there is a lot of cover up in that department and I think the training in the schools and with the doctors, with the police, that recognize that it’s in their training. Certainly, some more interventions could happen before a child starts acting out.”

“I can just tell you that a lot of families are losing their children because the resources aren’t there for them to get their children in a timely manner. More and more and more and more. And it’s atrocious to me.”

“There’s actually a benefit from being in CPS. You can actually get some clothes, you can get $200 worth of resources right now. I don’t know how that is a couple months from now. It’s ridiculous that you have to get into CPS so you can get something. So that your kid can get higher on MEO Head Start, or in a preschool.”

• Staff/Agency Overload and Burnout

“The three levels have all shifted up because the voluntary case management cases are getting harder...So they (CPS) are taking only one tenth of what they used to take.”

“We are seeing more and more of our workers or the so called professionals that need that support because it is so crazy at work. We didn’t need it as much. But now we need it. With the amount of, you gotta do more with less, something’s gotta give. Our employees, our staff, they have nowhere to go but to each other.”

• Family Barriers to Survival

“The basic needs aren’t met right now. Before, I can say, ‘I got this resource. I can get you off the beach in two days. You let me do it, I will do it, two days.’ Now, are you joking me? There are so many families on the beach. Everyday coach surfs. Kids are going to permanency because people don’t have housing. It is bad. This is as bad as I’ve ever seen it.”

“I think we should address these big corporations that employ people working at McDonalds, at Walmart, at Knmart and say ‘you can’t have a shifting schedule on these families every week.’ Most of them are staying at the homeless shelter, they have extra rules at the homeless shelter. They have to jump through the hoops, they’re taking the bus, they have to pick up their kids. It’s just impossible, it’s not friendly for them at all.”

Ku i ka māna.

Like the one from whom he learned.

Said of a child who behaves like those who reared him. Mana is food masticated by and elder an conveyed to the mouth of a small child. The haumanu (pupil) receives knowledge from the mouth of his teacher.
MOLOKA‘I KUPUNA

Bad Influences

Molokai’s kupuna spoke often about the severe impact that the ice epidemic, the media and over reliance on technology have had on the children.

• Ice use is high and the users don’t understand that it is a bad choice.
• Children are in violent, abusive, neglectful environments. Of the confirmed abuse and neglect cases reported, 90% is ice related.
• Drug use in the homes means that there are inappropriate behaviors and possible sexual abuse.
• There are a lot of suicides among the youth. It’s too often media induced, where the youth are frustrated over limited options in their lives.

Intergenerational problems were clearly somewhat related to a gap in understanding where each other is coming from, but also different knowledge levels regarding the internet and cell phone usage.

• Kupuna are kind of turned off cause the younger generation speaks louder.
• The biggest problem is communication between generations and each other.

Lack of Resources

Kupuna also discussed the impact of limited resources and funding cutbacks on their community.

• The cuts have a huge impact on services. Funds get cut and projects are incomplete.
• There are bad vibes about funding, how community is asked to participate again when things are left undone. Trust can be lost.
• With the services provided there is a competition. There is a lack of resources and there is a tug of war.
• It seems like the State’s mindset—where is it? When we first closed youth services and we sent our youth to the mainland. Change the mindset of how we are going to help our children.
• How can we parent anymore when everything is considered abuse?

Challenges of a Small Community

Because Molokai’s is a small tight knit community, there are close familial ties and long-term neighbors. While this makes the community attractive in many ways, it can also lead to avoiding strained relationships by remaining silent, even when family violence, child abuse, or drug dealing is apparent. Many talked about the fact that cases of abuse and neglect are underreported because of this network of connections.

• There is only some reported so the reporting is low.
• Following through on reporting is challenging and getting results is hard cause they all know each other.
• People feel helpless and powerless in the family. It can upset the whole family structure.
• About sexual abuse, there are generations of it, everyone knows but no one talks about it cause it is a small community.

Kupuna also emphasized that the system response often brings perceived judgment, frustration, and loss of trust, which has oftentimes led to a suppressed anger, further explaining hesitancy to call authorities when family problems are identified.

Culture and Tradition

While this island has strong cultural pride and cultural traditions, kupuna believe the strength of those longtime values and practices is waning.

• The cultural piece is missing (in services). I’d like to see the cultural values blend.
• I see a lack of self identity, a lack of a role in community values, lack of knowing who they (youth) are.
• Do our systems allow children to find their role?
• In the world today, different mindset, we feel we lost our role, cause we cannot take care of them today. We have to have one foot in the western world.
• Hawaiian culture, this is what we learned. Learning to give and to share what you have. The ability to share is one of the greatest gifts we have.

Remedies

Embedded in remedies was the strengths inherent in the people who live on Molokai’s.

• What I like about Molokai’s, we a different breed of people.
• The first thing we like do is give.
• Molokai’s has always had to go out and fight for what it needs as an island as part of the tri-isle.

Kupuna spoke about the importance of supporting change and re-directing young adults towards positive choices.

MOLOKA‘I KUPUNA

KEY CHALLENGES

1) Bad influences/negative role models
2) Lack of resources and funding
3) Small community under-reporting, not talking about problems
4) Loss of culture and tradition

KEY REMEDIES

1) Support education, healing and positive influences
2) Strengthen family-based intervention
3) Expand cross-generational communication and problem solving
4) Incorporating culture into services
• Some are trying to go clean and are going to school.
• Young adults need to find a goal, to have a purpose. The idea of “Living classrooms” was explained by one of the aunties who told how as part of her education they incorporated a hands-on approach using living classrooms. She felt this was beneficial and could be used currently with the help of the Chamber of Commerce so children could learn about their community and different roles and employment in more active ways.

Additionally, recognizing the healing needed from already-suffered problems was seen as critical for helping people reclaim a productive life.

• Automatically getting therapy for kids and parents in the abusive home is a good thing.
• Kids and parents need help. There is generational drug use going on. Kids need extra support if in an abusive home. Kids need counseling too.
• Bridge the gap between the kupuna and the practitioners. The kupuna are heard but are not given the deserved respect.

On Moloka’i respondents articulated the importance of exploring methods, training and options that seem to work in this context.

• People need more training. Training is beneficial. Workers are getting better at recognizing the signals and getting skilled at questioning.
• Better awareness about issues of sexual abuse is likely due to outreach and education, media.

Even though there is underreporting, the group spoke about the importance of coming forward and sharing information.

• But it is better now than from 30 years ago. It’s better now in that at least more people are following through with the reporting.

• On Moloka’i they did sex assault outreach awareness, ‘good touch bad touch’, and what to do, who to call, where to go. They put a hotline number up on a poster which helped, did an island wide awareness campaign.

• Reviewing those studies and distributing that info to all the agencies, churches, doctors, and health centers. Also discussed was the importance of including culture and traditions into prevention.
• More traditional component to the services and education can be a nice addition.
• Spirituality is a big part in getting people to meet up and be together.
• The whole point of Ho’oponopono was a leader to call family together, to make family aware there was a problem.

One topic given attention regarded the needs of males and the differential role played by males and females on Moloka’i, as well as at least one of the root causes of this problem.

• Hawaiian men have been hurting for a long time. Look back at how we were colonized, look at who took over and who were the leaders. They had to make sure the men were not in the positions they were in anymore. They had to put men below and raise women up, so it was economically and politically possible to take over. I think domestic violence is a result of this.

While there may be numerous reasons, kupuna agreed on men having a need to find their positive place in the community, where many women are strong leaders.

• Men need to be more loving.
• There’s a lack of good male role models on the island.
• There needs to be a men’s group and a men’s shelter and a transitional shelter.
• Males need to be healed in community, not many men are healers. The men need healing.

“I maika’i ke kalo i ka oha.
The goodness of the taro is judged by the youngest plant it produces.
(similar to “and how are the children”)
MOLOKA‘I

System Problems

Moloka‘i is home to a strong community with highly connected individuals and groups. The fact that people know, and are often related to, those around them can be a major strength for the Moloka‘i ‘ohana. Moloka‘i’s island has a relatively low population of just 7,000 residents, most of whom declare Hawaiian ancestry. The participants from this community recognized that their unique strengths are coupled with significant social challenges, many of which are family-related, reportedly due to a sense of loyalty, concern for one another, and distrust that the system will provide help that is truly relevant and impactful. Some of Moloka‘i’s challenges are purely geographical. Although it is physically closer to O‘ahu, Moloka‘i is one of the less accessible islands by plane, and it’s a smaller rural population resulting in fewer allocated state and county dollars. Thus, a number of services are simply not there, and those that have made it to Moloka‘i rarely succeed using the systematic process that is more accepted on other islands. Service providers commented that poor quality services, state social service cutbacks, a non-Hawaiian approach to healing, lack of service coordination, and extreme and inconsistent interventions (always remove children or always keep the family together) impair the official systems of response to community problems.

Challenges to Intervening in Family Problems

The problems mentioned in families by respondents were the same as discussed on other islands in Hawai‘i. These included teen pregnancy, grandparents being overwhelmed by raising their grandchildren, and a sense of “losing” children to technology and the broader world rather than being able to enfold them in the Hawaiian culture. Most commonly mentioned were child abuse and intergenerational problems, and drug abuse (especially ice).

Values and Spirituality

Moloka‘i’s respondents prioritizing focusing on cultural Hawaiian values more than anything else they mentioned. Returning to or reclaiming good solid values, and a spiritual dimension, were also important to the service providers on Moloka‘i. A clash of incongruent values was related to materialism, technology, and a diminished respect in human relationships. Generational differences were also noted. Several participants spoke of the disproportionate health and mental health consequences for Native Hawaiians in their community and viewed root causes and sustainable solutions through a cultural historical trauma based lens.

MOLOKA‘I SERVICE PROVIDERS

Having hard time. And wasn’t like before so I think some of the families nowadays are not ok on Molokai because it’s the burden on grandparents.

• Rural communities across the country are dying because of ice. All across the country. Because that drug is so intractable. And it’s taken a toll on us.

At the same time, some emphases were stronger amongst this group than in other locales. For example, both the strengths and weaknesses of being a small rural island, where people all know one another, were evident in discussions of when and how to best intervene if you saw children or families suffering.

• There’s one other thing I have to say, and that’s that the child sex abuse (here) is not new. It’s generations old. And I mean people who were old ladies when I came to the island (talking about it) was almost a brand new thing, back in the 70’s. As we knew about it then, people telling the story, their father who would abuse them, who then abused their daughter, who is now abusing the grandchild.

• It seems as though they come from an approach that the service providers will heal these families. And I think that’s the wrong approach. Instead of teaching them discipline and skills or tools, whether they be Native Hawaiian skills, Antearea, doesn’t matter. They have to heal themselves. Because how long you with a family? How long the family with the family? Who should be healer? Who gon get the answer? You think you gon get the answer? The family get the answer. They know what’s up. They not lolo, they don’t wake up this morning and say they gon be dysfunctional family for three decades.

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• I think our ability to cope with the new global culture of materialism, violence, disrespect for lots of people, is something that most rural areas are just not well prepared for. When we’re teaching our high school kids English and math, they need to start taking some responsibility, they’re just itching to get on Facebook because somebody just started a new fight. So from my perspective, having grown up in Honolulu where we’re kind of used to all this urban stuff, I have seen a real, almost a catastrophic collision between values that were very evident when I first came here. Kupuna were listened to, instead of afraid of their children because they’re using ice. That change has been very dramatic and very quick.

• It becomes generational because you had a kupuna group that was raised one way then the next generation, the makua raised another way, then the keiki, and none of them understand what took place, what’s happening now, and what’s going to happen in the future.

• What is pono? And what was our fathers traditions that we need to leave behind and what we need to take for us to make a better life? And what is the right stuff, and how do you know? Not intellectually where we talking up here, it’s inside here. But every indigenous people you talk about, the business of them was structure. And that’s what we missing.

Service Providers

KEY CHALLENGES

1) System flaws / inadequate services
2) Fears and misinformation keep people from intervening with problems
3) Values / culture clashes
4) Communication and information gaps

MOLOKA‘I SERVICE PROVIDERS
Children are number one. As much as the children love their parents, it is a concern, child abuse and neglect on the island.

On Molokai’s learning the Hawaiian language was wahi kana’aho, [sanctuary] was in the chants. That’s where they were taught the disciplines to be pono and both the disciplines of healing and making you heal yourself. Everybody say pu’uhonua [place of refuge] is a place where you go and ask for forgiveness, but you were a guest in there because the kapu system, to practice releasing all the anxiety. You never could go back in society if you were vested there.

Moloka’i is known as being the best Hawaiian island, and is it because some of our practices are still preserved from the old practices? And I think in a lot of cases we just have to work together, really strengthen our network as a community in terms of being able to say, look, this is not working. These are reasons why, and we have to give more authority to the people here on Moloka’i who know exactly what’s going on.

Service providers discussed the importance of culturally relevant services and tapping into community resources.

They got to understand identity first, who are they, and once they know that, and you don’t know where you going until you know where you came from. You have no clue where you’re going to step if you don’t know where you came from.

And I think in a lot of cases we just have to work together, really strengthen our network as a community in terms of being able to say, look, this is not working. These are reasons why, and we have to give more authority to the people here on Moloka’i who know exactly what’s going on.

At least we have each other that we can kind of lean on and look to, to take care of the kids.”

Where’s the opportunity that we can put in our cultural practices? And I think if you can open the door for that, that’s a great improvement right there.”

Many participants talked about community, communication and education. Participants in the focus group believed that more communication was necessary for many aims: to educate people on good ways to parent; to teach respect and responsibility; to distinguish discipline from abuse; to connect people across generational divides; and to build identity and community. However, the group strongly endorsed having culture at the cornerstone of all these forms of communication.

Communication and Education

•And all this kind of consumerism that you can’t stop it for the world, but you certainly cannot provide everything for your kids. Kids should have a meal and a family ever having designer jeans. These kids now have a lot of stuff.

•I know when I was growing up, I’d talk with my Aunties about stuff that I would never talk to my mom about, or dad. So it’s kind of the other role that all of us service providers have, Uncle and Aunt, to the children in the community. I think it’s still true that in this community the children belong to all of us, so it’s heartbreaking to see children that are neglected.

•They got to understand identity first, who are they, and once they know that, and you don’t know where you going until you know where you came from. You have no clue where you’re going to step if you don’t know where you came from.

Service providers stressed the connectivity that families can feel with each other and as a community.
The strongest your affiliation with the traditional Hawaiian identity, the more chance you have of being sick. You're thinking, 'Oh, well if I know who I am then it's easier for me and I should have an easier time,' but it's a racist, colonialist context which we're forced to operate in. It's very difficult if you have traditional orientation, so we're talking about not one generation, but by the time they refer it back, sometimes there's already stuff going on, but we saw the steps before the previous administration implemented this new 800 number process and there were far more reports and far more verified reports than after they triaged it into a long distance phone call. We don't know who's talking, and then you really can't quite figure out how they're making their decisions about whether there's a problem because they screen a lot of it out in Honolulu, and if they think there is a problem then they refer it back, but by the time they refer it back, sometimes there's already stuff going on. So I really think that there's room for a lot of discussion about policy and to be honest with you, I'm sure there are children who've died because of the 800 number system and because all the local offices, just like ours, were instructed to tell people, "No, we don't help." "The lower the numbers the better, so when it is diverted, they're receiving voluntary services, and then when they're reporting, and then the cycle is not broken. I think in a lot of cases we just have to work together, really strengthen our network as a community in terms of being able to say, look, this is not working. These are reasons why, and it has to be, we have to give more authority to the people here on Molokai who know exactly what's going on."

Additional Quotes for Molokai's Service Providers

You always look with your eye, that's what my uncle teach. You look with your spiritual eye, see the ground dead ahead. Took me a long time too, before you can do that, you got to get rid of the baggage and I think that's what blocks all of us. Even in this room we not perfect.

• When we see happy families that are solid and they're doing things together, it's joyful, we notice because it's not that often. I think some of the families that are bigger families, that they've been here for many generations, they have more internal resources so sometimes they have a better chance of taking care of their own.

• It's not like how are the children doing. I thought how are our children doing. Because that's how I think of them, and I feel like part of the problem is they're not really ours, we don't have the authority to decide what the curriculum is in school.

• I think about other indigenous cultures where people need to make decisions, who was it that sat down? Grandparents sat down, grandmothers usually had the last word because it was their children they were talking about.

• So there's something wise in all of that, how indigenous people over the planet did things in the role that the grandparent generation played and making decisions.

We're talking about prevention and also alternatives is that one of the things that I really interested in is the Hale Mua, and I think a good one would be like a hale. On Maui they're trying to reintegrate traditional culture and the role of mentorship especially and providing a place for men to discuss these issues and then to disseminate that knowledge because a lot of that is lost. If you go to other places in the Pacific where it's harder for men to discuss these issues and then to disseminate that knowledge.

• Challenges to Intervening

"There's abuse and neglect in the teens population because we have babies having babies, so they have no experience in being parents, and they still want to be kids, but then they have this kid at home, they don't want to watch it so they'll pass it on to anybody so that they can still have fun and do the things that they were doing before they got pregnant."

"I met grandparents who say I can't deal with my kid because she's strung out. I got to watch the grandkids and now I'm worried that she's stealing, and I'm afraid she's going to hurt me. When you're dealing with that drug problem and then you get the further detachment of a kid who just wants to do Facebook all day or just wants to listen to their mp3 player, it compounds the problem."

"I think it's still true that in this community the children belong to all of us, so it's heartbreaking to see children that are neglected. I think the rate of neglect is huge. I think it's directly related to ice and alcohol consumption both. Where the family's so broken that you're lucky if you can find one person that could be a caretaker and then the question is, is that one person that could take these children in, financially able to, and what age are they? Because it's exhausting taking care of little kids, so I don't think the children are doing really well.""When it comes to possible abuse, I think that it's probably a lot more and maybe under reported."

"We have a serious problem, domestic violence, sexual abuse, both of those issues are issues that the police can respond to, but all the brand new guys we have coming in, they don't even know yet how to deal with that in real life, let alone if they have an official role to play. Sexual abuse on this island is rampant. It's the last big secret. Almost every single family has somebody who has been molested."

• Values Clashes

"It's culturally biased because of the fact that if there is a bruise, anywhere on a child, it's abuse. Hawaiian style, if you lick the child in the back of the leg, it's okay. If it's in front of the leg or in front of the face or in front over here, that's wrong. All of us we get it. But you never got hit in the face or the vital parts. I'm not saying it's right, but we came out alright."

"Somehow a parent stopped being a parent. Stopped teaching the Hawaiian values, stopped teaching the value of living on an island and the cultural aspect of it. There has been a very drug oriented generation. And it's impacting the younger, 19 year olds, and 10 year olds now and everyone's been exposed to everything now because everyone wanted a piece of the pie."

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• System Problems

“We have the rotating rookies who come in from Maui and they live in the teacher housing, row by row section, but they're just honing their people skills, and they're not up for the types of problems that we run into, so I don't think the kids are doing that great, personally.”

“We had a child who was burned by a cigarette by his stepfather and so the grandma figured this out, walked into the local office, and talked to the staff there and said, ‘My no‘opuna’s been burned by a cigarette.’ And was told, ‘We can’t help you, you need to call the 800 number.’ And she didn’t. She walked straight into the police department and she said, ‘Here’s my child, here’s the cigarette burn.’ Police stepped in, and that point CWS had to get involved, but we saw the steps before the previous administration implemented this new 800 number process and there were far more reports and far more verified reports than after they triaged it into a long distance phone call. We don't know who's talking, and then you really can't quite figure out how they're making their decisions about whether there's a problem because they screen a lot of it out in Honolulu, and if they think there is a problem then they refer it back, but by the time they refer it back, sometimes there's already stuff going on. So I really think that there's room for a lot of discussion about policy and to be honest with you, I'm sure there are children who've died because of the 800 number system and because all the local offices, just like ours, were instructed to tell people, "No, we don't help." "The lower the numbers the better, so when it is diverted, they're receiving voluntary services, and then when they're reporting, and then the cycle is not broken. I think in a lot of cases we just have to work together, really strengthen our network as a community in terms of being able to say, look, this is not working. These are reasons why, and it has to be, we have to give more authority to the people here on Molokai who know exactly what's going on.”
WAIʻANAE

Poor System Solutions
Kupuna in Waiʻanae discussed the system flaws and lack of services in their area and the impact it can have on their community.

• You talk about mental services, but we don’t even have it in our community. And unless you’re in focus groups like this and into community, that’s a big help, that we find out where we can take our kids.

“Our kids are not failing. Our kids are excelling within the cultural concept. They got to learn to walk both paths. But you learn to walk the other path by not making them shame about who they are, but building the respect, the integrity. And then they can learn to walk both paths, or what I call learning to walk the crooked path straight.”

Need for Quality Education
The importance of education and the poor quality of the schools in the community was another central concern.

• I’m well aware of what’s happening in the community and as far as the children, it’s very sad. I believe education is very important, a way for us to succeed, a way to actually survive as far as wealth, knowledge, and everything else. And what I see right now is budget cuts that are really affecting the younger children.

• They’re not educating them out there, these girls, they’re getting pregnant as young as ninth grade. It’s the education.

One kupuna spoke about the connection between the behaviors and the conditions. They touched on the lack of perspective and empathy in the acknowledgement of these experiences.

• We keep concentrating on how to change behavior. We split behavior into direct behavior and indirect behavior. Direct behavior when we talking about violence or punching, the stabbing, the shooting, that kind of stuff. The indirect behavior being the discrimination, the teasing, the denigrating individuals and making them shame, but it’s still violent to the person. What causes behavior?” Normally what we say is attitudes. They don’t know enough, or they don’t have the right attitude. So we start working on giving them more education, telling them how to be responsible sexually. The thing that we leave out of the equation are conditions. The condition of unemployment, the condition of homelessness, the condition of lack of education, whatever the conditions that they come from, we tend to forget that.

Success of children and their resiliency was also noted, and several teachers were lauded for their invaluable contributions to youth’s development.

• And they were intelligent, smart, conscientious, driven children that really had lots of goals and so there is a hope and there are children out there who are achieving. The system is pretty messed up, but because maybe the family support maybe other support systems that are helping them, they’ve actually managed to break free of whatever horrible education system there is and they’re achieving. And that is inspiring me.

The Economy
Earlier in this section kupuna referenced system flaws and budget cuts. Below they speak more specifically about how these issues are affecting their community. They also discuss the stress that many people feel due to the economy. This stress can become a big factor in substance abuse and violence. Additionally, just throwing money at the problem in the same old ways was questioned.

• Years ago Waiʻanae was like a testing ground for new programs. We had so many programs that nobody else had. But with all the budget cuts, that’s pretty much dwindled. The first thing that goes is programs for women and children and families.

• Some parents don’t want to and some they just too busy. Like how she said, survival, I need to work because I just got to pay the rent, make sure get food on the table, I no more time for my kid’s education.

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WAI’ANAE

Parenting Needed

Kupuna in Wai’anae often talked about parents not having time for their children. Many kupuna discussed raising their grandchildren, yet this was also questioned as a solution, since it may be an easy “out” for the parents.

• My children have to do their children. I will only do them if I want to. But if they cannot, I think we become enablers and we take over because it’s easier for us to do it because they’re working. But sometimes I feel our children, the generation we’re raising now, they’re so selfish. They’re so into themselves they don’t have enough time to take care of their own children.

• I’m raising my three grandchildren, seven, eight, and thirteen. It’s been a challenge for me, this is not exactly how you want to spend your golden years. But you do what you do for your grandchildren because you want them to have a better life. The parents don’t spend enough time with the children and so more and more you see the kupuna, they take over because we love them.

Substance abuse has also diminished the quality of care provided to children, according to Wai’anae kupuna.

• It’s the parents are abusing their kids because they’re either high or they didn’t get their fix for the day. They ran out of money.

• I don’t necessarily think we should have a massive sweep of cops like coming in the whole state, second to the Big Island. And half the time it’s down the coast. It’s just that the reality is we have the second highest case load in the whole state, second to the Big Island. And half the time it’s drugs, drugs, drugs, that’s the key thing. So how do you stop people from using drugs?

One day he came home with me and he says, “Grandma, that’s alright, because the mother was punching him in the stomach and he said he would tighten his stomach so it wouldn’t hurt. But when it got to that point, I wouldn’t let her have the kids. They don’t go out and work, they stay home and collect welfare, and they’re not educated. Most of them didn’t finish high school. And then she goes out and have seven kids, of course you gon’h be frustrated and you take it out on the kids.”

Remedies

Community-based solutions, with or without external funding, as well as focusing on children and youth and enveloping them in community and cultural events were key recommendations.

• I think if we want to make a difference then we have to step up and we have to do it. We can’t wait for them to give us money to do it. If we see a need somewhere, with maybe just one child and we know somebody that can help them, then I think it’s our responsibility to find help. If we have to circumvent the system to do it, and sneak a table in the halau once in a while.

• There’s a lot of kids they do need help. And I see them on the streets. And where I live at, they can’t go to parents because of drugs and alcohol and abuse. But these kids, they’re not dumb. They’re smart kids, but they need programs. I try to help some, but I can’t help them all.

• How much land you get that is not being used, and yet on the other side of the street, we get homeless folks. And people just banking on leaving the land in place, and all the pay is property tax, but they don’t have to develop the land. That’s stupid. Why not create an organization, or a number of different organizations with the power to tell these land owners that if you dedicate your land for the next 20 years to our kupuna, and let this kupuna have the opportunity to provide land space, and then we negotiate with City and County, all of your small rules about permitting and to put up one wall you need a permit and all that stuff. Well turn that control over.

• Why don’t we have community baby showers? Any wahine who is hapa, you see you invited to the community baby shower, so that no single person, no single woman who is hapa get to be shame about being hapa. And we throw the word illegitimate out of the dictionary from now on. We create a community sense that every child is welcome.

• What makes a child survive, and it has to do with a lot of factors and one of the factors is someone made that child feel important. That they were loved, they were cared about, and that can turn some of these children so beautifully, just to know that I have a reason for being here and someone loves me and cares about what happens to me. That’s one of the most powerful things on earth.

Additional Quotes from Wai’anae Kupuna

• Poor System Solutions

“My view with regards to the question, “And How are the Children?”, well, really depends on how we look at the structure within children are to be measured. Right now we have a governing structure that is based on three fundamental principles: domination, individualism, and exclusion.”

“We have a large community on this coast who lose school days because of respiratory problems. If we’re going to talk about “And How are the Children?” I think we also need to focus on the physical environment over which they have no control.”

• Need for Quality Education

“There’s a lot of kids in Wai’anae that’s suffering big time and there’s a lot of cuts that are going to be made. A lot of times we don’t even know where to turn to when they’re special needs.”

“Neglecting, abuse, drugs. I don’t’ come from Wai’anae and it was like shock coming here. Even though I’ve lived here a long time. I never understood when I first came here I didn’t understand the schools. I couldn’t imagine because I never in my life saw things like this happen. And they thought I was just a big bitch going to the school and grumbling. But I did grumble. Even those lunches. Those teachers don’t eat the lunch.”

• The Economy

“Everybody says the children are the future, but where are we putting our money in the state system now? Actually how much energy are we putting into this whole thing? A lot of these kids are being neglected and abused through the fact that somehow the family, the parents were involved in drugs. And it’s a devastating epidemic. When I talk to HPD they said, ‘Oh the ice epidemic, oh we got it covered. Pau already.’ Yeah, right.”

“Worse off than I think we was ten years ago, that’s my feeling.”

• Parenting Needed

“One of the sad things is for some young women, and men, it’s the only way to feel good about themselves. When you go to the hospital and you have a baby, oh attention, flowers, cuz then unfortunately you got to take the baby home, it’s a tremendous thing of like, wow queen for a day, I have a baby, I’m so important now. And whatever they lacked in their life, you’re going to try to get from that baby what you lost. That baby’s going to love you. But they forget the fact that you have to take care of the baby.”

“The parents, they don’t have the time to work with the children. They’re working, or whatever they’re doing. So you do what you can to help them. That’s all you can do, besides giving them your love and being patient.”

“I see the kids out there paddling, doing stuff where they’re physical, so to me there’s education or there’s a mental health component, there’s spiritual, I think we have to make sure our kids have a spiritual component to their lives. So I’m going to be happy, I’m sick of being miserable. I’m 68 years old, if I’m lucky I got 20 more years, so why the heck am I going to spend my time being miserable, the kids are falling apart, the world is going to die, there’s tornadoes in Alabama, I mean what the heck.. This is all the time we have and if we combine our energy, our resources. Knowledge is power”.
The Flawed System

The Service Providers in Wai‘anae expressed strong dedication to their community but voiced that they are challenged in various ways. They reported that they are often overworked and underpaid. They cited the impact of budget cuts and the emphasis that has been placed on lowering the numbers of reports (regarding abuse, DV, etc.) and the decrease in support for providing preventative interventions.

Children don’t get seen. If they do go out, workers are rushed so they don’t do as thorough a job. Anytime that you overload somebody, they’re not going to be as competent. They’re more worried about administrative accountability and deadlines.

A lot of workers feel victimized right now, and how effective can you be as a helper when you’re feeling like a victim? The reality of it is that until we get back to an education system that honors our culture, that honors the way that we teach, that honors our value system, the statistics that we have today will continue. And we need our culture, we need time.

I just removed the child from the railroad tracks before it got run over and you’re getting mad at me? Do you wait until the child gets run over, and then we act? The damage already has been done.

Drugs and Other Negative Influences

Poverty and its direct effect on parental stress was also a topic that came up and providers saw it as strongly linked to the drug culture. Selling drugs can be a quick way and sometimes the only way to make money for some and also provides an escape from poverty and homelessness.

For some reason our families, our parents, are always depressed. For some reason our families are homeless. In this community, you can drive up the coast and you see it.

Well they face parents being drug addicts, they’re being raised by their grandparents, and grandparents taking care of the rest of their grandchildren, so they’re kind of neglected in the sense and they just do what they got to do to survive, so that’s what we see.

But I’m going to blame the ice epidemic in the 80’s that just wiped out a whole generation, maybe even two generations. It’s like this whole ice in the 80’s just wiped it out.

For some kids it’s normal to go down to the school early in the morning before anybody else so that you can just take a quick bath with a wash cloth in the bathroom and brush your teeth, and then Mom and Dad go wander at the school. That’s normal for our kids. So how are they doing? They’re surviving. They’re surviving on what they consider normal.

You can be homeless but you driving a car with nicer rims than I got. So it’s just, it’s the gangster, I mean ghetto type of subculture that they have out here and how are you going to convince people to change from that and make it lucrative to them.

Disconnected from Community and Dependent on Perpetrators

Service providers shared many concerns about individuals, and especially youth, having poor role models and often being disconnected from their cultural roots, therefore having a confused or shaky sense of identity. This extended to being emotionally and economically linked to these poor role models.

If you notice when you talk about the whole drug subculture and all of that, well every impoverished population adapts to that because you have opportunity to accumulate wealth and in this community alone, some of the most respected guys, at least on the street, are drug dealers.

Some of the kids that don’t even have money want to emulate them, what kind of bling do they have, the gold chains and all that kind stuff, it’s almost like Hip Hop Hawaiian culture.

The role models, they’re very few that the youth can emulate. But they don’t see that as a possible opportunity for them. They don’t. So they want instant gratification, they see their parents maybe who might retain some culture, but can’t even pay the rent, so do I want to be like that?

Service Providers also spoke about the impact of past abuse and the detachment that some have from the community. In many cases this results in dependence upon the perpetrator.

I think we have a lot of mothers in our case loads who are AMAC, adults molested as children, a lot, way too many. I don’t know the exact percentage, but I wouldn’t hesitate to say at least 70%.

What’s real alarming, is lot of times only time that we ever find out that somebody was sexually abused is that it finally comes out maybe in a psych eval, but they’re identified as substance abuser because they’re medicating all these years, and along with a community that’s very unique and specific to culture and all that too, you have social isolation too, which is one of the predictors too. So it’s very under-reported out there.

And the perpetrator is going to make himself somebody who they need. That’s going to be, he pays for rent, or he has the car, or he has the drugs, or whatever it is, that person is a person of power within that household.

Children not having the words.

They may not know sometimes that it is abuse because there’s a lot of trade-offs going on and it may not be painful, and there’s some confusion too. Boundaries are defined, or may be defined within your family system and you may not know any other way if you don’t get exposed to that.

Lack of Education

Service Providers discussed supportive relationships in the community and educating people about parenting and abuse to remedy situations described above.

Service Providers

KEY CHALLENGES

1) Flawed system/budget cuts/overworked staff
2) Drugs and other negative influences
3) Disconnected from community and dependent on perpetrators
4) Lack of education

KEY REMEDIES

1) Partner the “system” with the community
2) Re-in-still values
3) Rebuild community connections and a sense of pride
4) Create resources, and sharing knowledge
WAI‘ANA EP Smith Center

• And then there’s a large, not the majority, but a large amount of families who don’t realize that they’re doing something that might be abusive or neglecting, they just don’t realize because that’s how they were brought up. So they don’t realize that.

• The children that I work with are really good at adapting to the environment that they have been presented with and here in and unfortunately we expect a lot of the adaptation to occur in the children and not the parents.

• Under reporting. Because nobody believed in CPS, they thought it was a black hole, we’re not going to squeal on our neighbors, but once we started building a good reputation, people started calling their neighbors in, so the natural consequence of all of that was that they had more of an influx of children coming into the foster care system because the high prevalence of domestic violence, crystal meth use, homelessness, all compounded together so those numbers just totally increased.

Remedies

Reinvigorating community values and remembering Wai‘anae’s cultural and historical experience could create more positive experiences and supports.

• We are proud of where we come from, who we are, but what I think also happens is that being who we are, we just accept things. Our community accepts everything.

• We’re looking at educators, psychologists, we’re looking at schools, we’re looking at churches, we’re probably looking at extended family members. Those are all the things that you can find in this community and maybe those are all supports that can be tapped into.

Services Providers discussed the broad cultural stage upon which youth may develop stronger identity and pride in their culture and that can also contribute to the community as a whole.

• Two girls and they do slam poetry on Wai‘anae and what they talk about, their community, they talk a lot of pride, bringing the culture back. The arts is a fantastic way, the music, and the poetry, that’s a really good way to help bring it back.

• We get a lot of talent down here, musically, craft wise, but it’s not nurtured because culture isn’t the ticket out at this point.”

• All they know is that we from Wai‘anae, we don’t like outsiders and all that, but there’s some historical hearsay to all of that. And it’s real interesting stuff and maybe if people can bridge the gap between all that, educate them, and this is why there’s so much pride, and everybody got that warrior mentality out here, which I think is great.

Ideas about how to help children and families were also noted, as well as the fact that resilient families and children are surviving, and sometimes thriving.

• So basically trying to build survival skills because they survive out there, these kids are surviving out there. Bringing them in and saying, ok this is how you got to do it if you got to survive. A lot of them have kids. A lot of them making money, not the right way, and it’s not a good time especially with the economy, but we’re going to see what we can do because there’s hope for that group and we will keep hearing kids saying they want to do things and as long as they want to do things, there’s hope for them.

• You have so many committed providers, people that I see constantly, at least once a month. You have so many support services within this community, and they have a passion to do this job.

• You’ve got three kids and you factor in clothing, and factor in gas, and everything else we’re struggling with, but when you add in issues within the community, within the family regarding drugs, regarding the domestic violence, regarding mental health issues, you factor in, in distance, infrastructure, to the lack of support that may be within the schools, you throw that all into the mix, something’s going to give, and it’s usually the family, the parents.

• If you look at all the dental concerns, and hygiene concerns, and all these children have, they have children in public schools that go to school without shoes or even slippers. They can’t even afford 99 cent slippers, and that’s a given."

"It’s the mental health issues, the depression, and all of the anxiety that builds up. It’s just so much within the community that it becomes a norm for these kids. It becomes a norm.”

Additional Quotes from Wai‘anae Service Providers

• The Flawed System

"The remaining staff that I have are very much overloaded. They have to not only be case managers but they also have to investigate.”

"So children are going to be neglected. That’s just a natural outcome to a system that’s being so disintegrated at this point.”

"Right now our services are so fragmented because of budget cuts and all that kind of stuff, how can we pull together and work towards a common goal?”

"The third thing is economic challenges. The bottom line is we need to create more jobs and opportunities on the coast.”

"My staff hasn’t seen a pay increase in three years, we’re still making the salary we’re making three years ago. Our caseloads have quadrupled and we just shut down one office because our budget was cut severely.”

"Shoot, I could make more as a supervisor at McDonalds than I can as a social worker.”

"My staff, they’re living paycheck to paycheck and it seems to just be the norm for our families.”

• Drugs and other Negative Influences

"What we finding, there’s still a lot of drugs, prostitution out there with kids.”

"You’ve got three kids and you factor in clothing, and factor in gas, and everything else we’re struggling with, but when you add in issues within the community, within the family regarding drugs, regarding the domestic violence, regarding mental health issues, you factor in, in distance, infrastructure, to the lack of support that may be within the schools, you throw that all into the mix, something’s going to give, and it’s usually the family, the parents.”

"And if you look at all the dental concerns, and hygiene concerns, and all these children have, they have children in public schools that go to school without shoes or even slippers. They can’t even afford 99 cent slippers, and that’s a given.”

"Why is there so much pain on the coast?”

• Disconnected from Community and Dependent on Perpetrators

"Like eight, you’re going to be adult, you can do everything already. Take care yourself. And then watch your three year old brother and your two year old sister. And they’re adult issues at eight years old.”

"I’m a incest survivor. So for me, I understand sometimes too clearly when women come in with issues. And I know it’s difficult for not only little girls to talk about it, but for boys.”

"I know this one case we had, the grandparents actually said don’t tell. They knew about it, so it’s that kind of secret, that secrecy, and it’s difficult. So I think you can talk about it in the community, it opens up a can of worms, but in a way it gives children a voice too, but how do we do that because there’s a lot of barriers everyone has.”

• Educational Issues

“And they can start with hygiene, something as simple as hygiene can turn into the good touch, bad touch. This is your private area, this is respecting yourself, but then you think, respecting yourself? How can you respect yourself when other people around you aren’t respecting you and you’re not feeling respected?"
STATEWIDE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The State of Hawai‘i

This section aims to accentuate statewide findings and, unlike the individual reports, summarize the overall results. Unlike the prior sections, where the articulate and heartfelt stories shared, though organized, were mostly left to speak for themselves, this section discusses themes across the state. While there are limitations on what can be inferred from focus groups in eight locales (181 participants in 18 group discussions) regarding overall issues for children and families in Hawaii, some clear trends appeared across sites, strengthening the data because of repeated themes. As well, there were some different emphases placed on the importance of issues based on category of focus group respondent (kupuna or service provider) or location.

Both kupuna and service providers highlighted issues, all of which were organized into four categories using the ecological model. The ecological model identifies multiple levels on which problems or strengths may be identified and on which change efforts may be focused. These include:

1. The society
2. The community
3. The family/relationships
4. The individual

While these categories sometimes overlap, using this framework helped in organizing this information and presenting it in an understandable manner. For example, resilience of the individual may be a strength at the level of the person, and a downturn in the economy would be a factor influencing from the societal level. Increased grandparent involvement with children would fall into the family level, whereas high levels of drug use or domestic violence would be community level factors. It was quickly apparent that factors on any of the four levels could also be viewed as positive or negative. Therefore, to further analyze the data, information was coded based on comments that indicated positive or negative influence on children and families.

Common Themes with Kupuna and Service Providers

Kupuna and service providers both noted observations of the effects of the economy on families as well as on services for children. Other effects related to societal level issues where there was substantial agreement between kupuna and service providers across groups included: the need for more place-based decision making that includes the community and their perceived needs in determining spending priorities, as well as better trained and culturally sensitive service employees.

On the community level there were particular issues that both respondents groups saw as central to how families are currently functioning. The impact of “negative influences”, including drug use at every level was mentioned prominently and hopelessness and its increasing presence and resulting problems were also cited.

Both groups believe that families have strengths and weaknesses that influence their lives. Foremost is a huge amount of stress being handled by those parenting children, much related to time constraints resulting from multiple jobs, tight schedules, and financial concerns. Interpersonal violence was increased given those stressors, and allowed to continue through secrecy and silence, particularly child sexual abuse. They agreed as well that these stressors underlie cross-generational contact and communication. This is further strained by differences between generations regarding technological savvy. In particular, grandparents raising grandchildren have difficulty managing all the influences of media advances, including texting and the internet.

On the level of concerns related to the individual, especially the child, kupuna and service providers agreed that children are more influenced by all the other levels of life (family, community and society) than by their solitary choices or strengths. However, across groups, two main themes were echoed: teen pregnancy is a major issue affecting the lives of children and families and the lack of strong adult role models has resulted in youth with limited drive, perceived options, and a lack of respect.

Suggestions for community improvement were both creative and sometimes even already being implemented on a small scale. In response to programs that only address one problem or one age group, someone asked, “What about a facility for the families where the families can be treated as a family? That is best for the children.” Another group of respondents felt strongly that makes need to be targeted more in strengthening the family, “There needs to be more focus on the men and young men to grow up and be a leader and provider.” Individual responses to community ailments taken on by focus group participants also abounded. One kupuna talked about how her drug-infested and isolated neighborhood was transformed by her efforts to get to know everyone, share cookies, build connections, “Because of change in attitude and heart I started loving my neighbors like I should, my whole neighborhood changed. I want to be optimistic. I see value in my neighborhood, in my culture. What about people makes a place a slum? A slum is a place where people don’t care.” Others felt that certain laws limit the solutions that could be used, including solutions that re-integrate those who have made mistakes back into full community participation. For example, “CPS won’t let a felon (foster) parent, why not? So what if I am a felon, why can’t I care for the kids? You gonna take a messed up kid and put em in a perfect home?”

Differences Between Kupuna and Service Provider Concerns

Kupuna:

There were also themes that emerged differently in the kupuna groups than in the service provider groups. Not surprisingly, the kupuna were far more likely to note the loss of traditional values and culture and lament how that was affecting communities and children. Kupuna groups also emphasized the need for community strengthening, providing ample examples of how people did not now care for one another as they had in past times. Additionally at the societal level, kupuna were more likely to discuss the lack of cultural awareness of caseworkers, agencies, and courts, where services appeared insensitive or disconnected to aloha and an understanding of Hawaiian people.

On the community level, kupuna groups talked uniformly about the lack of a spiritual focus in youth or families as a concern, even noting that some people feel helpless and hopeless to make changes and improvements in the lives of their families. Further, they noted concern about the emphasis placed on materialism and consumerism. This seemed related to materialism being an empty replacement for a spiritual core. Kupuna were also more likely to emphasize the importance of education, or a good education, than were the service providers.

On the family level, kupuna were also far more likely to express confusion about how child abuse was or should be understood. Distinguishing discipline from abuse was not always clear and sometimes made kupuna feel parents were impeded in guiding children due to the laws.

One particularly interesting finding was how frequently respondents discussed kupuna/grandparents raising their grandchildren (or great-grandchildren). Involvement of an extended family with children was seen as a cultural strength. However, numerous respondents discussed how the distortion of the Hawaiian family concept had resulted in an overburdening of grandparents with caregivers. Some even referred to this as the disappearance of the middle generation into prison or drug addiction and the “abuse” of kupuna’s kindness and willingness to help. Grandparents in their seventies and eighties were reporting having half a dozen children in their homes which had, in the words of one “stolen our golden years”. These grandparents reported being tired and often not receiving much support from society in their expanded roles. Kupuna emphasized that both children and grandparents were suffering when parents do not take their parent’s responsibility. Having grandparents increasingly raising children is no long-term solution and finding ways to heal and empower parents to take on their role is of great importance to kupuna.

Individually, kupuna believe that people today, and especially youth, lack respect for others and often for themselves. Yet they recognize that, at least in part, this lack of respect came from adult modeling or lack of attention to the children’s behavior.

Service Providers:

Service Providers across the state also emphasized some distinct concerns. On the societal level, service providers were more knowledgeable about, and even more critical of, many services to children and families at this time. In particular, the impact of funding cutbacks was central to the
discussion in most of these focus groups, with long lists of services that were no longer available or not available when and where needed. Further, burnout was prevalent, with caseloads increasing and more complex cases being given to them than they have been trained to handle. They noted unmet needs: an early childhood focus, more prevention, the need for multiple strategies to solve problems, and a strengths-based approach, but were pessimistic that services could be maintained or further developed given the current economic climate. Of great concern was how many service providers, on multiple islands, felt unable to successfully do their jobs and felt at risk of having the same problems as the families they serve, given threats of job cutbacks.

Healthy Start
Healthy Start and other Early Childhood Supports were of particular focus for service providers around the state. In fact, when scheduling one focus group, the person helping us organize originally said, “Why bother asking what is happening? We know Healthy Start works but they defund it anyway!” Across the board, these early childhood prevention programs were seen as very helpful and the loss or reduction of some programs as tragic. As one person stated, “I was hired for the program that became Healthy Start, and that was to prevent child abuse. It was something we could do, we actually could prevent child abuse.” Service providers were frustrated that oftentimes politicians did not realize the impact of cutting these important family prevention efforts. Politicians had no clue that Healthy Start even existed on Maui and they are making decisions about people’s lives and they don’t even know what they are cutting. Another predicted, “Healthy start is going to come back.” By the feedback sessions, some community representatives were delighted that “Now we have the opportunity to get Healthy Start back through grants.”

On the community level, service providers were more apt to emphasize serious concerns about female teens and preteens. These included a normalizing of abusive experiences with dating relationships, manipulation into early sexual activity, sexual abuse, and lack of access to appropriate sex education and pregnancy prevention. Service providers especially related early pregnancy with interruption of education, lack of opportunities for girls, and then a repetition of child abuse with their children.

Similarities and Differences
Noted Between Focus Group Locations

While there was substantial agreement, and all sites are hurting with economic struggles faced by families, how that is experienced, in general, may have some differences based on island or community distinctiveness. For example, Lana‘i, the smallest of the islands, appears to have a tighter network of families and social service providers, thus doing a better job of early identification and intervention with children. On the other hand, respondents reported concerns that parents often allow their underage children to drink with them at home or at parties, one possible result of trying to keep track of what children are doing.

Comparing sites where focus groups occurred is not entirely feasible given the type of data collected and the fact that in a discussion format, the first speaker often sets the tone, at least in part, and the subject direction of the conversation. For example, if the first person brings up uninvolved parents, the next speakers are likely to agree or disagree about this, with examples of their own. So, because one focus group talked more about education does not mean other places do not care as much nor that other topics were not of interest, only that this is where the conversation focused, thus giving us a deeper look at that issue in that community. So, this section summarizes some emphases of each location where the research occurred, but should not be interpreted as necessarily in contrast or comparison to the other places. Differences in main topics would require further research to see if they are consistent over time and with additional respondents.

H A U ’ U L A

Hau‘ula is a community that hugs the coastline along the east/ north shore, making for a long but narrow band of people and organizations. The physical layout of the community challenges service providers in providing programs that can reach a large number of people. This may also make travel and neighborhood development more difficult. Focus group participants in this community were very concerned about homelessness, drug use, and how historical loss has contributed to the problems in this area. These factors also influenced the pessimism and sometimes “depression” claimed by focus group participants since they doubted things would substantially change for children and families. Efforts are being made in the community to represent, including work on education and substance abuse problems, with significant help from the religious institutions. Kuapua here especially emphasized the role of historical trauma and loss and intergenerational problems as central keys in explaining challenges present today.

H I L O

Hilo side of the island of Hawai‘i shares with several other sites problems inherent with families that struggle financially and many who live in isolated or remote areas. Hilo respondents saw a multitude of negative influences impacting children, from the media to escapism through substance abuse and concerns with suicide attempts in their community. Further the deep funding cuts at the time the economy is most hurting families has created a double whammy for their community. When services are most needed, they are cut. This overwhelms not only families, but workers report discourage-ment that they are unable to help many, and their own job situations also seem precarious, leading to even more workers burnout. Deepening the connections of children and families as important members of their communities was reportedly needed. An expansion of the use of traditional practices, including use of the land, as additional options and opportunities for youth and employment were also seen as necessary.

K A U A ‘ I

Kaua‘i also echoed the concern for teenagers and preteens. A convergence of issues leads to their concerns: grandparents being overwhelmed with raising children and having little knowledge of the ways youth communicate now (technologically); parents stressed with multiple jobs and thus neglectful of children; parental stress leading to increased child abuse but also increased emotional maltreatment of children; child molesting leading to youth runaways and criminal behavior; and bad home experiences acclimating girls to abusive dating relationships. Further changing notions of what actually constitutes child abuse versus child discipline was discussed by both kupuna and service providers, indicating not only ambiguous definitions, but ambivalent feelings about the topic. Kaua‘i also echoed the concern for teenagers and preteens. A convergence of issues leads to their concerns: grandparents being overwhelmed with raising children and having little knowledge of the ways youth communicate now (technologically); parents stressed with multiple jobs and thus neglectful of children; parental stress leading to increased child abuse but also increased emotional maltreatment of children; child molesting leading to youth runaways and criminal behavior; and bad home experiences acclimating girls to abusive dating relationships. Further changing notions of what actually constitutes child abuse versus child discipline was discussed by both kupuna and service providers, indicating not only ambiguous definitions, but ambivalent feelings about the topic. Kaua‘i was the location where youth suicide was most discussed, even though a youth suicide occurred on Moloka‘i the night before our focus group and copycat suicides had happened in Hau‘ula just months before. Although not always the precipitant, in at least some of these cases on Kaua‘i, undisclosed sexual abuse was a part of the reason for suicide. Kaua‘i’s focus group participants also discussed how youth needing to leave the island to continue their education created a tension between wanting to maintain family unity and furthering career opportunities. The most noted key to solving these problems was a return to traditional cultural values and identity.
KONA

Kona focus group participants expressed concern at a system which seemed largely unresponsive or unavailable to people in need. This group emphasized the connections between problems, so that child abuse cannot be addressed apart from a recognition of related issues, such as domestic violence, stress, etc. Comments also included discussion of how everyone in the community is touched by violence.

Parental stress was reportedly part of what led to high levels of anxiety among adults. "Things are worse because people are losing hope." In fact, "Things are worse because people are losing hope." Parental stress was reportedly part of what led to high levels of anxiety among adults.

Although well aware that they do not have access to all the services and opportunities on more populated islands, the service providers appear to have accepted that reality and rely upon themselves and each other. They reported a re-markable mutual trust with good adult support and guidance provided to children on the island, and when not available from parents, provided from aunties, school people, and neighbors. While the economy has made life much more stressful and overwhelming for families, they also stressed the can-do attitude present on their island. "We really don’t have a lot of homeless here. They stay with family." One major unique focus of the discussion included an ongoing "plantation mentality" with few major employers and workers being used to having family come after, rather than before, the priority of their employer. "Providing for a kid doesn’t include how to support them emotionally."

This led to, in part, a problem with less supervision and less involvement with young teens than was actually necessary, resulting in teen acting out, including problems with unwanted pregnancies and delinquent behaviors. Lana‘i kupuna also discussed the issue of ethnic shame, seeing this especially with Filipino children denying that part of their heritage, as well as sometimes with Hawaiian children doing the same. However despite these problems, generally adults reported they were optimistic about the future of children on Lana‘i, and even considered children living here to be more fortunate than those in other parts of Hawai‘i.

LANA‘I

Lana‘i most embodied the story of a small community, with both the strengths and weaknesses inherent in their isolation. Although well aware that they do not have access to all the services and opportunities on more populated islands, Lana‘i participants emphasized change at the community level, “It’s important that families have support in the community, it’s important to get the mayor, council members, get people involved.”

Another mentioned community level advocacy, “We have to feel more secure about asking questions, going to organizations that have power, like the DOE.” Additionally, adding cultural values was suggested, “We were taught to respect as parents, provided from aunties, school people, and neighbors. While the economy has made life much more stressful and overwhelming for families, they also stressed the can-do attitude present on their island. “We really don’t have a lot of homeless here. They stay with family.” One major unique focus of the discussion included an ongoing “plantation mentality” with few major employers and workers being used to having family come after, rather than before, the priority of their employer. "Providing for a kid doesn’t include how to support them emotionally."

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MAUI

Maui focus group participants also examined the role of Hawaiian cultural loss and oppression as an important context for understanding problems currently prevalent in their community. This historical picture has resulted in youth who are disconnected from their spiritual and cultural roots, as well as intergenerational patterns of violence. Reports from Maui were that between our first and second visits (Feb. to November), improvements were not noted. In fact, “Things are worse because people are losing hope.” Parental stress was reportedly part of what led to high levels of ineffectual parenting. Child abuse and other forms of interpersonal violence were also serious issues, with being addressed adequately, respondents believed, in part due to program reductions or elimination. At the same time, creative solutions exist and have been successful in Maui, from a land-based cultural education program to community prevention programs and educational theater.

MOLOKA‘I

Moloka‘i participants informed us that not only did system solutions not always adequately address problems, especially when lacking Hawaiian cultural principles, but may actually get in the way of finding workable solutions. This dynamic of distrust of the system is combined with a strong sense of community loyalty. This loyalty leads to strong ties, but also to maintaining secrecy and silence about problems, especially child sexual abuse, which is rarely reported but a longstanding issue, according to focus group responses. In addition to problems remaining unaddressed, clashes between traditional and modern values sometimes divide residents. Further, communication, particularly between generations, and transfer of information/knowledge needs additional attention. Moloka‘i service providers and kupuna both discussed the importance of strengthening Hawaiian traditional values, including faith and spirituality. At the same time, the difficulty of survival in a limited economy, and during an overall downturn nationally, also effects almost all families and children in Moloka‘i.

WA‘IANAE

Wa‘ianae was described as a strong Hawaiian community, with resilient children and families, despite levels of unemployment, educational challenges, and substance abuse. Like other communities, focus group participants here cited the need for support for kupuna raising grandchildren-and lamented that people were “cheated on both sides”, both losses to the children not having their parents involved and losses to older caregivers. In addition to high rates of interpersonal violence described, there was also discussion of unresolved grief from loss that many suffer due to the death of those they love. Education received much attention as a key to improving the lives of children, with both substantial complaints about the schools, but also great respect for invested teachers and coaches. In the autumn feedback session, great concerns were voiced about the need for adults to provide adequate sex education, with some suggesting it should be mandatory in schools. Several people shared that there are powerful “hopeful pockets” of families and activities that can be built upon in the Wa‘ianae community.
Recommendations are being provided for each level using the ecological model. The four levels (societal, community, family/relationship, and individual) were used in analyzing these data, and also must be kept in mind for solutions that are comprehensive and effective. This model contextualizes problems and solutions in the broader social and political environment. Increasingly, experts realize that placing too much burden on the individual to change (quit drugs, stop abusive behavior) is unrealistic and that each individual is embedded in family and relationships, which occur in communities, and are all occurring within a broader society. This more comprehensive approach to change provides more avenues for building and sustaining lasting change.

The following are the main recommendations which resulted from analysis of the research data as provided by focus group responses:

**Societal Changes:**
1. Prioritize prevention and early intervention
2. Solicit and use community input into funding and program decisions
3. Develop and strengthen culturally informed workers and solutions

**Community Changes:**
1. Address silence, secrecy, and shame around interpersonal violence, esp. sexual abuse
2. Build cultural and community connectedness
3. Provide opportunities for community-based healing and education

**Family/Relationship Changes:**
1. Create and implement strategies for stress reduction
2. Provide concrete supports for families
3. Focus on needs of teens and preteens

**Individual Changes:**
1. Teach, reinforce, and normalize pono/respectful interactions
2. Extend opportunities for positive community contributions
3. Surround youth with multiple adult supports and role models

**Societal Changes**
Changes on this level include large scale private and public initiatives, as well as potential for legislative policy changes and business involvement. Governmental involvement most often occurs at the societal change level.

1. **Prioritize prevention and early intervention.** In the context of this report, both wisdom from elders in the community, as well as advice from those working to help families who are struggling converged on the topic of how early attention to attachment to their significant caregivers. Early also means that it takes tremendous courage to discuss how it is crippling our lives, our families and our communities. It must be congruent with the culture and the values represented in that community. In Hawai‘i, more efforts should be made to provide ongoing training in cultural issues/sensitivity, and culturally infused programs for Native Hawaiians should be developed and piloted for successful use in Hawai‘i rather than borrowed, often untested, from other settings and cultures. In addition, creative solutions should be sought from those living in a community, and may incorporate individuals and organizations outside of social service agencies.

**Community Changes**
Community as used in the ecological model refers to the locale and social networks in which an individual or family most directly and frequently interacts. Community may encompass neighborhood, town, religious networks, sports activities, schools, or local businesses and programs. As a part of a community, each member has some influence on expectations, norms, and acceptable behaviors. While change at a societal level sometimes seems more distant and difficult, community members have more direct impact on the groups with which they most often interact.

1. **Address silence, secrecy, and shame around interpersonal violence, especially sexual abuse.** Silence around certain issues has been pervasive and resulted in inaction in communities around the world for generations, especially in regards to child abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence, and the sale and use of drugs. This silence results in a perpetuation of the problem. If it is to be shameful to even discuss, or if it is perceived to be “none of my business”, the activity continues unabated. There are no immediate or direct consequences for the assailant or the aberrant behavior. However, there are multiple and long-lasting consequences for the silent community. These include increased criminal behavior, harmed (and sometimes later harmful) individuals, skyrocketing public and individual health costs, and a decrease in safety in communities and schools. Silence breeds and teaches more silence, and the cycle continues. Addressing silence means beginning with addressing what is real, putting aside the shame and reframing shame as what occurs when we do not recognize and deal with reality. The first step, and perhaps the hardest, comes after public awareness efforts. It is not that people do not know abuse happens and that it hurts people. It is more that it takes tremendous courage to discuss how it is crippling our lives, our families and our communities. It must incorporate a community commitment to take on the issues facing down problems and looking jointly for solutions. The first step begins with refusing to keep the secrets of abuse and pledging to speak out and take action.

2. **Build cultural and community connectedness.** Many problems result from those people and families who become isolated and alienated from others in their world. In communities, efforts to keep alive cultural values and practices— and to involve more from the given community in such activities— would create a sense of belonging, inclusiveness, mutual caring and responsibility. Respect for a variety of cultural backgrounds, especially in this state, will help youth establish a firm sense of identity and personal pride. This can also lead to academic and career success. In addition, identifying and reaching out to anyone in a community who seems disconnected, regardless of their background or ethnicity, builds a safer neighborhood and general care and kindness. Programs and practices that support personal a-
1. Create and implement strategies for stress reduction. Often people think of stress reduction as something done by a person to relax more, to let go of their worries. While some suggestions were made that rising stressors on families may warrant workshops on relieving stress, most recommended additional changes that would actually serve to reduce stress rather than help people cope with more of it. For example, many noted that family-friendly policies would go a long way in supporting families by encouraging employers not to require overtime, to allow time off for school meetings or functions, etc. Where childcare is too expensive or unavailable, mechanisms could be instituted by churches or civic groups to offer after-school programs or help establish a safe parent cooperative with rotating supervision of children. In addition, stress reduction could be enhanced for children and youth by reducing bullying in school, peer mentoring, and learning time management and problem solving skills, as well as venting emotions positively through sports activities.

2. Provide concrete supports for families. One of the five identified protective factors for preventing children physical abuse is to make certain parents have access to concrete supports. This is both related to building a sense of community and reducing stress given that tangible supports provided by informal networks provide real help when individuals most need it. Supports can be transportation, diapers, clothing, food, a short-term loan, or emergency childcare. With a reduction in governmental financing of basic needs, and nonprofit agencies being stretched beyond their funding limits, people will need to implement the basic values of doing what they can to help one another. This trend is expected to continue for some time, requiring more of neighbors, employers, civic groups, and religious organizations than was previously necessary. However, this shift away from formal and strings-attached services to neighbors helping neighbors allows for creativity and community building and reduces the stigma of "charity". It also minimizes the centrality of criteria for determining who is really "needy".

3. Focus on needs of teens and preteens. Although early childhood intervention was a high priority in all focus groups, again and again we heard concerns for the young teen. At the time some parents are seeing a child wanting more independence and freedom, and therefore allowing for more choices and less oversight, teens and preteen youth are seen as very high risk groups. Some risks escalate at this life stage: drug and alcohol use, suicide, abuse and neglect, and unplanned teen pregnancies, as well as introduction into criminal behaviors either to "belong" or to make money. In a sense, providing connections, opportunities, and ample relevant and engaging training or education was seen as preventing pre-parents from limiting their options by having a child they may well turn over to a parent or grandparent once they learn it will not fill the hole they feel inside with "love". Efforts here can also help with prevention of abuse of that child who was unplanned and has an unprepared parent(s). This emphasis was strengthened by reports of dating violence, over-dependence on having a boyfriend, and even suicide attempts. Many stated that parents often let youth at this stage essentially raise themselves, back off of parenting after the elementary years. Some suggestions for engaging youth included having them involved in ways to contribute positively to their communities, whether mentoring other youth, or creating their own projects for improving their communities (see "individual changes").

Individual Changes

There is clearly a place for individual changes that can decrease and prevent interpersonal violence. However, traditionally most projects have focused most on incentives or punishments aimed to get an individual to "get it together". A complex set of factors, including the importance of the environment, makes this approach alone ineffectual--yet it is still important to bolster resilience and hope and provide opportunities so that all have access to a pathway to success.

1. Teach, reinforce, and normalize pono/respectful interactions. Kunapa and service providers both believe that children and youth are not being taught basic moral values or what it means to be "pono" and they emphasized the importance of respect for self, for others, and for elders. Adults who can address bullying, discuss dating issues, and encourage dialogue about fighting may be one key to remedying the lack of values. However, reinforcement at home, school, church, work, and in youth-oriented settings will require more than good lecturers. Effective value transmittal requires role models that exemplify those values, and yet are youth-friendly. Systems (classrooms, dances, ballgames) must normalize a culture of mutual respect, including work on long-standing gender socialization that allows for a certain amount of interpersonal manipulation or coercion. Excluding children most hurt by these disrespectful and behavior will only serve to create additional problems, thus long suspensions from school, for example, should be replaced with something that can enhance youth’s learning about relationships.

2. Extend opportunities for positive community contributions. Neither adults nor youth want to be seen as needy and incapable of giving back. As youth develop their identities, finding ways to contribute, not only to their own life goals but also to help others, both increases self-worth and good citizenship practices. A lack of knowing how to contribute, or a dearth of options for contributing (which youth cannot always see on their own), necessitates that adults actively seek ways to involve children and youth in building their community. Some suggestions included recycling projects, peer mentoring, job training or job shadowing chances to learn or make money, and linking youth with kupuna so the stories and practices of kupuna can be captured for posterity. When positive contribution increases, the needs to have a baby, do drugs, or commit crimes, for example, decreases. When children are guided through this often-difficult phase with positive activities, they are positioned to continue to strengthen the community for the next generation.

3. Surround youth with multiple adult supports and role models. As noted by many focus group participants, there are many children who have few or sometimes no relatable, sober, capable, available adults helping to care for them. Grandparents may take on the task of raising these children, often overwhelming themselves and their resources out of a desire to help. Other children live in difficult circumstances, on the beach, or with unstable shelter and food access. On an individual level, communities should find or create resources so that no child has to raise themselves, and ensure there are numerous adults concerned with each child’s welfare. This outreach must be shared by community adults: parents of a child’s friend, uncles, aunts, neighbors, churches, employers, co-workers. It does take an entire village to raise a child and the villagers need to attune themselves to "lost" children who benefit from kindness, guidance, structure, and having someone who will listen, or give them an occasional meal. Even more fortunate children, especially in the teen years, having a range of role models and concerned grownups provides them with options when they cannot or will not reach out to their parents.

STATEWIDE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Statewide Research Recommendations continued

transformation—particularly after incarceration, loss of child custody, or during substance abuse recovery—are also important and can help restore these individuals to full community membership and contribution. Without some practices based on restorative justice principles, too many will remain outsiders even in the communities in which they were raised.

1. Provide community-based healing and educational opportunities. Quality educational and social service programs are sometimes missing or incomplete in rural areas and on neighbor islands. At times it is not feasible for a full array of services to be provided by multiple professional and agencies when the numbers using those services remain small. However, equitable services, albeit different in distinctive sites, should be a goal. Further, since services-as-usual may not meet the needs of all the types of communities in Hawai‘i, community-based healing should be prioritized. In personal service delivery and educational programs, leadership should be provided by revered kupuna.

Community-designated leaders should guide the work, which may well fit "outside the box". Focus group suggestions ranged from internships with local fisherman or cooks to kupuna designing and leading parenting classes. Other ideas included self-help groups for past sexual abuse and teaching about historical events and cultural-historical trauma and loss. Integrating school curricula so that it mixes western and Hawaiian culture in deliberate but complementary ways was another idea provided. And while it was noted that schools cannot do everything, many saw a great deal of room for improvement in creating opportunities for increased family involvement, providing appropriate sex education, and improving standards and policies. The importance of strong educational efforts and helping those already harmed by the effects of violence and abuse was emphasized.

Family/Relationship Changes

Sometimes this category is referred to as the Relational level, since relationships certainly can extend beyond those with familial connections. However, in Hawai‘i, family is a term used to acknowledge those who become chosen family, whether by hānaī or informal adoption of an auntie or uncle. In referring to children, in particular, “the family is the core”, as one kupuna put it, changes within a child are unlikely to change a situation unless the family also makes alterations.

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