



ENCOUNTERS WITH MENTAL HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS

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Statewide Homeless Awareness Conference

November 3, 2023



OVERVIEW

Presenter Introductions:

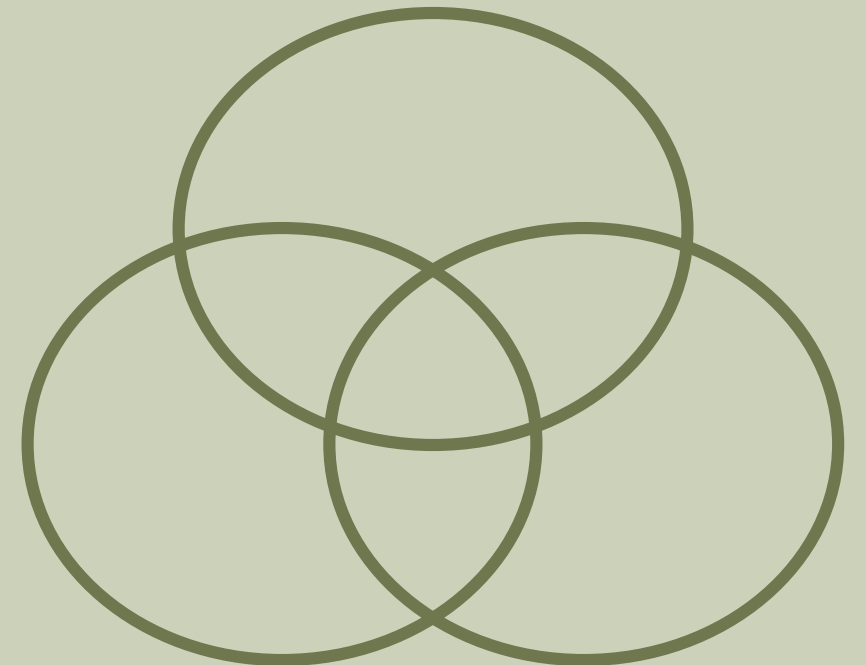
Chiyo Churchill, Rena Pascual, Natalia Villegas, Janina Martin

Community Psychology

Mental Health

Houseless individuals share

Participation project (prepare to comment)



WHAT IS COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY?

In general: Community psychology goes beyond an individual focus and integrates social, cultural, economic, political, environmental, and international influences to promote positive change, health, and empowerment at individual and systemic levels.

www.communitypsychology.com 10.27.23



FOR OUR PURPOSES IT MEANS:

- Engaging with community partners
- Talking story
- Taking time to build trust
- Being non-judgmental and patient when clients cancel or no-show and then being there when they want to engage
- Provide for basic needs (therapists sometimes do case management)
- Understand generational and cultural trauma
- Hear their story
- Be aware of community needs
- Make an effort to understand the systems people have to engage with
- Engage with compassion and dignity for those we serve
- Be a good listener, be willing to walk next to



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY?

Community provides a sense of belonging

Where do you belong, feel safe, feel heard

- Invite community members to the table
- Listen to stories, identify themes/common barriers, question the status quo
- Advocate for marginalized populations



NATIVE HAWAIIAN HOUSELESSNESS

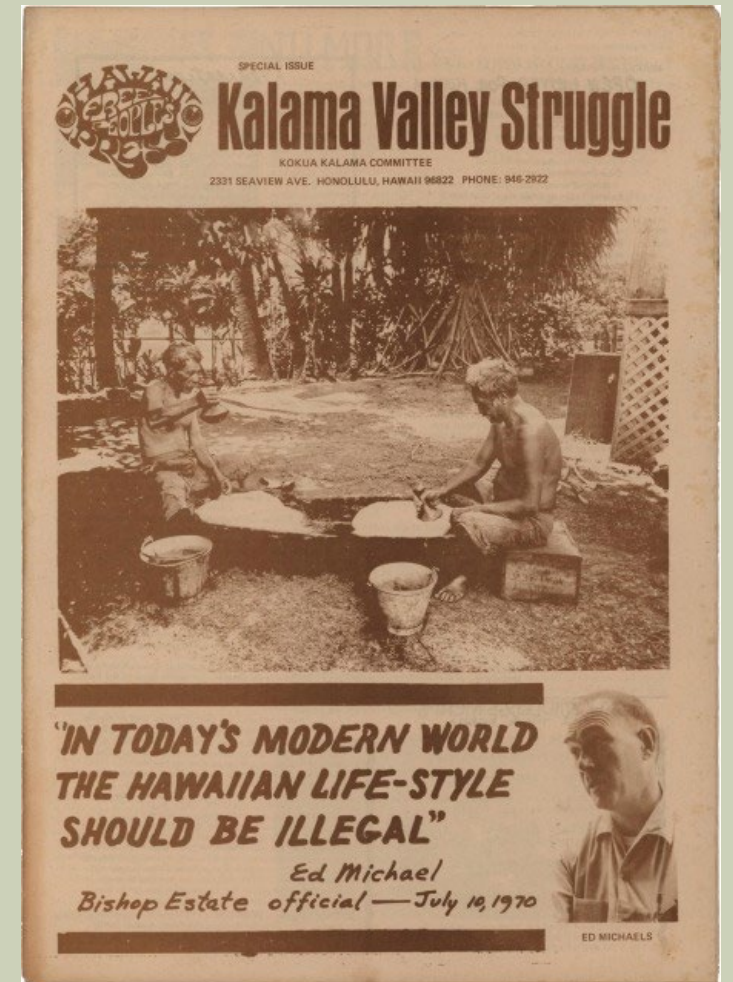
What does it mean to be houseless for Hawaiians in Hawai'i?

Land dispossession on a grand scale

- Still felt by generations of families today
- Hawaiians dying on DHHL waitlist
 - As of 2020, 28,000 names on waitlist

Illegal Overthrow of Hawaiian Kingdom 1893

- Ku'e Petitions document the thousands of Hawaiians resisting statehood
- Overthrow led to the denationalization of generations of Hawaiians
- Connection to culture, language, land was severed



HOUSING INSECURITY... DOES IT AFFECT OUR MENTAL WELLBEING?

Absolutely!!!

We do not need to be living on the streets to feel the grief and worry of not being able to “make it”

Generational grief and loss can manifest itself as mental health concerns such as: depression, anxiety, chronic stress

- This can also show up as psychosomatic issues: gastrointestinal disorders, rashes or hives, tension in different parts of the body, general achiness, etc.



WHEN WE USE THE TERM MENTAL HEALTH, WHAT DO WE MEAN?

Western Conception of Mental Health:

“Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices...

Many factors contribute to mental health problems, including: biological factors, life experiences, and family history.”

<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/what-is-mental-health>

Native Hawaiian Conception of Mental Health:

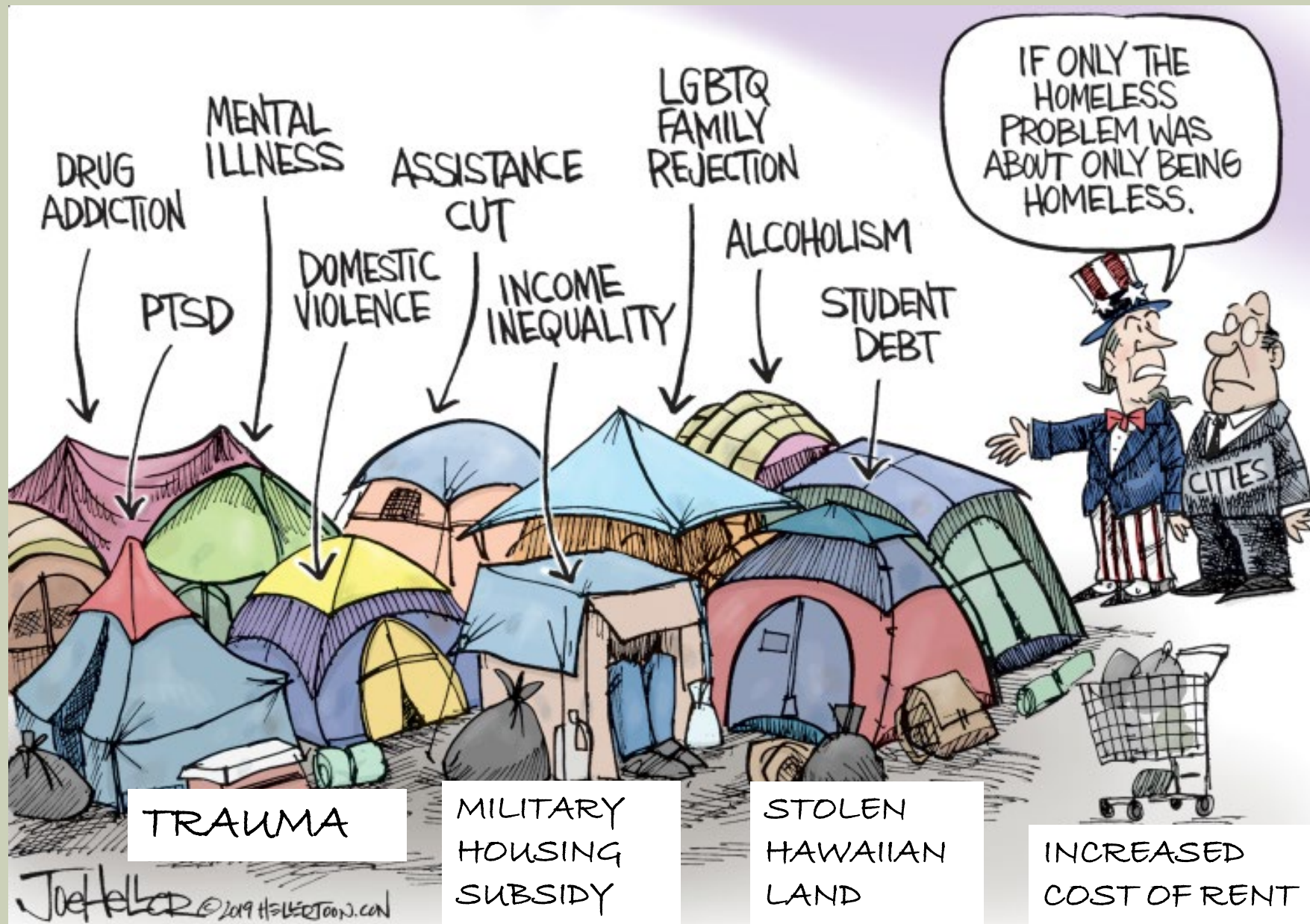
A balance of
relationships: with
‘ohana, ‘aina, akua





WHAT IS OUR
RESPONSIBILITY WHEN
WE BECOME AWARE OF
SYSTEMS THAT REWARD
A FEW, SUPPORT SOME,
AND
DISPROPORTIONATELY
NEGLECT OTHERS?





WHAT WE SEE CLINICALLY

Crisis – Medical crises, housing crises, family crises, food insecurity, children not in school, connection to culture disrupted...

Anxiety – Isolating, acting out, feeling unsettled, relationship disruption...

Depression – Isolating, not able to work or not engaged in day to day life, no joy...

Cycles and generational hardship – Children see and are affected by what they see, when parents cannot cope children don't learn how to cope...





Kupuna to Kamali`i

video



PHOTOVOICE

Photovoice is a process in which people – usually those with limited power due to poverty, language barriers, race, class, ethnicity, gender, culture, or other circumstances – use video and/or photo images to capture aspects of their environment and experiences and share them with others. The pictures can then be used, usually with captions composed by the photographers, to bring the realities of the photographers' lives home to the public and policy makers and to spur change.

[Chapter 3. Assessing Community Needs and Resources | Section 20. Implementing Photovoice in Your Community | Main Section | Community Tool Box \(ku.edu\)](#)



- Photovoice promotes equity by actively engaging participants from creating prompts, to discussing themes, and creating the presentation.
- Photovoice is a Community Based Participatory Research method with a decolonizing approach.



PROMPTS THE GROUP DECIDED ON

Please listen closely to participants sharing. After the video we would like you to give feedback to them via their project posted on the wall. Please use the Post Its to let them know your thoughts and responses to what they shared.

- What do you do to stay motivated and to maintain hope?
- What has your journey been through the systems?
- What are the labels and stereotypes you've heard?
- What do you wish people would remember when working with you?



SERVICES

Counseling Center

(808) 527-4470

Housing Services

(808) 521-4357

Kupuna Services

(808) 527-4777

Immigration Services

(808) 521-4357

Catholiccharitieshawaii.org

counselingcenterhawaii.com



QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

**PLEASE POST-IT YOUR FEEDBACK FOR
OUR PARTICIPANTS.**

THANK YOU!

