EMPOWERED SAFETY for INDIGENOUS YOUTH

WAHINE LGBTQ+ MAHU

AND ANYONE ELSE WHO NEEDS IT

‘Ike ‘ōpio

PILOT EDITION

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DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OF MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Trigger/Content Warning
discusses sexual abuse, suicide, violence against LGBTQ+ and other difficult topics
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Mahalo to 'Ike 'Ōpio workshop instructors & supporters Sierra Dew, Beki Light, Morning Star Gali, Joanne Castillo, Noa Helelā, Liko Martin, and Rossa Socco.

The views represented here were drawn from collective mana 'o through a collective process. No organization or individual is specifically represented by anything expressed. But a lot of it needs to be a lot more obvious to everybody.
Indigenous Rights Concept: FREE, PRIOR, INFORMED CONSENT (FPIC)

What it means: Consent must be given FREELY (without pressure), PRIOR to (before) whatever is being done, and everyone must be fully INFORMED about whatever will be done, and really okay with it. This is true whether someone wants to build a giant telescope or touch someone’s body!
Mahū is a Hawaiian term used to describe one who is neither male nor female but both. The closest English translation would perhaps be transgender or non-binary. Though in Hawaiian thought mahū represents the embodiment of both Kāne and Wahine energy. A third gender.

Gender queer people have always existed. And we’re often very recognized in ingenious cultures! For example on turtle island certain tribes have the word Two-Spirit to describe people embodying both male and female energy.

Often these people would have high ranking roles in their communities due to the fact the possessed both male and female mana. In Hawaii mahū people are sometimes said to have healing powers and would kōkua people in that way.

So if you ever feel that your gender identity doesn’t fit within your community, just remember, queerness has always existed as a prominent part of native culture, and therefore your culture!
BODY SOVEREIGNTY

Every body is as sacred as the earth.

How we choose to...

...nourish them.

...decorate them.

...partake in intimacy.

It's our choice. We make educated decisions on our health and well-being to exercise agency and sovereignty over our bodies.
What happened is not our fault but to heal from it is our responsibility.
DEMILITARIZE DOWN TO THE LAST BASE, SOLDIER, AND BULLET!
GROOMING

What is GROOMING?

Grooming is when an adult targets a minor and prepares them for sexual abuse.

1. Targeting a victim: someone they find vulnerable.
2. Gaining trust.
3. Filling a need.
4. Isolating the victim.
5. Sexual contact.
6. Maintaining control.

If you realize you are being groomed, you may feel bad that you did not see it earlier. IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT. YOU ARE NOT STUPID. AND YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

A trust worthy adult... keeps clear boundaries respects your personal boundaries is concerned for your safety will not "cover for themselves" won't use blame or guilt to control you doesn't exploit your vulnerability respects your choices, while also being there to provide guidance

A groomer... plants the idea of a further relationship in your head embarrases or exploits makes you feel respect for behaviour they find inappropriate claims you are mature for your age makes you keep "secrets" esp. regarding sex blackmails you conditional affection

Nobody understands you like me.
You are so mature for your age.
So what do you and your boyfriend do? (explicit)
I can make you a success!

Grooming HURTS. A trusted older person in whom a lot of hope and personal dreams was invested has betrayed you. Grooming is a “confidence art” (as in the term “con man”). People around you have been manipulated and might be excluding or dissing you, as they themselves have been groomed to support the groomer. This is NOT OKAY. You deserve to be taken seriously and treated with real respect.
Surviving Abuse

- you are not responsible for your abuse. You did not deserve or ask to be hurt.

- you will find a community that will love and support you. There are communities who will surround you with kindness.

- if you reach out, others will help you. You can escape your abuser.

- you are not dirty or ruined or defiled. You are worthy of love and it is possible to heal.
**Victim Blaming**

*When we hear...*

- Why didn't you fight him?
- Everybody has been abused. Get over it.
- What were you wearing?
- She would never do that!
- Hopefully you have learned not to drink next time.

*Sometimes we wonder...*

- Did I deserve this?

*You didn't...*

The victim of abuse is never at fault for their abuse. The responsibility is on your abuser.
Look around you.
Notice the colors you like.
What feels good.

Notice any shapes.
Trace them with your eyes.

Breathe in a color that feels good.

Place your hands on your body.
Imagine your colorful breath filling up that area.
Imagine it loosening.

Release as much as you can right now.

Repeat.

Breathe in... color + shapes.
Loosen + release.

Breathe out... color + shapes.
Loosen + release.

Breathe in... color + shapes.
Loosen + release.

Breathe out... color + shapes.
Loosen + release.
Auntie Beki Light is a champion boxer, martial artist, teacher and activist. She has lots of formal training as well as real-world self-defense experience. Usually she teaches us nonviolent self-defense strategies and techniques, but in this MMIP awareness zine, the priority is for Indigenous youth not to be missing and murdered in the first place. So here is some blunt, real self-defense mana’o she has to share.

**If you feel uncomfortable/unsafe, but can’t leave easily, what are some things you can do?**

You need to be brutally honest with yourself about what you are capable of doing, and stick to it. Know what your options are, and be prepared to use them. This includes physical self-defense tactics, safe spaces you can go to, and support systems. Be aware of strategic positioning. This can include physical positioning—being close to doors in rooms and cars, having a clear view wherever you are, keeping distance between yourself and the person you feel unsafe with, as well as being ready to move or defend yourself. Don’t let something escalate until it’s too late to do something about it. Think about possible weapons: bottles, keys, dirt, pen, a hairpin—anything that will stop them long enough to get away.

**If you are grabbed or trapped, what are some things you can do to get away?**

In general I would say to go for quick easy targets that will inflict pain and make them loosen their grab so you can get away. Go for the targets that are easy to reach and will immobilize them for a couple seconds: poke/gouge eyes (be prepared to go deep into the eye), punch the throat on Adam’s apple area, stomp on feet, head butt upwards. With the top of your head (bone) to their face, kick or knee strike their groin, elbow their face, stomp hard on front of their knee. I recommend a combination of these, not just one. For example, stomp hard on the foot and head butt upwards to their face, then run. If you are grabbed from behind, thrust your hips backwards to their body. This will loosen their grip and create space so you can break free. You can also elbow strike backwards to their chest or stomp on their feet. Scream. Once you can break free, **run**.

**What are your top recommendations for safety preparedness before there is a dangerous situation?**

Number one is defining your own healthy boundaries, and sticking to them. Do not accept anything less, and learn to recognize the red flags ahead of time. If you will not accept anything less than respect, you will be able to see signs of possible disrespect ahead of time. Know who your true friends are, people who will help you if you need it. This might not be many people; maybe you will have to look to an organization or group outside of your circle of friends and family. Investigate your options and have that information ready if you need it. Practice placing your emotions aside (temporarily) when you need to protect yourself. Strong, conflicted feelings can cloud our ability to act fast in a dangerous situation. Set your mind to doing what you need to do to stay safe, no matter how hurt, confused or betrayed you feel. Once you are safe, you can take time to process your feelings.

**You are telling people how to injure another person if that person is attacking them. Isn’t that violence?**

To be clear, we are talking about situations where your life is threatened or you are in actual serious physical danger. It is the last resort to hurt someone in order to protect yourself. Understanding through self-determination where your own pono boundaries are will help you decide what is truly necessary. Putting emotions aside, deescalating, and getting away is the priority. There are also non-violent self-defense methods, but these require training and practice. Defending yourself from violence is not violence, it is stopping violence against yourself. Safety is a human right.
it is common for people to freeze when they are attacked. It is one of the basic human responses to danger: fight, flight, or freeze. Freezing makes sense in some situations, but if someone wants to hurt you, it is probably better to get away. Freezing could keep you from stopping someone from violating your space or body, especially if the attack is unexpected. Sometimes abusers try to portray a person’s freeze response as consent, which it is NOT. Even if you did freeze when attacked, you are NOT the person who caused the abuse.

Here is a tutorial by martial arts expert Auntie Beki Light:

**Auntie Beki’s tutorial: How to Break the Freeze!**

**The Freeze Response**

**We Can Freeze When We Are Overwhelmed**
You may shut down in a dangerous situation and freeze. This a normal physical response from our nervous system when we feel extremely threatened, and it does *not* mean you are weak or incapable of doing something. You just have to understand why it happens, and how to get out of freeze mode and protect yourself.

**Break through the freeze!**
*Have a simple plan of what you will do.
*Breathe in 3 times through your nose then exhale forcefully twice through your mouth.

These help you focus, be present, and ready to defend yourself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why We Freeze</th>
<th>Mental/Emotional</th>
<th>Physical/Emotional</th>
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<td>You don’t know what to do and it <em>feels overwhelming,</em> or impossible to do anything to change it.</td>
<td>Have a simple plan in your head about what you can do if you need to: “I’m going to kick their knee if they step forward, then run to the left”</td>
<td>Breath work: Breathe in 3 times through your nose then exhale forcefully twice through your mouth. This helps you ground, focus and prepare to act.</td>
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| You are in *emotional conflict* about the person or situation that feels confusing and overwhelming. | Working on your *healthy personal identity* (our images of ourselves internally, and how we see ourselves in relation to the larger community) will give you more clarity in a dangerous situation. This will help you act instead of freezing up. | *Psycho-physio tool:* Combine a small physical movement with a mental image of something that makes you feel safe. This can be used to instantly flip into a state of mind where you can defend yourself.

This tool must be developed and practiced ahead of time, so that your body and mind are conditioned to go into the zone (focused, adaptable, and responsive) every time you use it. |

Unresolved trauma and emotional wounds from your past can be triggered, causing you to shutdown in some way. Notice: this might be an opportunity to resolve your old wounded patterns by creating a different, more positive outcome. |

Healthy self identity is connected to healing old wounds and trauma, and creating positive relationships in your life. |
Indigenous self-destruction is deliberately grown by colonial forces. When people feel terrible about themselves, it is easier to displace them, steal their land, and make them do what the colonizers want. With enough money and power, it is pretty easy to cause (sometimes on purpose, sometimes as a side effect) guilt, shame, bullying, drug abuse, extreme stress, trauma, anxiety and feelings of not being good enough. All of these things can make people want to hurt themselves, or to feel they should not exist.

YOU ARE GOOD ENOUGH - AND MORE!
As an Indigenous youth, your roots are powerful. Over time, they will make you strong. Things get better!

How to handle suicidal folks...

Suicide is very high among indigenous folks, largely due to colonial shame culture that has been ingrained in modern indigenous cultures, particularly in Polynesian culture.

Suicide rates are ultimately a form of cultural genocide

Native people are societally taught and re taught self loathing, and are taught to pass these teachings down generations and frame it as tough love

Don’t shame anyone for being suicidal
Ex: “you’re stupid for thinking about that” “suicide is selfish” “coward’s way out” “you’re being manipulative”

These types of statements can be very damaging, especially from family members, as we hold family opinions very high, especially in indigenous families

Shaming suicidal people actually just feeds suicidal ideation

Thoughts like “I’m selfish for being suicidal” can lead to thoughts like “well I really should die then”

What can you do instead for suicidal folks?

Consistently checking in
Reminding people they are loved and cared for
For some people, comforting physical touch is helpful (obviously only consensual touch)
Socializing with good safe people can be very helpful (but not over socializing)

Use your intuition to check in on someone who might seem extra sad, avoid recluses

If someone has experienced a lot of abuse & trauma, major life change, depression
Domestic Violence

HAND SIGNALS

Aka “I am in danger and cannot say anything.”

This gesture was originally developed by the Canadian Women’s Foundation as a way for people in isolation during COVID to express that they were being abused. The gesture was popularized on TikTok and led to some successful rescues.

There is potential to use this signal in other situations, such as trafficking or dating danger. However, be aware that in order for it to work, people need to know what it means. It is important to share with friends and others who might recognize it, if it is used.

Here is how it works:

1. Open hand, with thumb across palm.
2. Trap thumb with fist.
3. Repeat.

Again, it is not clear how effective this would be if you actually had to rely on it in a dangerous situation. Do not rely on it as the only thing to do. However, it is a tool that is good to know, and spread.
Surviving Abuse

- It wasn't your fault.
  - It's very common to feel responsibility for your abuse. That you did something to deserve, or you didn't try hard enough to prevent it.

  You did nothing wrong. You did not ask for it or deserve it. No matter what.

- Escape.
  - It will be scary, you will need to reach out and ask others for help. Cease contact, find a place that you can stay if they live with you. Report them if you feel safe enough to do so.

- Ask others for help.
  - When you are abused, it messes with your ability to trust. Build a community away from your abuser. People who love and respect you the way you are.

- Heal.
  - Healing is a long process. It takes a long time to come to terms with Abuse.
Resources
Some of these resources may be better than others. Some are great.

Tap808 Dating Violence (advocacy, counseling, info & more)
https://www.tap808.org 808-927-2434

Lavender Clinic (LGBTQ+friendly medical clinic, counseling)
https://www.lavenderclinic.org 808-744-2543

Planned Parenthood (medical clinic for women, men, LGBTQ+)
https://www.plannedparenthood.org 1-800-230-7526

Sex Abuse Treatment Center (SATC)
http://satchawaii.com  (808) 524-7273

Domestic Violence Action Center (DVAC)
https://domesticviolenceactioncenter.org

‘Ōpio Protectors Network
https://www.wisdomcircles.org/programs

‘Ike ‘Ōpio/Ho’opae Pono Peace Project
https://www.eapono.org/

StrongHearts Native Helpline (DV hotline, offers text chat)
https://strongheartshelpline.org/get-help 1-844-7NATIVE
(762-8483)

WeRnative (health info, Q & A) https://www.wernative.org

The Trevor Line (international LGBTQ+ mental health/text counseling/suicide prevention)
https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help/ 1-866-488-7386

Hawaii Cares (Hawaii mental health/substance abuse/DV helpline) https://hicares.hawaii.gov 1-800-753-6879

Hawaii Poison Center (confidential poison/OD help)
https://www.hipoisoncenter.org 1-800-222-1222

Other Numbers:
(your space)