

# Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Transgender Culutural Competency Webinar

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# Webinar Objectives

- ▶ Increase knowledge around the social structures and culture of the Native Hawaiian, Asian and Pacific Islander (NH/A/PI) TG Community
- ▶ Increase knowledge and understanding around slang/ terminology used by the NH/A/PI TG Community



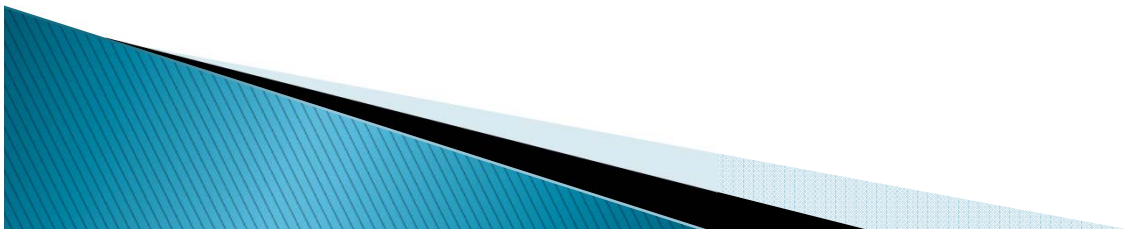
# Webinar Objectives

- ▶ Increase skills in providing culturally relevant counseling for NH/A/PI TG community
- ▶ Gain the confidence to provide culturally appropriate services and referrals for the NH/A/PI TGclients



# Poll Question

- ▶ How many Native Hawaiian, Asia, and Pacific Islander Transgenders do you currently work with?
- ▶ More than 10
- ▶ Between 5 and 9
- ▶ Between 1 and 5
- ▶ None



# What is culture?

Definition (wikipedia):

patterns of human activity and the symbolic structures that give such activities significance and importance

- ❖ Transgender Issues
- ❖ NH/A/PI Cultures

# Family

Important part of culture  
in the Pacific





# Practices and Traditions



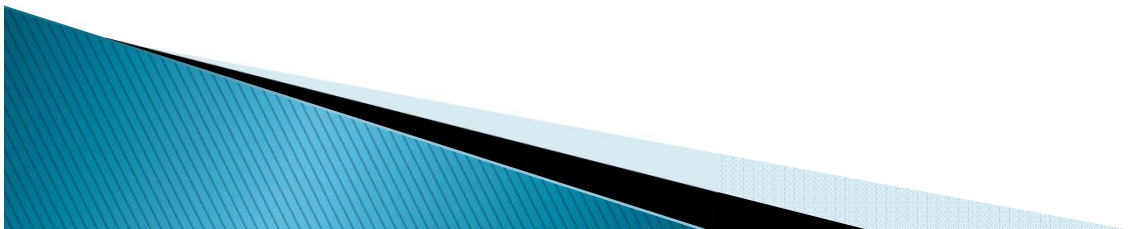
Poi – food as conflict management  
Na'au – gut feeling or instinct  
Mo'olelo – oral history  
Mahu – transgender  
'Aikane – gay/bi



# Cultural Terminology

**Mahu:** *Loren Andrews Dictionary, pub. 1865*

- ▶ A man who assimilates his manners and dresses his person like a woman.
- ▶ “person born with two sex organs.”
- ▶ “homosexual of either sex” *(Pukui-Elbert, 1973)*





# History of Mahu

## Journals of Reverend Cochran Forbes, *dated 1838.*

Forbes a reverend who came to Hawaii with the fifth company of missionaries. Forbes writes,

“One man who has never dressed in male costume from his birth now labours under conviction. He appears truly humbled, but says he does not know how to change his dress. I told him that if he would be a follower of Jesus he must make no reserve but must be willing to sacrifice everything. Poor fellow he has a hard conflict with his pride. But the sinner must be willing to anything for Christ.”



# Mahuwahine

- ▶ “Mahu” is a cultural term and was used negatively
- ▶ Transgenders despised being called “mahu”
- ▶ Transgenders have reclaimed the word
- ▶ **Mahuwahine** has helped transgenders of Hawaii to embrace themselves with honor and respect.

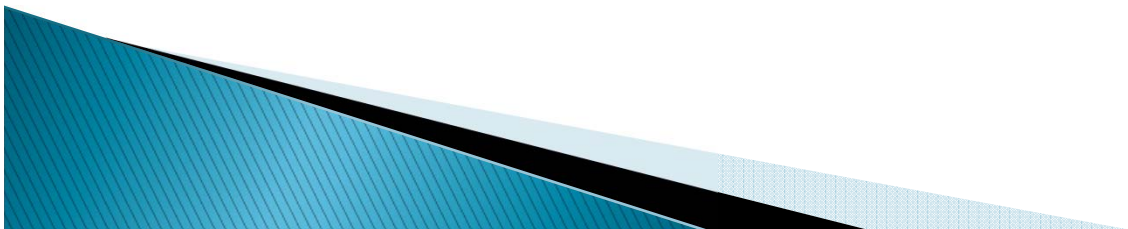


# Other Cultural Terms

- ▶ Bakla *(Filipino)*
  - ▶ Fafafine *(Samoa)*
  - ▶ Fakaleiti *(Tonga)*
  - ▶ Takatapui *(Maori)*
  - ▶ Mahuti *(Tahiti)*
- 
- ▶ Nadleeh *(Navajo)*
  - ▶ Katoey *(Thailand)*
  - ▶ Heidras *(India)*

# Gender Identity

One's sense of one's own gender. It is what one feels comfortable expressing. It is unique to each individual. It is a self feeling that one is a man, woman, both, neither, bi-gender, multi-gender, etc.



# What questions do you have?





# Cultural Same Sex Relationships

**Aikane:** *Loren Andrews Dictionary, 1865*

- ▶ To cohabit as male with male or female with female.
- ▶ Friend of the same sex
- ▶ Those who mutually give and receive comfort being of the same sex.



# Bisexuality

“In traditional times it was really OK if men who slept with men also slept with women and women who slept with women also slept with men. If that was OK, then what is homosexuality and what is heterosexual? Why is there a dividing line? It seems to me, in the west you have to be either hetero or homo, you cannot be both. In the west, they still deny that bisexuality exists. But we know it was very common, if not the norm, in traditional Hawaii.”

*Dr. Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa, 1999.*



# Identity vs Orientation

## ▶ Gender Identity?

- Refers to how a person identifies his or her role (male or female) and how he/she presents it to the world.

## ▶ Sexual Orientation?

- Refers to those people a person finds attractive for sexual interaction, whether it be persons of the same gender, the opposite gender, or both.



# Identity vs Orientation

- ▶ Female + Female = Homosexual
- ▶ TG Female + TG Female = Homosexual

- ▶ Male + Female = Heterosexual
- ▶ TG Female + Male = Heterosexual



# What questions do you have?





# Poll Question

- ▶ If a mahuwahine (transgender woman) is sexually attracted to heterosexual men, what is her sexual orientation?
  - Homosexual
  - Transgender woman
  - Heterosexual
  - Unsure of answer



# Poll Question

- ▶ If a mahuwahine (transgender woman) is sexually attracted to a mahukane (transgender man), what is her sexual orientation?
  - Homosexual
  - Bisexual
  - Heterosexual
  - Unsure of answer



# Mahu Slang



# Mahu Slang– Sex Work

- ▶ **Pooch-** looking for sex, whether it be for money or pleasure
- ▶ **Trick-** Exchange sex for money, drugs, or something of need
- ▶ **Trade-** a person who identifies as heterosexual, may or may not be in a relationship, but is attracted to a transsexual for sexual pleasure

# Mahu Slang– Beauty

**Fish-** refers to anything feminine, lady-like, or girly.  
(could also be used as a compliment)

**P-** anything pretty to perfect

**Mug-** refers to face, or make-up. Can also be used  
when referring to sex-work



# Mahu Slang– Terms

**Sickening, Lovely, Ova, Flawless-** a compliment

**P-** anything pretty to perfect

**Gorge-** short for gorgeous, or fabulous

**Back-** a term of agreement; exclamation

**T-** could be used as a way to address friends, or meaning TRUTH.

# Mahu Slang– Terms

**Feeding-** to give compliments sarcastically

**Reading-** to set somebody straight

**Muffy-** Homosexual, gay, or feminine acting male

**Drag-** to dress up as opposite sex or with over-exaggerated fashion

# Hawai'i LGBT social structures and services



# Social Structure

## ▶ Sub – cultures

- Age
- Sex Work
- Location

## ▶ Houses

- Chandelier
- Ashton
- Armani
- Daniels
- Jacobs
- L'mour
- Williams
- Lovechilds

## ▶ Family Unit & Support



# Local TG issues

- ▶ Stigma & shame
  - *From within & outside our communities*
- ▶ Disowned from biological family
  - “Not at my dinning room table”
- ▶ Appearance
- ▶ Substance use
- ▶ Access to services
  - Hours of operation
  - Location/ Transportation
  - Lack of knowledge of TG services





# Barriers to service

- ▶ Being judged
- ▶ Not being addressed as they present
  - He vs. She
  - Legal name vs. Preferred name
- ▶ Limited access
  - Transportation
  - Hours of operation
- ▶ Money/ Uninsured
- ▶ Stigma & Shame
- ▶ Guilt by association

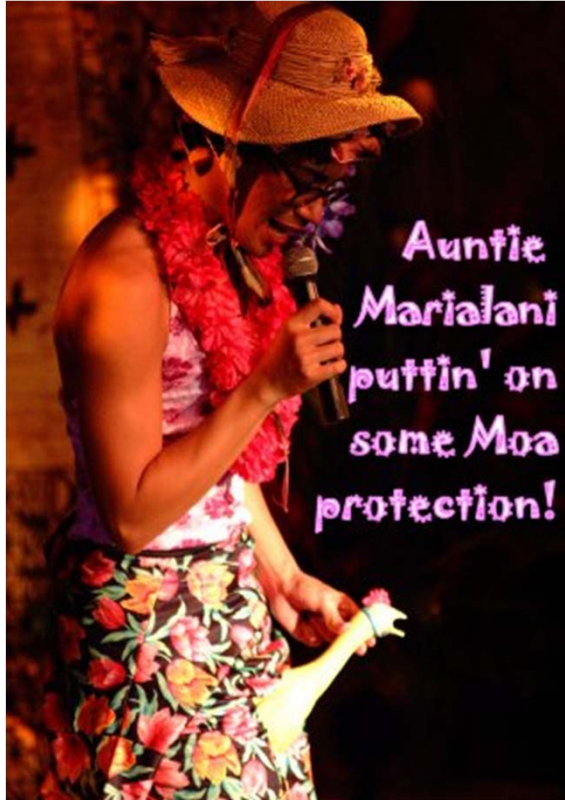
# Tips on providing service...

- ▶ Providing a safe place
- ▶ Focus on the clients need, not their gender identity and sexual orientation
- ▶ Provide Support Groups
- ▶ Hiring “local” TG staff member
- ▶ One-on-One counseling
- ▶ Confidentiality
- ▶ Accompany them to appointments
- ▶ Manage our own discomforts

**Client Centered**



# Community Building Events

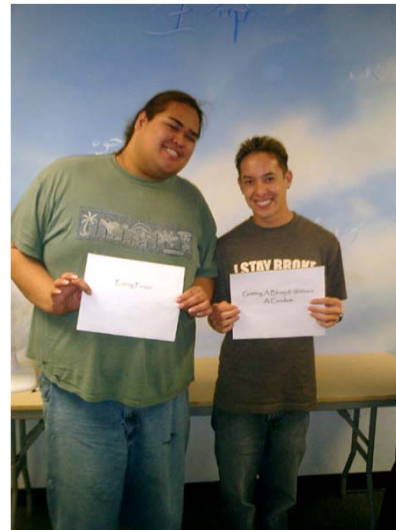
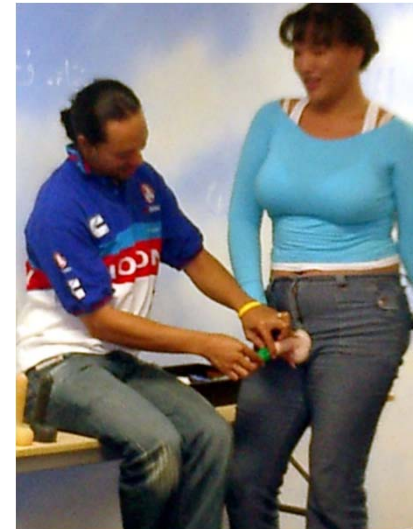




# Groups

## Guiding Principle – How to empower the group

- FOOD is Important
- Have workshops with fun, exciting and innovative events (waterpark, ice skating)
- Excite and empower core group to recruit and facilitate
- Incorporate activities to target the na'au (skits, HIV+ peers)



# Program Marketing





# Mahalo



# Any Questions?