



HEALTHY HAWAIIAN PROJECT

WHAT MAKES HAWAIIANS HEALTHY?



We asked **27 civically engaged kūpuna who live on O'ahu** about how working in the community impacts how these kūpuna think about their health.

SHIFTING THE NARRATIVE

Despite the negative health statistics on the Hawaiian community, there are healthy kūpuna who remain both healthy and active throughout their lives. We talked story with them on how to stay healthy.

WHO IS INCLUDED IN THIS STUDY?

Individuals who (1) self-identify as Hawaiian, (2) are 60+ years old, (3) are civically engaged, and (4) reside in O'ahu.

HOW WAS DATA COLLECTED?

10 focus groups of 1-4 people were held at community spaces and over Zoom. Data was collected in December 2022.

WHO COLLECTED THE DATA?

The research team included a project lead (Catherine Jara), faculty mentor (Dr. Ngoc Phan), near-peer mentor (Leilani De Lude), community partners (Dr. Lynette Cruz, Emilia Kandagawa), and NHPI undergraduate students (Elysia Couvertier, Erica Pardillo, Joseph Roberto). The study was funded by grants from HPU's HUI SRC (U01 GM138435) and the Center for Pacific Innovation Knowledge and Opportunities (U54GM138062).

WHAT DID KŪPUNA SAY?

Kūpuna reported **discrimination** growing up as Hawaiians, which affected their Hawaiian identity and health. However, they also discussed **community involvement, healing through talking, passing intergenerational knowledge**, and **finding purpose in helping others** as ways to stay healthy.

PROJECT WEBSITE: HEALTHYHAWAIIAN.ORG

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HOW DO THESE KŪPUNA UNDERSTAND HEALTH?

LAND BACK

"I sit on Ho'omau Ke Ola and that's drug addiction, abuse and all this kind of stuff. But when you put them on the 'Aina, it's a totally different story. They thrive....that's where we're at, you know? To return the people, our people to the 'āina."

-Female, 83

RECLAIMING IDENTITY

"My birth certificate says white, white mother and father. I went change 'em. I would huli and take back my Hawaiian name and be proud to be Hawaiian..."

-Female, 73

RECOGNIZING SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION

"The education got to be made to fit us, not fit them. Because we failing. And that was part of my fourth grade lesson. I'm failing in a system that wasn't designed for me."

-Male, 84

BEYOND PHYSICAL HEALTH

"...When we say healthy for me, it's maoli ola, it's not just physical health. It's every different aspect of society, and the maoli ola is based on relationships."

-Female, 66

HOW DO THESE KŪPUNA STAY HEALTHY?

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

"What I envision for a healthy Hawaiian community, it's the stuff that we've been doing on the Westside...because the component that nobody seems to talk about too much is how, how our health benefits when we hang out."

-Female, 78

HEALING THROUGH TALKING

"Talking stories heal. You heal the emotions [that] comes out...especially if we talk about civic engagement. The work that we do, and what we're doing right now."

-Male, 69

PASSING INTERGENERATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

"I think that's what keeps us healthy. Being able to get out there and share our aloha and our mana'o out with the kids..."

-Female, 74

FINDING PURPOSE IN HELPING OTHERS

"I'm really enjoying life right now... I would love to be involved in an effort to uplift them and somehow share my experience."

-Female, 80