Ke Ala Lōkahi, Native Hawaiian Batterer Intervention Program

Project Summary

July 9, 2007

Valli Kalei Kanuha, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Project Evaluator
University of Hawai'i, Department of Sociology
2424 Maile Way, Honolulu, HI 96817
808-956-8438; kanuha@hawaii.edu

This summary report describes the process and outcomes of the Ke Ala Lōkahi Native Hawaiian cultural domestic violence demonstration project, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from 2000-2005. The goal of this demonstration project was to design, implement and evaluate a culturally-based intimate partner violence and sexual violence intervention for Native Hawaiian batterers and battered women using Native Hawaiian cultural values, beliefs and practices. The intervention incorporated Western best practices regarding power and control, sex and gender roles, and family responsibility as they relate to intimate partner and sexual violence, and included teachings on ancient Hawaiian traditions and customs, visits to cultural sites, and classroom lessons.

While this project was funded to include both Native Hawaiian battered women and Native Hawaiian male batterers, due to the small cohort of women in the study this report will focus on the outcomes from the batterer intervention program.

This document is a summary of the full study report. For detailed information or additional questions about the study protocol and design, project curriculum, and outcomes, please contact Dr. Val Kalei Kanuha above.

Theoretical Foundations and Project Goals

There are two principal foundations of this intervention. The first theoretical framework proposes that the increased incidence, type and severity of violence in contemporary Native Hawaiian families is, in part, situated in a historical context of estrangement of Native Hawaiians from their land, language, values, practices, and traditions. The second theoretical foundation of this intervention incorporates work grounded in analyses developed through the violence against women movement in the United States. The 30-year legacy of the women’s anti-violence movement emphasizes feminist theory and practices, advocacy and empowerment for women, offender accountability, and collaborative community efforts to end violence against women and girls.

The main goal of this intervention was to design and implement a Native Hawaiian culturally-specific domestic violence intervention for battered women and batterers that would demonstrate the efficacy of using cultural beliefs, values, and

1 This report and the project described were supported by Grant/Cooperative Agreement Number US4/CCU919035-04 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC.

7/19/07; p. 1
practices to reduce violence perpetrated by Hawaiian male batterers. In addition, we believed documentation of the process by which such an intervention was developed could help elucidate whether and how such interventions might be replicated in other racial and ethnic minority communities.

Therefore we were interested in three primary outcomes:

1) That Native Hawaiian male batterers who complete a Native Hawaiian domestic violence intervention will have a lower incidence, frequency, and severity of violence, as well as lower rates of domestic violence re-offenses than Native Hawaiian men who complete a standard domestic violence intervention;

2) That Native Hawaiian male batterers who complete a Native Hawaiian domestic violence intervention will show higher levels of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding the dynamics of intimate partner violence and sexual violence and positive changes in sex and gender role attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors than Native Hawaiian batterers who complete a standard domestic violence intervention; and,

3) That Native Hawaiian batterers who complete a Native Hawaiian cultural domestic violence intervention will be more likely to attribute positive changes as outlined above to Native Hawaiian cultural variables

**Project Site and Program Components**

The project site for the Ke Ala Lōkahi study was Turning Point for Families, Inc. (TPFF), the primary provider of services for victims and offenders in intimate partner violence cases in Hawaii County. Based on intake data approximately 38% of TPFF’s service population is of Hawaiian ancestry.

The existing batterer intervention model used at the agency is a 28-week group program known as Alternatives to Violence (ATV). The theoretical foundation of this intervention emphasizes offender accountability based primarily on frameworks and models developed by the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, Minnesota, better known as “The Duluth Model” (Pence, 1987; Pence & Paymar, 1993). The key elements of the Duluth curriculum include the Power and Control Wheel, which describes various forms of physical, emotional, social, financial and other types of behavioral strategies used by batterers to coerce and control their partners. It is primarily a social learning, cognitive-behavioral approach through which violent incidents are analyzed to uncover patterns of abusive behavior and alternatives to violence.

**Ke Ala Lōkahi**

The intervention model that was developed and pilot tested in this study was named Ke Ala Lōkahi, translated in Hawaiian as “The Pathway to Harmony.” Over a two year period, TPFF staff and consultants designed a unique group curriculum that uses a Hawaiian learning method to involve participants in knowledge and skill-building that emphasizes Native Hawaiian cultural values, beliefs and traditions. The objective of the curriculum was to use Hawaiian culturally-based family and gender roles, responsibilities and rights, and traditional practices through which Hawaiian batterers would learn to take responsibility for their lives and life choices, including ending violence against their partners.
The intervention is organized around the Hawaiian concept of the Natural Order of Balance, as designed and offered to this project by Aunty Ulunui Kanaka'ole Garmon. This concept suggests that all beings, including humans, animals, plants, minerals or elemental objects and forces are in mutual and dependent relationships with each other. The Natural Order of Balance is not only the philosophical framework upon which the curriculum is built, but specifically reflects the ways men and women are part of a larger cosmos with responsibilities, rights, and expectations that require respect, care, harmony and love to sustain, grow and heal.

The program curriculum was created to address both female victims and male abusers with almost identical teaching lessons, with key differences in learning outcomes. The women’s component is based on identity, empowerment and decision-making, while the men’s component is grounded in identity, accountability and responsibility for their actions, particularly their violence towards intimate partners. From a cultural healing perspective both components are considered holistic and complementary in nature and are concerned with each individual’s capability to learn, teach, and understand their roles in their relationships, family and community.

The curriculum is comprised of 24-weekly, two-hour sessions with a culminating 48-hour session held at a cultural site. The curriculum is divided into four units or mokuna, each guided by a theme. The overall theme of the Natural Order of Balance is the binding force that holds each mokuna together. The curriculum uses cultural metaphors as the primary teaching method through which Hawaiian values and practices are imparted and connections made to non-violent, healthy behaviors. Program activities include Hawaiian crafts, chants, genealogy, ceremonies and visits to sacred places as the learning medium through which alternatives to domestic violence might emerge and evolve.

A critical difference between the Ke Ala Lōkahi and ATV programs is that as a cultural intervention with lessons and processes designed specifically to build relationships among group members, the Ke Ala Lōkahi intervention was a closed-enrollment group. Therefore members only entered at the beginning of the 24-week group cycle, and unlike the prevailing model of most batterer intervention programs group members were not replaced with new participants when someone dropped out.

In addition to participating in weekly group sessions, participants were also assigned to a TPFF Case Manager who facilitated group sessions, monitored group performance, maintained contact with probation and other related services, and provided one-to-one counseling, advocacy, support and referrals.

**Project-Building**

The development of the intervention was a significant undertaking that involved intense work during the first two years of the project, with refinements until almost the project’s end five years later. Beginning with the initial and ongoing obstacle of finding project staff with knowledge and skills in both Hawaiian culture and violence against women issues, a major challenge was the actual design of the intervention as there was no existing model anywhere in the U.S. similar to what we had envisioned. Currently there is still no curriculum that incorporates cultural practices and domestic violence theory to the extent reflected in the Ke Ala Lōkahi model.

**Staffing**
As stated above, throughout the five years of the project we were challenged to find staff with the unique combination of knowledge and skills required to develop and implement the program. Because Ke Ala Lōkahi was a Hawaiian cultural domestic violence program, we required staff with Hawaiian culture and domestic violence backgrounds, as well as an interest in the particular initiative for which the CDC funded us. Over the five years of the project, we were never able to find any staff who came to Ke Ala Lōkahi with that particular set of qualifications, emphasizing again to the very distinctive nature of the project.

In addition none of the TPFF agency staff nor those who worked in Ke Ala Lōkahi over its five years had ever designed a program of this complexity nor worked on a community-based research project. In addition, no one on the evaluation team, including the Project Evaluator had conducted a field study with a complex research design. Defining, clarifying and maintaining roles, expectations, boundaries and needs were constant themes of the project.

The final design of the Ke Ala Lōkahi curriculum was the result of an organic process that was wholly cultural in nature. That is, no one associated with the project nor any collaborators or observers had any preconceived notions about the final product because of the unique nature of incorporating Hawaiian culture and intimate partner violence into a domestic violence intervention.

An important hurdle that we had to overcome at the outset was the different levels and kinds of knowledge regarding Hawaiian culture and/or intimate partner violence among the project staff. Some staff had decades of experience in domestic violence but knew almost nothing about Hawaiian cultural practices, while others were Hawaiian practitioners who had no knowledge of intimate partner abuse. There were many “cultural clashes” about traditional ways of managing conflict in ancient Hawai‘i, and which of those beliefs and practices remained viable in 2000. Stereotypes about victims and batterers, as well as how best to intervene with them needed to be addressed before the team could begin to conceptually merge cultural and anti-violence “best practices.”

Through the thousands of hours of training, consultation, cultural site visits, and studying under our kupuna (elder) Aunty Ulu Garmon, the conceptual foundation and subsequent content that emerged as the Ke Ala Lōkahi curriculum was born.

**Project Implementation**

Staff training for the project was well-funded, and therefore diverse and extensive training opportunities were provided prior to and during the implementation phase of the intervention. Literally hundreds of hours of training were provided to the staff.

**Orientation to Project Evaluation**

As noted above, for TPFF as well as the Project Evaluator Ke Ala Lōkahi was their first experience separately and as a collaboration with an experimental field research project. All agency staff received an initial orientation about the overall intervention and evaluation design. The evaluation protocol involved considerable modification of existing TPFF staff policies, procedures, roles, and responsibilities. The project required numerous and constant monitoring, collaboration and teamwork between the evaluation team and TPFF staff.

**Cultural Materials and Activities**
Due to the multifaceted and innovative design of the Ke Ala Lōkahi curriculum, there were specific cultural materials, activities and off-agency cultural sites that were required for its implementation. Staff were required not only to learn many new Hawaiian cultural activities themselves but how to teach them in the context of the intervention. They also needed to be well-grounded in the ways these cultural activities would be translated into learning and research outcomes. It is important to underscore that this level and kind of preparation was not only task-focused but required a particular Hawaiian cultural mindset in order to cohere with the cultural nature of these activities vis a vis the overall intervention.

**Evaluation Design**

A randomized control trial design was developed for this project to control for two key variables: treatment and race/ethnicity of the treatment cohort. All self-identified Native Hawaiian men who were referred for, mandated to, or voluntarily sought services from TPFF were randomly assigned to one of three “treatment” conditions as described below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention/ Ethnicity of cohort</th>
<th>Hawaiian-only</th>
<th>Hawaiian &amp; Mixed Ethnicity (standard)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ke Ala Lōkahi, culturally-based Hawaiian intervention (KAL)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPFF standard intervention, Alternatives to Violence (ATV)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Condition #1:** Hawaiian cultural intervention with Native Hawaiian participants only (KAL)

**Condition #2:** TPFF standard agency intervention with Native Hawaiian participants only (ATV-H)

**Condition #3:** TPFF standard agency intervention with Native Hawaiian and mixed ethnicity participants (the current “standard” intervention)(ATV)

**Participant Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Project participants were initially screened to meet the following criteria for inclusion in the evaluation study:

1. Self-identify as Native Hawaiian by racial or ethnic category
2. Be referred, be court mandated, or voluntarily present themselves to TPFF.
3. Be at least 18 years old
4. Had used violence against their intimate female partners.

TPFF clients were excluded from the study if the following conditions were present:

- Active use of alcohol or other substances that are causing serious impairment in major life areas;
- Evidence of a severe mental disorder;
- Actively threatening to harm themselves or others, and/or imminent danger of harm to self or others.
Hawaiian men who came to TPFF for batterer intervention services and who met the above criteria and gave informed consent to participate in the study were randomly assigned to one of the three treatment conditions.

**Study Measures**

There are no quantitative or qualitative instruments that have been normed on Native Hawaiian populations with regard to domestic or sexual violence. Given these limitations, the instruments used in this study were selected based on the strength of their psychometric properties, content validity relative to the proposed intervention, and their use with other studies of domestic and sexual violence offenders and victims.

The following are the instruments used in the study:

1) Abusive Behavior Inventory (ABI)
2) The Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory (PMWI)
3) Burt Rape Myth Scale
4) Hawaiian Culture Scale

In addition, attendance at TPFF group sessions, as well as criminal offense data from the Family Court of the Third Circuit, Adult Probation Division were collected. Project staff were also interviewed before the intervention began, and at the end of the study.

A 213-item questionnaire including the four measures above was administered to all Native Hawaiians who joined the study. The questionnaires were administered at intake, and 3-, 6- and 15-months later. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with a sub-sample of study participants at those same data collection points. Participants were paid a stipend for each type of data collected (questionnaires and interviews).

**Study Outcomes**

From August, 2002 through December, 2004, a total of 198 Hawaiian men who met the study and TPFF criteria above were referred for an initial screening interview and enrollment into the evaluation study. Men were dropped from the study because they did not complete TPFF’s required orientation process or were terminated for program non-compliance (no show; excessive absences; lack of payment).

Therefore the final study cohort for the evaluation was comprised of 160 Native Hawaiian men, of whom 61 were assigned to Ke Ala Lōkahi (KAL), 39 were assigned to the ATV condition with only Hawaiian men (ATVH), and 60 were assigned to the regular ATV group (ATV). However, as noted in the study results below, data was collected on only a proportion of these participants due to lack of follow-through with the evaluation study.

**Demographic Profile of Study Cohort**

Men enrolled in the study were on average 32 years old (range = 18 to 56 years; s.d. = 8.9 years), with annual incomes of $9,760 (range = $0 to $34,000; s.d. = $8.009) and almost 12 years of education (range = 7 to 15 years; s.d. = 1.4). There were no significant differences in age, income or education between Hawaiian men in the three treatment conditions.

**Recidivism**

A key outcome we were interested in examining was domestic violence-related offenses that occurred after the initial incident that resulted in referral to TPFF’s batterer...
intervention program. We were able to collect re-offense data for 37 KAL, 19 ATVH, and 29 ATV men (N = 85), about 50% of the total study cohort. The specific charges used to reflect recidivism in this study include criminal abuse of intimate partner, restraining order granted/extended, restraining order violation, 3rd degree assault, criminal contempt of court, harassment, and probation revocation.

There were only a small proportion of men in the study who completed all required batterer intervention sessions. Therefore based on the theoretical assumption that more intervention would lead to lower re-offense rates we decided to include in our analysis only those men who completed 80% or more of group sessions in order to increase sample size and statistical power.

Recidivism was analyzed using survival analysis to accommodate event data (recurrence – no recurrence) across varying follow-up times for 77 men who completed at least 80% of their assigned program condition. Over a median follow-up period of about 10 months, 28 batterers (36%) who completed 80% of TPFF group sessions had a subsequent incident after beginning the program. Comparisons of raw rates of recidivism indicated that 12 (35.3%) men in the KAL condition, 5 (31.3%) men in ATVH, and 11 (40.7%) men in ATV had at least one recurrent incident. There was no statistical difference in the re-offense rate between the three batterer interventions. Similar analyses conducted for men who completed 50% or more group sessions showed that re-offending was higher among all groups, but found no statistical differences in recidivism between the KAL, AVH and ATV groups.

The majority of re-offenses were for four violations: abuse against intimate partner, being served with a TRO, contempt of court, and probation revocation. The majority of re-offenders were arrested and charged with 1-2 violations over the follow-up period.

---

2 Overall rates of recidivism were not significantly different between the three treatment conditions, $\chi^2(2, N = 77) = .421, p = .81$. Survival as a function of intervention condition was tested by a Kaplan-Meier survival analysis with pairwise comparisons of the three program conditions, but no comparisons approached significance.
Figure 1. Recurrence of violent incident for batterers completing at least 80% of intervention.
**Questionnaire Data**

A 3 x 3 mixed design ANOVA was used to analyze the effects of treatment condition (KAL, ATVH, and ATV) and time (3-months, 6-months, and 15-months) on men’s scores on the four measures used in the study. Men in all three treatment conditions reported statistically significant reductions in frequencies and types of abuse from baseline to 15-months later. However there were no significant differences between the Ke Ala Lökahi, ATVH or ATV intervention groups. On the Burt scale that measured beliefs and attitudes about gender roles, sex, interpersonal violence and rape, there were no statistically significant changes in men’s attitudes over time nor any group effects. Similar findings were reported regarding changes in knowledge and practice of Hawaiian culture; that is, no significant differences were found over time or between the three interventions across the study period.

These outcomes must be viewed with caution as there was a considerable decline in participant retention across all three treatment groups from baseline to 15-months. The study samples at 15-months were so small particularly for the ATVH and ATV conditions that conclusions based on this data require some prudence.

**Qualitative Interview Data**

Approximately 250 interviews were conducted with Hawaiian male and female participants during the five years of the project. Over 100 interviews were transcribed and along with the other interview data form the basis of the key themes generated below.

**Positive Changes in Knowledge About and Alternatives to Violence**

The majority of respondents who were interviewed, regardless of treatment group expressed positive learning experiences about violence.

“I never used to communicate. I never knew how to do that. But since I’ve been coming to class I communicate more. I used to hold it in, that don’t feel too good, Now I just blurt it out, I don’t hold it in. It feels better if you just tell the truth whether good or bad, just tell the truth…try to treat my partner with more respect.” (ATVH; #2051, 6-months)

Almost every participant reported that he had learned how to communicate better with his or her partners and children. Some stated that they had been socialized to hold in their feelings and then would react angrily or abusively when they felt emotionally threatened. Based on lessons learned in TPFF’s batterer intervention program, these participants reported increased ability to identify their emotions, then talk through or take a time out with their partners. Many men stated that they would use “cool downs” as a stress reduction technique. Men who were still in intimate relationships with either the partner whom they had abused or with someone new reported increased attempts to listen to her or “not take things so seriously” during conflicts as a result of batterer intervention.

**Positive Changes in Sex Role Attitudes**

While the quantitative data on the Burt Scale did not indicate any significant changes in attitudes and beliefs about sex and gender roles, the men interviewed reported what they considered significant changes in the ways they viewed their partners and intimate relationships due to batterer intervention. Mentioned frequently
were changes in attitudes about equality of household roles and responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning and child care.

One aspect that emerged in a few interviews concerned sexual assault. It was generally difficult to get men to talk about sexual assault during the qualitative interviews, and as reported by TPFF staff is one of the most challenging issues for facilitators to address in batterer programs. The following narratives illustrate the insights that some of the men revealed as a result of their group experience.

“One thing I didn’t know before was sexual assault can just be name calling. I mean it probably don’t sound good but I never know that forcing your wife to have sex was sexual assault, too. I never know that before. It made me feel bad. Not like there was a real big problem in my life or anything with my wife, it’s just something that I just never realized that was wrong to do. “ (#1028)

Finally, with regard to sex and gender roles, one KAL respondent summed up the lessons learned in the program this way: ‘When I was going school, if they could teach us about sexual intercourse....why they no can teach us about this kind of stuff? This is way more important.’” (#1045)

**Satisfaction with Batterer Intervention**

Across all three study groups, men expressed a great deal of satisfaction with the batterer intervention services they received at TPFF. They specifically cited the lessons or homework as important reminders of what they need to learn and retain about being non-violent. Many stated that they would review their written homework lessons in the period between group sessions and even after completing their 24-week program. Participants noted the importance of the group intervention as a place where they could “vent feelings” or “talk about things with guys” like themselves. None of the men we interviewed reported feeling out of place or ill at ease with the group process. As one ATV participant stated, “We share – everybody shares what they did that week. We got a lot to talk about.” (#2051)

Participants in all groups gave very positive feedback about individual program staff regardless of assigned study condition. One important staff characteristic reported by participants was related to the “local” or familiar backgrounds and experiences of the facilitators. This comment typifies what many respondents reported: “They always welcome you, make you feel welcomed...they local, can talk to them straight, don't have to be like, using all kind of talking nice. You can just be yourself, talk how you going talk, that's what I like. I can just be me.” (#1045)

Many participants stated that they understood the importance of not only attending group but remaining violence-free because they didn’t want to go to jail, go back on probation or have to attend batterers intervention again since many had been through the program on other occasions and failed to complete. The following comment exemplifies what many men reported: “I’m hoping to do good in this class this time around. I hope I'll never be back here. I hate to say don’t be back here but knock on wood I hope I won’t be back here. It’s up to you, the choice that you choose to do.” (#3050).

**Increased Knowledge and Appreciation of Hawaiian Culture for Ke Ala Lōkahi Men**

Men interviewed from the Ke Ala Lōkahi groups uniformly reported increased
knowledge and appreciation of their Hawaiian culture. All of the men attributed these changes to their participation in the Ke Ala Lōkahi groups. For men in the ATVH and ATV conditions, there was acknowledgment of Hawaiian culture in their everyday lives but no mention of the ways Hawaiian culture might have positively influenced understanding and modification of their violent behavior. As noted in the quotes below, many men came to understand the connection between traditional Hawaiian ways and its cultural incongruity with violence.

“I look up to her now. Like how the Hawaiians used to look up to the wahines [women], I look up to her. I’ve put her up higher than myself, so less arguments.” (#1038, 6 months)

“Like today with DV [domestic violence] I can focus on how one human being’s life is precious to someone, it is not like f---in’ rubbish where you can go and kick it around or slap it all around. And a couple of times I used to abuse my spouse…I see her all black and blue…and today I got the opportunity to try and live my Hawaiian culture way, so I can see and learn one better way for myself to live in this world, instead of living my same old self.” (#1024, 15-months)

“Actually I’m just learning about myself and being Hawaiian. I just going through life, all the different changes that are so fast. Just getting away from, I guess, my family’s tradition, the Hawaiian ways, you know, taking care of the home…This program helps me a lot actually because I’m getting to know myself and my responsibility in being a Hawaiian. Yeah, the Hawaiian ways, everything in life has a purpose, so if we can use those things and without one thing you lose something else. Just like nature, I guess. Hawaiian culture using nature and the ocean and things in the ocean. It’s like in the everyday things we hold true, take things for granted…It’s because we [he and partner] lost communication, now we have more communication.” (#1072, 3-months)

“I’ve been with this partner for 17 years. I’ve been coming to this program [ATV batterer intervention] many times, I’ve never graduated. This is the farthest I ever went. Again, it’s because of, I guess, the cultural thing. It’s like bringing me back to my roots and my grandmother. My grandmother raised me but I was so stupid, in my own world, not drugging or anything, you know when you’re a young kid who [wants to] listen to Hawaiian words, learning language. I didn’t have time for learning. When my grandmother had her stroke and she was paralyzed, I feel I owe her something, too.” (#1038, 6-months)

The men of Ke Ala Lōkahi attributed their change in attitude about sex roles to the connection they’d learned to make with Hawaiian cultural values regarding respect for women’s mana (power; spiritual force). As one stated, “The program is a reminder of how to be the best person I can be. Being a respectful Hawaiian is taking care of kuleana [responsibilities]. Also how to not be macho cause I’ve seen it in others and it’s ugly. A woman is a human being and needs respect.” (#1071)

**Voices of the Women**

Whether women had received support services in the past, were currently...
attending programs, or were partners of men in program who had never sought service from TPFF, their stories of abuse were consistent. All describe histories of violence with their past or current partners that included frequent and various forms of abuse. In many situations there were legal as well as social consequences to them, their children and their partners as a result of intimate partner violence. A significant proportion of the women interviewed for this project report histories of alcohol and drug abuse, child sexual and physical abuse, and problems with the law. Many of the women had been with their abusive partners for 10 or more years, some 20 to 30+ years.

Women’s perceptions of the batterer programs at TPFF were mixed. Some were grateful for the changes they saw in their partners as a result of the men completing intervention, while others felt the programs were part of an endless “revolving door” in which behavioral changes were either nonexistent or not sustained. Both men and women who were still living together often described the men bringing their homework home and that the men would also share what they were learning in group. It was not uncommon for both men and women to report that the women would help men complete the homework assignments required by the batterer programs.

Finally with regard to Ke Ala Lōkahi, men would sometimes state that their partners thought they were “going on field trips” and “having it easy” compared with the more didactic, traditional classroom-style of the ATV program. Other women reported that for the first time they saw substantive changes in their partners’ attitudes and behavior regarding power and control, particularly for those who had previously attended ATV or other traditional batterer programs.

“I wish there was a week or two before they started the Ke Ala Lōkahi program that you guys just sat and talked about different issues because this program is so awesome! It’s helped him big time. But if you ask him today what’s the difference between violence and anger, he can’t tell you. But my biggest complaint is he’s still angry about the same things he was angry about before he got into the program. He doesn’t understand the difference between positive anger and negative anger. I said, you get pissed off about fifteen different things…come to find out, it’s not about the fifteen different things, it’s because your feelings are hurt but you can’t tell me that…”(#1004)

“I was so ashamed, I used to never wear this kind of shirts, my arms used to be bruised. I have a scar on my shoulder from him biting me, ripping it. I have a scar here, from him biting and ripping. Both my arms would be covered in bruises. And my legs, all bruised. I would always use pants. He would hit things, yeah, and throw things. When I was pregnant he kicked me. He did kinda everything on the [Power and Control] wheel. After awhile when he started [Ke Ala Lōkahi], I guess, when they started getting more into the Hawaiian part, he totally started changing. I was like, ‘What? Is it the same guy or what? I was like, ‘Whoa! And then I don’t mean to, but you know you kinda wonder if it is fake or is it real? So, I tried to push his buttons and he didn’t do nothing, he was just like, ‘I’ll be back.’ And he’ll leave and I was like, ‘Okay, this thing is working!’ He didn’t hit me or anything! You guys are doing such a wonderful job. I wish everybody could [go to group] cause he said, he’s not here cause he is court ordered, he is here to
learn. He wants to learn. He wants to change, that’s why. So, you guys are doing such a good job. I wish you guys were here earlier.” (#5005)

Discussion

Based on both our empirical and qualitative results, the Ke Ala Lōkahi cultural program appeared to be equally effective in reducing recidivism as a standard, Duluth-style batterer intervention. There were no statistically significant differences between treatment groups with regard to changes in abusive behaviors, beliefs about gender roles and domestic violence, or Hawaiian culture. However, Ke Ala Lōkahi participants did attribute positive knowledge, beliefs and actions regarding their abuse to increased knowledge of Hawaiian cultural values, traditions, and practices.

All batterers regardless of type of intervention appeared to show slight improvements in reducing their abusive behavior, but less so their negative attitudes and beliefs about sex roles and interpersonal violence. In addition, those batterers who completed more intervention were less likely and took longer to re-offend. As supported by other batterer intervention research, TPFF’s batterer program appears to help some Hawaiian male batterers reduce their violent actions. However changes in attitudes and beliefs about sex and gender roles underlying violence against women are more resistant to change (Gondolf, 2002).

Examination of the quantitative data reveals some methodological limitations common in most studies of domestic violence offenders. For both the ABI and PMWI, mean scores based on batterer self-reports indicate very low frequencies of physical and psychological violence despite the fact that all of the men in the study were court-ordered to batterer intervention. Table 1. Illustrates this common methodological problem of under-reporting by comparing the baseline mean ABI scores from Hawaiian women and men who completed the initial enrollment for this study. While most of the women respondents are not partners of the men in the study, as in other studies comparing batterers and victims there is a significant difference between batterer and victim reports of intimate partner violence.

![Comparison of Physical and Psychological Abuse Self-Reports](image)

Table 1. Comparison of Physical and Psychological Abuse Self-Reports of Native Hawaiian Batterers and Victims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABI Phy</td>
<td>ABI Psych</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p < .01
While the empirical data does not support differential outcomes for men in the Hawaiian cultural as compared to the standard Duluth intervention, batterers in the Ke Ala Lōkahi condition and some of their women partners report that men who had previously attended but not completed batterer treatment were not only more engaged in but were for the first time able to satisfactorily complete their court-mandated treatment when assigned to Ke Ala Lōkahi. Men in KAL were also able to clearly articulate how the Hawaiian cultural intervention incorporated Native Hawaiian traditions about sex roles and respect for women with messages about building healthy relationships. We could argue that the KAL intervention is certainly no less effective than conventional batterer programs, and perhaps for Native Hawaiian men has at least the added benefit of learning new knowledge and skills about Hawaiian heritage and practices that may have more generalized outcomes beyond stopping domestic violence.

Finally abusers in all three conditions spoke very positively about their respective interventions, particularly about the TPFF staff who facilitated their group interventions. Regardless of condition, batterers indicated increased knowledge about the dynamics of intimate partner violence and behavioral alternatives to abuse learned in their batterer treatment groups.

**Study limitations**

There are major limitations with this intervention study that affect our interpretation of the data analyses and results. These points are summarized below:

- High drop-out rates in all three intervention conditions, and from study
- Small and unequal samples in each of the treatment conditions, and at the follow-up data points
- Re-offense data were incomplete
- Lack of partner reports to confirm batterer self-reports
- None of the quantitative measures used in this study were normed on Native Hawaiian populations
- Problems with intervention fidelity (conducting the groups in the same way across all three conditions)
- Closed vs. open enrollment policies for the comparison conditions

**Conclusions and Implications**

There were many challenges in the development, implementation and evaluation of this project, most of which were unanticipated. We add the following recommendations to our lessons learned, as we do believe there is more to discover about the complexities and intricacies of not only Ke Ala Lōkahi but any culturally-based interventions designed to end intimate partner and sexual violence in ethnic minority populations.

1. Follow-up studies should be conducted particularly with the male batterers who took part in this study. Contacts with female partners are integral to any future longitudinal study of batterer intervention with Hawaiian men or other men of color.

2. Replication intervention studies based on the Ke Ala Lōkahi model should be supported in order to further explore conceptual issues, dynamics and contexts that were revealed but not examined fully in this project.
3) Measures from this study should be used and modified to further examine their psychometric properties for Hawaiians and other non-White populations.

4) Research studies of Hawaiian and other Pacific Island and Asian battered women are needed, including studies of the cultural dimensions that impact family violence.

5) Qualitative research and evaluation methods may be more appropriate in revealing the complex variables and social contexts that mediate intimate partner and family violence in Native Hawaiian and other indigenous populations. These methods must be given equal weight and credibility in evaluating program efficacy and evidence-based practices.

6) A cultural intervention such as Ke Ala Lōkahi might be viewed as a more holistic approach to health and wellness than “just” a domestic violence intervention due to its focus on offender responsibility and accountability in all aspects of one’s life. Therefore, continued study of the long-term impact of such an intervention on community engagement in ending family violence is encouraged.

As with all batterer intervention and evidence-based studies concerned about public safety and crime, clear conceptualizations of outcomes such as “recidivism,” “re-offenses,” and behavioral vs. attitudinal change must be determined before best practices can evolve as a result of research. Dr. Ed Gondolf, who has conducted the most comprehensive studies of batterer intervention programs in the U.S. suggests that we consider measuring the efficacy of batterer services using victim testimony and verification instead of our usual reliance on criminal justice data. Since we know most crime, including domestic violence is both over- and underreported in certain communities, we believe the lack of victim-partner verification of those men who participated in TPFF’s services is a glaring weakness of our Ke Ala Lōkahi study.

In addition, the trend toward profiling of criminal personalities and social contexts that may contribute to crime demands that we also design policies and practices that account for individual, cultural and historical differences among offenders that will result in the most efficacious use of resources to address and prevent crimes such as violence against women. The Ke Ala Lōkahi project represents the beginning and not the end of our work to consider the unique histories of Native Hawaiians in these islands, and how those histories may contribute to our contemporary understanding of crime and safety, trouble and well being among our Kanaka Māoli people.

References
