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Warm Pacific Greetings!

It is heart warming to be invited to submit a contribution from the voices of Pacific psychologists in this edition of *Psychology Aotearoa*. With gratitude we acknowledge the opportunity given by the New Zealand Psychological Society (NZPSS) and thank the National Standing Committee on Bicultural Issues (NSCBI) and the Maori and Psychology Research Unit (MPRU) of Waikato University for their continual support in developing Pacific psychologists and psychologies.

The journey of Pasifikology started on the fringes through University cafes, lunches on student budgets and ad-hoc dinners. Our gatherings enhanced the collective intent to support one another in the journey of encountering the 'foreign-lands' of psychology. Despite the length of time between each gathering, the early mission for each Pacific student of psychology was 'to finish', the ultimate destination being registration. Perhaps intuitively we knew the need to 'finish first' then come together once we were established in the profession. Today, while the number of registered psychologists of Pacific descent has grown and the interest of Pacific students in psychology increased, there is much work required to support the development of Pacific peoples in the discipline and practice of psychology. The following report outlines the development of Pasifikology.

Our Motivation

Pacific diaspora is a way of understanding the movements or scattering of people through the Pacific region; it is thousands of years old and people have been moving around the Pacific for a long time. The history of Pacific migration is identified by some scholars as always being a "diasporic movement"¹. Through the encounter with European and American colonialism the 'movement' changed, "channelling migration along the sinews of trade and empire" (ibid). Today vast numbers of Pacific people now live in a place very different to where their ancestors lived, the most vivid illustration seen prominently in Aotearoa New Zealand which has the largest number of peoples from Pacific among the industrialised nations.

Recent research has shown that Pacific people living in Aotearoa experience mental disorder at higher levels than the general population, and at the same time evidence shows that Pacific people with mental illness have low access rates to mental health and addictions services². With significant levels of mental illness and low levels of access to treatment, there is high demand for a culturally and clinically competent Pacific mental health and addictions workforce. Growing psychologists of Pacific descent, who have both cultural and clinical

1 Spickard, P. Rondilla, J.L. & Hippolite Wright, D. Eds (2002). *PACIFIC DIASPORA: Island Peoples in the United States and Across the Pacific*, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu.

2 Ministry of Health (2007). Te Rau Hinengaro: New Zealand Mental Health Survey.

Pasifikology

knowledge and skills, can assist in meeting this demand.

In 2001 The "Blueprint" survey conducted by The Mental Health Commission identified that there was a significant lack of psychologists in the Pacific mental health workforce. The table below shows the occupational distribution of the Pacific mental health workforce, with only three Pacific psychologists working at the time.

Table 1: Pacific mental health occupational groups³

Occupational group	Number (n=149)*	Percent
Community support workers	47	31.5
Nurses	38	25.5
Residential caregivers	26	17.4
Social workers	7	4.7
Managers	5	3.4
Consumer consultants	4	2.7
Administrators	4	2.7
Clinical psychologists	3	2.0
Matua	3	2.0
Alcohol and drug workers	3	2.0
Psychiatric assistants	3	2.0
Youth workers	2	1.3
Occupational therapists	2	1.3
Psychiatrists (training)	1	0.7
Counsellors	1	0.7
Total	149	100.0

• 18 non-respondents.

Five years later, the 2006 Health Workforce Annual Survey did not show any improvement, with only three psychologists reported as registered psychologists of Pacific descent (Table 2) out of 1,154.

Table 2: Prioritised ethnicity of active Psychologists, 2006

	Number	Percentage
NZ European	855	74.0
Other Europeans	183	15.9
Māori	34	2.0
Indian	16	1.4
Chinese	7	0.6
Other Asian	7	0.6
Samoan	2	0.2
Tongan	1	0.1
Other	44	3.8
Not reported	6	0.2
Total	1154	100.0

3 Mental Health Commission (2001). Pacific Mental Health Service and Workforce: Moving on the Blueprint

4 Ministry of Health (2006). New Zealand Health Information Service

History

Historically the discipline of psychology has had little Pacific presence or contribution. Over the last five years however there has been a small growth of emerging Pacific professionals specialising in various areas within psychology, in various geographical locations across the nation. From about 2005 a few Pasifika psychologists meet to discuss and share ideas through informal meetings and an email network. The Pacific

Psychology Fono sprung out of a need to support the few Pasifika psychologists practising in Aotearoa New Zealand. It became clear that we needed to provide a pathway for others through support and mentoring process. People in the Fono are committed to this cause because of our own individual journeys of struggle and success. We believe in the influential power of collective support and know this has not been done before with psychologists.

Title: Pasifikology.
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Pasifikology

The heart that supports, promotes and grows psychology for Pasifika.

Our purpose

Pasifikology is a network of Pasifika psychologists, graduates and students of psychology. Our vision is to be the heart that networks, supports, promotes and grows psychology for Pasifika, in every way, shape and form.

We are connecting Pacific psychologists so that we can all support, promote, inform, educate and mentor the practice of psychology for Pasifika.

This includes:

- growing the Pacific psychologist workforce
- sharing knowledge and information
- ensuring that psychology is relevant for Pacific people in New Zealand.

Our executive



Our goals

- Increase the capacity and capability of Pasifika psychologists in Aotearoa.
- Promote Pacific models of care and cultural competence in psychology.
- Promote and advance opportunities for Pasifika psychologists in the workforce.
- Maintain high standards of professionalism and integrity "best psychological practice".
- Maintain a strong organisation "Heart of Pasifikology".

Why Pasifikology?

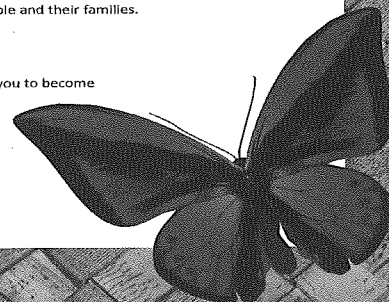
- *Te Rau Hinengaro*¹, The New Zealand Mental Health Survey, reported that Pacific people experience higher rates of mental disorder than the general population. The survey also found that Pacific people have very low rates of access to treatment, increasing suicidality, and higher rates of hazardous alcohol use. These important findings pose a serious challenge to the mental health sector.
- International research shows better health outcomes are achieved when the ethnic make up of the health workforce reflects the population it serves.
- More Pacific psychologists will improve quality assessment, treatment and overall outcomes for Pacific people and their families.

Become a member and join us!

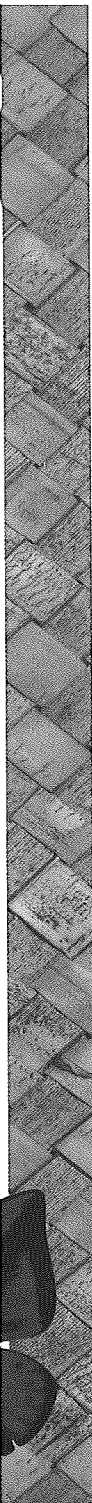
If you are a Pacific psychology graduate or currently studying towards your psychology qualification, we invite you to become a member of an emerging group of Pasifika psychologists making a real difference for our Pacific families. Join online at www.pasifikology.co.nz

¹ MA Oahey Browne, JE Wells, KM Scott (eds), 2006. *Te Rau Hinengaro: The New Zealand Mental Health Survey*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

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As a newly formed critical mass of Pacific psychologists we initially came together and formed the Pacific Psychology Fono with a shared vision of growing the Pacific psychologist workforce, sharing knowledge and information, and ensuring that psychology is relevant for Pacific people in New Zealand.

The Pacific Psychology Fono comprised of Pasifika psychologists, graduates of psychology and students of psychology. The Fono reflects our diversity through our different psychological training and background. However our major strengths are based around our inherent cultural connections with each other, which sets us apart from our non-Pasifika psychologists, these include our cultural models, humour, cultural understanding, shared values, and ease of connection and engagements with our people. It is this that gives life and meaning to our work as Pasifika psychologists.

The Pacific Psychology Fono formed an incorporated society which is governed by a Pacific Board of Trustees who are professional psychologists. Each Trustee and member brings a wealth of experience, diversity of skills and networks, and has contributed to both the profession of psychology as well as our Pacific communities in a significant way. Together we launched our journey in psychology and in 2008 branded the Pacific Psychology Fono as "**Pasifikology**", the name reflecting our unique identity as Pacific psychologists.

With support from the Ministry of Health we have been able to undertake projects such as;

- Organisational capacity building
- Formalising our identity through – branding, logo and website
- Membership drives in Auckland and Wellington
- Collective conference presentations
- Developing psychology mentoring
- Cultural supervision

More recently members of Pasifikology have also been involved in;

- Developing best (and promising) practice guide to talking therapies for Pasifika peoples
- National response team representatives to Samoa Tsunami disaster

Currently Pasifikology is embarking on one of its most exciting adventures, one which we hope the readership of *Psychology Aotearoa* can assist. Our endeavour is to ensure that all Pacific students of psychology are informed and are given the opportunity to join *Pasifikology*. The aim is to support the growth of the Pacific psychologist workforce and develop psychologies relevant for Pacific peoples. We are in the process of connecting with university psychology departments to promote an awareness of *Pasifikology* for Pacific students through either a guest lecture and/or information packs.

The inaugural national Maori and Pacific psychologies symposium of 2007 hosted by MPRU espoused the notion that "the time has come for Māori and Pacific psychologies to claim our legitimate space within the discipline of psychology⁵". **Pasifikology** is a collective born of ancestral Pacific nation's spirit forging a space within psychology for psychologists of Pacific descent to discover and make visible Pacific worldviews.

"Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding, Oceania is hospitable and generous...Oceania is us. We are sea, we are the ocean, we must wake up to this ancient truth and together use it to overturn all hegemonic views that aim ultimately to confine us physically and psychologically in tiny spaces which we have resisted and from which we recently liberated ourselves"

(Eveli Hau'ofa p 39, 2008)⁶

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