

If you are experiencing 'ino'ino, which is the depression that mostly resides in our unconscious, a good remedy for this is **reconnection**. You can build your resistance to the evils or injustices of society by **strengthening your inner spirit**. Nothing can penetrate a strong spirit. Build your spiritual base by **reconnecting with your god or church, your cultural group, and/or your family and friends**.

Sometimes, the *kaumaha* is too heavy even with family and friends by your side. In this case, you will need **the help of medicine** (*la'au*). Be open to all forms of help. There are wonderful people in the world who are trained in the healing arts of medicine, message, and therapy. Use them wisely.

Treatment Choice

Know what your insurance provides and does not provide. Some service providers work alone and some work as a group. Know the benefits of a group practice vs. a single provider. Choose insurance plans that make sense to you. For more information about depression, contact a mental health clinic near you, or talk to your primary care physician.



**A Service Publication
Office of Health Equity**

Kaumaha (Depression)

What is Kaumaha?

Kaumaha is the emotional weight bearing down on a person. It can be described as the Native Hawaiian version of the western diagnosis we call depression.

About 9 percent of people in the United States suffer from depression. In Hawaii, research shows that Native Hawaiians suffer from depression at a slightly higher rate (12%). Thanks to years of research and a better understanding of Hawaiian healing practices, there are now treatments that can help. Unfortunately, many Native Hawaiians do not recognize that *kaumaha* is treatable.

If you or someone you care about is feeling sad, empty, helpless, tired, or having trouble sleeping, eating, concentrating, enjoying life, or having thoughts of death, then information presented here may be helpful.

***A Service Publication From
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Hawaii Department of Health***



Different Types of Loss

In addition to *kaumaha*, Native Hawaiians acknowledge other forms of depression that is mostly associated with a sense of “loss”.

Lu’ulu’u is expressed in the physical affect of drooping forward with sorrow as in the bereavement of a loved one;

‘Aoa is expressed in the wailing of distress to depict hurt and sadness as in the loss of something or someone dear to one’s heart; and

‘Eha is expressed as a form of sadness associated specifically with a relationship breakup. Hawaiians would say “the heart throbs with agony [love]”.

What Causes Kaumaha

Some researchers say *kaumaha* is genetic and that it runs in families. Other researchers say that stress at home, work, school or the loss of a loved one can cause *kaumaha*. Also people who have low self-esteem, who always view themselves and everybody else in a negative way or someone who is always complaining or angry are prone to the various types of *kaumaha*. Researchers have also shown that *kaumaha* has been linked to heart disease and diabetes (people with major depression are three times likely to develop diabetes).

We believe that *kaumaha* is a combination of genetic, mental, spiritual, and environmental factors. We also believe that *kaumaha* is the result of cultural and spiritual loss, as described by Native Hawaiian researchers who attribute the injustices of the past to the present “hurts” of Native Hawaiians. The term *‘ino’ino* describes this type of depression the best.

‘Ino’ino – A Broken Spirit

‘Ino’ino is another form of depression, expressed as a state of being contaminated, damaged, or deeply troubled. This type of depression is most associated with one’s spirit or soul. This type of sadness is a result of one feeling disconnected to their God(s), culture, family, or to their church community.

Evaluation and Treatment

Understanding the reasons for *kaumaha* may help in providing a complete treatment plan. The first step in getting good treatment for *kaumaha* is a physical examination by a physician. Sometimes problems within our bodies cause emotional disruptions, such as sadness or anxiety.

1 First, know the numbers. It’s good to check your **blood pressure** (less than 120/80 is normal), **cholesterol** (less than 200 is ideal with HDL greater than 50 and LDL less than 100, and **triglycerides** below 150), and **glucose** (less than 100 is good to help prevent diabetes). Knowing the numbers will help prevent the two leading causes of death for Hawaiians –heart disease and diabetes.

2 Second, take a look at your life situation and determine what type of *kaumaha* you are experiencing. If its work related or if you are taking on more than you can handle then you are experiencing *kaumaha* – the weight on your shoulders is having an effect on your emotions. **Learn to say “no”, reprioritize, and make time for rest by getting good sleep and relaxation.** If you are experiencing loss of a loved-one, either *Lu’ulu’u*, *‘Aoa*, or *‘Eha* then you want to use your family and friends as a resource. Although quiet reflection can be helpful try not to isolate yourself from others. **Only “people” can replace “people”.** If your husband or wife passed away, then you want to focus on your children or grandchildren. If you had a recent break-up, then you want to focus on your family and reconnect with friends.

