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## WORKSHOP ABSTRACT

### **Ngā kitenga o te Maramataka: The insights into the Māori Lunar calendars.**

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Tuia ki te rangi,	It is written in the heavens,
Tuia ki te whenua	Upon the land,
Tuia ki te moana.	and the ocean.
E rongō te po, E rongō te ao.	And balanced between night and day.

The above whakatauaikī is a proverb or saying in Māori our tīpuna used, to navigate through the environment, aligning what was happening in the heavens, sun, moon, stars and winds with that on the land, trees, plants, birds, ocean, tides and fish movement. Rereata Makiha a Tohunga Maramataka, a sage of Māori knowledge, quoted Tukaki Waititi, a Māori leader,

“nothing was ever created or emerged to live in isolation, even a hidden face can be detected by its impact on something.” (1)

As Māori, our belief is we connect to everything above, below and on the whenua, land. Our well being sits within the health and well being of the environment.

The mental health system in Aotearoa is failing Māori, in addressing mental health inequities and under Te Tiriti O Waitangi commitments and obligations, this is a human rights issue. Māori are admitted to secondary mental health services and forensic services at higher rates than non- Māori and are under diagnosed in primary care for disorders such as depression. (2) Aotearoa reached a ten -year high of suicides

in 2016, with Māori male and females having double the rate of suicides than non-Māori. (3)

Turuki healthcare, a Māori primary healthcare provider, has implemented an integrated health service approach to mental health, with the provision of healing groups. The practice seeks to place at the forefront, those who are specialized in their fields, with knowledge handed down and accumulated over centuries from tīpuna.

Maramataka reconnects whānau back to the environment and provides understanding of ancestral ways, for healing. Tīpuna studied and mastered Te Taiao, the natural environment, by daily observations. With maramataka, tīpuna watched and studied Ngā mata o Hina Marama, the many faces of Hina, the moon and the impact she had. Each face, phase, of Hina, was given a name and attached an activity to be carried out, most efficient for the environment at this time. This was called the Maramataka Māori, The Māori Lunar calendar.

Due to the impact of colonisation, urbanisation and the introduction of the Gregorian calendar, Māori shifted away from ancestral knowledge and disconnected from the environment. We have borne witness to this separation from Te Taiao, in our engagements with whānau. Our classes use

pūrākau, our stories, to work with whānau and provide the necessary tools for wellness. Whānau are equipped to create a plan for recovery using the template of our ancestors. In doing so, whānau are restored in hinengaro, mind, tinana, body, wairua, spirit.

The application of Maramataka has large implications for Māori well being. It serves as a preventative strategy, to intervene in what is a dire situation for those experiencing mental health distress. It is an indigenous world view and approach to healing that can save lives.