

Moemoeā: Weaving the Threads of Memory and Dream for a Psychology of Belonging

The theme of this conference, Moemoeā, gifts us with a powerful duality: the act of looking back (mahara) and the courage to dream forward (moemoeā). But what happens when the past holds both profound wisdom and deep wounding? And what does the future hold for those who have often been left at the margins of both memory and vision?

This keynote will explore the transformative intersection of Indigeneity and Disability within the psychological landscape of Aotearoa. We will journey into the past to remember the sophisticated psychologies of connection held by Māori, while also confronting the history of how the "norm" has been weaponised against both Indigenous and disabled bodies. From this grounded place of memory, we will then turn to the moemoeā—the dream of a "Psychology of Belonging." This is a psychology that moves beyond diagnosis and deficit, asking instead: Where do you belong, and how can we strengthen the web that holds you?

By weaving together the wisdom of Mātauranga Māori and the lived experience of the disability community, particularly at their vital intersection for Takātāpui, Whānau Hauā, and Māori with disabilities (tangata whaikaha) this session challenges us to decolonise and de-pathologise our practice. It is an invitation to become weavers of a new future, where every mind, body, and whakapapa is seen, valued, and held.