

Eat & Work Together Weaving Empathy

09 November 2024, 12noon—3pm

Bahá’i Centre, Browns Bay

Organised by Sylvia Aston and Beate Matthies

Participants according to Diversity Indicators:

Nationality/Ethnicity:	Occupation (incl. retired):	Age Groups:
English 3	Sales 1	20-30 0
German 1	Accountant 2	30-40 2
Indian 2	Teacher 1	40-50 3
Irish 1	Manager 2	50-60 4
Kiwi 4	Administrator 2	60-70 5
Malaysian 1	Landscaper 1	70-80 6
Māori 1	Scientist 1	80-90 2
Punjabi 2	Chef 1	
Rwandan 1	Financial Advisor 1	Religions:
Samoan 2	Midwife 2	Bahá’i 5
Scottish 1	Unknown 8	Christian 7
South African 1		Hindu 2
Tongan 1	Gender:	Jewish 1
US American 1	Female 13	Sikh 2
Total: 22	Male 8	Unknown 5
	Gender Diverse 1	

12noon – 12.30pm: Arrival & Welcome



Mihi Whakatau - a reflection on Weaving:
Weaving (Rara) is a fine art. It takes work and patience to weave. The process of stripping the flax down and to get to the fibre is like the effort to get to the fibre of your heart. We welcome all—with their own sorrows and grief. We are all united with those who are here and those who have gone before us.



12.30 – 12.45pm: White Paper Round

Each participant takes a question on a white paper strip and shares the answer with the participants around the table.

Icebreaker Questions—What do I like? What makes me happy?

- Family, children, friends
- Good food, coffee, cake
- Learning, widening my horizon
- Serving people
- Being with people with a good heart
- Nature, hiking, gardening
- Meditation, faith community



12.45pm: Lunch Buffet

After a Jewish karakia, the participants enjoyed a vegetarian lunch buffet style.



12.45pm – 1.30pm: Yellow Paper Round

While having lunch, each participant takes a question on a yellow paper strip and shares the answer with the participants around the table.

Relationship Questions—What characteristics do you like in people?

- Honesty, reliability
- Diversity
- Respect
- Shared concern for the environment
- Support within the community

Q: If you saw someone who looked lost—would you approach them?

- Yes (all agreed). Approach the person and ask how they could help.



1.30pm-2pm: Activity—Weaving Empathy

Each table receives a couple of small sticks, some wool and a pair of scissors. The participants work in twos and start decorating the stick, then hand it to the next couple to continue.

Activity with or without words—no limit to creativity. Reaction:

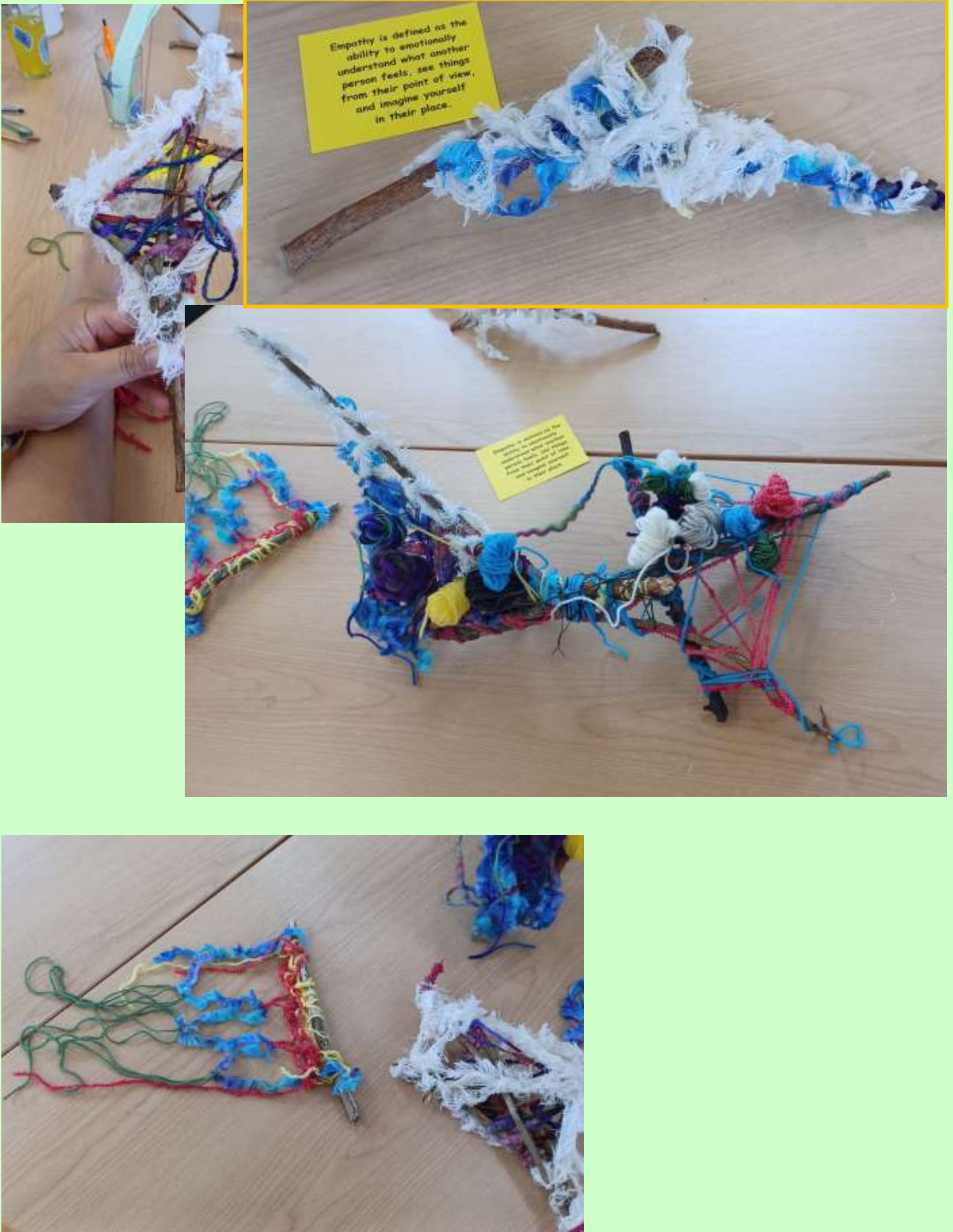
- Fun & Laughter
- Didn't expect that my preparation would work out the way it did
- Sharing of ideas
- Not one person “owned” one of the results as an individual



1.30pm-2pm: Activity—Weaving Empathy



2pm: Activity—Weaving Empathy—Results



2pm: Activity—Weaving Empathy—Sharing the Results

One person of those who were actively involved in one of the art works, spoke shortly on the meaning of the art work and/or how they felt when weaving.



2pm – 2.30pm: Green Paper Round

While having dessert, each participant takes a question on a green paper strip and shares the answer with the participants around the table.

Empathy Questions—What are your experiences with Empathy?

- Searching for justice
- Overcome prejudices
- Using our skills in a positive way
- Shared concern for the environment
- Listening & caring
- Nice to know that you are missed / noticed
- Give support, show empathy
- Accept support, a helping hand



2.30pm – 3pm: Wrap-up & Farewell Gift

Each participant is asked to take some of the left-over food home to their family, whanau or community to continue weaving empathy beyond the event.

Farewell Gift:

A pill bottle with the label “Direction: Use everyday”

The content: a stripe of paper with a quote on empathy, diversity, community.

Examples:

- “Empathy begins with understanding life from another person’s perspective. Nobody has an objective experience of reality. It’s all through our own individual prisms.” (Sterling K. Brown)
- “When you start to develop your powers of empathy and imagination, the whole world opens up to you.” (Susan Sarandon)
- “A good exercise of the heart is to bend down and help another up.” (John Andrew Holms)



The Organisers:



Beate Matthies and Sylvia Aston

Feedback from Participants:

It was a lovely event, thanks so much for having me along. I liked that the discussion questions were open ended and gave us all a chance to share perspectives as we see things as human beings. It felt like we were doing community building. I liked the stick activity, especially that it was not something that could be done alone.

Wonderful to feel the energy lift and the laughter become louder with the weaving activity.

I loved that this workshop touched on current issues to do with a common problems with seniors and living alone. Also I love seeing my community as well as other religion denomination persons.
Thank you and very grateful for the great mahi.

It was great to hear the buzzing in the room and people swapping tables after every round.

Well organised, clearly a lot of thought went into the planning. Consequently, good experience for people in general who engaged in this process. Very clearly needed to build communities of such a diverse nature - needs to become a continual proceed.

The event was good. It was good to share our experiences and learn from others. The exercises were good and made us think of own likes, experiences and the activity made us all use our creative or just normal thinking to made it work. It was a good insight into how we as human beings irrespective of our faiths can live in harmony and live our day to day lives.