



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning
2759 South King Street
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

March 12, 2024

TO: Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair
House Committee on Human Services

Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health and Homelessness

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Measure: S.B. No. 3279 S.D. 1 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

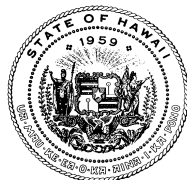
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support with comments

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) supports S.B. No. 3279 S.D. 1, defers to the Office of Wellness and Resiliency (OWR), and offers comments.

A comprehensive mental health support system is crucial to address acute and chronic mental health issues. The prevalence of these issues is on the rise, particularly as we continue to address the impacts of COVID, and more recently, the Maui wildfires.

EOEL would like to especially note that supporting early mental health and development in the youngest years is critical and asks that this also be incorporated into the development of this system. Mental health issues, even at this stage of the earliest years, can be caused by biological and/or development factors, experiences of trauma such as family violence, child abuse and neglect, parental substance abuse, and experiencing systems of poverty. These issues may result in developmental delays that could have long-lasting and detrimental impacts to children's health and development.

We look forward to continuing to work with other stakeholders and departments to continue strengthening the systems of support for our youngest keiki across the State. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.



STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE
KE KE'ENA KŪPA'A MAULI OLA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
415 S.BERETANIA ST. #415
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

House Committees on Human Services and Health and Homelessness

Tuesday, March 12, 2024 9:10 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

**In Support of S.B. 3279 SD1
Relating to Mental Health**

Aloha Chairs Marten and Belatti, Vice Chairs Amato and Takenouchi and members of the committees:

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office **SUPPORTS** S.B. 3279 SD1, Relating to Mental Health and offers comments.

Established through Act 291 (Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022) the overall aim of the OWR is to make Hawai'i a trauma-informed state. OWR is focused on breaking down barriers that impact the physical, social, and emotional well-being of Hawai'i's people. The OWR explores avenues to increase access and availability to mental, behavioral, social, and emotional health services and support.

S.B. 3279 SD1 proposes the establishment of the well-being project within the OWR. The measure would allow OWR to accelerate and strengthen the office's mission of creating a trauma-informed state. Since the inception of the OWR, we have initiated training and technical assistance supports with several state departments, specifically around the implementation of trauma-informed care. While the OWR does not provide direct mental health care, we provide technical assistance and training on implementing trauma-informed care in all state agencies, including those who provide direct mental health support services. This bill would allow OWR to expand its work and engage entities beyond state departments to incorporate culturally grounded and community-informed well-being programs.

Trauma-informed care (TIC) is an approach to understanding and responding to the widespread impact of trauma. By passing this bill, the State would be upholding the TIC principles of Safety, Peer Support, Empowerment, and Voice and Choice, which strengthens our pathway towards a trauma-informed state. As such, the OWR **SUPPORTS** S.B. 3279 SD1.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tia L R Hartsock".

Tia L R Hartsock, MSW, MSCJA
Director, Office of Wellness & Resilience
Office of the Governor

LATE

SB-3279-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 1:03:44 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/12/2024 9:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Melody Young	CARES	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

CARES testifies in strong support.



HAWAI`I YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 904

Honolulu, Hawai`i 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: info@hysn.org

Vonnell Ramos, President
Cyd Hoffeld, Vice President
Sione Ford Naeata, Treasurer
Greg Tjapkes, Secretary

Judith F. Clark, Executive
Director

Network Membership

*Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai`i
Big Island Substance Abuse
Council*

*Bobby Benson Center
Child and Family Service*

Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawai`i

Collins Consulting, LLC

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC `Ohana, Inc.

Family Programs Hawai`i

Family Support Hawai`i

Friends of the Children's Justice

Center of Maui

Get Ready Hawai`i

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale `Opio Kaua`i, Inc.

Hawai`i Children's Action

Network

Hawai`i Health & Harm

Reduction Center

Hawai`i Island Community`

Health Center

Ho`ola Na Pua

Ho`okele Coalition of Kaua`i

Ka Hale Pomaika`i

Kahi Mohala

Kokua Kalihii Valley

Kaua`i Planning and Action

Alliance

Maui Youth and Family Services

Na Pu`uwai Molokai Native

Hawaiian Health Care

Systems

P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.

Parents and Children Together

PHOCUSED

PFLAG—Kona, Big Island

Planned Parenthood of the

Great Northwest, Hawaii

Alaska, Kentucky, Indiana

Residential Youth Services

& Empowerment (RYSE)

Salvation Army Family

Intervention Services

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community

Center

The Catalyst Group

March 9, 2024

Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
And members of the Committee on Human Services

Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
And members of the Committee on Health and Human Services

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 3279 SD1 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN) strongly supports SB 3279 SD1
Relating to Mental Health.

According to the 2021 Surgeon General's Advisory on Youth Mental
Health, recent national surveys of young people have shown alarming
increases in the prevalence of certain mental health challenges.

35% of middle and high school youth in Hawai'i experience persistent
depression; 7% of high school and 11% of middle school students in
Hawai'i reported having attempted suicide.

23% of middle school students report that their mental health was
most of the time or always "not good" in the prior 30 days. Youth
mental health issues are a risk factor for high-risk substance use.

The TeenLink Hawai'i website continues to get 2,000 site visits on
average each month. The top topics/pages visited included Suicide;
Health and Wellness Toolkit; Sleep; Stress; Mental Health; and Self-
Care.

A Hawai'i Department of Health report using 2020 data estimates that
11,000 of Hawai'i's youth experienced at least one major depressive
episode in the prior year. Of those who experienced a major
depressive episode, approximately 6,000 did not receive mental
health services in the prior year.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 3279 SD1:
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

TO: House Committee on Human Services and Health and Homelessness

FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: Tuesday 03/12/2024; 9:10 AM; CR 329 & via videoconference

Chair Marten and Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee
Chair Belatti and Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **SB 3279 SD1**, which establishes with the Office of Wellness and Resilience the State of Well-being Project to assess and enhance tier 1 and tier 2 mental health support services for all key stakeholder communities across the State. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawaii.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency dedicated to providing social services in Hawaii for over 75 years. CCH has programs serving children, families, elders, homeless, veterans, and immigrants. Our mission revolves around offering services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawaii. Catholic Charities Hawaii has providing counseling services to individuals and families for years.

The project aims to address an urgent necessity by evaluating and improving tier 1 and tier 2 mental health support services for key stakeholder communities across Hawaii. Mental health holds a crucial role in overall well-being, and it is a fundamental duty of our state to guarantee access to high-quality, trauma-informed mental health services.

Catholic Charities Hawaii supports the Office of Wellness and Resilience endeavors to establish Hawaii as a trauma-informed state and to ensure the availability of a range of effective mental health services. By endorsing this bill, we are taking a significant stride towards fostering a healthier and more resilient community that prioritizes the well-being of its residents.

We urge your support for this bill and ask for your assistance in its passing during this legislative session.

Please contact our Director of Advocacy and Community Relations, Shellie Niles at (808) 527-4813 if you have any questions.



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS • 1822 Ke'eaumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone (808) 527-4813





Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: House Committee on Human Services
House Committee on Health and Homelessness
RE: SB3279 SD1 in strong support
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 329
March 12, 2024; 9:10 am

Aloha Chair Marten, Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Amato, Vice Chair Takenouchi and committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT of Senate Bill 3279 SD1** relating to Mental Health.

SB 3279 SD1 establishes the State of Well-being Project within The Office of Wellness and Resilience, (OWR). This project will assess and enhance tier 1 and tier 2 mental health support services across the state and build programs for key stakeholder communities in which well-being programs do not currently exist. Programs will incorporate culturally responsive support systems for key stakeholder communities across the State. It would also appropriate funds to assess and enhance existing mental health training and ongoing support services to various public agencies such as public schools, community centers, and health care centers. Funds would also be used to hire and train mental health specialists and work with approved partner organizations to be culturally grounded and community and trauma-informed.

Tier 1 systems not only provide a common language to define wellness practices but also promote a safe and healthy organizational culture for all. It is designed for all people to set a foundation. Tier 2 mental health support systems identify those at higher risk and therefore require specialized training and support geared to meet those needs. Together, these two tiers of support encompass the core mental health needs of individuals, groups, and communities.

The above purposes align with the OWR's framework to define trauma-informed care and trauma-responsive practice that applies to schools, community centers, health care providers, and other programs that have contact with children and youth. The effort will support trauma-informed care within our systems for the benefit of both the public who interact with these systems, as well as our state workforce. We must continue to make Hawai'i a healing-centered and trauma-informed state in 2024. Mahalo for supporting this bill.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Mai Hall, M.Ed.
Children's Health Coordinator



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON HUMAN SERVICES and HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 312
Tuesday, March 12, 2024 AT 9:10 A.M.

To The Honorable Lisa Marten, Chair
The Honorable Terez Amato, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Human Services
The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the committee on Health & Homelessness

SUPPORT SB3279 SD1 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS SB3279 SD1.**

The Chamber notes that mental illness is one of the most pressing challenges humanity is facing today. The prevalence of both acute and chronic mental illnesses has been on the rise in the State and globally over the past two decades. Untreated mental illness is one of the top predictors of suicide, substance abuse, incarceration, and adult disability. This is especially disconcerting for historically marginalized and under-resourced communities, which are at significantly higher risk of mental illness and also have more limited access to mental health education, resources, and support. Mental illness at the individual level compounds across communities and leads to negative statewide outcomes, including increased joblessness, homelessness, domestic violence, violent crime, and school dropout rates.

Additionally, we have seen the importance of mental health support services given the trauma that many face following the August 8 wildfires. We appreciate this bill as there are gaps in support services that are vital to address. We also encourage the group to consider how to broaden the capacity of the Hawaii State Hospital to not only assist those who have committed a felony, but to the wider community who need critical mental health care.

We support efforts to establish the state of well-being project and a timeline for the project to:

- (A) Assess the tiers of mental health support services that currently exist; and
- (B) Enhance existing well-being programming and, when non-existent, build out culturally grounded and community-informed well-being programming to establish mental health support services for key stakeholder communities across the State.

This is a crucial tool in the toolbox on fighting homelessness and supporting the care for those with mental illnesses. For these reasons, we **SUPPORT SB3279 SD1** and respectfully ask that it be passed.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

LATE

SB-3279-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 8:09:39 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/12/2024 9:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heidi Roddenberry	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha: mental health support is vital, especially with Hawaii having a devastating 30% higher teenage suicide rate than the national average. Maui is still healing from the wildfire tragedy; people are struggling. I know two local families from my time living on Maui that have faced tragedies of attempted suicide and, worse, boys who have committed suicide. It is devastating, and now we know how to prevent such tragedies. Especially with the stigma around counseling, bringing Tier 1 mental health tools is how to introduce wellbeing and healthy relating, giving our keiki tools for resilience and a brighter future. It can circumnavigate the stigma; of course, those in crisis will still need a high-level intervention that counselors offer, yet the average population can gain the tools to help them navigate life, reducing the demand for more costly Tier 3, one-to-one counseling. A well-planned Tier 1 mental health support system can reduce the burden on the counselors, allowing them to focus on the people who need their help the most. Just as it has been shown that investing in preventative and primary care can lower costs with higher patient satisfaction, investing in Tier 1 practices can save millions and “ultimately be a district’s most cost-effective endeavor as it affords the opportunity to address mental health concerns before they reach a point of extreme emotional and financial cost (Carr-Kaffashan et al., 2022).

Having Hawaii leadership supporting mental health programs is incredible and will be groundbreaking in the US. Stateside, there has been a lack of efficacy in mental health initiatives because evidence-based tools have not been adequately utilized. Hawaii has an incredible opportunity to support its people with the tools for wellbeing and evidence-based strategies to help people ready to heal. This would put Hawaii in a leadership position throughout the US, as the first State of Wellbeing. This could add a new aspect to tourism, just as Bhutan gained notoriety when they began measuring Gross National Happiness.

Mahalo on your excellent kokua for our Ohana, especially our keiki.

SB-3279-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 11:12:07 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/12/2024 9:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB3279 SD1.

FROM: EOPA Code Blue Water Solutions

SUBJECT: Support for S.B. No. 3279 as amended

TO: Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair
Rep. Terez Amato, Vice Chair
Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Honorable Committee Members

LATE

Measure: S.B. No. 3279 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Hearing Date: Tuesday March 12, 2024

Time: 09:10 am

Location: Conference Room 329

Elected Officials to Protect America (EOPA) Code Blue Water Solutions is a nonpartisan network of current and former elected officials who care deeply about protecting our lands, waters, and democracy while ensuring environmental justice and solving the climate emergency.

We view this legislation as an important step in climate resilience, given the increase in climate-related disasters. The need is especially urgent after the tragic fires on Maui. S.B. 3279 is uniquely impactful as it focuses on Tier 1 and 2 well-being and mental health.

Tier 1 mental health services include about 90% of the population and provides foundational mental health services for everyone. This includes well-being service provisions that are aimed at the entire system and population. Tier 1 services include early intervention, support, and education so that all stakeholders know how to take care of themselves and their communities. This is the critical starting point for building a shared vocabulary and set of practices to promote positive health outcomes and prevent illness in the future. Tier 1 significantly reduces the burden on Tier 2 and Tier 3 systems. Tier 2 services are targeted at higher-risk groups and are generally 7% percent of the population. Tier 3 involves one-on-one clinical counseling for individuals with conditions that require special attention and generally includes 3% of the population.

Research conducted over the past twenty years in the fields of positive psychology, education, neuroscience, and public health demonstrates the critical importance of Tier 1 mental health support for the health, safety, and success of our communities, schools, and civil institutions. Hundreds of studies and dozens of meta-analyses provide clear evidence that basic training and practices in emotion regulation, prosocial behaviors, positive psychology, emotional intelligence, and self-awareness will significantly reduce the prevalence of emotional trauma, depression, anxiety, stress, and burnout. This improves relationships, increases academic achievement and job performance, and reduces the risk of maladaptive emotion regulation behaviors like substance abuse, social isolation, and violence.

The positive impact of Tier 1 mental health support systems is particularly effective in improving the health of higher-risk populations and high-burnout and high-turnover occupations. Providing adults and children with the preventative skills and training to help care for their own basic mental health is more effective and less costly than attempting to reverse mental health issues later with Tier 3 individual care. Focusing on Tier 1 has the ability to reduce the number of Tier 3 cases, reducing costs and improving the health of the overall community.

We enthusiastically support S.B. No. 3279 with the following suggested amendment to ensure the definitions of Tier 1 and 2 are clear. This is important as it will help inform how to develop and implement an effective program. The following references the established definition of tiers from the American Psychological Association and the organizational psychology literature.

“Tier 1 (Universal) shall be defined as: Well-being service provisions that are aimed at the entire system and population within an organization. Successful Tier 1 programs must include, but not limited to:

- Program implementation is focused on whole-organization Tier 1 mental health support and offers continuous care and year-round learning for all stakeholders.
- The program is culturally relevant and responsive to the needs of the communities it is serving.
- The program is evidence-based in the psychological and/or medical sciences, with published, peer-reviewed scientific evidence of program efficacy.
- The program includes age-differentiated lesson plans designed to support children and adults across all developmental phases of life from two years old into adulthood.
- The program must offer at least all of the following practices and tools across multiple domains of positive psychology and organizational culture: (a) Mindfulness and emotion regulation, (b) Prosocial behavior, (c) Positive character development, (d) Positive community development, (e) Self-awareness (f) Emotional intelligence.
- The program delivery methodology offers multiple channels of learning, including but not limited to: (a) Asynchronous digital learning capabilities. (b) Synchronous digital learning capabilities in cohorts or groups. (c) Live in-person training and onsite implementation.
- The program includes tracking, measuring, and reporting both program impact and implementation fidelity across all sites.
- The implementation of the program is scalable and centers on community cohort learning rather than individual learning.”

“Tier 2 (Groups) shall be defined as: well-being service provisions that are aimed at populations within an organization that are at higher risk of mental health challenges. Successful Tier 2 programs must include, but not limited to:

- Programming shall include the above Tier 1 criteria as a baseline.
- The program provides specialized mental health care support for groups with a higher risk of mental illness.

- Program services must deeply understand a particular population within a community and be designed to support systems to uplift well-being and prevent illness for that group.
- The program provides additional context and support to Tier 1 programs.
- The program connects individuals to Tier 3 providers when acute care is needed.”

S.B. 3279 takes a holistic approach to mental health that can be an example for other states and nations. Hawaii can lead the nation and be the first State of Well-being. Elected Officials to Protect America Code Blue Water Solutions **SUPPORTS** S.B. 3279.



Alex Cornell du Houx

Frm. State Representative, President of Elected Officials to Protect America,
Professor USF Masters in Public Leadership and Director of the Certificate in Public Leadership,
Marine veteran.

LATE

SB-3279-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 3:42:04 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/12/2024 9:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matt Melnick	The Contentment Foundation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a schoolteacher I can attest to the power of The Four Pillars of Well Being on both a personal as well as a professional level. I was part of the team that piloted this program at Corbett Preparatory School of IDS in Tampa, FL in 2015. While we modified the curriculum along the way to adapt to the climate of the changing times, the mission from the start has always been the same. The intention is to prioritize the well being of our faculty first so that we can be the best versions of ourselves for our students. We are then able to deliver the curriculum to our kids and help them grow up in a way that teaches them how to have a healthy relationship with their thoughts and emotions so that they can respond instead of react to the world in which they were living. This model creates a community of wellness that can be sustained over time. Please know that this is the most important work of our time and our students can set an example for the recipients of The Four Pillars in Hawaii and beyond.

SB-3279-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 6:50:10 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/12/2024 9:10:00 AM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Flynn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Legislators,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am a concerned citizen writing to express my enthusiastic support for Senate Bill 3279, S.D. 1, the OWR; State of Well-being Project. As a resident of our great state, I believe this legislation is a crucial step towards addressing the mental health challenges faced by our communities, and I would like to share my perspective on why it is so important.

In recent years, it has become increasingly evident that mental health is a pressing concern for our society. The findings presented in the bill, recognizing the rise in both acute and chronic mental illnesses, resonate with the experiences of many individuals and families in our community. Untreated mental illness, as highlighted in the bill, often leads to severe consequences such as suicide, substance abuse, incarceration, and adult disability. I believe that Senate Bill 3279 is a timely response to these challenges.

The tiered approach proposed in the bill aligns with the research conducted over the past fifty years, emphasizing the critical importance of a comprehensive strategy to address mental health concerns. As a citizen, I appreciate the focus on Tier 1 mental health support systems that provide skills training and programming to all stakeholders within various organizations, fostering a common vocabulary and wellness practices. Additionally, the recognition of Tier 2 mental health support systems tailored to higher-risk groups within these organizations is a crucial step toward addressing the specific needs of our community members.

I wholeheartedly endorse the establishment of the State of Well-being Project, which aims to assess and enhance tier 1 and tier 2 mental health support services across the state. This initiative, as outlined in the bill, is a commendable effort to create a comprehensive mental health support system that caters to the diverse needs of our citizens.

Furthermore, the appropriation of funds to establish mental health specialist positions within the Office of Wellness and Resilience is a wise investment in the well-being of our community. These specialists will play a vital role in providing expert guidance and support, ensuring that individuals and communities receive the necessary resources for mental health.

While I understand the concern about exceeding the general fund expenditure ceiling, I believe the long-term benefits of Senate Bill 3279 far outweigh the immediate financial constraints. As a

citizen, I see this as a crucial investment in the overall health, productivity, and resilience of our community members.

I kindly urge you to support and pass Senate Bill 3279, ensuring its effective implementation from 7/1/2050. By doing so, our state can take a significant step toward building a more compassionate, resilient, and mentally healthy society.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your dedication to the well-being of our community.

Sincerely,
Lisa

LATE

SB-3279-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 6:58:34 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/12/2024 9:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristina Blundon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Anxiety once dominated my every day life, a relentless force that brought physical symptoms to my chest and neck. Simple tasks like meetings for work became monumental challenges, trapping me in a cycle of fear and worry.

Realizing I didn't have to suffer alone, I sought mental health support. Tools for emotional regulating became my savior, where I learned to confront my fears with mindfulness.

Today, I'm a testament to resilience and the importance of mental health supports, particularly in schools. If I would have learned the tools for social and emotional learning when I was younger, it could have saved me 6 years of suffering. With courage and compassion, I embrace each day, knowing healing is possible with the right tools.