



American Bowen Academy™

Bowenwork in Maunabo, Puerto Rico

Kathleen Riley, an ND in Connecticut, who has been practicing Bowenwork since 1991, sent us this story about her recent volunteer work in an area of Puerto Rico that had been ravaged by Hurricane Maria.



I have a friend, Nelly, in Maunabo, Puerto Rico, whose farm was devastated by hurricane Maria. The house without the roof is where I have stayed in the past. I wanted to visit Nelly and help with the farm, but the lack of electricity for communication and the devastation of the roads delayed my visiting until the first week of May. We used old fashioned snail mail to coordinate.

When I visited in May, seven months after hurricane Maria, she and many others the area still did not have electricity or running water. Instead of having me work on her farm, Nelly requested that I work on her and her neighbors, who had injured themselves clearing the hurricane damaged trees and buildings. Many buildings still have blue tarp roofs like the one shown on the right, because getting funds for repairs has been very difficult.



What started as a simple trip grew as she talked to friends and neighbors. I visited churches and schools in Maunabo, Patilla, and Capilla communities.



Each time we started with a small group of interested people, it grew over the hours to 30 to 40 people. The beauty of Bowen is that it lends itself so well to group sessions.

I asked people to sit or lie in areas according to their worst complaint, e.g., back pain, knee pain, etc., to make it easier for me to remember. (In my own office I frequently do 3-6 Bowen sessions at a time, but these were larger groups and I do not speak

Spanish.) Then I went around the areas and worked on 10-20 people at a time. The woman shown above lay across 4 chairs while I demonstrated what Bowenwork involves and Nelly translated for me.



Everyone wanted me to work on them lying down, so we went into their church and filled the pews. It was hot due to the lack of fans, but we even had quite a few children ask to be worked on. I also taught stress-coping strategies and breathing and tapping techniques, and provided handouts that had been translated into Spanish. Some of my supplement providers who are familiar with my regular nonprofit volunteer work generously donated probiotics, vitamins and minerals to this trip. Before the week was over we were already getting feedback about reduced aches and pains. The last day we saw helicopters bringing electric poles towards the area, which meant electricity was coming soon.

I am very grateful for the gift of Bowen and the opportunity to provide some comfort to over 150 people who have endured so much. I am grateful

for friends who graciously translated the written materials I wanted to bring. I am especially thankful for Nelly, who allowed me to visit even though she was concerned that I would have to deal with the lack of electricity and running water.