Engaging Asian Youth in Challenging the Stigma: A Model for Youth-Led Program

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Improving the Wellness of Asian Youth
Activity

Think of a few youth that stand out to you

What assets/attributes/qualities/skills about them stick out to you?

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Addressing the need

- Asian youth overlooked in mental health services
- Mental health issues not immediately seen
- Disconnect/denial of culture
  - Connection to ethnic identity - protective factor

Stats

Compared to other U.S. populations, Asian Americans are 3 times less likely to seek mental health services.

You are not alone

5.6% of the U.S. population identifies as Asian American or Pacific Islander

Among this, 19% Asian American high school students considered suicide.

Trauma among Asian youth

- Intergenerational
- Immigration
- War
- Separation
- Isolation
- Language barrier
- Culture differences
- Academic stress
- Parental pressure
- Expectations
- Shame
What is Trauma-Informed Care?
6 Guiding Principles to a Trauma-Informed Approach

1. SAFETY
2. TRUSTWORTHINESS & TRANSPARENCY
3. PEER SUPPORT
4. COLLABORATION & MUTUALITY
5. EMPOWERMENT, VOICE & CHOICE
6. CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, & GENDER ISSUES

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/infographics/6_principles_trauma_info.htm
What is Healing Centered Engagement?
What is wrong with you?

What happened to you?

What is right with you?
Healing centered engagement focuses on:

1. Healing by addressing the root causes
2. Being grounded in culture and identity
3. Strength-based and asset driven
IWAY Programs

- One-on-one counseling
- Healing centered Youth Program
- Mental health presentations to youth and parents
- To address the barriers:
  - FREE
  - No parental consent needed
  - Incentivized (can earn up to $90 in gift cards)
  - Offer programs at schools
  - Bus and BART passes provided
  - Food
  - No insurance
Counseling - Common Themes

- Self-esteem / identity
- Body image
- Social anxiety
- Family pressure and expectations
- Navigating relationship (family, friends, peers, etc)
- Coping with childhood trauma
- Unmotivation
- Worrying about the future and the unknown
Importance of supporting parents when working with youth

- Generation gap
- Cultural difference (1st gen vs 2nd gen)
- Intergenerational trauma

- Fostering empathy
- Understanding
- Connecting to family heritage
- Strengthen support network
Youth Group Programs

- Ethnic pride and building cultural identity
- Self-confidence and awareness
- Focused on emotional wellness & ties to the community
- Strength and asset based
- Through media, food, art, exploration field trips
DEMOGRAPHICS OF CURRENT IWAY CLIENTS

GENDER \( (n=107) \)

- Male: 32%
- Female: 65%
- Other: 3%

AGE GROUP \( (n=105) \)

- 10 to 12: 3%
- 13 to 15 Years Old: 32%
- 16 to 18: 65%
Handling everyday life in the past 30 days

I am handling daily life (n=107)

- 75% Agree/strongly agree
- 19% Undecided
- 7% Disagree/strongly disagree

I am able to cope when things go wrong (n=107)

- 54% Agree/strongly agree
- 29% Undecided
- 18% Disagree/strongly disagree
Handling everyday life in the past 30 days

I get along with family members (n=106)
- 78% Agree/strongly agree
- 8% Disagree
- 14% Undecided

I am satisfied with our family life right now (n=106)
- 70% Agree/strongly agree
- 13% Disagree/strongly disagree
- 17% Undecided
Handling everyday life in the past 30 days

I am doing well in school and/or work (n=107)

- 73% Agree/strongly agree
- 18% Undecided
- 9% Disagree/strongly disagree
During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel...

- **nervous (n=103)**: 6% None of the time, 17% A little/some of the time, 78% Most/all of the time
- **hopeless (n=104)**: 8% None of the time, 32% A little/some of the time, 61% Most/all of the time
- **restless or fidgety (n=103)**: 8% None of the time, 34% A little/some of the time, 38% Most/all of the time
- **depressed (n=102)**: 8% None of the time, 28% A little/some of the time, 52% Most/all of the time
- **that everything was an effort (n=102)**: 17% None of the time, 30% A little/some of the time, 54% Most/all of the time
- **worthless (n=98)**: 4% None of the time, 45% A little/some of the time, 51% Most/all of the time
SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

I know people who will understand me when I need to talk (n=105)

- 82% Agree/strongly agree
- 13% Undecided
- 5% Disagree

I have people that I am comfortable talking with about my problems (n=106)

- 81% Agree/strongly agree
- 14% Undecided
- 5% Disagree
SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

In a crisis, I would have the support I need from family or friends (n=105)

- 75% Agree/strongly agree
- 18% Undecided
- 7% Disagree
How does youth leadership challenge the stigma?

- Their voices have impact!
- Creating opportunities for youth to impact their own community
- Empowerment
- Self-agency
- Asset-based (focused on strengths)
- Break traditional adult/authority power dynamics
Creating Youth Centered Programs

- Community Advisory Board (CAB)
- API Talent Show
- Community Engagement Internship - Challenging the Stigma
"I haven’t really talked about it with my family because I feel like it’s really weird to them. Because I feel like I might have problems with mental health but I don’t feel comfortable enough to talk to them about it. Like for example, my mom would just be like “you’re just sad, let’s go and get something to eat”. She doesn’t actually understand the mentality of having depression or really bad anxiety."
Stop and Think

Thinking back to the youth from the beginning of the presentation...

How would you utilize those qualities to develop them as a youth leader in your community

Please share: www.menti.com code: 17 32 31
Adapting To Virtual Programming

March
Present
- Disseminated program material virtually

How we finish the rest of the program?
Video
Two Programs

Middle School
Cameras OFF
Mics OFF

High School
Cameras OFF
Mics ON occasionally
Focus Coping

I learned about the 3 types of focus coping. Which one I use the most, different ways I can address the problem and the name for it.

BEFORE IWAY:
I wasn’t necessarily “proud” to be Asian. People know the stereotypes and would tease me about it. I wasn’t the type to embrace my Asian-ness. I was born and raised in the US, so I’m not very knowledgeable on my culture. I don’t know any specific holidays, how to speak Tagalog.

AFTER IWAY:
Although I still not be knowledgeable about my culture, I know there are others that can relate. I now make me feel better about being Asian-American. It’s great to know the people I know that participated in IWAY that are Asian-American also feel the same way as me.

IWAY has given me something to look forward to every week! It has so far and I am so grateful to have been apart of it! Thank you so!

-Lynelle Legado
Hey Emily!

I wanted to thank you for being so kind and patient. When we sign on to learn we feel safe and welcome. You always give us time to reply or think about our answers, and never force us to do anything. You always encourage us and make learning really fun. Thank you for always being so cute!

Enjoy the rest of your Summer!
Challenges

- Sensing how engaged people are
- Getting youth to interact with each other
- Doing creative and reflective projects

Lesson

Don’t relocate your program online, create an online program.
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Platforms
- Zoom → Break out rooms, White board
- Google Drive → Docs, Slides, Jamboard

Activities
- Do activities TOGETHER as much as possible
Dear Me...

I am doing great! I am beautiful. I am grateful to be alive, still breathing and functioning amazing. I am enough for me.

I love this & I agree with everything!!
you are more than enough<333
and that is the TRUTH!! <3
yes! you are enough for yourself and you are AMAZING!
I... Am not a virus
Am a Chinese Women
Do not eat dogs
Am an artist
But I...
Care about mental health Am not good at math
Deserve the same respect
Was in orchestra
Do not want to be a CS major
Do not listen to K-Pop
Am addicted to boba
Can be into the same things guys are
Questions?
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