



Culturally Responsive Services for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Student Success

By Matthew R. Mock, PhD

Background

Asian American communities are among the fastest growing in the United States. Culturally-based stigma and shame are oftentimes barriers to seeking services or assistance from others. AAPI students are at-risk for depression, suicidal ideation and other adjustment problems. Family can be a source of support as well as unintended pressure. Proactive education regarding mental health concerns along with strategies to effectively address them is essential. Providing culturally responsive services to Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students can contribute to their academic success.

Culturally responsive campus services means adopting best and emerging practices. Outreach to AAPI students should be done in culturally relevant and acceptable ways. This might include English as Second Language (ESL) classes, classes that provide course credit, campus structures frequented by these students, or languages often other than English that can be understood. Culturally appropriate outreach may include informal methods of meeting students “where they are at”. A campus-wide strategy can include:

- providing ongoing training for staff and faculty to increase awareness of AAPI student needs,
- improving information dissemination to students, for example through classroom discussions, normalized campus community forums, or
- online support groups, hotlines, mobile applications, or other means more used by students.

Resources and Supports*

There are many resources available to increase awareness, understanding, and support for AAPI college-age students.

Each Mind Matters, California’s Mental Health Movement funded by the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA), has a large catalogue of useful resources and programs related to suicide prevention, mental health awareness, and stigma reduction among AAPI communities. To find relevant programs, click “Find Programs and Resources” here, then select “Asian/Pacific Islander” as the Target Audience: <http://catalogue.eachmindmatters.org/>. For helpful resources, visit this section and select the “Diverse Communities” Category: <http://www.eachmindmatters.org/resources/>. For videos about the mental health experiences of

real API individuals, select the Category “Asian/Pacific Islander Stories” here:
<http://www.eachmindmatters.org/stories/>.

Know the Signs (<http://www.suicideispreventable.org/>) is a statewide suicide prevention social marketing campaign built on three key messages: Know the signs. Find the words. Reach out. The Know the Signs suicide prevention campaign has culturally adapted suicide prevention outreach materials such as posters, brochures, print ads, and TV and radio segments for the Korean, Vietnamese, Hmong, Lao, Chinese, Cambodian, and Filipino communities. The ads break down the misconception that seeking help is a sign of weakness. All materials are available in the Resource Center at Your Voice Counts; click the checkbox next to “Other Languages” in the search Filters column: <http://resource-center.yourvoicecounts.org/>.

Another CalMHSAs mental health project, the **California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP)**, has a page of helpful resources related to API mental health. This includes publications specifically on student mental health: <http://calmhsa.org/programs/cultural-responsiveness/crdp-california-reducing-disparities-project/>.

The Asian American Psychological Association (AAPA) was founded in 1972 by a group of dedicated national psychologists and mental health professionals. Under the guidance of prominent leaders primarily in California—a core group including educators, masters- and doctoral-level psychologists, social workers, other mental health professionals, and advocates—AAPA was formed. AAPA has continuously represented AAPI psychology and mental health training, education, and research issues including state-of-the-art clinical practices. The AAPA has also developed a series of fact sheets of timely relevance for serving AAPI and international students on college and university campuses. Each of these information sheets provides the most recent facts and research on the following topics:

- 1) Trauma and violence exposure among Asian and Pacific Islander children and adolescents
- 2) Intimate partner violence among Asian and Pacific Islander women
- 3) Asian international students’ adjustment challenges
- 4) Asian American first-generation college students

The history, additional features, membership, and core topic areas of interest to AAPA (including these fact sheets for downloading and circulating), can be found at <http://aapaonline.org>.

The American Psychological Association (APA) is the major AAPI organization for psychologists nationwide. The APA partnered with AAPA to address core topics through its Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs (OEMA). After collecting data nationwide, APA produced common myths and fact sheets, including risk and protective factors for major AAPI concerns such as:

- 1) Bullying and victimization of Asian American students
- 2) Suicide among Asian Americans

APA also published an *Ethnicity and Health in America Series* that can be read at <http://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/ethnicity-health/index.aspx>.

The National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association (NAAPIMHA) has been dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders living in the United States since 2001. Its mission is to promote the mental health and well-being of these diverse AAPI communities through:

- Working with consumers
- Working closely with community-based organizations
- Advocating public policy to improve the quality of services such as principles of recovery
- Providing technical assistance and trainings on cultural competence, working with interpreters, and clinical issues

NAAPIMHA continuously addresses AAPI social justice issues, including suicide prevention among youth; the empowerment of communities, especially mental health consumers; and advocating for equal rights as well as access to affordable high quality mental health services for all. For more information, go to <http://naapimha.org>.



National Asian Pacific American Families against Substance Abuse (NAPAFASA) is a non-profit organization that was founded in 1988. It is dedicated to addressing alcohol, drug, and tobacco issues of AAPI populations throughout the continental United States, Hawaii, the six Pacific Island jurisdictions, and other regions. NAPAFASA has service providers, families, and youth involved in its multifaceted approaches to reach AAPI communities. In addition to reducing substance abuse and related problems, NAPAFASA promotes health and social justice, as recognized in its mission statement: “NAPAFASA is a national organization that prevents and reduces substance abuse in Asian American, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander families and communities through research, advocacy, education and capacity building.” Additional AAPI materials relevant to AAPI college and university students can be found at <http://napafasa.org>.

The California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions (CIBHS) was established in 1993 to promote excellence in mental health services throughout the state. It was originally called the California Institute for Mental Health (CIMH). In 2014, the original mental health-focused Institute merged with Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy Institute (ADPI). Collaborating with consumers, family members, and other interested individuals representing the public interest, CIBHS’s goal is to assist health professionals, agencies, and funders to improve the lives of people with mental health and substance abuse challenges. CIBHS provides trainings, evaluation, and technical assistance, as well as conducts research and policy forums. Recognizing the continuous increasing diversity of California’s populations, CIBHS added a Center for Multicultural Development that

focused on AAPI community mental health needs and evidence-based solutions. CIBHS continues to address relevant AAPI young adult concerns through focusing on equity and cultural competence. For more information, go to <http://www.cibhs.org>.

CIBHS has previously collaborated with Asian American-focused centers such as the **Asian American Center on Disparities Research (AACDR)** located at the University of California, Davis. The mission of AACDR is focused on researching ethno-cultural factors differentially impacting the effectiveness of treatment. AACDR investigates the ways cultural factors either enhance or mitigate the effectiveness and implementation of mental health treatments, including those evidence-based for Asian American clients. For more information go to <http://aacdr.faculty.ucdavis.edu/>.

There was a highly significant conference and interactive forum focused on mental health at-risk issues for AAPI college and university students. It was entitled *Promoting Well-Being and Preventing Suicide among Asian/Asian-American University Students*, and held in Southern California in November 2014. The forum was hosted at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) Pasadena campus with co-sponsorship by the Asian American Psychological Association.

This first-time forum focused primarily on suicide prevention, and increased AAPI awareness and sensitivity in service provision. Some of the goals and objectives for addressing the needs of AAPI students included:

- Identify contributing factors to suicide and discuss potential barriers to access services
- Describe emerging ideas for culturally sensitive outreach and promoting well-being
- Demonstrate knowledge of current practices and converge on future directions related to service delivery and clinical intervention on various local campuses
- Create collaborations, share community resources, and expand supportive networks from a core cultural perspective for and with AAPI students

As a result of this forum, a list of valuable resources was collated and then distributed online. Several of these represent initiatives across the country that address the mental health needs of AAPI college and university students. The following list is based on that original resource.

Resource List

AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION: ASIAN AMERICAN – PACIFIC ISLANDERS

<http://static.ehe.osu.edu/sites/cspp/brochures/asian-american-students-suicideprevention.pdf>

COMMON STRESSORS FOR APIS

http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/apiconnect/stress_common.shtml

HELPING YOUR STUDENT WHEN STRESS TURNS TO DISTRESS, A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

<http://uhs.berkeley.edu/parents/stress.shtml>

OFFICE OF SUICIDE & VIOLENCE PREVENTION: ASIAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

http://www.nova.edu/suicideprevention/forms/asian_american.pdf

ONE MENTAL HEALTH MESSAGE DOES NOT FIT ALL: PACE UNIVERSITY CUSTOMIZES SUICIDE PREVENTION OUTREACH TO REFLECT MULTICULTURAL AND SEXUAL DIFFERENCES

<http://pressroom.blogs.pace.edu/2010/10/28/one-mental-health-message-does-not-fit-all-pace-university-customizes-suicide-prevention-outreach-to-reflect-multicultural-and-sexual-differences/>

OUTREACH/ENGAGEMENT TO REDUCE STIGMA AMONG APIS: STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

<http://crdp.pacificclinics.org/files/resource/2014/06/Extended%20SMH%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

SUICIDE AMONG ASIAN AMERICANS

<http://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/ethnicity-health/asian-american/suicide-fact-sheet.pdf>

SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION AMONG ASIAN AMERICANS

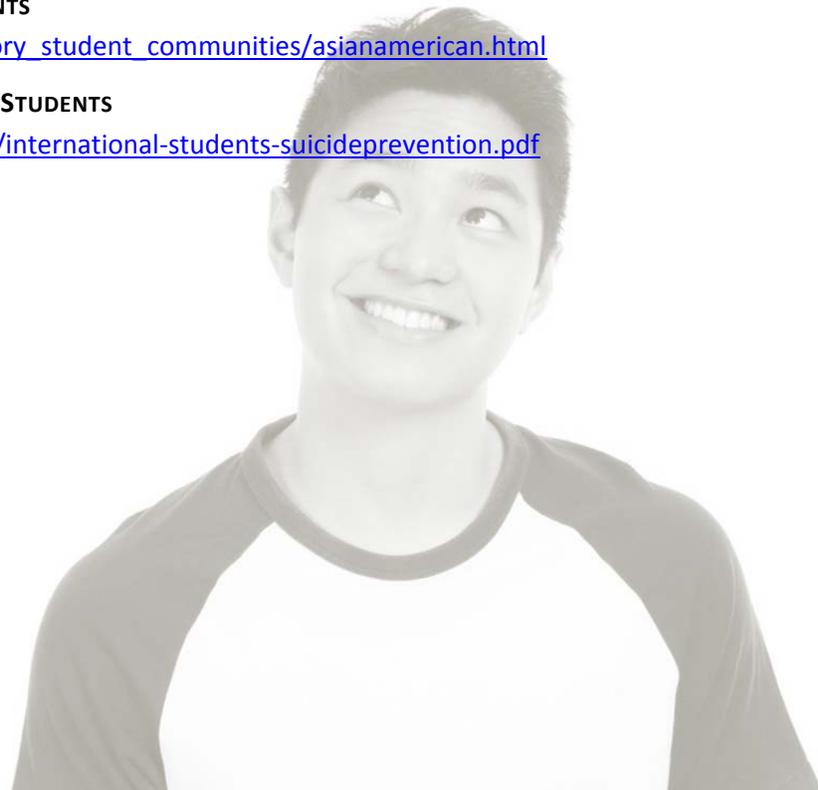
<https://sites.google.com/a/sapasianamerican.org/www/research/highlights>

SUICIDE PREVENTION FOR ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENTS

http://www.emorycaresforyou.emory.edu/emory_student_communities/asianamerican.html

SUICIDE PREVENTION FOR INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE STUDENTS

<http://static.ehe.osu.edu/sites/cspp/brochures/international-students-suicideprevention.pdf>



Additional Resources

The **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** is described as the largest grassroots mental health organization in the nation. NAMI provides information on mental illness, support programs, and treatment. They offer information on mental illness and recovery in different Asian languages, including Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and more. Refer to their Multicultural Action Center through their primary website at www.nami.org.

The student-run organization **Active Minds** provides mental health information while at the same time advocating for the removal of stigma associated with mental illness. The organization has more than 350 chapters nationwide. Its membership specifically includes Asian American college and university students. Their website is www.activeminds.org.

A publication describing the overall experiences of Asian American and Pacific Islander students was published by the **National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education** in 2008. It is titled *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders – Facts, not Fiction: Setting the Record Straight* and is available from the College Board on the Web: www.collegeboard.com.

*These organizations are provided for consideration and do not necessarily reflect an endorsement of services provided.

California Community Colleges Student Mental Health Program (CCC SMHP)

Toll-free: (855) 304-1647 ~ www.cccstudentmentalhealth.org

The California Community Colleges Student Mental Health Program (CCC SMHP) is dedicated to increasing the capacity of the CCC system to provide student mental health services. Funded by the California Mental Health Services Authority, this program offers cost-free training and technical assistance (TTA) to California's community college campuses.

The California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) is an organization of county governments working to improve mental health outcomes for individuals, families and communities. Prevention and Early Intervention programs implemented by CalMHSA are funded through the voter-approved Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63). Prop 63 provides the funding and framework needed to expand mental health services to previously underserved populations and all of California's diverse communities.

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