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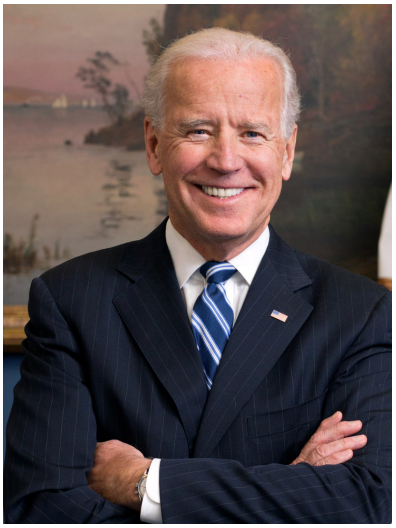
LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021



The Asian American Psychological Association extends its heartfelt congratulations to President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris! AAPA is especially excited about VP-elect Harris, the first woman and person of color in this position. Ms. Harris comes from Tamil-Indian and Jamaican-African descent, and was Time Magazine's Person of the Year for 2020 (sharing the award with President-elect Biden).

Inauguration Day is January 20, 2021. On February 12, the Year of the Metal Ox begins. In the Chinese Zodiac, the Ox is very hardworking, honest, intelligent, and reliable. Oxen are modest and humble, yet their methodical diligence yields results. The metal element indicates strength and rigidity. While the year may produce obstacles requiring extra effort, problems can be solved with dedicated effort. The metal element also indicates change. Combined with the Ox energy of ponderous effort, lasting change may take time to effect. This year will require patience, industry, and systematic implementation of change over time.

AAPA looks forward to beginning to change and heal our country with a combination of hard work, compassion, and thoughtful progress towards a hopeful future.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

RICHELLE CONCEPCION
PSY.D., MPH.
PRESIDENT

I will admit, I am always very anxious when the AAPA convention is around the corner. Much of my anxiety is characterized by excitement about seeing friends I hadn't seen in a year, while the other significant portion of the anxiety is riddled with feelings of inadequacy. Truth be told, I can describe my early experiences with convention as very isolating. I recall attending convention and feeling inadequate compared to the attendees that I interacted with. On the one hand, I felt I didn't fit in because many of the faces I saw were academics and researchers, folx with PhDs who had a plethora of experience doing the work they did. I wasn't sure where I fit in as a clinician among the sea of PhDs that surrounded me. I felt as if I had to put on some sort of "face" in order to try to fit in though by doing this, I felt more disconnected and lost sight of why I was there in the first place.

After a while, I did eventually come to the realization that the letters behind my name didn't necessarily dictate what I could bring to the larger table and ended up finding the group of folx that I endearingly call my tribe. I'd also found myself in some of the spaces that I never imagined I would fit in -- leadership as I found that shared visions about the direction of AAPA was what brought many of us together.

Though our convention took place in a virtual space, I was still anxious. Though Zoom has been the most frequently used platform for classes, webinars, meetings, etc. I still felt uneasy and chalked it up to my own imposter syndrome. If anything, being in this leadership position has attributed to an exacerbation of imposter syndrome especially as others look to me for leadership and not feeling as if I could meet everyone's expectations. I admittedly was untangling all of those thoughts in the moments prior to the AAPA convention opening session. However as I sat through that session as well as many of the others during the course of the weekend, I learned to mute those internal dialogues and focus on what was most important - connection, empowerment, and healing.

As I listened to many of the concerns and feedback from our members and EC, it was clear to me that many of the spaces created within AAPA and those that expand beyond AAPA were about connection especially as many hoped to collaborate with our fellow EMPAs as well as each other. As we continue to be an organization that is driven by our commitment to social justice, it is strengthened by our individual members coming together.

FINANCE REPORT

JAN ESTRELLADO, AMANDA BREEN & MICHELLE MADORE

CO-FINANCE OFFICERS

AAPA's Co-Finance Officers (FOs) Jan Estrellado, Amanda Breen, and Michelle Madore are happy to report that AAPA's bank accounts are in good condition. Our total combined balance from ETrade and PayPal is $420,739.20 as of November 5, 2020. Subtracting fiscal agent accounts and AAPA Division balances, AAPA's main account has $160,172.46 in working capital. The FOs are pleased to share the following updates with the AAPA membership:

The FOs are pleased to share the following updates with the AAPA membership:

- **Finance Officer transitions.** In October 2020, we welcomed Drs. Michelle Madore and Amanda Breen as the newest FOs. We send our deepest gratitude to the outgoing FO, Dr. Matt Lee, for his service to the AAPA Finance Officer team. Matt's leadership helped to create greater financial stability through building infrastructure and documentation practices.
- **Expanded Finance Officer team.** The EC voted to approve the expansion of the FO model from a 2-person to a 3-person team, mainly to match the growth of the organization.
- **Alliance Project Funding.** The FO team is working to manage the fiscal portion of the COVID-19 Communities of Color (COC) Needs Assessment project, headed by Dr. Anne Saw.
- **2019 Taxes.** The FOs will soon complete and file AAPA's 2019 taxes and are preparing to file 2020 taxes.
- **W9s.** The FOs strengthened its disbursement process by working with division officers, awards committee, and its tax consultant to provide W9 documentation for taxable income to its contractors and award recipients.
- **Reincorporation.** The FOs, along with the presidential leadership team, filed federal and state paperwork (CA) to reincorporate and is in the final stages of re-establishing its 501(c)3 non-profit status.
- **Bank account consolidation.** As soon as 501(c)3 non-profit status is finalized, Matt Lee has graciously agreed to finalize the bank account move from E*Trade to Chase Bank. This process will allow for more efficient fiscal tracking and transactions, including for division finances.
- **AAPA Website Development Project.** Under the leadership of Communications Officer Dr. Ming-Che Tu, the FO team is part of the EC project team to re-vamp the AAPA website.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

KAVITA ATWAL, PH.D.
MEMBERSHIP OFFICER

Hello AAPA Members!

Thank you for being an AAPA member. AAPA's overall membership continues to steadily grow. The Asian American Psychological Association currently has a total membership count of 1,376 members. Student members comprise the majority of our membership. Since May 2020, we have had an overall increase of 139 AAPA members. Specifically, we have had an increase of 84 student members, 52 professional members, and 3 retiree/emeritus members. See the table below for a breakdown of our membership by membership type.

The AAPA Executive Committee has approved two Student Membership Assistant Volunteer Positions. These positions were created to give students the opportunity to collaborate with and assist the Membership Officer in managing membership related tasks. One position has been filled by Carla Pamela Cortez. Welcome, Carla! The other position will remain open until filled.

You can easily edit your AAPA membership through our website at www.aapaonline.org. By logging in online, you can also join our wonderful AAPA Divisions. If you are having difficulty logging into your account, there is an option to reset your password online. Your AAPA membership will last for a year from the date that you signed up, and will be automatically renewed after the year is complete. Please email us if you would like to opt out of having your membership automatically renewed.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding AAPA membership, please do not hesitate to contact me at membership@aapaonline.org.

Thank you for your continuing support of AAPA!

Best,
Kavita

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

	May 2020	November 2020
Students	763	847
Professional	465	517
Emeritus	9	12
Total	**1237**	**1376**

AAPA ANNUAL CONVENTION

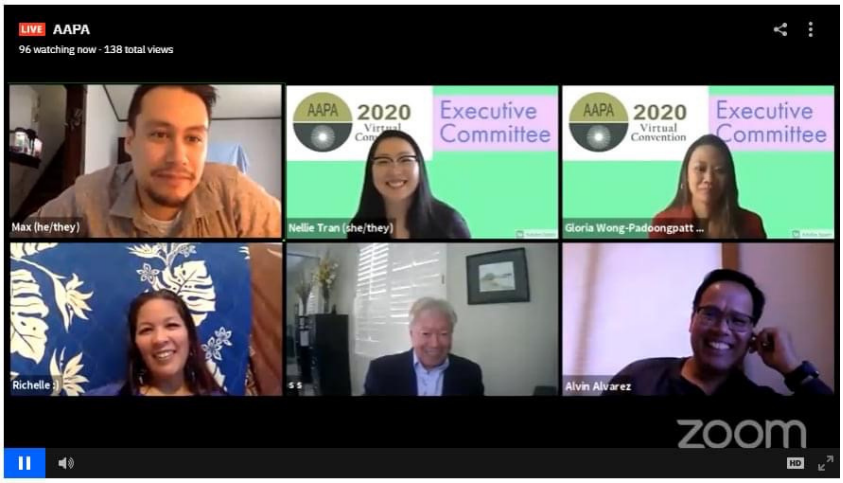
Hearing from the 2020 AAPA Annual Conference Co-Chair Jennifer Hsia

A big thank you for organizing, supporting, volunteering, and attending the AAPA 2020 Virtual Convention in October 2020! Special thanks to **Drs. Jennifer Hsia** and **Maximilian Tokarsky** for serving as Convention Co-Chairs and working with the convention planning committee! One of the co-chairs, Dr. Jennifer Hsia shared her reflections on this year's AAPA Convention with our AAPA newsletter readers.

Tell us about the significance and importance of this year's AAPA convention to our AAPA community members.

This year, I had a lot to manage personally and professionally, and there were also many changes leading up to when we finally decided to go virtual. As we prepared and planned for convention this year, we really wanted the theme to capture and reflect where we were as individuals and for AAPA as an organization. It was in this spirit that we came up with the theme of Watering Our Roots: Cultivating Ourselves and AAPA's Future. There were many key individuals who helped to develop this theme (in addition to Max and myself), including Dr. Phoukham Bounkeua and members of AAPA's Executive Committee. Our theme focused on encouraging self-care in ways that are consistent with (instead of in opposition to) our cultural values and perspectives and collectively defining AAPA's identity so we can know who we are and what we stand for as an organization going forward. This theme was personally meaningful to me because I was consistently reminded throughout the planning process to manage my own expectations and remember to care for myself and my needs. It was important to me that the theme was more than just words on a page, that it was something that could be put into action.

From top:
Jennifer Hsia, Ph.D. and Maximilian Tokarsky, Ph.D.



Tell us about your overall reflections on serving roles as a co-chair.

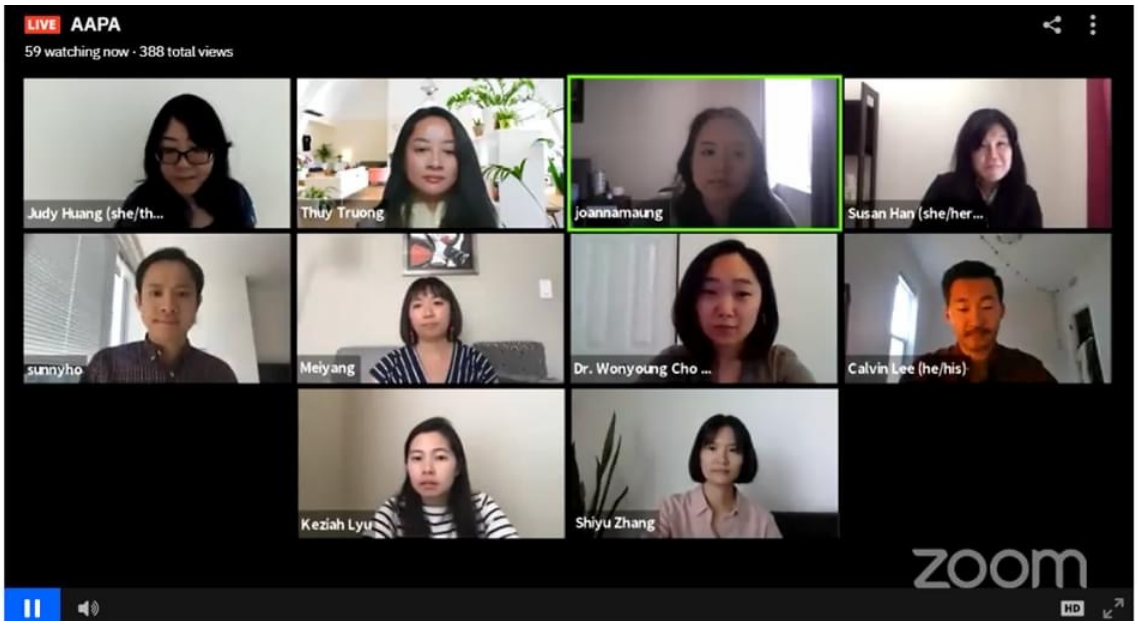
This is my second year as Convention Co-Chair although my first time being Lead Co-Chair. Overall, even though the format could not have been more different, I enjoyed both years. To be honest, it was a bit scary and daunting to make the relatively late switch to a virtual convention, especially because there was no precedent for it. However, I knew this was the only option unless we cancelled convention this year. I didn't want to do that because so many look forward to attending every year. Also, for some, convention is a critical time to connect with others. We really wanted to encourage those connections at this year's convention, and I really wasn't sure if we could create that in a virtual format. I was pleasantly surprised to see that we were able to create community. Also, while overseeing the planning of convention can be overwhelming at times, having great fellow co-chairs and a hardworking planning committee makes the co-chair role much more manageable.

AAPA Convention has really changed a lot since I first joined AAPA in 2010. When I first started attending, AAPA was a very academic conference, with research presentations akin to APA. However, starting with 2016 convention, the focus shifted to themes related to clinical practice and social justice. While I find it refreshing for AAPA to be a conference that is a bit different from typical academic conferences, I think we can find a better balance to bring back some of the research emphasis and focus. It is my hope that future conventions will strive for this balance so that conventions can appeal to our broad and diverse membership.

How did you become committee chairs? What is some advice for AAPA members who may be interested in becoming the AAPA committee planning committee members in the future?

The simplest answer to this question is that I said "yes" at the right time. As for how I

got involved in convention planning, it was actually based on a misunderstanding. As a graduate student, I was a convention volunteer and enjoyed that experience. I missed a couple conventions due to timing with my clinical internship and was looking to get more involved in AAPA. When I saw an announcement for convention volunteers on the listserv, I responded thinking they were recruiting volunteers for convention day. Next thing I know, I receive an e-mail notifying me that I was going to be Co-Chair of the Banquet Committee and that it was a 2-year commitment. I thought I would give it a try and really enjoyed it! After I finished my two years on Banquet, I volunteered for the planning committee again and was AVI/Refreshments Co-Chair. To be honest, I secretly had the goal of one day becoming Convention Co-Chair, but my plan was to volunteer on different convention committees first. However, at the end of



convention that year, one of the Convention Co-Chairs, asked me if I would like to be Convention Co-Chair for the next convention. I thought about it (very briefly) and agreed, and the rest is history.

For those who may be interested in being a member of the convention planning committee or Convention Co-Chair, my best piece of advice is "don't be afraid to volunteer". Every year, we send announcements on the listserv and via social media for volunteers on our planning committee. You don't need to have previous planning experience to join the committee. Respond to the request; we strive to include as many people as possible.

What are some favorite, interesting, or powerful things that you noticed as part of the convention or your committee collaboration?

One of my favorite parts of convention planning is getting to know the members of the convention planning committee. In general, I really enjoy working as a part of a team. It is so true that teamwork makes the dream work! I also enjoy working with my fellow co-chairs to craft and shape the vision for convention each year and then take steps to realize that vision.

Overall, convention was a wonderful experience this year! I consider it a success when I can enjoy an event that I helped to plan. Even though I was disappointed in only being able to attend about one day of convention, I thoroughly enjoyed the events that I attended. I really appreciated the sense of community that was created. In addition, not only did I not feel exhausted despite being on Zoom continuously for several hours, I actually felt more energized at the end of the day. It was particularly meaningful for me to connect with others during the social and to participate in the townhalls.

Do you have any last words to share with our AAPA newsletter audience?

Thank you to all the attendees for making the convention a success. A very special thanks to the amazing convention planning team. I have said this many times before and will continue to say this. Our convention planning team this year had to be extremely flexible in terms of their roles and responsibilities and were charged with developing creative solutions to

translate our convention into an unprecedented virtual format. We would not have been able to pull off this convention if it were not for their efforts as well as the volunteers leading up to and on the days of convention to help it run smoothly. Personally, it was my great honor and privilege to have the opportunity to be Convention Co-Chair and give back to AAPA in this way.

AAPA AWARD RECIPIENTS AND SPOTLIGHTED AAPA MEMBER INTERVIEWS

Award Title: Distinguished Contributions – Research, as well as Distinguished Contributions - Leadership/Service

Recipient: *Dr. Sumie Okazaki*

Interviewers: PORTIA CHAN & SONALI SINGAL

Sometimes the word "home" can be spelled with A, A, P, A. For Dr. Sumie Okazaki, the AAPA has been just that – home – and her path to this home was lined with serendipities and being in the right place at the right time.

At this year's AAPA convention, Dr. Okazaki was awarded with two distinctions. She was recognized for Distinguished Contributions – Research, as well as Distinguished Contributions - Leadership/Service. She was deeply touched and truly honored, and stated during a recent interview, "I'm very appreciative of the recognition, and I hope to be a part of AAPA for the rest of my career."

Dr. Okazaki is a Professor of Applied Psychology at the New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. As the child of immigrants, she had early aspirations of becoming a medical doctor, but as an undergraduate student at the University of Michigan, she became "interested in clinical psychology but was not sure about the direction." When she went to the university's counseling center to discern her professional pathways, she was matched with an Asian male counselor. This congruous match allowed her to explore her upbringing more deeply while also connecting her past to her future. This match led her to graduate school at University of California at Los Angeles, mentored by Dr. Stanley Sue.

At UCLA, Dr. Sue had just been awarded an NIMH grant to research Asian American mental health, and this mentor-protégé relationship opened many doors for Dr. Okazaki. One of these doors led to becoming involved with the AAPA, which was co-founded by her mentor and his brother Dr. Derald Wing Sue in 1972. After

earning her doctorate at UCLA, Dr. Okazaki held faculty positions at University of Wisconsin at Madison and University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Because of a change in jobs for her husband, Dr. Okazaki moved to New York and began working at New York University, where she is still on faculty today. When she earned tenure, Dr. Okazaki became president of the AAPA, and she worked very closely with Dr. Kevin Nadal to make the organization even more inclusive and outwardly facing.

Over the years, her mentors have become close friends, and she has continued the thread by mentoring talented students, like Dr. Matt Lee and many others. She feels that ushering in the next generation of AAPI scholars is generative work. This type of diligence requires self-care, and during this time of physical distancing she has woven her network on the web through virtual meetings with her peers, including Dr. Doris Chang and Dr. Karen Suyemoto. Connecting with them has been a "lifesaver in being able to talk about issues of race in teaching and sharing resources."

A lifelong learner, Dr. Okazaki said she "loves learning from students from the issues they bring to highlight Asian American disparities." She continued, "As more and more students come into the field they bring their own experience into the field. Asian American communities are very diverse and it helps expand the research to be more diverse." Just as Dr. Sue opened the doors for her, she continues to open the doors to others. The AAPA has been and continues to be a place where Dr. Okazaki continues to both feel and foster a sense of belonging, and she has never missed a convention. These gatherings with her mentors, peers, and students inspire her, and, in the organization and with each other, they find themselves at home.

Award Title: AAPA Early Career Award for Research

Recipient: *Dr. Stephen H. Chen*

Interviewer: MELE KRAMER

Dr. Stephen Chen is this year's AAPA recipient of the Early Career Award for Research, 2020. Stephen is the Director of Culture & Family Development Lab at Wellesley College and the recipient of AAPA Early Career Award for Research – 2020. Stephen's bio and interview gave some insights regarding his work and how it is valuable to the AAPI community.

In addition to living and working in Shanghai, China, Stephen studied and researched Asian American children's K-12 experience on both U.S. coasts to learn more about their lived cultural experiences as it pertained at risk populations in various socio-economic levels as it pertains to social status. He shares some of his journey in an interview with this AAPA student reporter:

Mele: Hello Stephen, thank you for taking the time to do this interview and Congratulations on receiving the Early Career Award for Research! Can you tell

me a little bit about your education and research journey and how it led you to this point?

Stephen: After my undergraduate studies, I worked as a school counselor in Shanghai, China for about 6 years. My work included providing support services to students from elementary school through high school, and often involved working closely with students' families. Through this work, I became interested in the interplay between students' experiences in the classroom and the home, and how these were all embedded within a broader cultural context. These interests set the stage for my graduate research with Qing Zhou at U.C. Berkeley, where I was able to participate in her longitudinal study of Chinese American immigrant families in the San Francisco Bay area. Since joining the faculty at Wellesley, my collaborators and I have launched a similar study examining stress and developmental processes among Chinese immigrant families in the Boston Area.

Mele: Did you find there were similarities between Shanghai, China and U.S. populations within early child development and culture in the different populations of children?

Stephen: The students I worked with in Shanghai ranged from early elementary through high school, whereas my research in California and Massachusetts has focused on children in late elementary school.

Bio and overview of Dr. Stephen Chen:

"My research interests lie at the intersection of clinical, cultural, and developmental areas of psychology. The overarching aim of my research is to examine how cultural and family processes influence mental health and development across the lifespan. I explore this question primarily in under-represented, underserved, and at-risk populations.

My interests in both research and teaching were shaped significantly by my previous experience as a K-12 school counselor and administrator in Shanghai, China. At Wellesley College, my courses include Asian American Psychology, Cultural Psychology, and a seminar on Culture and Emotion. My goal in teaching and mentorship is to guide students in connecting fundamentals of cultural and developmental psychology to implications for Asian American mental health."

What struck me about both of these Chinese American samples was the wide range of families' socioeconomic backgrounds. In the Boston sample, I've been able to look more specifically at the role of social status in development – for example, how children and parents come to understand their relative social standing, and how their perceptions of social status relate to their socioemotional well-being.

Mele: It seems as though you were able to recruit easily in each geographic area. How were you able to recruit since this is a specific specialized population?

Stephen: Great collaborators and community partners! And of course, proximity to large Asian American populations made recruitment much easier, too: this was definitely a major factor when I was looking for faculty positions. That said, the pandemic has certainly expanded our geographic boundaries in research, and has forced us to be creative in coming up with research protocols. It is the silver lining to a difficult situation.

Mele: Yes, COVID has been an interesting situation in terms of changing the way we do things. I did some research on virtual and global teams in grad school. The bottom line of the literature showed that was virtual is nice but unless there is a global crisis, would not likely be mainstream. Yet, here we are, in a global pandemic which has forced us to leverage virtual platforms. We certainly learned to expand our ideas for functioning!

Stephen: Yes, we never would have voluntarily gone to this level of virtual operations, and here we are re-inventing ourselves and processes.

Mele: Can you tell us how you initially got connected to AAPA and what AAPA has meant for you?

Stephen: I first got connected to AAPA as a graduate student. Since I had no exposure to Asian American Psychology as an undergrad, it was tremendous to be able to connect through AAPA with pioneers of the field – many of whom inspired me to pursue research in the first place. Over the years, I've been especially appreciative of how AAPA doesn't shy away from tough questions of race, equity, and social justice.

Mele: Thank you for sharing how valuable AAPA is and your experience as a member. Can you tell me about receiving the AAPA Early Research Award?

Stephen: It's an honor to receive this award. I'm indebted to Qing Zhou, my doctoral advisor at Berkeley. When I started grad school, I wanted to dive right in to issues of Asian American mental health. Qing forced me to go back to basic theories of development, culture, and emotion, and fundamentally changed the trajectory of my research.

I've also learned so much from my students at Wellesley, especially the students from my Asian American Psychology classes over the past few years. They keep me from getting too comfortable with what I think I already

know about Asian American Psychology; their insights and experiences remind me that Asian American Psychology is a dynamic and evolving field, and I'm a better teacher and researcher because of them.

Mele: What service or research projects do you look forward to working on or seeing in the near future?

Stephen: Right now, we're interested in how Asian American parents and children perceive their own social status and the social status of others, and how these perceptions impact their socioemotional development. One of our recent papers in AAJP examined these processes in elementary-age Chinese American children, and found that children's perceptions of lower social status were associated with more social loneliness, even controlling for their family's socioeconomic status. Another paper, which was recently published in Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, looked at differences between Chinese immigrant mothers' perceived social status in the United States and in their countries of origin. We found that downward shifts in perceived social status were associated with more depressive symptoms.

Mele: Do you have any last words or messages for AAPA members or new researchers coming into the field?

Stephen: Connections and support from organizations like AAPA are such important resources for professional development. In my view, one of AAPA's most valuable features is its "multigenerational" community of both researchers and practitioners: you have pioneers and experts in the field alongside people who are just starting out in their training.

Mele: Thank you again for taking time to interview for the AAPA Fall Newsletter. Most importantly, Congratulations and thank you for your contribution to AAPA through your service, research, and for your dedication to the Asian American community.

Award Title: AAPA Early Career Award for Service

Recipient:

Dr. Niyatee Sukumaran

Interviewer: MICHAEL P. HUYNH

This year, Dr. Niyatee Sukumaran was the recipient of the Asian American Psychological Association (AAPA) Early Career Award for Service. She is a licensed counseling psychologist at Hillcrest Psychological Associates (HPA), specializing in psychotherapy for individuals and couples, both short-term and long-term. Over time, her work has been in service towards a number of different population issues of psychology, including Asian American and international mental health, multicultural identity, college counseling, and occupational wellness. Dr. Sukumaran has also provided group psychotherapy throughout her professional career. During a recent interview with her, it was

an honor to hear about her educational journey, how she got connected to AAPA and what this organization has meant to her, current service projects that she looks forward to working on in the near future, and final words to share with those of you reading this piece.

Dr. Sukumaran's educational journey was greatly shaped when she first came to the United States as an international student in 2008 and pursued an MA in Clinical Psychology from the University of Central Florida (UCF). There, she not only trained to become a therapist but also developed research experience through her master's thesis by examining how religious identity differed between populations in America and India.

"I wanted to be in a program where students felt supported and heard"

When finding a graduate school program, she expressed that, "I wanted to be in a program where students felt supported and heard," and her college counseling center experiences at UCF provided her the means to directly support international and Asian identified students. This growing interest in both research and clinical work led Dr. Sukumaran to pursue a PhD in Counseling Psychology from the University of Missouri—Kansas City (UMKC). By working at UMKC's Office of Multicultural Student Affairs and volunteering with refugees and immigrants in her clinical work, she felt assured about working as a counseling psychologist with diverse groups.

Dr. Sukumaran also considers supervision as an integral part of training as a counseling psychologist, and she developed her dissertation topic on understanding the role of microaggression experiences by supervisees of color in counseling supervision, along with the impact on their counseling and multicultural counseling self-efficacy. She brought all of these experiences during her pre-doctoral internship at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) Counseling Center and as a post-doctoral resident at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). Dr. Sukumaran continued to work as a Counseling Psychologist by helping her clients through a multicultural lens. She served as a liaison to South Asian American, South Asian International, and Muslim-identified students at UCSD. She provided multicultural services to Asian Pacific Islander Middle Eastern and Desi American (APIMEDA) students at UCSD by collaborating with Windi

Sasaki, the APIMEDA Program Manager at UCSD. Dr. Sukumaran also continued to collaborate with her colleagues at UCSD CAPS to provide supportive healing spaces and forums to marginalized communities, as well as additional resources such as training on microaggressions.

Reflecting on how Dr. Sukumaran initially connected to AAPA, she first met Dr. Kimberly Langrehr, who is one of the board of directors from the organization, while completing her doctoral studies at UMKC. Dr. Sukumaran found AAPA to be a welcoming community to openly discuss topics such as the intersectionality of Asian identity development. Navigating through the labels of being an international student and a South Asian provider, Dr. Sukumaran saw how in AAPA, "You're not alone in the world. There are other people who experience similar challenges, either personal or work related," which continues to empower her to become a better agent of change. After about five years since she first joined AAPA, she could tell through the organization's emails and conferences that it has been a caring academic space. To her, "AAPA is a support network and place of encouragement to keep using my voice and realize that my voice is valid."

Currently, Dr. Sukumaran has transitioned from UCSD CAPS to continue serving college students and community members through a group practice at HPA. Her goal is to continue offering spaces for Asian American and Asian international communities in San Diego in her private practice. Her prior experiences at UCSD provided opportunities such as presentations and serving as a panelist to raise awareness of help-seeking among Asian communities, as well as normalize the experiences of working with Asian identified providers in mental health. She found that questions like "What will my parents or others say?" and "What will my community think of me if I were to seek help?" as common barriers particularly in the South Asian community for help seeking. Her hope is to continue being an accessible resource to Asian identified individuals, not just in academia but also in new areas including postpartum care and offering multiculturally based consultations to companies. Many companies in San Diego employ Asian identified individuals, and a salient question of inquiry is, "How are you supporting your community and staff?" Dr. Sukumaran hopes to help companies provide culturally sensitive support services to their employees.

As Dr. Sukumaran begins to branch out from college mental health to community mental health, she sees the need to have providers of color and training from different multicultural backgrounds in order to build a community that is supportive, caring, and considerate towards each other. Speaking from her own experiences as an international student, even the process of receiving an "alien ID" felt alienating in its own way. In her words, "My goal is that we as a community can understand, honor, and be accepting of differences." However, there is still more that needs to be done in order to transcend that effect into other communities. Additionally, it is essential to acknowledge that the work and practice that come

from psychologists and social workers on a day-to-day basis is generally unheard or unseen to the public eye. While this work remains confidential, even from other clinicians, it does not mean that "our voices and positive influence are any less quiet." The fact that there is even an award for service is important to recognize, especially since much of the focus in academia is on research, but who directly benefits from consuming this research? Dr. Sukumaran's last words for AAPA are that, "I hope we have more community members who are recognized and have the opportunity to shine—many of them are shining behind closed doors." It is just the beginning of the greater service impact that we can offer and witness as an organization.

SPOTLIGHTED AAPA STUDENT MEMBER

Stephen C. Rose 2020 Student Award Winner

Recipient: Thomas Le

Hi AAPA family! My name is Thomas Le and I am a doctoral candidate in the Counseling Psychology program at the University of Maryland, College Park. My research mainly revolves around the effects of oppression on Asian Americans' eating and drinking behaviors, as well as the influence of gender roles on outcomes such as sexual assault perpetration. I am also passionate about clinical work, service, and teaching/mentoring that dismantles oppressive structures such as white supremacy and patriarchy. I was excited to attend the virtual conference a few weeks ago and am so appreciative to all the conference organizers for their flexibility and efforts during this uncertain time.

I won the Stephen C. Rose scholarship for a project that examines the influence of sexual racism on queer Asian American men's disordered eating, as well as the moderating role of resistance and empowerment against

racism. To be frank, what motivated me to initiate this project was my feeling of anger about how queer Asian American men are portrayed in popular culture (e.g., media) as well as in the research literature. We're often portrayed as submissive and obsessed with getting queer white men to love us. I wanted to execute a project that highlights our strengths and how our collective resistance against racism and white supremacy may protect us from the oppression we experience. Feminist author bell hooks often writes about how the best theory emerges from personal pain. I tend to agree with this statement and want to use research as a way to both shed light on the repercussions of oppression, as well as to imagine radical alternatives that center Asian Americans' resilience and humanity, especially Asian Americans with multiple marginalized identities.

Advice for AAPI graduate students: Three things come to mind as I write this in regard to advice, or at least three things I'm reflecting on for myself. The first piece of advice is to prioritize perseverance. My still-developing perspective as a grad student is that once you achieve a baseline level of research competency, perseverance becomes the determining factor. For example, I received this award upon my third time applying, so I got rejected from it twice. I've gotten several manuscripts and awards rejected and I always keep trying. Second, I'd recommend developing a strong sense of self outside of academia (or work generally) so that you have other areas of life to fall back on if or when work feels tumultuous. Third, I'd encourage engaging in deep, ongoing self-reflection about how you may perpetuate White Supremacy Culture (you can see more on that here:

https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/white-supremacy-culture-characteristics.html

I think we are all susceptible to perpetuating white supremacy culture, no matter how critically conscious we think we may be. As Audre Lorde once wrote, "the true focus of revolutionary change is never merely the oppressive situations which we seek to escape, but that piece of the oppressor which is planted deep within each of us." I hope we can continue showing up for one another in resisting internalized racism, preventing the perpetuation of white supremacy, and also having fun and enjoying the work itself, whether that be clinical work, service, teaching, mentoring, or research.

SPOTLIGHTED AAPA STUDENT MEMBER

AAPA Dissertation Grant Winner

Recipient: Chan Jeong Park

Multiculturalism has been a main theme in my personal and professional development. I was exposed to different cultures growing up. Born and raised in South Korea, I attended secondary schools in China and the United States. I received Bachelor of Social Sciences from the Hong Kong and returned to South Korea to attend master's program in Counseling Psychology at Ewha Womans University. All these experiences helped me appreciate the beauty of diversity and develop cultural curiosity. Because I wanted to learn more about multicultural counseling, I decided to apply to doctoral programs in the U.S. I am currently a fifth year doctoral candidate in Counseling Psychology Program at the University of Missouri-Columbia and am completing predoctoral internship at the University of Utah Counseling Center.

Women's career development is one of my main research interests. In particular, I became interested in experiences of women of color in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), who are marginalized in terms of both gender and race/ethnicity. Although Asians as a whole are not underrepresented in STEM fields, Asian female students may still experience marginalization. For example, Asian women comprised only about 26% of bachelor's degrees in engineering earned by Asian Americans in 2017 (NSF, 2020). Acknowledging the need for more research with this population, I decided to study their academic satisfaction in my dissertation.

Based on the satisfaction model of Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent & Brown, 2006), which includes socio-cognitive variables such as self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal progress, I examined factors that contribute to students' academic satisfaction. Perceived discrimination and proactive personality were selected as an environmental obstacle and a person input in

in the model, respectively, as they were postulated to be especially relevant to these students. In addition, critical consciousness was included as an additional socio-cognitive variable. Data from 585 female college students of color (*M age* = 21.42, *SD age* = 3.25; *n Asian* = 240, *n Black* = 174, *n Latina* = 171) were collected through Qualtrics. Multigroup measurement invariance tests and multigroup structural equation modeling were conducted to examine the racial/ethnic differences in constructs and their interrelationships. The findings showed that the Asian, Black, and Latina samples were equivalent at the scalar level and the proposed model fit the data from the three samples well. Significant racial/ethnic differences in several latent means and structural paths were observed. The findings illustrate how personal, socio-cognitive, and contextual factors influence academic satisfaction of Asian female students in STEM and indicate meaningful similarities and differences in comparison to Black and Latina students.

I joined Asian American Psychological Association (AAPA) earlier this year because rise in xenophobia following the Covid-19 outbreak led me to seek community where I could be seen and heard. AAPA email listserv has been a valuable source of news and resources for me since then. I was also very surprised and heartened when AAPA provided emergency funds for students affected by the pandemic. Furthermore, I was honored to be selected as the recipient of Dissertation Research Grant. To me, it was more than just a grant; it was a validation that my research mattered. As I now prepare for my life after doctoral program (it is still hard to believe that I am almost at the finish line), I feel encouraged and empowered to continue to pursue my passion in women's career development. I would like to thank the AAPA leadership and members for building such a welcoming community and look forward to paying forward the support I have received.

SPOTLIGHTED AAPA STUDENT MEMBER

AAPA Dissertation Grant

Winner, 1st Runner Up

Recipient: Ashley Nguyen

My journey as a first-generation Vietnamese American immigrant paved the way for me to appreciate diversity matters from a minority standpoint. Being the medium between two strikingly different cultures throughout my life allowed me to see how the values, teachings, and traditions from each community mixed and did not blend so smoothly. This experience sparked my interest in psychology, creating a desire to study how these culturally based

practices ebbed and flowed with each other. I started this journey at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), where I received my Bachelor of Art in Human Development. I continued to seek out educational opportunities to strengthen my knowledge about these matters and completed my Master of Art in Psychology at Pepperdine University. Consequently, I sought opportunities within the Vietnamese community to serve as an envoy to improve access to care. While at different agencies as a bilingual clinician, I discovered that unmet needs, as a side effect of arduous assimilation, was a theme that also extended across other marginalized groups, largely impacted yet underserved communities. The more I learned, the more I realized that I couldn't just learn about the ways to decolonized psychology- I had to act and participate in doing so.

This gap in care and my desire to impact change through larger systems drove me to pursue a doctoral degree. Currently, I am a third-year clinical psychology doctoral candidate at Pepperdine University. As it was my priority to study at an institution that emphasized cultural awareness and humility, Pepperdine afforded me opportunities to work in diverse settings, conduct cross-cultural research with professors, and take a year-long multicultural track. In the past two years, I intentionally sought out diverse practicum settings, including community mental health agencies, school systems, academic teaching medical settings, and private practice, to better understand how different treatment settings addressed the provision of culturally sensitive care.

My research interests are predominantly fueled by my desire to mobilize efforts to bridge the existing chasm between available culturally sensitive approaches and assessments for this field. For my graduate studies, I engaged in and produced research relating to cross-cultural topics to shorten this gap in the literature. My research examines the role of race and ethnicity within the context of clinical and neuropsychology, with aims to (a) produce literature about under-researched communities and (b) to highlight cultural factors that represent resiliency and strength. Reflecting on my personal and professional experiences fostered an interest in examining psychotherapeutic practices across ethnic and racial communities, sparking my dedication to utilizing my dissertation to explore this topic. My dissertation examines the effectiveness

of parent management training for reducing externalized problem behaviors in Asian youth. I am looking at existing studies that apply conventional parent management training protocols and hope to discuss the efficacy of these approaches for our collectivistic communities. My goal is to delineate recommended practices based on the current knowledge base and offer ideas for future research to meet the needs of Asian youth with externalizing issues.

It is my desire to conduct research that will contribute to decolonizing psychology; a feat that is far but not unattainable given the way our field has grown. I hope that other Asian American students utilize the voice that our parents and ancestors afforded us in a way that will contribute to this as well. I am grateful to be the first runner-up for the Asian American Psychological Association. Despite the nuances of COVID-19, I felt that the virtual convention grounded me to my roots and community. I am excited to see how this organization will continue to grow and plan to contribute to its ongoing success.

SPOTLIGHTED AAPA STUDENT MEMBER

AAPA Dissertation Grant Winner, 2nd Runner Up

Recipient: Anna Ying

Anna Ying is a 5th year student in the Clinical Psychology PhD program at UMass Boston. I'm interested in mental health disparities, barriers to treatment, mental health stigma, culturally responsive interventions, and Asian American mental health.

My interests in mental health disparities and barriers to treatment, including stigma and cultural variables, sit well at the intersection of heart and mind. I'm motivated when I observe needs in the community. I also experience scholarly and intellectual satisfaction in finding optimal solutions to problems. Not everyone benefits from the current mental health system, and my research endeavors to optimize benefits for marginalized populations.

My dissertation is titled, "Examining Culturally Adapted, Values Based, Mental Health Stigma Reduction and Help-Seeking Messages for Asian Americans,"

and synthesizes my research values, observed needs in the community, and interests in mental health disparities. Research on interventions targeting mental health stigma have mostly been developed in implicitly Eurocentric cultural frameworks, likely decreasing effects in populations with Asian American values. My online study examines the differential acceptability of culturally adapted versus Eurocentric stigma reduction messages by centering common values of East, South, and Southeast Asian Americans, such as collectivism and interdependent self-construal. My study elicits participation from the community by soliciting feedback on which specific vignettes and messages, emphasizing particular Asian American values, may be helpful in these communities. Findings will be used to develop new culturally-adapted anti-stigma interventions.

Reflecting on this year's convention, I felt refreshed by the discussion of community care. I hope AAPA can be a space that continues cultivating inclusive community care.

A REMINDER TO DE-COMMODIFY YOUR TIME, VALUE, AND MINDSET

MAICA PORCADAS

Like many others during our time in COVID quarantine, we look for activities to invest our time in that will increase our productivity, efficiency, and overall growth. For many, the time to build up and hone new skills is now, and many may often fall into the trap of avoiding "wasting time" - when all we have is time. We look at our days with the intent to try out new hobbies and find ways to spend our 24 hours. Throughout a number of social media blog posts, there has been a circulating message that if you do not come out of this quarantine having gained a new skill, a new hobby, or establishing a "side hustle" as a means of extra financial income, that you "do not lack time but that you lack the discipline to be successful." With the events occurring this year, there has been continued decrees of adapting to the " new normal" in terms of adjusting to the precautions of the global pandemic. Taking it another step forward, this should also be the time to become conscious and cast off antiquated beliefs of equating our self-worth to what we are able to produce and to stop feeding into the mindset of internalized capitalism.

In the podcast "Stuff Mom Never Told You," the concept of productivity and job performance guilt is discussed. Their conversation touches upon how productivity may be used as coping mechanisms to fight off the inability to control larger issues beyond our grasp. While this is not a dangerous mindset and though it is important to complete our day-to-day obligations, the harm does become

evident when productivity outweighs our physical and mental health. Although their particular conversation is centered around the throes of the pandemic, the guilt and mindset of equating our productivity to our own worth precedes the chaos of this year. The belief of not being a "successful person" for having a few lazy days or not being able to get through a full to-do list is often seen as a characteristic that must immediately be fixed. For much of our society there is a large inclination to frame the context of our time as a spendable quantity. Time is symbolized to be precious and limited, and is highly valued by individuals who believe there is a limitation to this metaphysical currency. Something as simple as overlooking how salient terms of quantity is used to express our time, insidiously seeps into our understanding of what we deem valuable - "how did you spend your day?", "you need to stop wasting your time", "were you able to be productive?" - without us realizing that we are manifesting forms of internalized capitalism.

It is not to say that having a good work ethic is overrated or fatalistic. What does need to be reevaluated is the common practice of placing exhaustion on a pedestal to praise, admire, and work toward. Overexhaustion and the inability to "relax" is often a glorified badge of honor that individuals gloat about to their peers and colleagues. For some of us this is a concept that may be difficult to challenge, "why should we not applaud hard workers?" It is not in the fact that we should not applaud hard workers, but that we should ensure that those hard workers are taking time to take care of themselves and to rest. Audre Lorde says it best in that, "caring for [one's self] is not self-indulgence, it is self preservation...". If you have ever fallen into the rabbit hole of articles with titles similar to How to Optimize your Productivity, Boosting your Productivity with these 5 Life Hacks; and so forth; be sure to keep in mind maintaining a balance of what you read and take in. While these topics can be beneficial to developing work habits, do not forget to remember the importance of articles with titles such as How to Rest and Relax, Benefits of Meditation, and Taking Care of Others by Taking Care of Yourself.

At the end of the day, we do look at the outcomes of what our energy and hours have amounted to. Instead of looking solely at the work completed, it would be a beneficial practice to reflect on and praise ourselves on what we have done to care for our well-being and others. We want to look back at the hard work but never at the expense of our health. The popular saying often goes, "you can not have your cake and eat it." Take this time in adjusting to the "new normal" and challenge that - bake a cake, have it, and enjoy it.

SILENTLY ASIAN IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

ALLISON GUNN

Most people don't look at me and immediately recognize that I'm Chinese. I pass as White because I'm also White. I'm part of the 2.8% of people in the United States who claim multiracial heritage. It wasn't always that way, though. For years I would mark "White or Caucasian" on surveys and other forms. I would tell people I was Chinese, but it was always after I had already been identified as White. In elementary school, with few Asian students present, it was seen as "cool," the model minority myth already taking effect.

As I got older, people started enforcing an asterisk, "You're part Asian." While true, I struggled with figuring out which part of me was Asian and which part was White. Were my hands Chinese because I knew how to use chopsticks? Was my face somehow Asian because when meeting other Chinese people, they almost always recognized our shared ancestry? Over time I've learned to fight back when people try to declare that I'm not Asian enough. But those comments are part of me and I also have to fight myself and any internalized thoughts about not being enough to really "count." It's been long enough since I started identifying myself more accurately as bi-racial, more than one race, or specifically as White and Asian that it isn't a second thought anymore. I know my identity and I'm happy with who I am.

But this doesn't mean that everything is easy and straightforward now, especially with a worldwide pandemic that is being blamed (by some) on the nation that I share part of my

identity with. COVID-19 has been highly politicized and I'm trapped, knowing where I belong, but never knowing if I'll be accepted where I belong. The Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council reports more than 2,500 incidents of discrimination against Asian-American and Pacific Islanders. It's significantly less likely that I will be the victim of one of these incidents than others who more closely resemble the stereotypical idea of what an Asian person looks like, but that doesn't mean I'm not concerned for me and my family, including my 92-year-old grandmother who still goes out to get her groceries and my aunts, uncles, and cousins who do fit that description. Having earned a Master's degree in Holocaust and Genocide Studies before my Master of Arts in Counselor Education, I am also well aware of the steps

taken to dehumanize populations and rally racism as a way to strengthen support for increasingly fascist regimes. Even in the absence of these specific steps, I cannot forget that it was less than a century ago that Executive Order 9066 was signed, interning Japanese-Americans in this very country and severely affecting these citizens' quality of life for generations. And I know that when the racism and hatred become normalized and legislated, the bi-racial identities of my sisters, my nephews, my son, and me have the potential to make us targets, as well.

The federal government has not done much to restore my faith in our safety. On September 17th, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution condemning racism against Asians and Asian-Americans in response to the increased rates of hate crimes and race-based attacks. While I appreciate the 243 Representatives who voted in favor of this resolution, I fear the 164 who specifically voted against it, who refused to acknowledge the harm that was being done to a racial group, who sided against tolerance and acceptance and with the violent offenders. I tried watching the Vice Presidential debate, but had to stop once Vice President Pence began blaming China for the pandemic and doubling down on the current administration's xenophobic attempts at restricting travel from China, a reminder of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the only federal legislation in the U.S. to ban immigration for a specific nationality. These acts and rhetoric increase my concern for the safety of myself and other Asian-Americans.

But my concern and anxiety are complicated with that ever lingering impostor syndrome. I'm part Asian. Do I have the right to have the same concern, the same fear? Not only do I face the increased anti-Asian sentiments that are increasingly infecting our nation and the highest offices in government, but I suffer the experience of questioning my inclusion in my own race. Impostor syndrome is a challenge when we wonder how we ever were able to earn a degree or land a job, but it creates even more of an internal struggle when we question our place in one of our identities. I try to consider what could possibly help whenever I am facing something this complex. I ask of my fellow counselors, please don't leave out those who are multiracial. Please recognize our fears and concerns as valid and be aware that we might not feel comfortable voicing those thoughts because we never know if we will be accepted or viewed as outsiders. Please reassure us that we belong with you as much as we belong with our other identities. We will support you. I ask that you support us too.

> *"I suffer the experience of questioning my inclusion in my own race."*

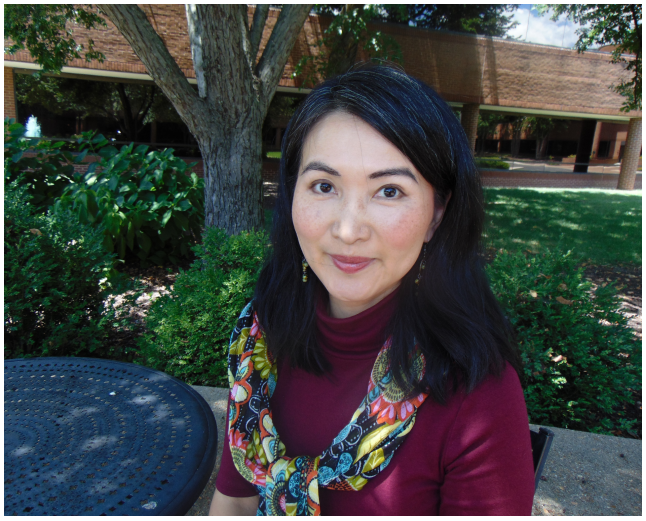
THE LONGEST NIGHT: "SOME LOW-GRADE FORM OF DEPRESSION"

PORTIA CHAN

Words have flavors, and colors have aromas. Senses are juxtaposed into oxymoronic yet elegant blends when you have synesthesia. Couple this with a tendency towards anxiety and depression, and the formula can mean sensory overloads that lead to introverted reprieves. Welcome to my world.

This year, 2020, feels so indecipherable, yet, when I hear the phrase 20/20, the expectation is being able to see with clarity. This year has been anything but clear. As we go deeper into fall, the foliage appears to put on make-up in preparation for holiday gatherings and guests. With social distancing, though, these gatherings will need to be different. My family is not doing trick-or-treating this year, since the CDC lists this as a "higher risk activity." For Thanksgiving and Christmas, we will shelter in place and have smaller celebrations. This means that we will not be able to see some of our family members because they live farther away or are at higher risk if infected with COVID-19.

I am feeling symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorder. This is sometimes dubbed as the "winter blues," but the synesthete in me touches blue like soft cotton or exquisite quartz. It is nurturing. It is precise. The approach of winter, in the Northern Hemisphere, means shorter durations of sunlight leading to the longest night, or the Winter Solstice. For many of our ancestors, this decrease in light was symbolic of death and then rebirth. While our contemporary legends tell of Rudolph leading the other reindeer of Santa Claus's sleigh, older tales commemorate the Deer Mother who leapt into the sky to lay the old year to rest and to bring in the new year, evidenced in the increasing sunlight leading eventually to the Summer Solstice.



But what about the time between the loss and the renewal? That time was vulnerable, and some did not make it. Maybe some of the SAD now is in remembering and noticing our vulnerabilities. During these times, we need each other, yet, during COVID-19, the protective factor of each other is tinged with worries of transmitting the virus. In other words, what should comfort us also causes distress. However, there are ways to offer solace without stress.

On her new podcast, “The Michelle Obama Podcast,” the Former First Lady shared that, “"I know that I am dealing with some form of low-grade depression. Not just because of the quarantine, but because of the racial strife, and just seeing this administration, watching the hypocrisy of it, day in and day out, is dispiriting." Michelle Obama’s words help me to feel understood. In this Pandora’s Box of 2020, her words are like the Hope that was kept inside the jar. Some sources state it was a jar instead of a box. Incidentally, Pandora, in Greek myths was the first woman, and Mrs. Obama was a First Lady. They both give hope – one in myth and one in reality.

If you find yourself feeling symptoms of SAD, low-grade depression, or just not yourself, the CDC offers guidelines and resources on how to cope, including some of these tips:

- Tend to your emotional health
- Take breaks from the news
- Care for your body by stretching, consuming well-balanced meals, exercising, and getting enough sleep
- Connect with others, your community, or faith-based organizations either in-person with social distancing measures or online or by phone or mail

These days I have been enjoying time to connect with my family. My husband has been teaching my daughter and son more board games, which they love. We make arts and crafts together. Sometimes my children will give us impromptu concerts on their piano and guitar. I love books, and reading to them or listening to them read to me feels warm, like cinnamon.

Resources:

CDC guidelines on holidays: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html#halloweenSAD: https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/seasonal-affective-disorder/index.shtmlWinter Solstice and
Deer Mother: https://gathervictoria.com/2017/12/15/doe-a-deer-a-female-deer-the-spirit-of-mother-christmas/
The Michelle Obama Podcast:
https://open.spotify.com/show/71mvGXupfKcmO6jlmOJQTP?si=xxccObEQSV-ePnzn5PlC6g
Wamsley, L. (2020, August 6). Michelle Obama Says She's Dealing With 'Low-Grade Depression' During Lockdown. NPR The Coronavirus Crisis. Retrieved from https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/08/06/899785192/michelle-obama-says-shes-dealing-with-low-grade-depression-amid-quarantine
Pandora’s Box (Jar): https://www.greekmyths-greekmythology.com/pandoras-box-myth/
CDC coping with stress: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html

ADVOCATING FOR THE AFTERTHOUGHT

CARING WITH COURAGE DURING COVID-19

ANNE BERNICE ANDAYA & JIA JIAN TIN

Over the years, cultural diversity training for mental health professionals has evolved along with the country's ever-changing demographic. As student trainees, we feel the need to convey our concerns regarding the lack of culturally specific training regarding the variety of Asian populations. The stereotypes that come with being a model minority is not a one size fits all. Not all Asians are one and the same. Our views are anecdotal and by no means do they represent all graduate students in the field. By sharing our perspectives, we hope to promote and foster conversations that initiate change for the field's collective betterment. This is our chapter, one we are eager to share.

Anne Bernice Andaya, 2nd-year Doctoral Student (Filipino)

Graduate school has been an invaluable resource that has enriched and helped me grasp my unique intersectionality as an Asian American woman and an aspiring clinician. Multicultural and diversity training is a core component of every psychology program curriculum. Yet, I feel a significant lack of culture-specific training for the Asian/Pacific Islander population. While I acknowledge and recognize the initiatives and the efforts the field has collectively put forth, we cannot afford to be complacent. The pedagogy in which diversity is taught has ample room for growth and improvement. The lack of culture-specific training may perpetuate ruptures in the therapeutic alliance between the therapist and the client, leading to a decrease in the client's quality of mental service. My classroom and in-field experiences have led me to believe that Asian ethnic-specific training and resources are sparse, causing parties to be at a disadvantage at the therapeutic alliance's onset.

Throughout the multiple diversity classes I have participated in throughout my graduate training, I can only remember a few instances where an Asian or an Asian American client was the subject of my lecture. During those rare moments, a reoccurring theme seemed to surface without fail, which was the client's language barrier. A mutual understanding through a shared language is an integral aspect of any successful therapeutic alliance. However, I must

argue there are many other avenues in which the therapist can convey empathy or create safe spaces for the client to embrace their own unique identities. A strong rapport can be developed through the clinician's ability to recognize Asian ethnic-specific cultural traditions, beliefs, and practices, increasing retention rates, and other successful therapeutic outcomes. Yet, little time was spent addressing these ethnic specific differences. Developing a more robust diversity training regarding the Asian population will be beneficial for the field.

My lack of culture-specific training became apparent when I attended my first Asian American Psychological Association (AAPA) Conference in 2019. During the conference I learned essential differences in the Asian population regarding topics like suicide and shame. My conference experience has left me craving more opportunities and instances where my Asian intersectionality is acknowledged. Similarly, my experience has left me an urge to advocate for a more inclusive training experience.

Jia Jian Tin, Doctoral Candidate (Malaysian Chinese)

During my doctorate training, I received education in culturally diverse topics addressing various concerns regarding Black and Hispanic clients. Yet, most of my knowledge about working with the Asian population is obtained through personal research and clinical work.

My first Asian American client was a college-aged Southeast Asian female referred to the college clinic by the disability office. The student had received an extensive psychological evaluation from her high school, diagnosing her with oppositional defiant disorder and adjustment disorder after her family moved from the East Coast to California more than a year ago. After a couple of sessions, it became apparent the client suffered from Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and depression. Consultation with the psychologist who evaluated the client was an unpleasant experience. The client's disorganization and struggles with inattention were brushed off due to her "good academic standing." Her lack of motivation, irritability, and frustrations were noted as a form of "externalizing behavior" to express her disapproval of her parent's decision to relocate. Her suicidal behavior was "attention seeking." Yet, even during my intake, it was noted her inattention existed long before her move to California. Her depression and lack of motivation began back in middle school.

This experience sparked my curiosity to research what the field knows about the Asian population. Since then, I have attended the AAPA

convention twice, completed multiple workshops, read books, and did personal research to improve my understanding in hopes of better serving my Asian clients. For example, I now know ADHD and depression among Asians are often misdiagnosed as other disorders. One cannot help but wonder why such necessary information was hardly addressed in culture diversity classes? We are often told Blacks are misdiagnosed with psychosis, or Hispanics are overdiagnosed with substance use disorder, so why not inform clinicians about misdiagnosis in the Asian population? Why are Asians treated as an afterthought in cultural diversity training? Of the nearly 50 Asian clients I have worked with, less than a handful have endorsed concerns about their accent or language barrier. I believe the language barrier is a significant concern for some Asian clients, but should not culture diversity classes also address other important issues impacting the Asian population? For example, model minority myth, face loss, the wide variety of religions in Asia, or even the simple fact that Asians are not one and the same!

Future Directions

The Asian population in the United States is on an upward trajectory. Statistically, one in twenty clients for any clinician would be from an Asian background. While we acknowledge the emphasis on diversity that the field puts forth. We recognize its insufficiency and encourage more Asian ethnic-specific training resources. Knowledge in this area should not be seen merely as a bonus but should be treated as an essential component of any clinician's training. We believe AAPA and its members are in a prime position to advocate for more Asian ethnic-specific education to be included in mental health training programs around the country. Also, AAPA should seek to increase accessibility to training and workshops so clinicians may equip themselves with the necessary knowledge skills to serve their Asian clients best.

Jia Jian Tin (*left*) and **Anne Bernice Andaya** (*right*)

WHAT IS YOUR RACE/ETHNICITY? ASIAN ☑

ISRA AHMAD

MANY HAVE SEEN THE INFAMOUS BOX ON ALL SORTS OF LEGAL FORMS, SURVEYS, AND EVEN SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS.

A group that makes up well over 60% of the world's population dwindled down to one box: Asian. Lumping us all together as one may seem like the easiest way to understand population level patterns, but rather, this practice conceals a deeper story.

I reflect on my earliest memories of checking this box. I was filling out the demographic section of the Standardized Testing & Reporting (STAR) exams in California. I was not certain of which box to check, and recall being torn between checking off 'American Indian' or 'Asian'. As a Pakistani American, I read 'Indian' as the closest geography to Pakistan, but simultaneously certain that Pakistan is a country on the continent of Asia. As a grade school student, I did not ponder too much about this, and just checked off 'Asian'.

At some point, the check box next to 'Asian' started to include a description of subgroups within that category. Although this list has never been exhaustive, it started to make it easier for me to feel comfortable to check off the Asian box. However, I began to wonder why my group did not get its own box. Even though the idea of disaggregation existed in

> ***"I began to wonder why my group did not get its own box."***

the description of 'Asian', the survey tools I came across rarely separated this data at the data collection phase. The Asian box served as a one size fits all identity for the whole group.

Not until I began my own journey in research and survey development did I understand the implications of this type of data aggregation. It meant that my Pakistani heritage and culture was now in the same bucket as people who identified as Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Hmong, and Nepalese, to name a few, and vice versa. This effectively dilutes the oral and written traditions, languages, cultures, economic status, educational attainment, and heritages of millions of people who identify with racial/ethnic groups originating from the Asian continent, making it much more difficult to detect in-group differences. For example, according to the United State of Women, Asian American Pacific Islander women earn $0.87 for every $1 earned by a White, Hispanic male. However, when you look deeper into the disaggregation of Asian identified women, even more disparities persist. The National Women's Law Center, on average Fijian women earn $0.55, Cambodian women earn $0.57, Japanese women earn $0.92, and Malaysian women earn $1.25, for every $1

dollar earned by a White, non-Hispanic male in the United States. When grouping all Asians together, it's easy to miss the differences that exist within subpopulations by a variety of characteristics, including gender identity.

Detecting economic differences within those who identify as Asian Americans is not the only aspect that is masked by aggregate data. Subgroups within the Asian/Asian American diaspora have unique patterns of health behaviors & outcomes, civic participation, linguistic and cultural practices, and institutionalized & systemic barriers to thriving. Without understanding the diversity among Asian/Asian Americans, we will not be able to identify areas of assets and opportunities across our communities.

So how do we begin to combat the dangers associated with data aggregation, particularly among Asian/Asian American populations? There are many approaches and strategies being employed to address this issue.

Here are a few recommendations:

- **Changing policies to mandate inclusion of diverse Asian/Asian American groups in research tools across our systems.** Our national, state, local government agencies, community-based organizations, private sector entities and much more must develop, adopt, and enforce policies that mandate the inclusion of Asian/Asian American subgroups in its data collection tools. Although incremental progress is taking place, our systems continue to make decisions using data that may not be inclusive of the uniqueness of Asian/Asian American subpopulations.
- **Increasing racial/ethnic representation in research and other leadership positions.** Representation of Asian/Asian Americans across the various sectors of research, academia, and governmental and community-based organizational leadership positions allows for diverse voices to be uplifted. These voices may also play a critical role in developing inclusive policies, survey tools, and much more.
- **Increasing awareness of the diversity that exists within Asian/Asian American groups.** Increasing the awareness of the diversity within Asian/Asian American groups is a feat that applies across the board, even within subgroups that identify as Asian/Asian American. Understanding the complex histories and origins of Asian/Asian Americans identities is essential to continue to develop and uplift a system of inclusion.

These steps, many of which leaders in the space are working tirelessly to address, may help foster a continued culture of inclusion for the Asian/Asian American diaspora. The voices of millions are diluted when we engage in data aggregation. Solving for this practice will shed light on undetected patterns and areas to improve equity and justice within our communities.

PURSUIT OF (UNENCUMBERED) HAPPINESS

GAYATHRI HETTIARACHCHI

"Minissu monawa kiyaida?" **This simple phrase in Sinhala, translating to "What would people say?" in English, is one that is so familiar in the South Asian community.** Growing up with Sri Lankan culture as a significant part of my identity, I have always been aware of how my actions, thoughts, and behaviors could be perceived by others in the community. While being part of a tight knit community can be a wonderful thing, it can also be the most significant barrier in pursuing individualism, as those four words, quietly but persistently impact your decisions. For some, it is easy to disregard that voice and follow their dreams and goals, but for others like myself, it takes practice and a great deal of self-confidence to step away from the noise to pursue happiness, regardless of what others may think.

As a child, I was lucky to grow up in a household where my dreams and goals were always supported enthusiastically by my parents. At that age, I was unaware that my actions and behaviors were closely watched, not only by my family, but also a group of friendly strangers. However, through the years, as I began to form my own opinions and understood more about what I wanted to pursue in my life, I became aware of the opinions of those around me. They expected me to follow through my goals of getting into a good university, becoming a doctor, and making my family proud. While this was not necessarily negative and most of the time well-intentioned, I found myself cringing inwardly every time someone asked what I was doing at the time and when I was finally going to become a doctor. I felt obligated to share my goals with everyone because it would have been impolite not to do so. I felt as though every step I took had to be successful, for there were uncles and aunties who wanted me to succeed.

Sure, some people may say, "What is she even complaining about? Nothing sounds wrong with wanting others to succeed." They would be mostly right. Nothing is wrong with wanting others to succeed. However, when parts of your life are dissected, put under the microscope, analyzed, and discussed with others, it becomes a bit irritating, to say the least. That is when the toxicity of the community comes into play. I spent years pursuing a path, specifically medical school, because I was afraid of what others might think if I chose a different path halfway through. Fear of failing their expectations kept me on a path that I was not passionate about. At times it was difficult to decipher if I was making decisions or if someone else was making them for me. My family was supportive of me, so why was I bothered by anyone else's opinion? It was the guilt

of letting people down, letting them think I was a failure, and the idea of ruining my established image.

These were a lot of unnecessary burdens I put upon myself, when all I needed to do was follow my passion. Although I knew I did not want to pursue medical school, I knew I wanted to go into the healthcare field. For the longest time, I was afraid of even researching and opening my mind into other careers in healthcare for the fear of disappointing others. However, as I gave myself the opportunity to cancel out the noise and focus on myself, I became more and more drawn to a career as a physician assistant (PA). After speaking to PAs and doing intense research on the career path, I was certain that it was the path I wanted to take. While my parents supported my decision to pursue PA school instead of medical school, I was again hounded with questions from those in the Sri Lankan community as to why I did not want to be a doctor anymore. "Why did you give up?" was a popular question, when I had in no way felt that I gave anything up. I was also told by many that I was smart enough to be a doctor, and I was asked why I was settling to become a PA, when I was clearly excited to pursue this new path. One even told me that I was kicking a pot of gold (medical school) away and being foolish.

These words can certainly play a significant impact on one's mental health, adding unnecessary anxiety and doubt. It bothered me that people seemed to have so many unwarranted opinions of what I wanted to do with my life. No matter what I did and how right I thought I was, there always seemed to be something wrong. There was no right answer or an end to the pleasing. However, having taken the first step in disregarding these opinions, I felt that I could slowly but surely shut the noise out. For me, it is still a work in progress to only listen to my gut feeling without constantly thinking, "What will people say?" Even writing this article, I am trying to suppress this thought. I know that this feeling of guilt and fear of disappointment is common among the South Asian community, as we are brought up to think that listening to others' opinions is polite and to be an example to younger children in the community. I have learned, however, that this is not worth sacrificing your happiness. One can still be a polite and inspiring person while pursuing what brings him or her joy. I realized that at the end of the day, my decisions are what matters the most, not the opinions of those who watch from afar. Once I accepted this, it has become much easier to concentrate on my goals and unapologetically pursue my dream. Every day, I find that the voice in my head whispering those four little words become quieter and quieter.

Gayathri Hettiarachchi

AUTUMN MUSINGS

DARCY S.F. ING

Autumn holidays are here, and winter is approaching. In East and Southeast Asian countries, the Mid-Autumn or Moon Festival is the second most important holiday after the Lunar New Year. Called Chuseok in Korea and Tsukimi in Japan, the moon festival dates back to when Chinese emperors worshipped the moon to ensure abundant harvests. Lanterns light the way to prosperity, while rich mooncakes are served with tea.

Other fall and winter holidays involve light, rebirth, and gratitude for plenty. These include Diwali – the Hindu festival of Light, Samhain (Halloween), Thanksgiving, Bodhi Day – honoring the Buddha's enlightenment, Winter Solstice – the day with shortest period of daylight and longest night of the year, Advent, Christmas, Hanukkah, and both the Gregorian and Lunar New Year's Day.

I always think of the Greek goddess Persephone in the fall. Persephone, who represents vegetation, was the daughter of Demeter, goddess of agriculture and the harvest. One day, while Persephone was picking flowers in a field, she was kidnapped by Hades, god of the Underworld and ruler of the dead. Hades had decided to take the unwilling goddess to rule the Underworld as his queen. In despair, Demeter searched the entire earth for her lost daughter. Because of her grief, plants died, while trees lost fruit and leaves. All over the world, nothing grew. Famine was widespread, and animals and people starved.

Because of the widespread suffering, Zeus finally told Hades to allow Persephone's return. However, before she left the underworld, Persephone had eaten a few pomegranate seeds. Those who ate the food of the underworld had to stay there permanently. However, in this case, for the sake of all living things, the gods struck a bargain. Persephone could live above ground with her mother for part of the year. The rest of the year she spent underground with Hades.

The myth of Persephone is used to explain the changes of the four seasons. When Persephone prepares to leave her mother, summer becomes autumn. Temperatures drop, plants grow scarce, leaves fall from trees, and the world prepares for the harshness of winter. After her time with Hades, Persephone returns to Demeter, winter ends, and spring arrives. Warmth and new life renew and transform the earth, as they have for millennia. Across the world, people celebrate the turning of the seasons with special holidays.

In 2020, the seasons are changing in the context of COVID-19. Like Persephone, the world journeys to the cold, dark, winter with trepidation. We venture to the land of the dead, the inability to stop viral spread, the cost to health systems and workers, and the higher death toll approaching. We have lost much, grieved much, and more suffering is coming.

America's botched federal response and partisan politics mean that infections continue to rise. Each infection spike builds on the one preceding it, hospitals reach and exceed capacity, and the death toll increases, while mask-free super-spreader events continue to happen. Unemployment continues, while financial strain and risk of housing loss causes ever rising levels of tension.

We are now in the third infection spike, largely driven by household transmission. Infection will increase, as interstate traveling and family gatherings surge during autumn and winter holidays. Complicating this, the peak of flu season occurs soon after New Year's Day. Weary health professionals coping with COVID-19 patients must add flu patients to their caseload.

Scientists haven't yet advised cancelling holiday plans, instead encouraging safer alternatives. Dr. Anthony Fauci remarked, "This is not a one-size-fits-all issue. It depends on what risk you want to take. It is difficult if not impossible to quantify what that risk is." At the same time, complete national recovery of health and economic well-being depends on people not letting their guard down. We need to be both thoughtful and creative to find balance between the desire to gather and the importance of staying safe.Most people find the idea of loss unnerving, even disturbing or frightening. Death is a mystery, an unknown. We are not the same after death touches us, even if we are not the one who dies. At the same time,

death is an inevitable part of life for plants, animals, and people. What begins must one day end, and we usually don't know how it will happen. Death is about endings and beginnings, birth and rebirth, metamorphosis and transformation. Death is a part of being alive.

Like Persephone, we travel to the underworld, the land of the dead, in a time of bleak winter. The underworld is a place of reaping, not of sowing, past misguided priorities, the gradual little-noticed breaking down of systems and institutions designed to protect us. Perhaps the quiet of winter gives us time to reflect on how we got here, and what needs to happen to get us out. The time underground is meant to prepare us for transformation. We will survive this, and find a new spring.

We need time to grieve our losses, to research ways to understand and treat the virus, and to develop a vaccine. In addition to healing from the virus, the time in the dark is also for reflection of the damage our society has sustained over generations. Awareness is

increasing of how racism, sexism, and other –isms have affected lives, how we have damaged the planet, and our systems. Voters are learning they cannot depend on politicians, and must be involved in decisions that affect their lives. Plans are being made to restore fairness in the federal judiciary, and there is more understanding of how "dark money" and corporate interests have affected politics, healthcareand , and more. Darkness is coming, but it is temporary. We must heal from the virus, prevent its spread, and heal our nation. During the wintwe, share in a safe way with others, celebrate safely, and take inventory of physical, emotional, and spiritual resources needed. Heal and renew your stores with self-care, and support. Use this time for contemplation, discernment, and preparation, to determine what we can bring to the world we want to create. Remember that while not in complete control of events, we are in control of our response. Transforming our world will take much longer than this fall and winter, and require much from us, but there is hope. This took time to happen, and it will take time to heal, but we will. Spring is coming.

SELF REFLECTION: A CONFUSED DESI

ARADHANA N. SRINAGESH

I want to talk about something that is not discussed too often in our community or let alone at all; the societal pressure within the South Asian community.

I strongly believe that the South Asian youth, more than just peer-pressure, are victims of "social pressure". The choices made early on in life are driven from the idea of proving themselves better than 'uski beta or beti'*The hardest part begins with making a career choice,and it sticks with usfor a very long time. By the time we realize, it is already too late to make changes.

The Desi** way is the silent way. In a community that exudes pride, stoicism is what is presented. To admit to flaws in the community, would be to question the status that Indian Americans enjoy within the Western society. The pressure to live up to this perceived social position has been one of the reasons that young South Asian choose not to voice their emotional honesty.

In my first two years of undergrad, my grades in my science classes plummeted. The Bs I got my freshman year came as a shock to a formerly straight A student, but by sophomore year, those Bs turned into Cs. After barely passing my science classes, I knew that going to medical school was not in the cards for me. Not that I could not do the work, but, because my heart was not in it. I didn't like the material and could not commit to caring enough to understand it.

*his son or daughter; **people, cultures, and products of the Indian subcontinent and their diaspora

It is not hard to remember that gut-wrenching feeling, the moment I realized the life I had always envisioned — the one where I was a thriving neurosurgeon, making my parents proud and their sacrifices worth it — wasn't going to pan out that way I had anticipated. For the very first time in my life, I was completely unsure of myself and my purpose. Failing was never an option, or at least I had thought. I had to take a step back and ask myself, "what do I want to do" rather than, "what do people think I should do". Without a doubt, I am fully aware I am not the only one.

I had to learn new — maybe untraditional — ways of finding what my true calling was. Once I started the dialogue with my parents and explained why the medical school route was not for me, I experienced a sense of relief and clarity. I used the societal pressure as a reason to not be honest with my parents, but more importantly, myself. But, I also worried. I was worried what excuse I would have to use to hide that fact that I was not pursuing medical school anymore. I did not want to give off a sense of defeat or failure. I knew at this point succeeding was the only option. Success meant acceptance. But this time, rather than societal acceptance, it was self-acceptance. Through this journey, I found a way to combine my initial interests of helping individuals and my newfound passion. Today, I am proud to say that I am a clinician and researcher in the substance use field. I work towards increasing our knowledge to improve clinical practices, and eliminating treatment gaps within the minority populations in the field.

I am again very familiar with the feelings of anxiety and uncertainty as I navigate another untraditional path. I am in the process of applying to Clinical Psychology doctoral programs for the third time. I could easily hide and not share about my two previous attempts. But I think it is important to highlight that rejection is okay. We live in a world where success is measured by the comparison to others. We are careful with our stories. We edit them to seem less painful. Unlike my early years, neither my parents nor I are silent about this "failure".

I speak about my journey because I do not want anyone else to feel alone. You are not alone. You deserve the best out of life and while we make many sacrifices on this journey, you should not sacrifice your health and well-being in order to please others. You deserve a life where happiness is the norm, not the exception. You deserve a life that does not feel like a burden.

As the future of our South Asian community, it is imperative that we normalize the conversation by speaking about our experiences. Communities will strengthen once we stop clinging on to the illusion of perfection. We are more than "uski beta or beti". I want to see my community break barriers and social norms. I want our current and future generations to successfully pursue their passions and achieve their wildest dreams. I want to dedicate this article to my parents for making me the person I am today, my organic true-self.

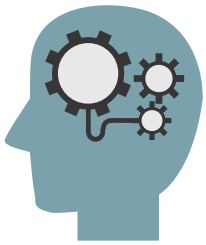
THE MENTAL HEALTH FRUITS OF OUR DISCIPLINARY LABOR

ALEX OKASHITA, MICHAEL P. HUYNH, & MELANIE TRAN

Mental health issues in Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities are multifaceted, leading scholars from many academic disciplines attempting to solve them. But does tackling API mental health within our own fields keep us from thinking outside the box? Three PhD students from different academic backgrounds exercise a thought experiment to identify what API communities gain from working across disciplines and what is lost when academics stay in their own lanes.

First, we define our fields of psychology, public health, and urban planning, along with their relationships to API communities. Second, we describe levels of disciplinary integration. Third, we initiate our thought experiment by examining a salient API issue through the levels of disciplinary integration. Finally, we consider the merits of transdisciplinary scholarship for solving complex problems facing API communities.

Three Cookbooks on API Mental Health Research



Psychology is a broad field that utilizes research and practice to understand and/or influence mental and behavioral processes. In relation to the API experience, psychology involves not only inquiry into the thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and development specific to API communities, but also the bidirectional influences between API folks and the contexts they inhabit that impact psychological wellbeing. These contexts span across the spectrum of human experience, such that API mental health is a product of many domains of mental and behavioral processes. Thus, from a psychological perspective, advancement of API mental health necessarily spans across disciplines to better understand and cultivate culturally responsive contexts to promote mental health and prevent, diagnose, and treat mental illness.

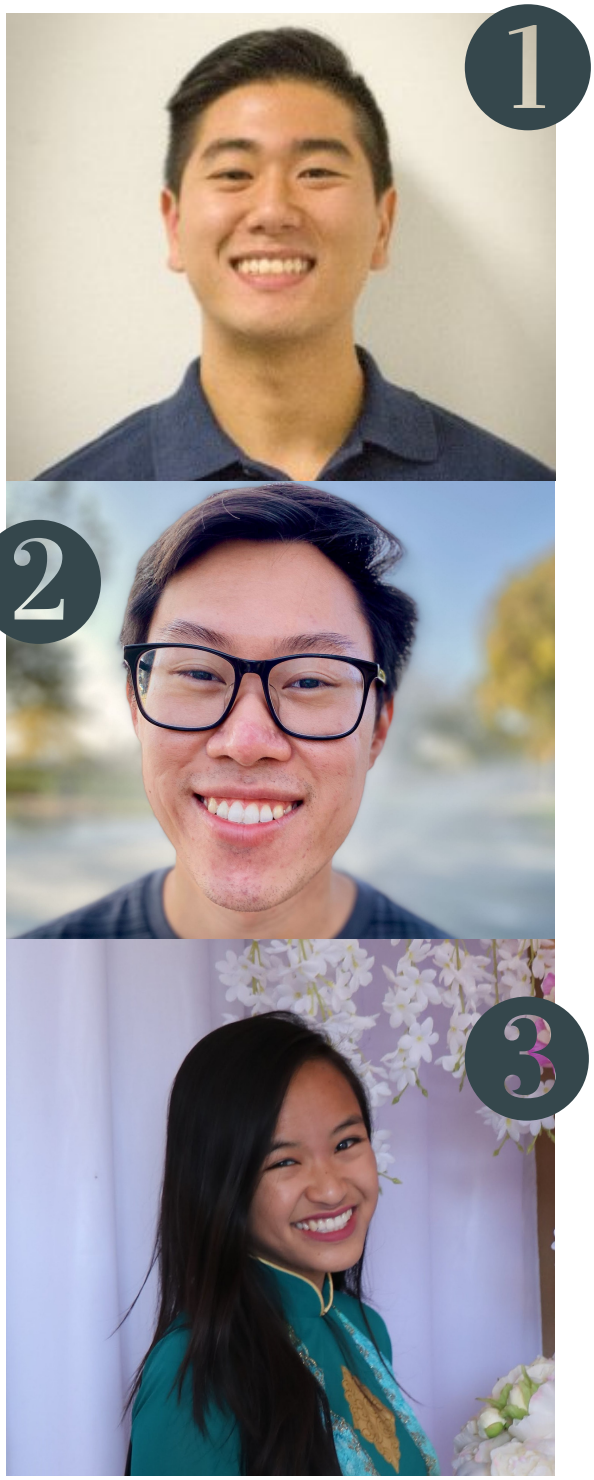
Public health aims to prevent disease at the population level and create optimal conditions in society for a longer, higher quality life. Typically, this is done by promoting community-based interventions, healthcare policy, and research to understand how different factors influence the distribution of disease. In the context of mental health, public health professionals mobilize efforts to identify risk factors, increase mental health awareness, and eliminate barriers that prevent groups from accessing services, including API communities. Thus, mental health research goals from a public health standpoint tend to address biological, social, and environmental determinants of mental health outcomes.

Urban planning is an interdisciplinary field that navigates complex and interconnected issues relating to the built environment and its institutions to create a better future for the people interacting with these spaces. These issues are observed through the lens of housing, land-use, transportation, environment, and community and economic development. The fields of landscape architecture, political science, public policy, architecture, civil engineering, and environmental science can cross paths with the urban planning discipline. Since APIs live, work, and play in cities and spaces, urban planning is used to advocate for interests such as accessibility to resources (e.g., food, water, social networks, education, economic opportunity), immigration, adequate housing, and environmental justice.

From Following Recipe Traditions to Creating New Cooking Techniques

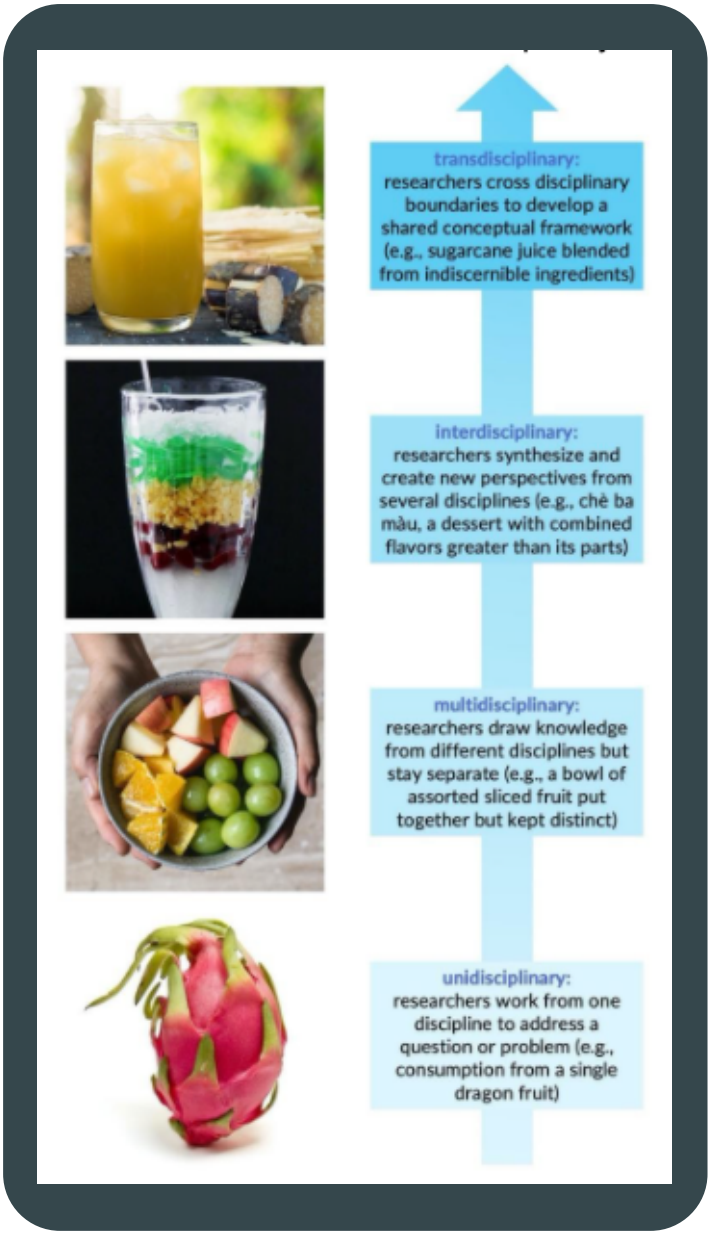
The increasing trend of multi-authored papers and cross-disciplinary research teams makes it more relevant than ever to understand and consider a framework that "integrates concepts and methods from different fields to achieve a broader understanding of complex problems within particular spatial, temporal, sociocultural, and virtual contexts" (Stokols, 2018). Advocates argue that breaking from disciplinary boundaries can produce vital scientific and social advances. The chart below demonstrates the four levels of disciplinary integration scholars use.

One mental health challenge that API communities face is a sense of belonging. For instance, the perpetual foreigner stereotype has played a persistent role throughout U.S. history on API belonging. From the COVID-19 pandemic, anti-Asian discrimination has spiked, negatively impacting API feelings of belongingness and mental health. Together, we identified that promoting actual and perceived belongingness has beneficial implications for API health outcomes, highlighting its research importance across our three disciplines.



1. Alex Okashita
2. Michael P. Huynh
3. Melanie Tran

From a **unidisciplinary** approach, our disciplines tackle this issue separately. A team of psychologists might focus on examining the relationship between neighborhood characteristics and perceived belongingness. Public health practitioners may focus on the health implications from having a sense of community belonging, such as mental disorders and substance use, comparing APIs to other racial groups. A team of urban planners may see this issue as growing pains, reflecting on past built environment factors and institutional policies that encouraged segregation of race and resources such as redlining. An urban planning team might focus on institutional strategies to increase a sense of community.



From a **multidisciplinary** approach, each discipline contributes their specialized skills, resources, and/or methodology. Psychologists may contribute surveys on belonging and mental health using established metrics, public health professionals may design recruitment strategies to ensure that sample findings are representative of the greater API population, and urban planners may determine how institutions can implement the findings to assist various API communities. The limitation of multidisciplinarity, however, is that each field continues to operate independently from one another with the goal of eventually combining their work. They may exchange knowledge and resources, but they remain distinct disciplines.

A substantial leap in collaboration occurs when taking an **interdisciplinary** approach. We began this thought experiment by sharing the primary perspectives and methods of our respective disciplines. From there, we discussed how our disciplines might align to achieve common goals. As a result, we identified new potential variables integral to understanding and promoting API belongingness that were relevant to all our fields, including assimilation, wealth, proximity to restaurants or grocery stores of one's ethnic identity, and perceptions of safety. We also considered measuring structural factors like physical signage translations and racism incidents. Our brainstorming yielded data

collection techniques like geographic mapping and Yelp data scraping to examine how proximity to ethnic restaurants and businesses may contribute to API belongingness. Through collectively identifying where our disciplines intersect, we generated a cohesive approach that integrates multiple perspectives and methods.

Food for Thought

Through cross-disciplinary collaboration, there exists great potential to address complex API mental health issues. In silos, our disciplines naturally have their limitations, whether it be traditional methodology, measurement tools, or capacity to recruit generalizable samples. Our conversations revealed how each of our fields can complement and support one another. Where one identified an area for growth in their respective discipline, the other identified that area as their discipline's strength. If we stay within our disciplinary lanes, the API community loses out on timely interventions, nuanced and contextualized mental health data, and much more. Shifting the status quo towards transdisciplinary work will enrich our understanding of API issues to develop responsive and impactful solutions. Thus, we invite you to reach across disciplines to "consume" knowledge outside of your usual palate.

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