

## Outreach/Engagement to Reduce Stigma among API's: The Challenges of Stigma

### *Did You Know?*

- 11.7% of AAPI teens needed help for emotional/mental health problems, but only 4.8% RECEIVED psychological/emotional counseling in the past year
- Even when children showed signs of depression, Asian American parents declined help for their children
- Asian Americans are less likely to seek help for mental health problems than other racial demographic groups, and less than their representation in the US population; this applies regardless of demographic location, age, gender, education, or Asian subgroup
- Asian Americans with high enculturation (i.e., stronger beliefs about Asian values) have less positive attitudes about seeking help for mental health problems
- Among women with depressive symptoms, compared with Caucasians, AAPIs were less likely to receive services
- One study of Korean Americans found that compared with younger adults, older adult reported greater misconceptions and stigmatizations about mental health as a weakness that would bring shame to a family if one were to reveal their mental illness by seeking treatment

### **Barriers Impacting Use of Mental Health-Related Services**

- Cultural barriers
  - Stigma
  - Loss of face
  - Causal beliefs
- Culturally Unresponsive Services
  - Lack of language match
  - Lack of ethnicity match
  - Poor cross-cultural understanding
- Limited access to care (e.g., cost, lack of insurance coverage)
- Lack of awareness or understanding of services

### **Positive Factors to Utilize to Improve Help-Seeking**

- Collaboration between mental health providers and other care resources that are less stigma-inducing and more commonly sought by Asian Americans
  - Primary care providers
  - Community Organizations
  - Religious leaders, healers
- Integration of behavioral health into primary care settings
- Presence at cultural events or activities
- Shifting engagement topics/targets/approaches to allow for better recruitment (e.g., “academic parenting” versus “mental illness” workshops)

### **Cultural Considerations for Asian Americans**

- ❖ Many AAPI languages do not have positive terms to describe mental illness; using terms such as “wellness” or “well-being” may be helpful with reducing inherent stigma for this topic
- ❖ Asian Americans are more likely to use informal support systems than formal services for help with mental health problems
- ❖ Perceived discrimination has been associated with a host of issues in different research studies, including:
  - Korean American adolescents’ externalizing problems
  - Depressive symptoms and substance use in Filipino Americans
  - Poor mental health and decreased use of mental health services in Chinese Americans