

Outreach/Engagement to Reduce Stigma among API's: Student Mental Health

Did You Know?

- 11.7% of AAPI teens in California needed help for emotional/mental health problems, but only 4.8% RECEIVED psychological emotional counseling in the past year
- 30% of Asian American females in 5th through 12th grade reported symptoms of depression, as compared to Non-Hispanic Caucasians (22.5%), African American (17%), or Hispanic females (27%)
- More Asian female students reported recent suicidal thoughts and behaviors (21%) than Asian male, Caucasian female, and Caucasian male students nationally
- Among male high school students nationally, Asian American men have the highest rates of considering suicide (17%)
- Suicidal ideation appears in 19% of API high school students versus the 16% national average; API students show double the rate of suicide attempts compared to the national average (4% versus 2%)
- Children of foreign-born Asian families were at greater risk for poor physical health, internalizing problems, and inadequate interpersonal relationships compared with children of US-born Caucasian families
- Asian American adolescent boys are twice as likely as Caucasians to have been physically abused, and three times as likely to report sexual abuse
- Asian Americans are underserved in University and College Counseling Centers; alarmingly, the majority of these centers don't see Asian Americans as an underserved population
- Asian college students were less likely than other racial groups to seek professional psychological help for suicidal ideation
- Among Asian American students, Korean American students scored the highest on the Diagnostic Severity Rating Scale and were more likely than other groups to prematurely drop out of treatment
- Perceived discrimination is a significant source of stress for Asian American and Pacific Islander Students
 - For example, in a sample of Korean American adolescents, perceived discrimination was associated with increased externalizing problems

Cultural Considerations for Asian Americans

- ❖ Depression symptoms may sometimes be expressed or reported through physical complaints
- ❖ Asian Americans are more likely to use informal support systems than formal services for help with mental health problems
- ❖ Poor academic performance and anxiety about performing well enough was a major risk factor for suicidal ideation in API youth/teens/students
- ❖ Subgroups differ in risk for various mental illnesses among Asian American youth; for example, southeast Asian youth show higher rates of anxiety than east Asian youth
- ❖ The model minority stereotype and associated pressure for academic success is a significant source of stress for Asian American young adults
- ❖ Signs and symptoms of mental illness may exhibit different in Asian Americans
 - Patterned absences (e.g., absences every Wednesday afternoon)
 - Graffiti on notebooks, mental-health related comments or essays
 - Attendance and GPA are generally **not** early signs
- ❖ Contrary to the model minority myth, API teens do not have "healthier" minds than their counterparts:
 - 20.4% of API teens are at risk for depression, compared to 20.3% of African American teens, 18% of Caucasian teens, and 23.7% of Latino teens in California