

In recognition of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, the National Network to Eliminate Disparities in Behavioral Health (NNED) and the SAMHSA Office of Behavioral Health Equity hosted a virtual roundtable highlighting the impacts of COVID-19 on Asian Pacific Islander (API) communities and some culturally-specific strategies to address these impacts. APIs have experienced a surge in discrimination and stigma due to the anti-Asian narratives related to COVID-19. These narratives have increased the vulnerability for fear, anxiety and emotional distress within API communities.

NNED organizations and API community leaders have responded to the rising needs for mental health support. Below are the mental health impacts and culturally-specific strategies to support APIs discussed during the virtual roundtable.

Mental Health Impacts

- **Elevated Sense of Fear:** APIs have a fear of contracting the virus and/or passing the illness to elders.
- **Stress/Depression:** APIs are experiencing the economic impact of losing jobs and/or businesses, as well as an seeing an increase in domestic violence.
- **Historical Trauma:** Past trauma of coming from war-torn countries or being treated as foreigners are resurfacing due to discrimination/racism towards APIs.
- **Shame/Guilt:** APIs do not want to talk about stressors or depression for fear of burdening others or bringing shame to their family.
- **Social Isolation:** API elders are isolated at home with lack of transportation.
- **Language and Cultural Barriers:** COVID-19 information is not available in all Asian languages; it is difficult to translate words such as social distancing for APIs to understand. Newly arrived immigrants struggle with English as a second language.
- **Reluctance to Speak Up:** APIs are taught the value of suffering in silence.

Strategies to Support APIs

- Launched StopAAPIHate, a website to report racist incidents.
- Provided mental health services via telehealth.
- Delivered Public Service Announcements (PSAs) in Asian languages.
- Held space on virtual platforms to promote wellness including 'Asian Women Circles', writing workshops and learning circles focused on achieving whole health strategies (body, mind, spirit).
- Developed social media infographics and videos about how bystanders and families can respond to race-related bullying by using WITS: Walk away, Ignore, Talk it out, Seek help.
- Engaged youth to deliver food to isolated elders; meals included helpful information about COVID-19.
- Provided support for Asian-owned businesses specifically help to apply for loan/relief programs.
- Sent informational packets to immigrants in English as a Second Language (ESL) citizenship classes to continue their classes virtually; included a Mental Health 101 info-sheet.
- Conducted Asian language hotlines to take questions in various languages about COVID-19.
- Used the Taoist belief to be like water: adaptable, nourishing, strong, and persistent.

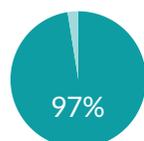
Participants



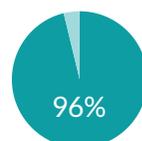
311 participants
by computer or phone
644 registrants
48% attendance rate

Survey Results

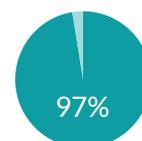
Following the roundtable, participants were asked to fill out a survey on their experience. 79 attendees responded to the feedback survey (25%).



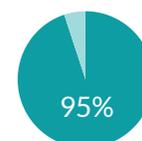
This virtual roundtable was informative



The dialogue increased my knowledge of the subject



Information provided could be useful to my work



The structure was effective and allowed opportunities to raise questions and get information



Strongly Agree and Agree

Strongly Disagree and Disagree

Resources and more information at:
<https://share.nned.net/2020/04/communities-respond-to-covid-19-implications-for-apis>