



Building Resilience in Our Community: Understanding and Healing from the Impacts of COVID-19 and Xenophobia

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Who We Are:

Clinician
Professor / Educator
Member of the Asian
American Community

Why We Are Here



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Questions to Think About

"Let's Talk!"

- What is your level of awareness of anti-Asian racism?
- What are the challenges within your environment that make talking about anti-Asian racism difficult?
- Are you feeling supported by your workplace?
How do you stay grounded?
- What do you need (resources, skills, etc.) to overcome the barriers you are naming?



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STOP AAPI HATE MENTAL HEALTH REPORT Key Findings

"Let's Talk!"

- AA who experienced racism are more stressed by anti-Asian hate than the pandemic itself.
- 1 in 5 AA who experienced racism display racial trauma, the psychological and emotional harm caused by racism.
- **Reporting is critical:** AA who experienced racism reported lower race-based traumatic stress after reporting.
- AA who experienced racism have heightened symptoms of depression, anxiety, stress, and physical symptoms.
- Experience of racism during COVID-19 is found to be more strongly associated with PTSD symptoms.

Saw A, Yellow Horse AJ, Jeung R. STOP AAPI HATE MENTAL HEALTH REPORT

Hahn, H.C., Xavier Hall, C.D., Garcia, K.T. et al. Experiences of COVID-19-related anti-Asian discrimination and affective reactions in a multiple race sample of U.S. young adults. *BMC Public Health* 21, 1563 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-11552-1>



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Clinical Themes We Are Noticing



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Receiving Direct Anti-Asian Hate Sentiments



"It's people like you is why we don't have masks... and toilet paper."

"I look outside and it makes me sad to see people wearing masks.
I don't want us to become like *those* countries where people wear masks."

"The Target incident – her look was of fear and disgust"



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Worrying About Safety of Loved Ones

"Let's Talk!"

Constant worries
Feelings of helplessness
Fear of being in the dark
"Survival guilt"



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Internalizing Anti-Asian Sentiments

"Let's Talk!"

13-year-old male referred for self-harming behavior.

He was a new immigrant from China. Classmates called him
stupid and dirty for eating animals.

This boy bought a small knife and started cutting himself.
When he came into my office, I asked him if he knew
why he was there to see me, he said,

"Because I am in trouble, and I am bad."



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Perpetuating Stereotypes and Within-group Resentment

"Let's
Talk!"

14-year-old Vietnamese-Chinese female came to session
upset with friends and classmates **making fun of Asians**
due to fears of Coronavirus.

She said they were **racist and ignorant**,

*"I wish the Chinese would stop eating weird animals
because it gives Asians a bad name."*



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Oppression Olympics

"I am not sure I can
speak up about how
I am feeling as an
Asian person
because I don't
want my black
friends to think I
don't support the
Black Lives Matter
movement."



We need to stop playing Privilege or
Oppression Olympics because we'll never get
anywhere until we find more effective ways
of talking through difference. We should be
able to say, "This is my truth," and have that
truth stand without a hundred clamoring
voices shouting, giving the impression that
multiple truths cannot coexist.

— Roxane Gay —

AZ QUOTES

"Let's
Talk!"



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What It Is Like for Asian Identifying Clinicians: Parallel Processes?



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Some Common Themes: Sound Familiar?



- **What is our role** in talking about racism and discrimination in clinical settings?
- **Do we have a right** to talk about Anti-Asian hate during time of Black Lives Matter?
- **We are scared and confused** for the safety of ourselves, family and community.
- **Invisibility** of our Asian identity to clients, colleagues, and institutions where we work.



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Empower Our Clients & Ourselves: Key Points!

"Let's Talk!"

- **You are not alone!**
 - Importance of community support
- **Experiences of Anti-Asian racism are not reflections of you**
 - You don't have to carry other people's stuff
- **Speak your truth**
 - This does not minimize truth of others; you get to and can take up space too
- **Tap-In and Tap-Out**
 - Activism comes in different forms and does not have to be 24/7



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What Resources Do We Need to Build Community of Support?

"Let's Talk!"



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Some Helpful Suggestions

"Let's Talk!"

- Key to trauma informed care – paths toward healing
 - ✓ Safety
 - ✓ Predictability
 - ✓ Agency/Control
- Know your spaces
- Know your peoples
- Create an inner circle of buffering support
- Establish casual and regular affinity spaces



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Self Care When Working with Trauma Is Imperative

"Let's Talk!"

- **Reflect**
 - Take notice of your experiences and reactions
- **Regulate**
 - Establish ways to cope in the moment and beyond
- **Relax**
 - Affirm & give permission for self compassion



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Thank You!



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