



Meeting the Comprehensive Needs of Pan-Asian Students: Leadership Perspectives on Identifying and Developing Strategies

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Leadership Lessons and Strategies

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Director of Upper School,
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Current Context



Casey Ho
@CaseyHo

orientalist misogynists: "go back to China!"

eileen gu: <decides to compete for China in the Olympics>

orientalist misogynists: "wait, no, not like that!"

8:49 PM · Feb 2, 2022

[Read the full conversation on Twitter](#)

3.4K Reply Copy link

[Read 212 replies](#)

Twitter: @CaseyHo

The New York Times
@nytimes

Asians make up around 7% of the U.S. population but have become vividly overrepresented in ice rinks and competitions at every level, from coast to coast.

Gradually, they have transformed a sport that, until the 1990s, was almost uniformly white. nyti.ms/3H1BZHn



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Personal Story



- What do you see?



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Power of Representation



- What impact does teacher representation have in the classroom?
- What about curriculum?



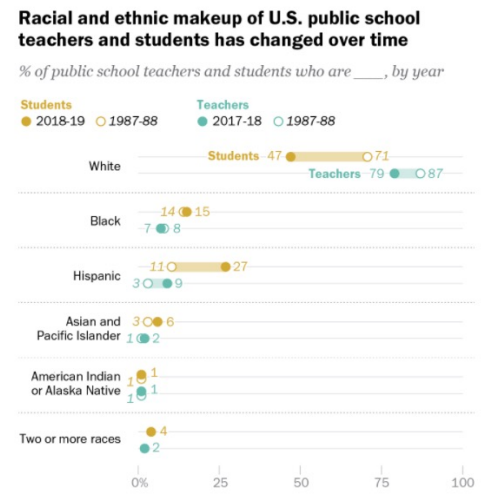
Logos for The MGH Center for Cross-Cultural Student Emotional Wellness, William James College, Center for Multicultural & Global Mental Health, Harvard University, and PACE.

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Power of Representation



- What responsibility do I have as an educational leader?



Logos for The MGH Center for Cross-Cultural Student Emotional Wellness, William James College, Center for Multicultural & Global Mental Health, Harvard University, and PACE.

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Erasure vs Invisibility

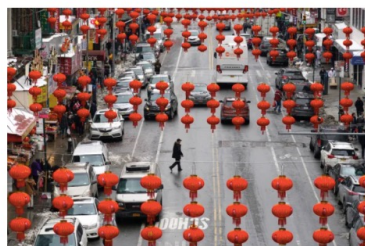


- In what ways have I erased or diminished the experiences of Asian students?

COVID's Outsize Impact on Asian Americans Is Being Ignored

Along with Pacific Islanders, they suffer from disproportionately high death rates and hospitalizations and low testing—but their suffering remains invisible

By Amy Yee on May 6, 2021



Credit: Bruce Yuanye Bi/Getty Images



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Measure What Matters



- What do we say is the purpose of education and schools?

Report: Asian Americans More Stressed by Anti-Asian Hate Than COVID-19

By Joe Fitzgerald Rodriguez, Holly McDede Jun 1, 2021 Save Article



Volunteer organizer Krystal Mak wears a mask that says, "Stop Asian Hate" during a student-led rally to show solidarity with Asian Americans in San Francisco on March 26, 2021. (Beth LaBerge/NGFD)

Asian Americans may be experiencing more stress from first-hand anti-Asian racism than from COVID-19 itself, according to a new report from [Stop AAPI Hate](#).



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Measure What Matters



- What narratives do we lift and celebrate?

AN UNEVEN PLAYING FIELD:
THE COMPLEX EDUCATIONAL
EXPERIENCES OF ASIAN AMERICANS

Julie J. Park



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Personal Story



- What do you see?



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Pan-Asian Student Support on the Ground

Karen Shih, Ph.D.
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What Does Support Look Like on the Ground?



- Clubs and affinity groups
- Advising and mentoring
- Asian American/Ethnic Studies curriculum
- Asian American faculty/staff representation
- ALL school personnel's cultural competency
- Clear policy and procedure to address Anti-Asian racism
- Programming and events (heritage month and more)



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Pan-Asian Students and Mental Health



- Anxiety/OCD, depression, eating disorder, PTSD
- Sexual assault, disempowering parenting, abusive romantic relationship, parent's rejection of their sexual orientation/gender identity, financial stress, imposter syndrome, mental illness of family members



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Pan-Asian Students and Mental Health



- Help seeking behavior
- Expectation of counseling
- Culturally competent Asian/Asian American counselors
- Working with parents



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Asian Women's Action for Resilience and Empowerment program (AWARE)

"Let's Talk!"

- Based on research by Professor Chris Hahm of Boston University
- Created specifically to address the mental, sexual, and physical health of Asian American women
- Evidence-based intervention
- 8-week counseling group, usually 5-8 students in a group, at least one facilitator needs to be of Asian descent
- Adapted AWARE in high school



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Asian Women's Action for Resilience and Empowerment program (AWARE)

"Let's Talk!"

- Session 1: Introduction to AWARE
- Session 2: ABCDG Parenting & Coping Disempowerment
- Session 3: The Catch-22: The Double-Blind
- Session 4: Who do I see in the Mirror?: Body Image and Discrimination
- Session 5: Romance, Violence, and Everything In Between
- Session 6: Sex and Substance Abuse
- Session 7: Giving Yourself Grace
- Session 8: New Beginnings



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Qualitative Assessment Results for AWARE



"AWARE is **able to break the cultural barriers** such as having culturally trained therapists. Cultural-specificity of the intervention will make people more willing to open up and accept help."

"I struggle to allow myself to feel emotions and fail. **Showing myself compassion** is really the only way to change that and the skills I learned were pivotal in starting to allow myself to feel and fail."

"**I didn't feel so alone anymore** in my experiences with my parents. It also helped me feel more compassionate to them to learn why they may have engaged in some disempowering parenting techniques."

"I struggle so much with body image as a genderfluid person. When we first had to name 5 things we liked about our bodies for our commitments, I cried because I only could think of 2. I still have body image issues, but **I confidently can find positive things** about my body. Also, acknowledging the fetishization of Asian women was extremely important to talk about."

"**I started to go to Tea Talks more** and came out to my mom again—better experience this time."



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AAPI First Year Fellowship

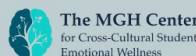


This fellowship program is designed for Asian American and Pacific Islander-identifying first year students to explore their racial identity and more in 8 workshops throughout the fall semester.

Goals:

1. Provide Asian American first year students a space to unpack their racial identity in relation to other identities (e.g. gender/sexual orientation, class status, ethnicity, religion)
2. Connect Asian American students with Wellesley professors who teach Asian American Studies/related topics or are allies to the AAPI community
3. Foster meaningful relationships between participants that will last throughout their 4 years at Wellesley

In this fellowship, 10-12 fellows will meet weekly. Each workshop will be led by two student facilitators under the supervision of the Advisor to Students of Asian Descent.



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Topics for AAPI First Year Fellowship

"Let's Talk!"

- Diversity of the AAPI community (including ethnic diversity, class diversity, etc.)
- Model minority myth and perpetual foreigner
- Queer AAPI identities and the stigmatization of queerness in relation to histories of western colonization
- Unpacking internalized racism, anti-Black sentiment within the AAPI community, and AAPI complicity
- Reflecting on our relationship with family, high expectations and how it impacts our mental wellbeing, and coping mechanisms/resources we can use to move forward



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AAPI First Year Fellowship Feedback

"Let's Talk!"

"In high school and elsewhere I grew up in predominantly white spaces and always felt sort of out of place. During this fellowship, I've probably been the most vulnerable I ever have been with a group of people and just being able to do that I think shows the sense of solidarity and empathy we've built here."

"My first semester experience would not have been the same without the fellowship. I have had a hard time feeling like my feelings as a person of color who is AAPI are not valid, and this fellowship helped me start to work through that. It was very validating to hear people echo thoughts I'd been having for years. One example I can think of was during the Queer AAPI Identities meeting, we were talking about how white queer voices are very prominent at Wellesley and how the vast majority of our white friends are much more open about their identities to their families. Even at a place like Wellesley where it feels so different than places we've been before because it's so LGBTQ+ friendly, there are still racial differences that impact our experience. It was just very comforting to hear that other people had noticed the same things and to have a space where I felt comfortable expressing my thoughts."

"I tend to think of professors as my superiors who are honestly kind of scary and not people I can really talk to. It was nice to feel like professors actually care about me, especially when it comes to my identity because I haven't had role models who were also Asian that weren't my relatives before. It was also validating to hear that these people who are so respected and accomplished still struggle with some of the same things that I do."



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Key Components for Success

"Let's Talk!"

1. Intentional space-culturally specific, culturally competent Asian American counselor/facilitator
2. Acknowledge their struggle, give permission to be vulnerable in a community
3. Structured program-topics, content, activity, reflection, tell their stories, listening
4. Long period of time, not just a one-time event



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Two Messages to Take Away

"Let's Talk!"

- **Feel the Urgency:** Many Asian and Asian American students are suffering and their needs are overlooked.
- **Change is Possible**



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Resources



[Contemporary racism and the Asian American experience: The impact of lifetime racial microaggression stress on psychological functioning and risk behavior in Asian American young adults](#)

[Supporting Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander Students and Families: Tips for Educators in K-12 Settings](#)

[AAPA COVID-19 Related Resources](#)

[AWARE](#)

[Fractured Identity: A Framework for Understanding Young Asian American Women's Self-harm and Suicidal Behaviors](#)

