

How to Help East Asian Youth & Families Deal with Mental Health Issues (January 3, 2017)

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University of Pennsylvania
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“It takes a village”

Central High School of Philadelphia

Administrators, Teachers, Staff, Home-School Association, Alumni Association



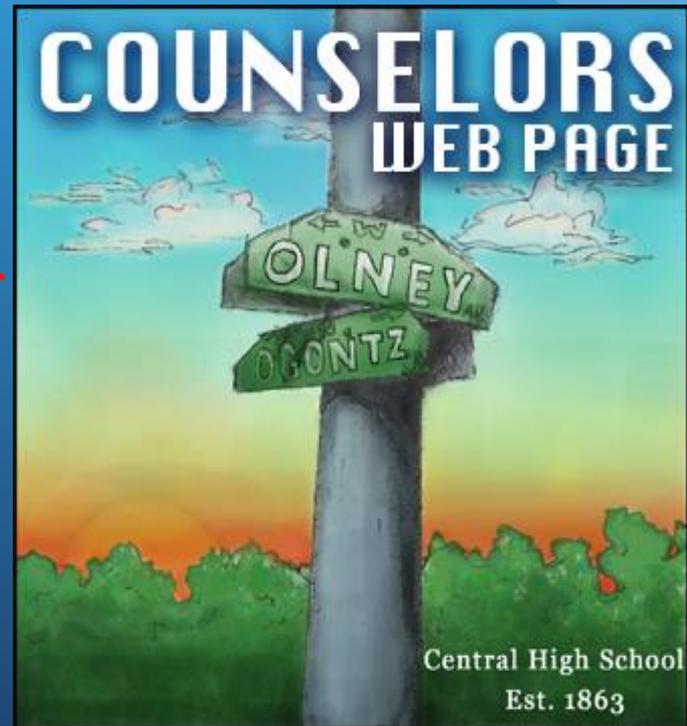
Student services

Academics

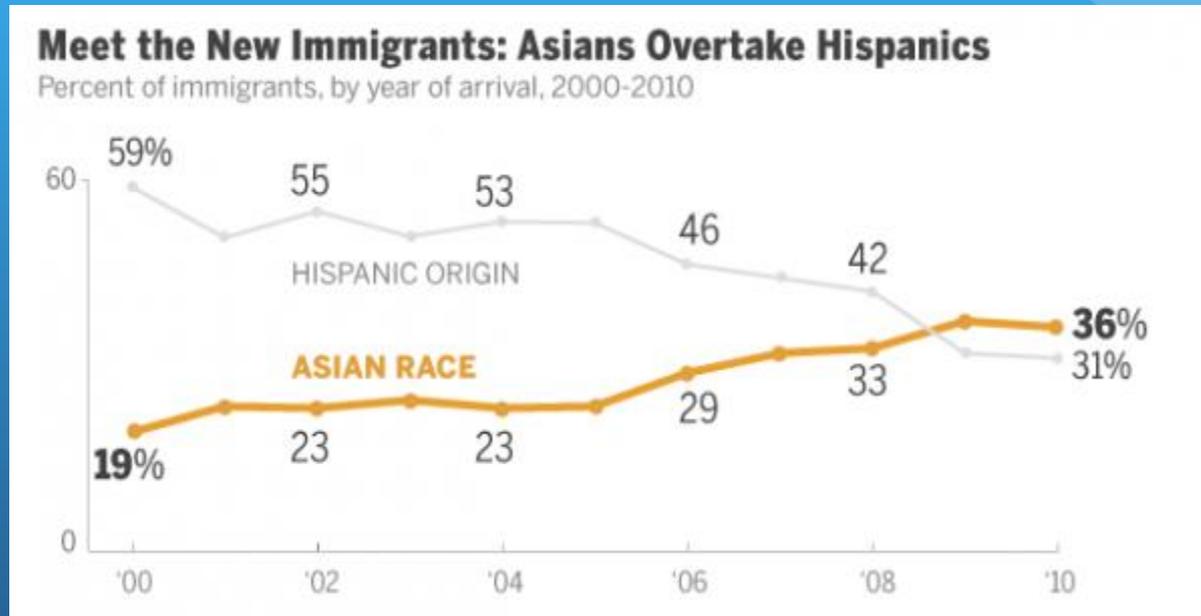
Parents

Campus Life

Alumni



The Rise of Asian Americans



Asian Americans are fastest-growing racial group in the U.S, with Asians now making up the largest share of recent immigrants

What Defines Asian Americans

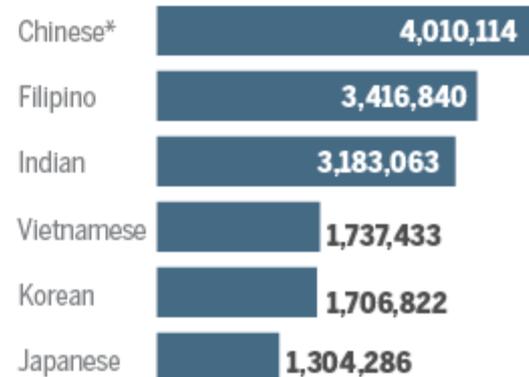
U.S. Asian-American Population, 2011

18,205,898

TOTAL U.S. ASIAN AMERICANS

THEY MAKE UP 5.8% OF THE
TOTAL U.S. POPULATION.

SIX GROUPS MAKE UP AT LEAST 83%
OF THE TOTAL ASIAN-AMERICAN POPULATION



*includes 215,441 Taiwanese

According to Pew Research survey, Asian Americans have strong values on marriage, parenthood, hard work and career success. Asian Americans are made up of immigrants and their descendants from countries in the Far East (Chinese, Korean, Japanese), Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent, each with a unique history, culture, language and pathway to America.

Cultural Values & Beliefs in East Asians

- ~ Philosophies of the mind: Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, ancestor worship (Chinese)
- ~ Powerful spirits through rituals (Chinese)
- ~ Family: collectivism (vs. individualism)
 - family harmony, hierarchy, respect elders, obligations
- ~ Image: reserved exterior
- ~ Communications: confrontation avoidance
- ~ Hard work, self reliance (vs. work & leisure balanced)
- ~ Group oriented thinking

Education

Pressure to Succeed

Who's a "Tiger Mom"?

39%

say Asian-American parents put too much pressure on their children.

This compares with only 9% who say American parents put too much pressure on their children to do well in school.



Beliefs in Health

East Asians

Mainstream Americans

Mind-body harmony

{Chi (air), Ying/Yang (food/drink)}

Seeking help when needed

Doctors make health care decisions

Healing: Acupuncture, qigong, herbal medicine

Individual organ systems

Health maintenance

Doctors and patients make decisions jointly

prescribed & over the counter medications

Beliefs in Mental Health

- ~ difficulties in conceptualizing the western medical terms such as depression, instead: low energy and insomnia; somatic complaints
- ~ moral bases: poor morals, laziness, selfishness
- ~ spiritual bases: angered spirits, use of local healers
- ~ strong stigma and shame (losing face for individual and family)
- ~ lack of understanding of the roles of mental health professionals
(e.g. expecting therapist to tell the patient what to do)
- ~ solutions focused

How Does Culture Shape the Expression of Emotional Distress in East Asians

- Signs of weakness

(if publicly displaying strong emotions)

- Acculturation conflicts

(children of immigrants blame their parents -controlling)

(immigrant parents complain about children - rebellious)

- Feel shamed

(if emotions directly challenged)

- Place high value on education

(Children face great pressure and stress to succeed academically)

Common Mental Health problems in East Asians

- Adults

- ~ sleep difficulties
- ~ fatigue
- ~ not feeling well (headache, aches...)
- ~ dizziness
- ~ difficulty concentrating
- ~ memory loss
- ~ chest tightness

(Neurasthenia: culture-bound syndrome, DSM-IV-TR)

- Youth

- ~ not going to school
- ~ grades declining
- ~ not listening to parents, grandparents
- ~ playing video games excessively
- ~ “too Americanized”
- ~ communication difficulties between parents and adolescents

How is the overall Asian Mental Health in US?

The U.S Surgeon General's report "Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity - A Supplement to Mental Health: A Report of Surgeon General" (U.S. Department of Human Services, 2001)

- ~ The need for services
- ~ The unmet service needs of Asian American individuals
- ~ The appropriateness and outcomes of mental health services

Asian American Mental Health: where are we?

1) The National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS)

2095 Asians, 18 years and older, 50 states and D.C, 2002~2003

Prevalence (life time) = 17.3 % any psychiatric disorder; Prevalence (12 month) =9.19 %

Immigration factors were associated with the disorder with different expression between women and men

2) The 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

#Asian Americans had the lowest rates of illicit drug use, alcohol use, tobacco use, substance dependence/abuse

3) Studies on Specific Asian American Subgroup or Specific Mental Disorders

Inconsistent results, Variance : clinical problems, subgroup, gender, age, and acculturation

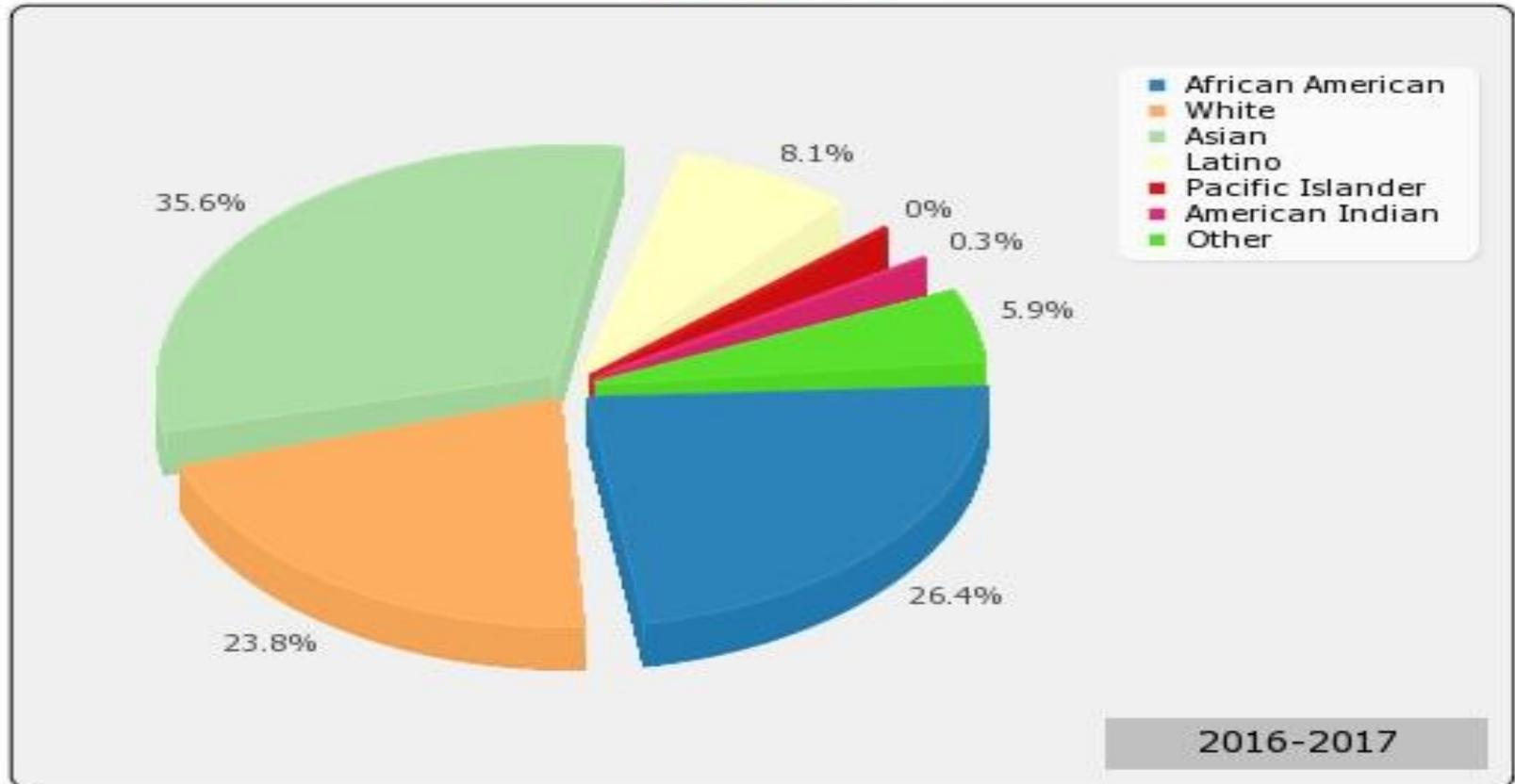
Asian Immigrants in Philadelphia

- ~ New analysis of census figures: the percentage of Asians in Philadelphia's immigrant community has increased seven-fold over the last 40 years.
- ~ The Asian groups experienced the largest growth in population from 2000 to 2010 growing by 43% (28,751 people).
- ~ In 2010, Asian population was 96,405, 6.32 % of Philadelphia population

Demographics at Central High

Ethnicity

[View Data Table](#)



Asian High School Students

- ~ Second generation of immigrants (Gen 2.0)
- ~~ First generation of immigrants (Gen 1.0)
 - ~ Came to US before high school (< 13 y/o)
 - ~ Came to US after high school (>13 y/o) (Gen 1.25)
- ~~~ Study abroad students

Cultural Identity

* The identity or feeling of belonging to, as part of one's self-conception and self-perception, pertaining to nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, locality and any kind of social group that has its own distinct culture

** Cultural identity is characteristic of the individual, but also refers to the entire population that shares the same values, perceptions and assumptions

Acculturation

Acculturation: the processes that occur when different individuals or groups of people meet and exchange aspects of their cultures

~ Group-Level: seen as a massive intake of another culture's traits, incorporating them as part of one's own culture.

~ Individual-Level (Transculturation): happens on a smaller scale with a less visible impact; most often occurs to first-generation immigrants, for whom transculturation is most difficult due to the lack of precedents in their family.

***New World Encyclopedia*

Types of Acculturation

1. Assimilation: when one desires minimal or no contact with one's culture of origin, and keeps frequent contact with the host culture
2. Integration: when one keeps high involvement with one's culture of origin, and at the same time has high involvement with the host culture.
3. Separation: when one maintains high involvement with the culture of origin, but prefers minimal involvement with the host culture.
4. Marginalization: when one desires no contact, neither with one's culture of origin nor the host culture.
5. Transmutation: when one decides to identify with a third culture, which is often a combination of both the culture of origin and a host culture.

Acculturation and Adolescent Development

Psychological Identity (Erickson, 1962)

- ~ Unique sense of self, elements from family but also others; with past, present, and future
- ~ *Ethnic/racial identity* important aspect of psychological identity development, completed in adolescence/ young adulthood
- ~ Peer and family interactions “mirror” against which psychological identity develops
- ~ Living in two worlds: traditional (home) and mainstream (peers/ school) ; mirroring in one may conflict with the other

Pressure to assimilate from mainstream society (media pressures, threat of social and economic marginalization)

Optimal adaptation: *Biculturality (two-way process)*:

- ~ Identity based on ethnic/ racial/ cultural group of origin
- ~ Select best of both cultures in terms of values, beliefs
- ~ Successfully navigate different contexts

Acculturative Stress

*** After moving to a new culture, individuals face many challenges:**

New language / Different customs, values and laws/ Distinct norms of social behavior/ Discrimination/ xenophobia/Economic stresses/Loss of natural protective beliefs/Loss of extended family support

**** Research has shown that acculturative stress is an important factor in the mental health of immigrants, as it increases the risk for various psychological problems.**

***** Several variables are associated with the degree of acculturative stress**

- ~ the greater the differences between the two cultures, the higher the stress**
- ~ the reason for moving to the new culture**
- ~ the degree of receptiveness of the host society**

Gap & Distancing

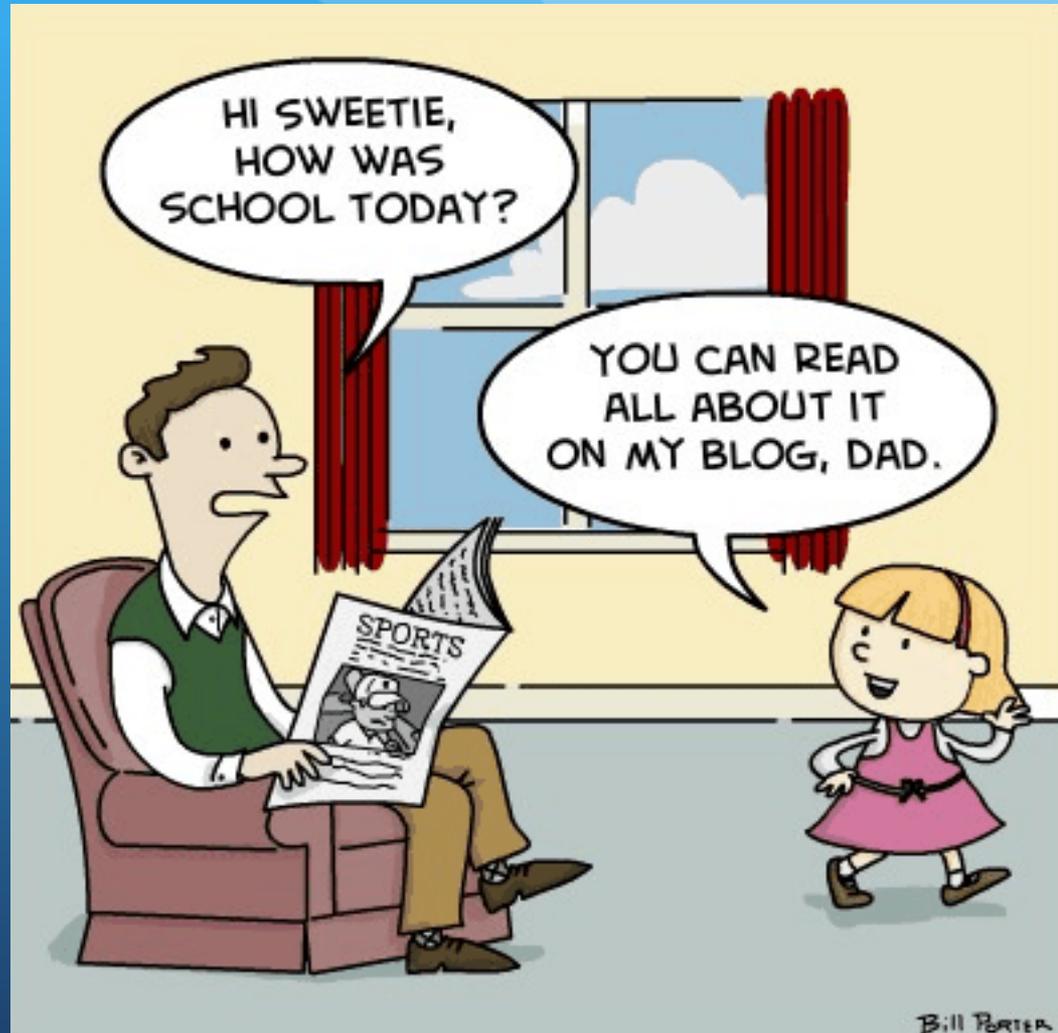
Generational Gap:

The difference of opinions on music, values, politics, etc. that occurs between one generation and another, usually between younger people and their parents and grandparents

Acculturative Family Distancing (AFD)

Parent-child differential acculturation; youth rebelling against parents vs. parents holding onto traditional values

Is it typical?



Relevance of Acculturation in MH of Asian American Youth

Immigration and Psychopathology: Hypotheses

- ~ Higher resiliency to stressors in Gen 1 immigrants (self-selection); grow “softer” in second generation
- ~ Repression of MH needs in Gen 1 in favor of addressing more immediate needs
- ~ Gen 2 immigrant may identify with devalued concepts of their ethnic Identity, adopted from the host culture, which may lead to “ethnic self-hate” and higher psychopathology
- ~ New hypothesis: Cumulative adverse effects on immigrant youth are largely due to acculturation stress and strains on family support, as seen in AFD and its impact on adolescent-family relations

Parental Roles in Promoting MH in East Asian Youth

- ~ Acculturated/acculturating
- ~ High/reasonable expectations
- ~ Effective communication skills (talking to, not talk at)
- ~ Understanding the developmental stage of their children
- ~ Balanced (physically, mentally, financially, immigration status...)
- ~ Willing to reach out to school, etc.

Parental Barriers to MH Issues in East Asian Youth

- ~ Language difficulties
- ~ Shame and stigma
- ~ Limited acculturation process
- ~ Overworked
- ~ Limited understanding the developmental stage of their children
- ~ Lack of concept of mental health issues
- ~ Emphasizing outcome more than process
- ~ Limited capacity to reach out to school, communities

Case presentation

Fall 2012

13 y/o Chinese girl (“Lucy”), brought to the clinic by mother with chief complaints of “withdrawn, sadness” in the setting of feeling sick since starting 8th grade, resulting in grades declining. Mother shared that she was having difficulties in communicating with Lucy.

- ~ Lucy immigrated to US at age 3
- ~ lives with parents, a grandmother, a younger sibling
- ~ is closer to mother than to father
- ~ enjoys singing, playing piano, also goes to a Chinatown church
- ~ has friends from her school

Case presentation (cont'ed)

Spring 2014

Lucy, now is 14 y/o, again brought to the clinic by mother with chief complaint of “I am stressed about school” (9th grade in a local magnet school).

- ~ Lucy terminated psychotherapy a few months after starting as she did not find helpful
- ~ Became pessimistic the first day of high school after finding out she did not have the same classes with her friends from the middle school
- ~ Grades started slipping, failing some classes with the possibility of being held back
- ~ Difficulty sleeping, falling asleep in classes, low energy and poor concentration, no interest in doing anything; feels nervous “all the time” especially about going to school or giving presentations; has had passive suicidal ideation, has been cutting her wrists
- ~ Lucy reports she does not have any support at school or home (relationship with mother and father “not good”, and she does not like her grandmother either)
- ~ Friendship: she and her friends have grown apart
- ~ Mom is unsure how her daughter is doing in school because she has not seen a single report card yet, but believes that Lucy has been missing a lot of school
- ~ Mom requested a tutor for Lucy

Case presentation (cont'ed)

What are the recommendations?

~ Lucy

~ Parents

~ School

~ Community

How can you help?

1. Talk to students

- ~ willing to get help (tutoring? checking in? etc.)

2. Involve parents/grandparents

- ~ willing to accept help? (incentive points: grades, future)

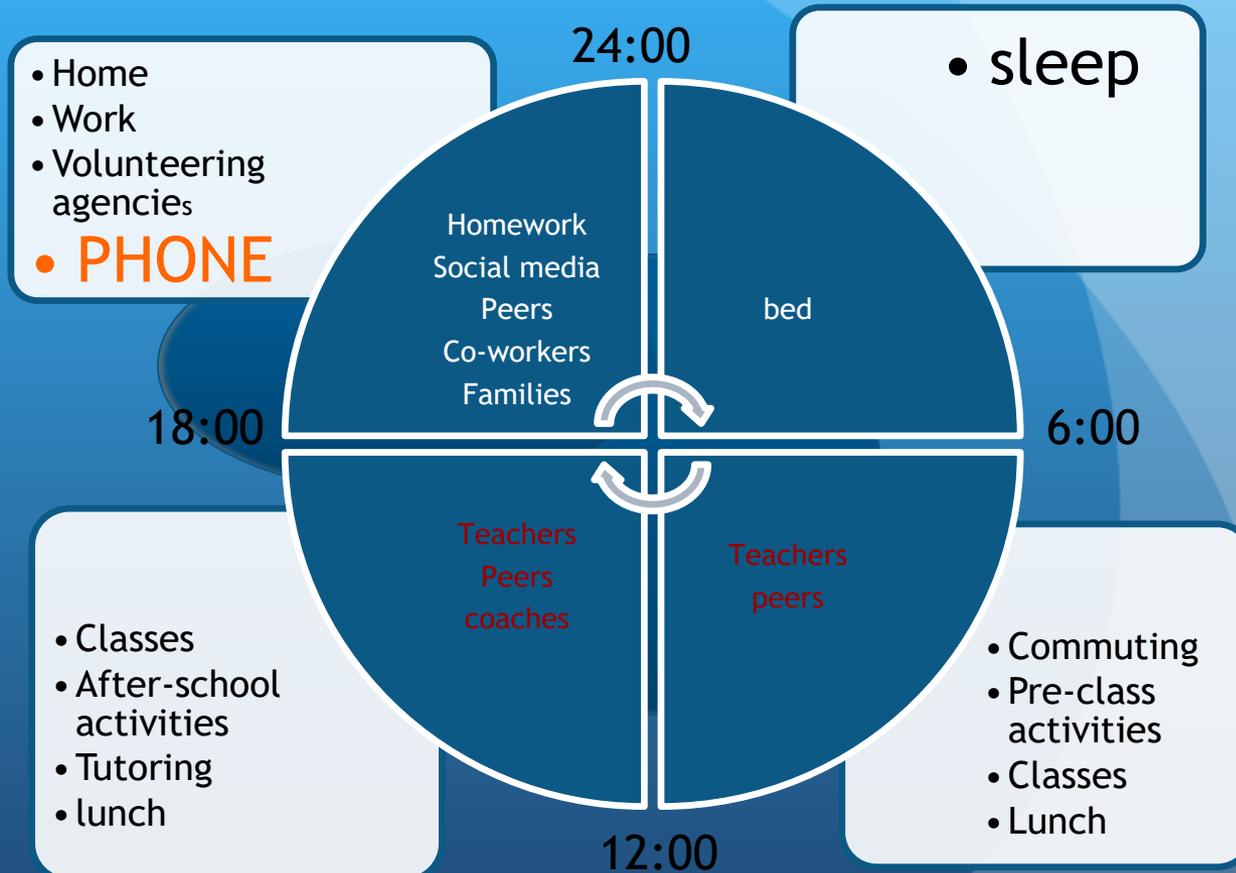
3. Involve peers/coaches/club sponsors

- ~ students will be trained as coaches

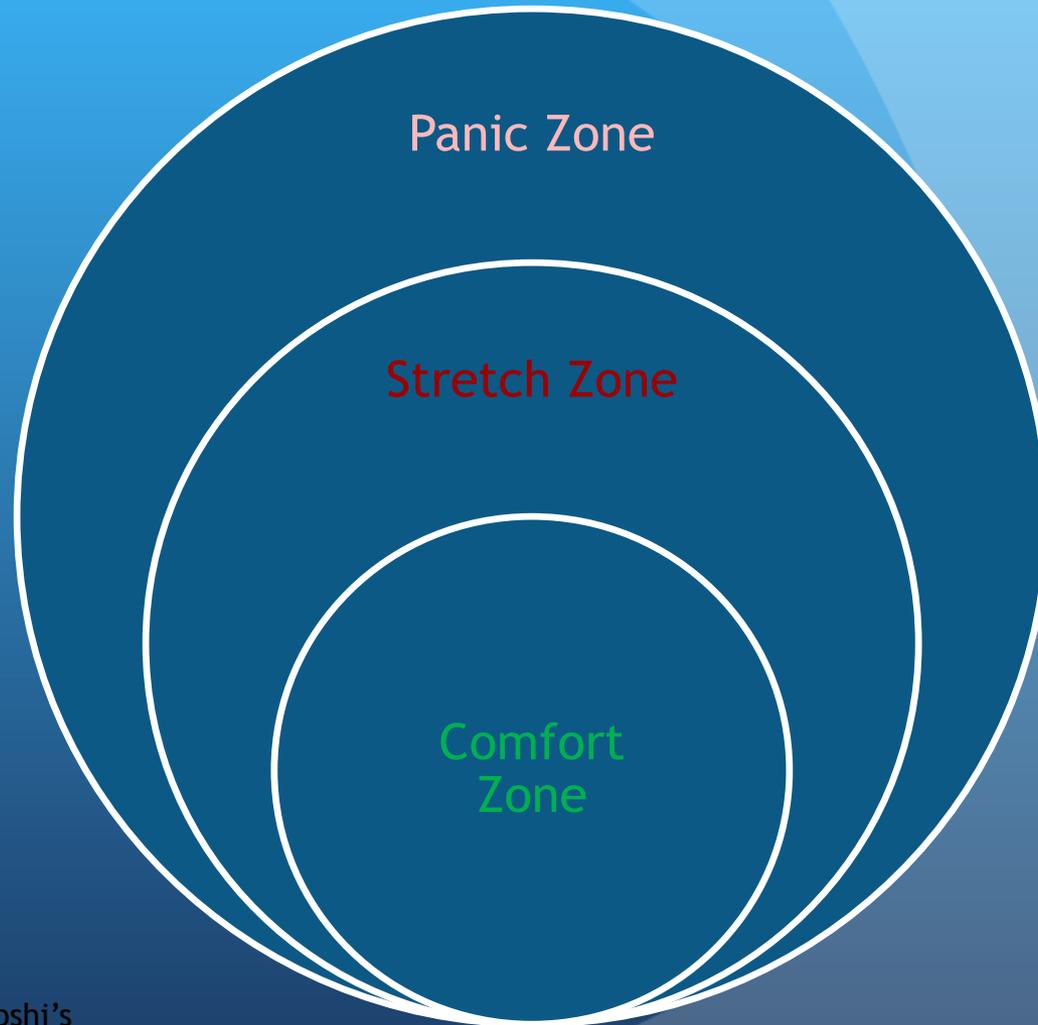
4. Make referral

- ~ Counselors
- ~ Pediatricians
- ~ Mental health Professionals
- ~ communities (churches, local organizations)

Where are our kids now days?

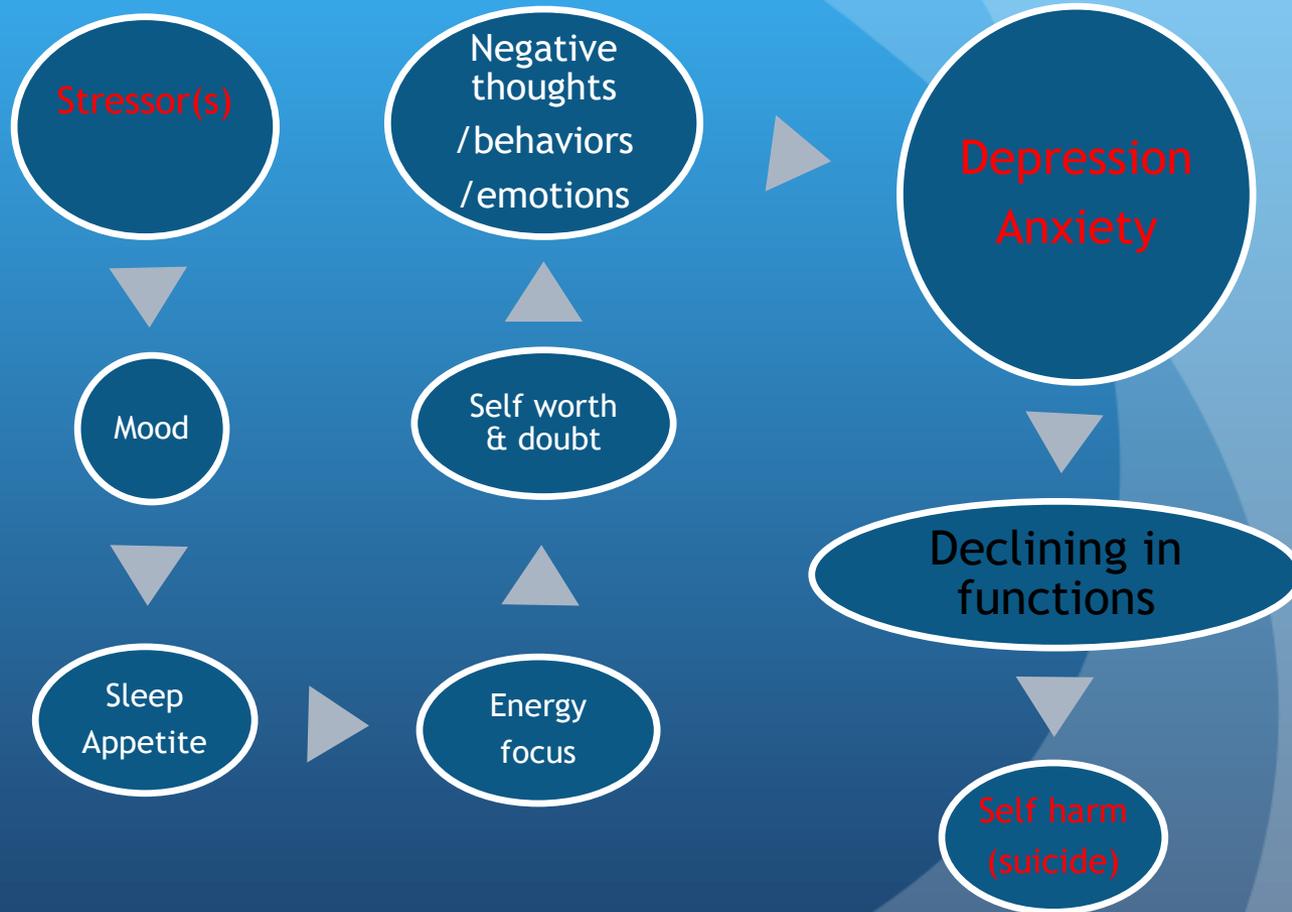


Where are our Teachers Now Days?



Excerpt from Dr. Joshi's
presentation at AACAP, 2016

What are the processes?



Facts & Stats

~ For middle and high school age youth (ages 12-18), suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death. *

~ Over-all, suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for our youth ages 10-24. *

(*2014 CDC WISQARS)

~ More teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza, and chronic lung disease, **COMBINED**.

~ Each day in our nation, there are an average of over 5,240 attempts by young people grades 7-12.

~ 4 out of 5 teens who attempt suicide have given clear warning signs.

** The Jason Foundations

What are some Warning Signs of Suicidal Ideation?

- ~ Talking about suicide (verbal/**social media**)
- ~ Making statements about feeling hopeless, helpless, or worthless
- ~ A deepening depression
- ~ Preoccupation with death
- ~ Taking unnecessary risks or exhibiting self-destructive behavior
- ~ Out of character behavior
- ~ A loss of interest in the things one cares about
- ~ Visiting or calling people one cares about
- ~ Making arrangements; setting one's affairs in order
- ~ Giving prized possessions away

What are Certain Risk Factors that can Elevate the possibility of suicidal ideation?

- ~ Perfectionist personalities
- ~ Gay and Lesbian youth
- ~ Learning disabled youth
- ~ Loners
- ~ Youth with low self- esteem
- ~ Depressed youth
- ~ Students in serious trouble
- ~ Abused, Molested or Neglected Youth
- ~ Genetic predisposition
- ~ Parental history of violence, substance abuse, or divorce

Future Direction

- **Increase access**

- ~ recruit medical students, residents, social workers, paraprofessionals within Asian immigrant communities
- ~ establishing medical homes, system of care (School will be a big part of this)

- **Promoting help-seeking behaviors**

- ~ reducing stigma

- **Improving outcomes**

- ~ quality research

Stories on Depression in Asian American Teens, Supported by the Carter Center (Rosalynn Carter)

<http://newamericamedia.org/2013/09/cultural-stigma-hurts-asian-american-teens-with-depression.php>

<http://newamericamedia.org/2013/09/a-psychological-lifeline-for-asian-american-teens.php>

<http://newamericamedia.org/2013/09/on-some-college-campuses-a-focus-on-asian-american-mental-health.php>

* There is also Chinese & Korean versions

Resources for Youth

Youth Move National

Youth M.O.V.E National is a youth led national organization devoted to improving services and systems that support positive growth and development by uniting the voices of individuals who have lived experience in various systems including mental health, juvenile justice, education, and child welfare. The members of Youth M.O.V.E. National will work as a diverse collective to unite the voices and causes of youth while raising awareness around youth issues. We will advocate for youth rights and voice in mental health and the other systems that serve them, for the purpose of empowering youth to be equal partners in the process of change.

Lets

Let's Erase the Stigma Educational Foundation addresses issues that youth face every single day in school, in the media, and at home-issues that are sometimes hard to discuss. But LETS youth are changing the world because they are not afraid to say something about

Minding Your Mind

Fifty percent of individuals with a life-time diagnosis of a mental health issue will show warning signs by the age of 14. Educating students, parents, teachers and school administrators on this often avoided topic is critical. Minding Your Mind provides this much needed education by sponsoring school programs, supporting research and holding an annual public forum each May. A 501(c)(3) charitable organization, Minding Your Mind is based just outside Philadelphia, PA.

Reach Out

ReachOut is run by the [Inspire USA Foundation](#). The Inspire USA Foundation is a California-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Inspire's mission is to help millions of young people lead happier lives. To meet the Inspire team and read their bios, you should go to the [Inspire Foundation website](#).

The Trevor Project

The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth.

*American Academy of child and Adolescent Psychiatry

MH Agencies and Resources in Philadelphia Serving Asians

Table of Contents

Crisis Numbers

On-Site Mental Health Services

Social Work and Community Resources

Psychoeducational Handouts in Other Languages

<http://pennapamsa.weebly.com/list-of-resources.html>

references

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11. Moha Ennaji, *Multilingualism, Cultural Identity, and Education in Morocco, Springer Science & Business Media, 2005, pp.19-23*

12. Pumariega, A. J. Community-Based Mental Health Care of Immigrant Populations: conceptual Basis, Symposium at IPS, Oct. 2013