MENTAL HEALTH IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

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UCI Cross-Cultural Center
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KATHY DONG

- Counseling background
- Cultural Wellness, Professional Development
- Born and raised in Orange County, CA
- Vietnamese Refugee parents
- Personal is political
TODAY’S GOALS

Students in Diversity in Medicine will be able to...

- Identify the relationship of their identities with culture
- Increase their knowledge about mental health of different communities of color
- State how mental health impacts them in their everyday life
- Understand the impact of intergenerational trauma for these communities
ACTIVITY: IDENTITY & CULTURE

● What role does mental health play in your everyday lives?
● How have your identities impacted your experiences?
● What role does mental health play in your family? Your culture?
● How has your family/culture shaped your overall perception of mental health and well-being?
  ○ What about your help-seeking behaviors?
How Can Race/Ethnicity/Culture Influence Mental Health?

- Communication (Verbal & Non-Verbal)
- Manifestation of Symptoms
- Family & Community Support
- How People Perceive & Cope with Mental Illness
- Stigma & Shame Around Mental Illness
- How Doctors Interact
- How and Where People Seek Help

Stressors on Diverse Ethnic/Racial Groups

- Racism
- Discrimination
- Poverty
- Violence

Mental Health Disparities Factors

Members of ethnic and racial minority groups in the U.S. “face a social and economic environment of inequality that includes greater exposure to racism, discrimination, violence, and poverty, all of which take a toll on mental health.”

- U.S. Surgeon General
HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO MEDICINE & SCIENCE?
# THINGS TO CONSIDER

## RACE & MENTAL HEALTH

## SYSTEMATIC ISSUES & OPPRESSION EXIST

## OTHER BARRIERS
- LANGUAGE
- CULTURE
- RELIGION
BLACK/ AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

- Misinformed about mental health
- Unspoken topic
- Lack of African American mental health professionals
- Lack of health insurance
- Misdiagnosis
• Limited research about Native American and mental health
• Values of well-being = connectedness, reciprocity, balance, and completeness
• Alternative methods for holistic healing
• Lack of health insurance
LATINX/CHICANX/HISPANIC COMMUNITIES

- Limited research on mental health
- Lack of health insurance
- Stigma
- Latina Teens / suicide rate

17.8% of the U.S. population is estimated to be Latino or Hispanic.

Of those, over 15% had a diagnosable mental illness in the past year.

That is over 8.9 million people.

More than the number of people who live in New York City.

SOURCES:
2. https://www.samhsa.gov/specific-populations/racial-ethnic-minority

MORE THAN THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN NEW YORK CITY
ASIAN AMERICAN / PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITIES

- Extremely diverse group - 43 different ethnic subgroups, 100 languages and dialects
- Limited knowledge about mental health
  - Language barriers
  - Conflicting values
- Suicide Rate
  - UCI Counseling Center

5.4% of the U.S. population identifies as Asian American or Pacific Islander.

Of those, over 13% had a diagnosable mental illness in the past year.

That is over 2.2 million people more than the number of dentists, postsecondary teachers and lawyers in the United States.

Sources:
There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.
Yes there are barriers, but what can you do to close these gaps?
TRAUMA

Experience that causes psychological injury or pain
Exposure to a traumatic event such as threatened death, injury, or sexual violence (1 or more)

- Direct experience
- Witness
- Learning about event / others’ experiences
- Repeated experience or extreme exposure

(American Psychiatric Association, 2013)
Presence of 1+ Intrusion Symptoms

- Re-experiencing the distressing memories
- Recurrent dreams/ Nightmares
- Disassociate reactions = Flashbacks

Avoidance

- Avoiding distressing memories
- Avoiding distressing reminders

Negative alterations in cognitions and mood

- Negative beliefs or expectations
  - “No one can be trusted.”

(American Psychiatric Association, 2013)
SYMPTOMS

- Irritability
- Hypervigilance
- Reckless or self-destructive behavior
- Concentration problems
- Exaggerated reactions
- Sleep Disturbance (ex. Insomnia)

(American Psychiatric Association, 2013)
INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

“Trauma that is transferred from the first generation of trauma survivors to the second and further generations of offspring of the survivors via complex post-traumatic stress disorder mechanisms.”

(“Intervention”, 2012)
VIETNAMESE AMERICAN REFUGEES
INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA
VIETNAMESE AMERICANS IN ORANGE COUNTY

6.1% of the county’s population

Largest number of Vietnamese outside of Vietnam

(Vo, 2008)
SOUTHEAST ASIAN/VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

- Khmer Rouge
- Vietnam War
- Diaspora: Waves of Refugees
  - 1st wave
    - Well-educated, gov’t officials
  - 2nd wave
    - Boat people
  - 3rd wave
    - U.S Orderly Departure Program
    - U.S Homecoming Act
    - Humanitarian Operation Program

(Zhou, Min, & Bankston, 2000)
GENERATIONS

1st

1.5

2nd
MENTAL HEALTH AS A STIGMA

SAVING FACE

COLLECTIVIST CULTURE
DEPEND ON COMMUNITY & FAMILY

PRIDE

Bác Sĩ Tâm Thần

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

(Vo Dang, 2005)
UNIQUE STRESSORS

ACCULTURATION = ADAPTING TO A NEW CULTURE

ENCULTURATION = PRESERVATION OF ONE’S CULTURE

GENERATIONAL GAPS

LANGUAGE BARRIERS / LANGUAGE BROKERS

FILIAL PIETY - RESPECT FOR ELDERS

PARANOIA & ANXIETY

(Maffini & Pham, 2016)
**RESEARCH**

- Vietnamese refugees attending psychiatric clinics = high rates of PTSD and panic attacks
  (Hinton, Safren, & Pollack, 2006)

- Southeast Asian Refugee Families  (Sangalang, Jager, & Harachi, 2017)
  - Refugee parents’ trauma prevents development and affect family functioning and children’s mental health
    - Affects the quality of the family relationships, communication, parenting behaviors, children’s behaviors
  - High rates for PTSD, depression, and anxiety
    - Cambodian refugee adults - 62% PTSD, 51% depression
  - Intergenerational transmission of trauma more salient for 1.5 generation than 2nd generation children

- Vietnamese American College Students  (Han & Lee, 2011)
  - Similar to other AAPI, but still unique due to the refugee family background
  - Intergenerational conflict
  - Experiences more psychological distress than other Asian subgroups
CASE STUDY

Anh Nguyen is a low-income, first generation Vietnamese American-born college student who is attending a 4-year university. It is the first time she has been away from home. She seems anxious when you first meet her. This is the first time she ever stepped into the counseling center. She later shares with hesitation that her family has a refugee background - her dad was in the army and her parents came to the U.S on boat. Anh also mentions how her parents are strict and always reminds her not to trust anyone. This frustrates Anh since these type of lessons makes her question on trusting others completely. You also discover that she does not know enough about her parents’ stories since they actively avoid talking about it at home. Therefore, she has a hard time understanding her parents and finds herself in a lot of conflict with them. She is stressed about balancing family, school, and work because she decided to go with what her parents want such as aiming to be a doctor or pharmacist. She says, “I am not interested in this path but I need to do it to live up to my parents’ expectations and make enough money to take care of them especially with all the sacrifices they made. I can’t risk following my passions. My parents also are growing older and they both have thyroid.”
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PROJECT NGOC

- UCI student organization focused on humanitarian rights, specifically fighting against the repatriation of refugees
- They fundraised to help those in the refugee camps all over the world
- Supplied art supplies as a method of healing

(Vo Dang, 2005)
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
TODAY

I WAS A BOAT PERSON
TREATMENT/ FUTURE WORK AS PROFESSIONALS

- ART AND ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR HOLISTIC HEALING
- SELF-CARE
- DE-STIGMATIZE MENTAL HEALTH
- CRITICAL THINKING & UNDERSTAND LIMITATIONS/ BARRIERS
- COUNSELING APPROACH
TAKEAWAYS FROM TODAY
RESOURCES

Project LETS: https://letserasestigma.com

SEAA doc: http://seaadoc.lib.uci.edu/

VIET STORIES: http://sites.uci.edu/vaohp/
Queer & Race Series

with DeeJay & Kathy

Come and have meaningful conversations with us over tea, cocoa, and snacks about LIFE and the intersections of race, gender, and sexual identities.

DeeJay Brown
Assistant Director, LBGTRC

Kathy Dong
Student Development Coordinator, CCC

Wednesdays
Week 6 & 9 (2/14, 3/7)
4 - 5 PM

G301 UCI Student Center | LGBT Resource Center

Counselor-in-Residence

Take Time Thursdays with Dr. Jas Tilghman

Dr. Jas is from Missouri where she completed all of her degrees. She’s passionate about the well-being of students and strives to support students’ resiliency and hardness.

Drop by her open hours to learn about her work, do a self-care activity, talk about life, or have a confidential conversation.

Thursdays, 2 - 4 PM
CCC Board Room

Counseling Center
University of California, Irvine
THANK YOU

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CROSS-CULTURAL CENTER


Intervention to Address Intergenerational Trauma: Overcoming, Resisting and Preventing Structural Violence. (2012). Retrieved from https://www.ucalgary.ca/


Our process is easy

first

second

last
SlidesCarnival icons are editable shapes.
This means that you can:
● Resize them without losing quality.
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Isn’t that nice? :) 

Examples: