



What is “APIA”?

- APIA = Asian & Pacific Islander American
 - “umbrella term” for many ethnic groups and languages spoken
- Purpose of the term:
 - U.S. Census category
 - pan-ethnic identity: political advocacy, social identity
- Diverse – not a homogenous group, even within the same ethnic group
 - seniors in particular identify with their country of origin and their own ethnicity

+ APIA OAs in LA County

- 50+ population of APIAs is growing rapidly
 - Asian Americans = 56% growth
 - Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders = 50% growth
- Predominantly immigrant communities
 - among Asian American groups, Japanese Americans are the only group that is majority US-born
- Face language barriers
 - 62% of Asian Americans 50+ are LEP
 - 34% of Asian Americans households are linguistically isolated



Model Minority Myth #1

- Myth: Asian Americans are well-educated and financially well-off.
- Reality: The Asian American community is bimodal.
 - Some Asian Americans are well-educated and well-off, particularly those whose families have been in the US for several generations, or those who entered the US on high-skill work visas.
 - Other Asian Americans are at or near the bottom in terms of educational attainment and income/poverty.



Model Minority Myth #2

- Myth: Asian Americans take care of their own and don't need help.
- Reality: Asian Americans need resources.
 - Asian American families face the same social and economic pressures as anyone else living in the United States.
 - They may be unaware of resources or don't know how to access them.
 - Sometimes there are inherent barriers to accessing resources.



General APIA Cultural Values

- Hierarchical family structure
 - elders are highly respected as authority figures and social treasures
- Private vs. public self
 - reliance on adult children & ethnic community
- Communal vs. individual self
 - ultimate goal may not be “independence”
 - want interdependence, but without being a burden others



+ Challenges for APIAs

- Lack of knowledge about available resources
- Fewer in-language services, educational materials, activities and referral resources
- Mainstream providers may be unaware of specific needs or unable to address them
- Culture might be perceived as a barrier to receiving services (barrier is indirectly clients' "fault")



+ Serving APIA Elders

- Before you start, do some reflection and research
- Prepare to provide culturally appropriate and/or in-language support
 - increases understanding, comprehension, communication
 - promotes a sense of inclusion
 - bilingual materials so all family members can participate
- Cultural competency and linguistic competency are not the same!





A Word About Translations...

- Literal translations often don't make practical sense
 - words or concepts may be absent in some languages
 - professional translators may not be familiar with social service/mental health terminology, or
 - technical terms may be correct, but inappropriate for the target population

- Must interpret, then re-create culturally and linguistically appropriate materials
 - “I” statements feel unnatural – must convey a sense of empowerment without relying on “I” and “me”
 - quality of life is not necessarily about “pleasure” – must identify some other value or way of phrasing



Broad Strategies

- Develop and use a neutral (euphemistic) vocabulary
 - emphasize education and wellness rather than “help”
 - support group = weekly class to learn about...
- Build credibility
 - be visible and open to small talk
 - follow up and follow through
- Empower community-based organizations
 - faith institutions
 - other nonprofits



+ Individual Approaches

- Spend extra time building rapport
 - assess language & level of acculturation
 - be prepared to give some level of personal disclosure
 - leave room for reciprocity
- Take indirect communication style into account
 - direct eye contact avoided
 - non-confrontational → noncompliance
 - “yes” may not always mean “yes”
 - pay attention to somatic complaints
- Get to know the family
 - understand their decision-making context
 - influence and motivate the senior
 - family members often need support too



+ Ideas

- Develop new materials and a useful vocabulary to talk about issues
 - give service providers and families more confidence to bring this up things with their elders
- Increase awareness among primary care physicians in our respective communities
- Create additional supportive activities
 - transportation
 - congregate activities
 - culturally appropriate adaptations of EBPs



Resources

- Asian Americans Advancing Justice
www.advancingjustice.org
- Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council
www.A3PCON.org
- Little Tokyo Service Center
www.LTSC.org
- National Asian Pacific Center on Aging
www.NAPCA.org