“Success is a collection of problems solved.”

I. M. Pei
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“You don’t choose the times you live in, but you do choose who you want to be. And you do choose how you think.”

Grace Lee Boggs
Beginning in March of 2020, attacks on the Asian-American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community grew exponentially; according to the New York Police Department’s data, hate crimes against Asians are up 1900% since the start of the pandemic. These attacks have been reported nationwide - even here in Oklahoma. Racism is not a new experience for Asians and Asian Americans in our communities. Racist ideology has long been intertwined with the American perception of our AAPI communities, sustaining concepts that define the “model minority” myth and “perpetual foreigner” status.

By understanding the history surrounding Asian American experiences and the long-established foundation of anti-Asian bigotry, we can begin a journey towards better understanding the AAPI community. We can move into becoming allies in a more external, active capacity that remains respectful of the many cultures that are included in the term “Asian American”.

Throughout this packet there are a series of questions meant to provide a space for self-reflection. Through this deliberate and mindful process we hope to see an Oklahoma that actively works to welcome all cultures as well as create an informed nonprofit community that can succeed in their missions by incorporating inclusive practices.

*All links contained in this document can be found here: [bit.ly/AAPI_Toolkit_Links](bit.ly/AAPI_Toolkit_Links)*
Within the wide variety of cultures included in the term “AAPI” and “Asian American”, there are also many different lived experiences. The experience of a Japanese American family in Hawai`i in the 1940s is entirely different from that of a Vietnamese American family in Texas in 1970. To understand the current surge in violence against this population, we must go back and build a foundation of historical knowledge about the AAPI experience in America. There are patterns of racism perpetuated from the past into the present, which in turn inform how we address them currently.

Ask Yourself:

- What do I know about AAPI history?
- What do I know about the Asian American community in Oklahoma, including the Vietnamese American population?
- Where have I learned what I do or don’t know?
- Where did I learn the answers I gave above?
tools

For an introductory course on AAPI history, PBS has an in-depth series titled Asian Americans, going back from 1850 to present day (watch here).

Lee Isaac Chung’s film Minari has garnered praise for it’s portrayal of a family of Korean immigrants moving to the midwest in the 1980s. The film is (as of May 2021) showing in select Oklahoma theaters, and is also available to stream.

Historian Erika Lee’s comprehensive book, The Making of Asian America, is another overview of AAPI history. This book is a masterful historical compliation, and provides analysis of key Asian American figures, events and experiences.

Jasmine Cho is an activist and baker who uses cookies to educate her following about different Asian-American icons and historical figures. Watch her TEDx Talk here.
Why is there a surge of anti-Asian hate rhetoric and assault against Asian Americans? Worldwide, 2020 was a year filled with crisis, shutdowns, uncertainty, and loss of family and friends. The internalized stress and anxiety of the pandemic manifested into a new wave of xenophobia, the fear or dislike of cultures different from one’s own. There are a number of stories across the country of physical attacks on the AAPI community in the wake of COVID-19. These incidents range from hateful speech to damage to property to more severe attacks including physical assault and death. The motivations for these assaults are rooted in racism, which allows Asians to be targets for violence and has been perpetuated for decades. The sexualization of Asian women, the historic fear of AAPI “taking American jobs” and many more unsubstantiated stereotypes allow this community to be the target for modern-day violence. Once we understand the patterns, we can begin to break down this process and, ultimately, work towards stopping the cycle of hate and violence from repeating itself.

**Ask Yourself:**

- What has sparked the current surge of attacks?
- What does anti-Asian rhetoric look like?
- How are these incidents treated in media coverage versus other hate crimes?
- How do I interface with stories like these? Do I read them or do I skip them because they may not relate to the community I am from?
The ACLU recently interviewed activist Amanda Nguyen on the rise of anti-asian attacks, and she discusses her viral video that named the attacks as being hate crimes ([watch here](#)).

NextShark is a news source that focuses on Asian American-centered news stories, told by members of the community and allies alike. It is a great resource to not only learn about incidents as they occur, but to also read more about the current efforts being taken by communities across the nation to protect and empower AAPI people.

[contains strong language] Minority Korner is a podcast that aims to “take an introspective look at the world, through an intersectional lens”, hosted by comedian James Arthur M. The podcast has just released three episodes (294-296) featuring the AAPI community, and tying the current wave of racism towards them into its’ historical foundation. Start with Episode 294, which covers the Chinese Exclusion Act and Model Minority Myth.

Celeste Ng recently wrote a beautiful essay for the New York Times titled “Keeping Love Close” about self-love as an Asian American in this time of heightened hate. The essay is intercut by a contemporary image gallery sourced from a wide variety of Asian and Asian American photographers that provide small vignettes into their lives.
Unconscious biases, also known as implicit biases, are inherent predispositions that we unknowingly carry and inform our actions on a daily basis. While we may actively think in an equality-focused way, often times our subconscious still carries prejudiced ideas and stereotypes formed by our experiences and social interactions.

“I would argue that most people don’t want to have those biases. They intend to be non-prejudiced or non-biased. And yet... they have learned stereotypes, they have picked them up from cultures, to the point that they get so deeply entrenched in their minds, that they become default or habitual ways of thinking about others,”² says Dr. Patricia Devine, a leader in the field of bias study.

We may not want to have biases, but acknowledging and interpreting our biases is important increasing more understanding in our communities. To look inward and examine these societal prejudices is a difficult but necessary step on the journey towards becoming an ally.

**Ask Yourself:**

- What do I understand about implicit and unconscious biases?
- How do I exhibit bias-led behaviors?
- What do I do when I catch myself exhibiting these behaviors?
- What system or education do I need to overcome these behaviors and exclude them from my vocabulary/actions?
Derald Wing Sue, hailed Asian American anti-racist author, explains in this video what a microagression is and how to combat them. Additionally, in 2020 he released his two new books: “Microaggressions in Every Day Life” and Microintervention Strategies: What You Can Do to Disarm and Dismantle Individual and Systemic Racism and Bias”.

One of the most common microaggressions the AAPI community experiences daily is the mispronunciation of names. Often times, immigrants will adopt a “Western/American” name to avoid this issue, tucking away a part of themselves to make things “easier”. There are a wealth of websites that teach how to pronounce different names from different languages, such as NameShouts and Pronounce Names. Not only does this one small act have the opportunity to make someone feel seen and respected, but it can also improve professional relationships and how you serve your community through your nonprofit. Better yet, once you get in the practice of saying these names correctly, it soon becomes second nature!

“Covering Asia and Asian Americans” by the Asian American Journalists Association is a huge resource for vocabulary you will see in coverage of the AAPI community. This also helps to navigate readers away from problematic terms and phrases that we may not realize contain a loaded history.

There are many established resources for unconscious bias trainings in Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Center for Community and Justice, which is based in both Tulsa and OKC, offers inclusive workplace and leadership trainings, as well as a variety of resources. For those starting to examine their biases, take the Harvard Implicit Bias Tests, which are presented in a variety of diversity facets.
On the foundation of education and commitment to understanding the Asian American experience comes allyship. As allies, we may become comfortable speaking up to friends, colleagues, and community leaders. This may be through a large, organizational statement, or it may be a personal conversation with a friend exhibiting anti-Asian sentiments. No matter the scale, it is important to wield your voice as an advocate and ally. Those that propagate hate rhetoric often take the silence of unaffected communities as agreement with their message, so be loud in your condemnation of bigotry. This is not to say that you speak over the AAPI community, but rather make it known that you do not stand for xenophobia and, when possible, make space for AAPI voices to be heard, seen, and validated. Make sure your allyship is authentic and not “performative”, meaning that you go beyond rhetoric alone and commit to actions that utilize your privilege and resources to make real change.

**Ask Yourself:**

- What is performative allyship vs. authentic allyship? How do I avoid the pitfalls of the former and embrace the latter?
- What does “speaking up” mean to me?
- How have I advocated for others in the past? How do I plan to advocate for the AAPI community in the future?
- How are AAPI people represented in my organization? My board of directors? My friend group?
One very practical step an organization can take is making a public statement against Anti-AAPI racism. The #ProtectAllPeople Social Media toolkit is aimed to provide a variety of resources for organizations looking to make statements on social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook tools

“How to Start Conversations About Anti-Asian Racism With Your Family” with host Audie Cornish and guests Nicole Chung and Christine Koh on NPR talks about the first steps of confronting these themes with your loved ones. It is available to read or listen to [here](#).

Maggie Ryan’s article, “7 Ways to Check in With Your Asian American Friends Without Saying ‘How Are You Doing?’” is a great resource for those of us who want to reach out but don’t quite know how. She covers the pitfalls that often accompany well-intentioned gestures, and it is a great first step in learning how to speak with AAPI friends and colleagues about what is happening and offer support in a productive, respectful way.

Within the conversation around dismantling racism is the question of representation of minorities in media. Jon M. Chu, director of “Crazy Rich Asians”, discusses the importance of on-screen representation and connection in film at his TEDx Talk, which you can [watch here](#).
The work against racism is not limited to one community, and it is important to take on the huge entity that is racism with a holistic approach. Acknowledge the different ways in which racism is perpetuated and affects different marginalized communities. Racism operates on both systemic and individual levels, and therefore our approach will work within both of these realms. Working both individually and collectively is often seen as the most overwhelming step in any anti-racist endeavor, but it will take many people aligned as allies to right this ship and bring new understanding to our social consciousness.

**Ask Yourself:**

- What policy affects minority groups? How can I influence or change that policy?
- Do any policies/attitudes in my spaces (work, home, hobbies) perpetuate systemic racism? Can I change those?
- How do I “show up” for the AAPI community in Oklahoma? The Black community? The Latinx community?
Ibram X. Kendi’s book “How to be an Anti-Racist” focuses on the African American community, but the practices within the book are meant to be used to be anti-racist in all capacities. It builds an internal foundation and provides active tasks for the reader to engage in. Kendi’s book is referenced in Being Antiracist, a resource provided by the National Museum of African American History and Culture and the Smithsonian.

The Cornell University Asian American Studies Program has released a great toolkit of Anti-Racism Resources for the AAPI Community, the majority of which are nationally relevant, and can be found here.

“10 Keys to Everyday Anti-Racism” by Kirsten Ivey-Colson and Lynn Turner for Berkeley University’s Greater Good Magazine has a proactive list of behaviors that you can work into your own daily routine.

There are a wealth of books specifically about the experience of racism in AAPI communities. Two examples that explore similar themes with different approaches are “Yellow” and “Minor Feelings”. Frank Wu’s “Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White” explores the changing racial landscape and attitudes in 21st century America through an Asian-American lens, with a wide variety of engaging sources, sometimes informal and other times academic. “Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning” is an autobiographical collection of writings that explore author Cathy Park Hong’s ideas of Asian American identity and experience through her personal anecdotes.
Finally, we need to nourish our own AAPI community here in Oklahoma. There are a variety of ways to do so, many more than we have listed here. Use these tools to springboard your start as an AAPI-ally. Over time you will find your own specific ways to make AAPI Oklahomans feel welcome, supported, included, and respected. Here are a few suggestions to get started:

- Look at intervention on an individual level through bystander trainings and online resources
- Support Asian-owned businesses
- Reach out and connect with AAPI-serving organizations to see what support they could use right now

We wish you the best in this endeavor and look forward to a better Oklahoma for all.

**Ask Yourself:**

- What do I know about Oklahoma’s AAPI community?
- How often do I interface with the Oklahoma AAPI community? What do those interactions look like?
- In what ways can I further support them?
- How do I envision my allyship in the future? What does it look like now and what do I want it to look like moving forward?
To prepare yourself in the event that you witness racist harassment or violence, consider attending a bystander intervention training. Hollaback! has partnered with Asian Americans Advancing Justice to offer free individual trainings (funded by donations) in bystander intervention to stop anti-Asian/American and xenophobic harassment. They also partner with organizations to offer workplace trainings.

If you witness a hate incident within Oklahoma, please report it to the CAIR reporting system and Stop AAPI Hate. This allows these two organizations to accurately track hate incidents and analyze patterns to work towards changing the underlying motivators for them. CAIR Oklahoma also has a wide variety of resources, including their organization’s “Plan to Combat Racial Injustice”.

In Oklahoma City, the Asian District Cultural Association maintains a business directory, as well as an archive of reviews of locally-owned/operated spots to support.

The Tulsa City-County Library hosts an annual Asian-American Festival in June, where they present a wide variety of events and demonstrations. Learn more about it here.

While there is often a focus on events and groups in Oklahoma City and Tulsa, it is important to remember that there are still large Asian communities in non-metro areas such as Stillwater, Comanche County/Fort Sill, Jenks, Broken Arrow and more. If your organization is looking to serve the AAPI community, remember to reach out to these areas when applicable and include them in your efforts.
2) “Our Everyday Assumptions Can Hurt Others. Here’s What It Takes to Change Your Thinking.” PBS, Public Broadcasting Service, 29 May 2018 (link)

All links contained in this document, as well as supplemental resources not listed, can be found here (link is case sensitive):

bit.ly/AAPI_Toolkit_Links

This Google Doc will be regularly updated with new resources as more become available.
“While self-change requires becoming a nonracist person, societal change requires becoming an antiracist one.”

Derald Wing Sue