Session 305 | How Are You Feeling? The Evolving Physical and Mental Health Challenges Facing AAPIs Today

Session Description:
Systemic and structural racism. Anxiety, stress, loneliness. Physical threats to our safety. Our distinguished panel, which includes leading Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) health advocates, a physician expert on health equity and digital health, and healthcare policy experts, will discuss the complicated health challenges facing the AAPI community, and how they have changed over the course of the pandemic. These include, but are not limited to, chronic conditions (which include mental health conditions), societal factors, and the impact of the anti-AAPI violence earlier this year. We will also explore the ways that AAPI and other organizations have been advocating for better awareness and better health outcomes.

Moderator:
Priya Bathija, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, American Hospital Association

Speakers:
Juliet Choi, President and CEO, Asian Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Lan Đoàn, Postdoctoral Fellow, NYU Grossman School of Medicine, Department of Population Health
Binita Amin, Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Binita Amin, Ph.D. PLLC
How Are You Feeling? The Evolving Physical and Mental Health Challenges Facing AAPIs Today

Recommended Reading List – December 2021

Systemic and structural racism. Anxiety, stress, loneliness. Physical threats to our safety. Chronic conditions, including mental health, societal factors, and the impact of the anti-AAPI violence. The speakers in this session will discuss the many health challenges facing the AAPI community and how they have become worse as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. They will also explore ways that AAPI and other organizations have been advocating for better awareness and better health outcomes.

In addition to the session, below is a list of resources that discuss these topics and will be helpful as you further consider these issues. We also hope that you will share them with others to help increase conversation, awareness, and support within our community.

**PHYSICAL HEALTH CHALLENGES**

White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Website. This website from the Obama Administration sets forth the societal factors that influence the health of AAPI communities. While dated, the issues posed remain critical to our community.

Unique Challenges Facing Asian American Communities and the Path Forward. This American Hospital Association blog sets forth the lessons learned from a discussion of health care leaders serving the AAPI community. For the full conversation, see below, Health Challenges Resulting from COVID.

Asian Health Coalition Website. This website summarizes the top health conditions challenging the AAPI community, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hepatitis B, and obesity.

Health Disparity Research in Diverse Asian American Populations: Present and Future. This website summarizes health disparities confronting Asian Americans, discoveries from research and future research opportunities to reduce health disparities among AAPI and other underrepresented populations.

**MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES**

The Demographics of Unmet Need for Mental Health Services. This research from the American Psychological Association highlights that the percentage of Asian populations receiving health services is nearly the lowest of all of the racial and ethnic groups. At the same time, Asians report the lowest perceived unmet need for these services.

Mental Health and Stress among South Asians. This article from the Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health presents research demonstrating that South Asian immigrants are experiencing high rates of mental health disorders. It also explores how these disproportionately high rates of
mental illness may have implications for disparities found in chronic illnesses among this population, including the increased risk for onset of cardiovascular disease and cancer.

**Barriers to Addressing Mental Health in the AAPI Community.** This website from the National Alliance on Mental Illness sets forth key barriers to addressing mental health in the AAPI community, including language, stigma, shame, the model minority myth, immigration status, faith, alternatives to treatment, and challenges in research. It also lists critical resources that may be helpful to you, your family members and friends.

**HEALTH CHALLENGES RESULTING FROM ANTI-ASIAN HATE**

**The Mental Health Impact of Anti-Asian Racism** This piece from the American Psychological Association highlights how the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated xenophobia and bigotry toward Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. It also discussions ways to address the distress caused by that hate.

**Stop AAPI Hate Mental Health Report.** This report from Stop AAPI Hate, Brigham and Women’s Hospital and the Asian American Psychological Association discusses the unprecedented mental health concerns Asian Americans are facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Anti-Asian Hate.

**Confronting Anti-Asian Racism and Health Disparities in the Era of COVID-19**, In this Journal of the American Medical Association Health Forum piece from Sept. 2021, the authors explore how race-conscious conversation in medicine is evolving, particular as it relates to AAPI communities. The piece also shares that clinicians must go beyond denouncing overt racism and take on disaggregation of data, adopt cultural humility in clinical practice and improve workforce diversity.

**To Dismantle Anti-Asian Racism, We Must Understand Its Roots**, This Harvard Business Review Article from May 27, 2021 discusses how to move toward a safer, more equitable future for Asian Americans. The author takes a comprehensive look at the histories of anti-Asian racism and Pan-Asian solidarity, identifies key takeaways, and makes recommendations to organizational leaders who hope to contribute to a brighter future.

**HEALTH CHALLENGES RESULTING FROM COVID-19**

**APIAHF Nationwide Survey on AANHPI on COVID-19.** The Executive Summary from this July 2021 Asian Pacific Islander Health Forum Survey illustrates the viewpoints held by those in the AAPI community on COVID-19 and vaccinations. It also shares insights into how lives have changed for AAPI individuals throughout the pandemic.

**Advocating for the Asian American Community during COVID-19.** This American Hospital Association website features a discussion between hospital and health care leaders about how AAPI communities have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, including high risk of exposure, unemployment and economic challenges, alongside an increase in anti-
Asian xenophobia and racism. Speakers also share how they are communicating and collaborating to effectively address the AAPI community’s concerns about COVID-19.

COVID-19 and Advancing Asian American Recovery. This McKinsey & Company Report from August 2020 shares the numerous ways the AAPI community has been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. The report starts with a primer on the AAPI experience, the impact of the pandemic, and steps to improve equity for the AAPI community.

DATA AND HEALTH IN THE AAPI COMMUNITY

AAPI Community Data Needed to Assess Better Health Outcomes. This American Medical Association Report lays out data challenges associated with health data for the AAPI community and emphasizes the need for continued surveillance of data collection initiatives, and greater granularity of data collection for AAPI communities in the United States.

Advocating for Data Disaggregation By Race and Ethnicity. This guide from the Asian Pacific Islander Health Forum is written for community leaders and advocates who want to advance health equity by calling for changes in the way data are collected, analyzed, and reported. It supports efforts to make the unique health needs and disparities faced by racial and ethnic populations visible.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS FOR ATTORNEYS

Therapy isn't Self-Indulgent - It's Evidence-Based Self-Care. This article shares data proving that therapy works and offers insights for readers to consider if they are on the fence about seeking therapy. This includes a reminder that you can be strong, have support and still benefit from therapy.

The High Cost of Calm: Why Relaxing Is So Much Work. In this Psychology Today article, the authors discuss why being calm remains necessary for well-being. They also propose some effective techniques – including deep breathing – that can be used to stay calm.

Self-care Tips for Asian Americans Dealing with Racism Amid Coronavirus. In this Huffington Post Piece, therapists share advice they give AAPI clients who are dealing with discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Awake Network. This website includes an active online guide with free medication resources.

National Alliance on Mental Illness Blog posts:
- Coronavirus: Mental Health Coping Strategies
- How to Protect Your Mental Health During the Coronavirus Outbreak

Surviving Racism Amidst Covid-19. In this blog, the author provides steps for addressing racism and provides resources you can use to report it and learn more.
How to Respond to Microaggressions. In this New York Times article, the author explains what microaggressions are, their consequences, and how to determine whether responding is worth your time.