



# 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](http://www.advancingjustice.org)
- Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council  
[www.A3PCON.org](http://www.A3PCON.org)
- Little Tokyo Service Center  
[www.LTSC.org](http://www.LTSC.org)
- National Asian Pacific Center on Aging  
[www.NAPCA.org](http://www.NAPCA.org)