



Roots & Resilience

**THE POWER OF DATA & STORIES TO
ADVANCE AAPI YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH
2025 AAPI CONFERENCE | RALEIGH, NC
SEPTEMBER 26-27**

WAVES

WELLNESS. ADVOCACY. VOICES.
EDUCATION. SUPPORT.

Our founding in 2016 was motivated by the huge unmet mental health needs in the Chinese and Asian American communities. Since then, many passionate volunteers, including some mental health professionals, have joined us and work tirelessly to deliver educational and support programs in the community, conduct research, and advocate for policy and resources. We are in this race together to reduce suffering and save lives.

Our youth often suffer silently with depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues. The cultural gaps between immigrant parents and U.S.-born children lead to social isolation, identity issues and sky-high expectations. Adding to the list of challenges are low mental health literacy, wide-spread stigma against mental illness, and lack of language-adaptive and culturally sensitive mental health services—these are only some of the barriers that stand in the way of getting help.

In response, we as a collaborative community are here to empower our families, stand in solidarity and work towards Wellness, Advocacy, Voices, Education, and Support (WAVES).

While our work has made positive impacts and been widely recognized, there remains much to be done as our communities are still underserved and hurting.

 www.ucawaves.org

 info@ucawaves.org

WHAT *We* DO

SERVICES WE OFFER

- ✓ **Provide** Bilingual Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Trainings
- ✓ **License** Film Screenings & Facilitate Guided Discussions
- ✓ **Deliver** Culturally Responsive Peer Support
- ✓ **Lead** Educational Workshops & Conference Sessions
- ✓ **Conduct** Community-Based Research & Evaluation

Learn more at ucawaves.org!

MHFA TRAINING

WAVES offers Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training in English & Chinese to help adults recognize, understand & respond to mental health challenges present in adults *and* youth.

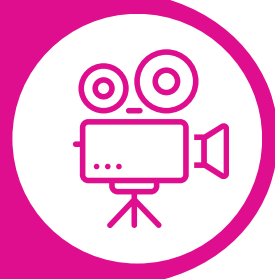


RESEARCH

WAVES conducts research to understand the health needs of diverse AAPI Diaspora—including Asian refugees—evaluating evidence-based programs that increase language access and connection to care.

SILENT WAR FILM

Silent War is a powerful documentary sharing Asian American families' stories and exposing the hidden mental health crisis, supported and uplifted by WAVES.



EDUCATE & TRAIN

WAVES equips private & public sectors, providers, and peer-support specialists with culturally responsive, linguistically congruent tools to address barriers faced by AAPI communities.

WAVES VILLAGE

WAVES Village is a virtual & in-person bilingual peer-support network where trained volunteers provide culturally responsive support, empathy & empowerment for AAPI communities.



CENTER YOUTH

AAPI youth—from high schoolers to young professionals—lead, support, and advocate through WAVES Makers, shaping the future of community empowerment and connection.

Welcome Message

Dear friends,

We are so honored to have you today for the first AAPI Youth Mental Health Conference “Roots and Resilience”, in North Carolina, where I have called home since 2018.

In 2016, when a group of my friends shared with me about our children’s and parents’ struggles with mental health challenges and suicide, I felt we had to help our friends and communities. As a mom of five children, I realized how much I could have benefited from this vital advocacy at times when my family was struggling. Now, I feel a responsibility to use my own voice to speak out. The stigma costs lives; mental health does not discriminate. We can not lose more youth to suicide; we must break the silence.

Since then, along with the most passionate group of parents, youth, professionals, and advocates from a national coalition of Chinese Americans, United Chinese Americans (UCA), we started our relentless public health campaign addressing youth mental health in Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI). The name of our organization, WAVES, is a simple expression of our values: to strive for Wellness; to advance mental health Advocacy, to amplify the Voices of AAPI communities; to provide Education through national conferences like today's; and to create a safe space to Support one another.

We are so grateful you are here today to learn, connect, reflect, and find solutions together. Our incredibly passionate and talented UCA WAVES volunteers, team members, partners, and advisors have worked tirelessly since last year to put this conference together. It could not have been possible without our most generous sponsors. Thank you all for your investment to help save lives and make lasting impacts.

Warmly,

Lily Chen, PhD, RN
Founder & Executive Director
UCA WAVES

亲爱的朋友们：

能在今天与大家齐聚北卡罗来纳州，共同参年首届“根源与韧性”亚太裔青少年心理健康大会，我感到无比的荣幸与激动。这是北卡历史上第一次举办聚焦亚太裔青少年心理健康的盛会，而自2018年以来，北卡就成为了我称之为“家”的境地。

早在2016年，我的朋友们与我分享，我们的孩子和父母在心理健康和自杀问题上正面临着沉重的困境。那一刻，我深知我们必须行动，去帮助我们的朋友和社区。让我意想不到的是，在这个过程中，作为五个孩子的母亲，我自己也成了最大的受益者之一。现实是残酷的：偏见和污名化正在悄无声息地夺走生命。心理健康问题不会区分种族、年龄或背景，它可能发生在任何人身上。而沉默：只会让更多年轻生命在绝望中悄然离志。我们必须打破沉默，创造改变。

从那时起，在一群充满热情的父母、青少年、专业人士和倡导者 汇聚在一起，我们与全美华人联合会 (UCA) 携手，发起了持续至今的公共健康运动。我们的目标非常明确：要为亚太裔青少年心理健康发声。通过倡导、打大声音、举办教育活动（比如今天的大会，以及全美超过15场类似的活动），并努力营造安全的支持空间，让青少年能够 在其中 茁壮成长，健康生活。

今天，你们的到来，就是 最强有力的支持。你们愿意在这里学习、交流、反思，并共同寻找解决的途径，这让我们充满感激。过去一年里，我们优秀的 UCA WAVES 志愿者，团队成员、合作伙伴和顾问夜以继日、不群辛劳地筹备这场大会。而如果没有众多慷慨的赞助机构鼎力支持，这一切都将无法实现。我由衷感谢你们的每一分投入和陪伴。正因为有你们，我们才有可能拯救生命，播下希望，带来持久而深远的改变。

·
谢谢大家。

陈健 (Lily Chen) 博士。注册护士
UCA WAVES 创始人兼执行主任

ROOTS & RESILIENCE AGENDA

NETWORKING BREAKFAST

LOCATION: ROOM 1A&B | 8:00 AM - 8:30 AM

CONFERENCE KEYNOTE: KELLY CROSBIE, MSW, LCSW

LOCATION: ROOM 1A&B | 8:30AM - 8:55 AM

REVEALING THE REALITIES: TAAF'S SURVEY ON AAPI YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

LOCATION: ROOM 1A&B | 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING IN CHINESE AMERICANS

LOCATION: ROOM 1D | 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

LOCALLY GROUNDED: AAPI HEALTH RESEARCH IN NORTH CAROLINA

LOCATION: ROOM 1A&B | 10:15 AM - 11:15 AM

AAPI YOUTH SPEAK: STORIES, STRENGTH, AND THE "I WISH" WALL

LOCATION: ROOM 1D | 10:15 AM - 11:15 AM

LUNCH KEYNOTE: DR. HOWARD LIU, MD, MBA: SOCIAL MEDIA & YOUTH: A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CLINICIANS

LOCATION: ROOM 1A&B | 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

HEALING IN ACTION: YOUTH POSTERS AND WELLNESS ACTIVITIES

LOCATION: ROOM 1A&B (POSTER SESSIONS)

ROOM 1D (WELLNESS ACTIVITIES) | 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

RECKONING ON SCREEN: *SILENT WAR* DOCUMENTARY FILM PREMIERE

LOCATION: ROOM 1A&B | 2:00 PM - 4:45 PM

 *Break for dinner on your own!* 

EVENING KEYNOTE HOW TO RAISE RESILIENT YOUTH: MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

LOCATION: ROOM 1A&B | 6:45 PM - 9:00 PM



CONFERENCE KEYNOTE

STATE AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR MENTAL
HEALTH AWARENESS, TREATMENT, AND RECOVERY

ROOM 1A&B | 8:30 AM – 8:55 AM

Kick off the conference with a warm welcome from co-hosts John Holton and Peggy Wong, along with greetings from Representative Maria Cervania! The keynote will be delivered by Kelly Crosbie, MSW, LCSW, Director of the NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Use Services, who will share how strong partnerships between state systems and communities can break stigma, improve access, and foster recovery.

Kelly is a licensed clinical social worker and brings over 30 years of leadership experience in public services supporting mental health, substance use, and developmental disabilities in North Carolina.



Representative Maria Cervania | Welcome Speaker

Maria Cervania is a North Carolina State Representative and UCA WAVES Board Member. Among the first Asian American women and the first Filipino American elected in the state, she advances AAPI representation, equity, and community engagement in policymaking.



John Holton, PhD | Co-Host

John Holton, PhD is Director of Strategic Initiatives at UIC's Jane Addams College of Social Work and a WAVES advisor. He leads funding development, advises faculty on research, and connects graduate students with policy development and implementation opportunities.



Peggy O. Wong, RN, PMHNP-BC | Co-Host

Peggy O. Wong, RN, PMHNP-BC is a psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner dedicated to advancing equity and representation in AAPI communities. Her work explores cultural influences on mental health, with interests in immigrant health, minority care, and family relationship dynamics.

REVEALING THE REALITIES: TAAF'S SURVEY ON AAPI YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

ROOM 1A&B | 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

Discover key insights from The Asian American Foundation's national youth mental health survey, highlighting trends, challenges, and implications for supporting AAPI youth. Moderated by Dr. Justin Chen, this panel pairs experts and community voices to share data-driven strategies and culturally informed approaches for educators, service providers and advocates.



Justin A. Chen, MD, MPH | Session Moderator

Justin Chen is Vice Chair of Ambulatory Services and Vice Chair of Health Justice in the Department of Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medicine/NY-Presbyterian. He is also Executive Director of the MGH Center for Cross-Cultural Student Emotional Wellness, and a former RWJ Clinical Scholar, focusing on cross-cultural mental health and access to care.



Sruthi Chandrasekaran, MSc, MA | Session Panelist

Sruthi Chandrasekaran is the Director of Data & Research at TAAF. She's passionate about data-driven advocacy & advancing AAPI equity. With a background in global health and economic policy, she's held research roles at Ibis Reproductive Health, J-PAL, and the Packard Foundation.



Charissa Cheah, PhD | Session Panelist

Charissa Cheah is Professor of Psychology and Asian Studies at UMBC and President of the Society for Research on Adolescence. Her work explores social-emotional health in AANHPI and Muslim American families using mixed methods.



Finneas Wong, PhD(c) | Session Panelist

Finneas Wong is a Counseling Psychology PhD student at Arizona State University. His research focuses on racial-ethnic and gender identities, particularly how Asian trans and nonbinary youth navigate identity with their families. He is committed to supporting Asian and LGBTQ+ communities.



Eh Taw Boe, BS | Session Panelist

Eh Taw Boe is a recent graduate with a BS in Animal Science focused on veterinary bioscience. She has extensive experience working with children, animals, and plants, and is passionate about environmental stewardship and community care.



Peggy Wong, RN, PMHNP-BC | Session Organizer

Peggy O. Wong, RN, PMHNP-BC is a psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner dedicated to advancing equity and representation in AAPI communities. Her work explores cultural influences on mental health, with interests in immigrant health, minority care, and family relationship dynamics.

MHFA TRAINING IN CHINESE AMERICANS: IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RESEARCH

Room 1D | 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

Moderated by National Mental Health Trainer & Expert, Ruby Brown-Herring, MSW, this session highlights culturally adapted Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) initiatives in Chinese American communities. Speakers share strategies for reducing stigma, fostering community engagement, and building research partnerships to promote mental health awareness and support.



Ruby Brown-Herring, MSW | Session Moderator

Ruby Brown-Herring is a national corporate well-being speaker and consultant with 20+ years' experience promoting mental health in workplaces. She develops programs fostering belonging, engagement, and retention, leads statewide youth MHFA initiatives in NC, and trains MHFA instructors nationwide.



Cixin Wang, PhD | Session Panelist

Cixin Wang is an Associate Professor of School Psychology at the University of Maryland, College Park. Her research focuses on bullying prevention, mental health promotion, and culturally responsive interventions for children and adolescents, particularly among diverse and Asian American communities.



Chunying Zhao, MLSW | Session Panelist

Chunying Zhao is a licensed clinical social worker and WAVES Training Co-Director. Motivated by her children's mental health journeys, she returned to school to support families facing similar challenges, fostering resilience, connection, and community well-being.



Ran (Emma) Tao | Session Panelist

Ran (Emma) Tao is a WAVES Youth Ambassador and MHFA Training Research Assistant at WAVES. A Boston College graduate, she is pursuing a master's at Columbia Teachers College. She supports student access and mental health advocacy while fostering inclusive, supportive learning environments.



Feng Xue | Session Organizer

Feng Xue is an experienced healthcare analyst passionate about data, education, and community well-being. She teaches Chinese, serves on school and CSAUS boards, and advocates for mental health support within Chinese school communities and the broader community.

**Did you know
WAVES offers
MHFA training?**

In partnership with the Mental Health Association for Chinese Communities (MHACC), WAVES conducts Youth and Adult MHFA training sessions to educate the community about mental health. Want to learn more? Visit our website, ucawaves.org!

LOCALLY GROUNDED: AAPI HEALTH RESEARCH IN NORTH CAROLINA

ROOM 1A&B | 10:15 AM – 11:15 AM

Explore community-engaged projects addressing health disparities, refugee experiences, and culturally informed care in North Carolina's AAPI communities. In this powerful session, researchers and practitioners share insights on promoting equity, improving access, and advancing culturally responsive interventions.



Pao-Hwa Lin, PhD | Session Moderator

Pao-Hwa Lin, PhD is a nutrition scientist at Duke University Medical Center. Her research examines dietary impacts on hypertension, weight, prostate cancer, and mental health. She contributed to the DASH diet and promotes AAPI youth mental health through community partnerships.



Liana Adrong, MSW | Session Panelist

Liana Adrong, MSW is Executive Director of the Montagnard Dega Association, advocating for Montagnard refugees and elders. A social worker, researcher, and community liaison, she promotes healthcare access, cultural preservation, and youth mentorship while strengthening her community through arts.



Xuesong Han, PhD | Session Panelist

Xuesong Han, PhD is Scientific Director of Health Services Research at the American Cancer Society. Her work examines how health policies and social determinants shape cancer outcomes, with a focus on survivorship, disparities, and quality of life.



Ana (Nikka) Sucaldito, PhD, MPH | Session Panelist

Ana (Nikka) Sucaldito, PhD, MPH is a social and behavioral scientist focused on health equity for Asian and Asian American refugees and immigrants. She uses community-based participatory research to develop interventions promoting mental health, language access, and empowerment.



Ya-Ke (Grace) Wu, RN, PhD | Session Panelist

Ya-Ke (Grace) Wu, RN, PhD is an Assistant Professor at UNC Chapel Hill School of Nursing and Adjunct Assistant Professor in Psychiatry. Her research focuses on AAPI health priorities, eating disorders, and evidence-based interventions, building on her clinical and academic nursing experience.



Krystal Zhang, MA | Section Organizer

Krystal Zhang is a researcher passionate about global health equity, with expertise in LGBTQ+ rights, sexual and mental health, and migration. She has partnered with leading institutions and community organizations to advance accessible care and reduce stigma for marginalized populations.

AAPI YOUTH SPEAK: STORIES, STRENGTH, AND THE “I WISH” WALL

ROOM 1D | 10:15 AM – 11:15 AM

AAPI and refugee youth from Karen, Hmong, and other Southeast Asian communities share personal stories on mental health, resilience, and what they wish their caregivers better understood.



Mary Shen, MD, MSc | Session Moderator

Mary Shen is a psychiatry resident at Brigham and Women's Hospital and APA Leadership Fellow. With 35+ publications, she advances cultural psychiatry, mood and substance use disorder care, and mental health equity for underserved and immigrant communities.



Juliana Chen, MD | Session Panelist

Juliana Chen is a child and adolescent psychiatrist, Associate Director at MGH's Center for Cross-Cultural Student Emotional Wellness, and Chief Medical Officer at Cartwheel Care. A SAMHSA Minority Fellow, she advances stigma reduction and resilient parenting in Asian American communities.



Taneyetta Sutton, MSW, LCSWA | Session Panelist

Taneyetta Sutton serves as Senior Administrator for Social Work and Mental Health at Wake County Public Schools. With 24 years' experience in social services and mental health, she is also President of the North Carolina School Social Workers Association.



Naialie Lor | Session Panelist

Naialie Lor is a nursing student at UNC Chapel Hill with experience in psychiatric support, data science, and community health. Active in the Hmong Student Association, she advocates for culturally responsive care and youth mental health awareness.



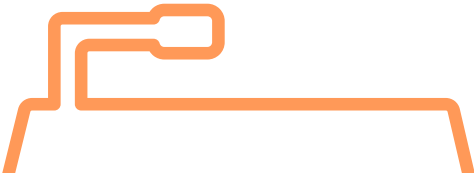
Lucy Liu | Session Panelist

Lucille Liu is an IB Diploma senior and volunteer with The Kim Foundation, where she organizes fundraisers and speaks on youth panels. She leads an Ethics of AI club and explores biotechnology ethics, while enjoying violin, literature, and making dorayaki.



Reid Bowman, MPH, CHES | Session Organizer

Reid Bowman is a public health educator specializing in mental health, sexual violence prevention, and trauma-informed care. With experience at NAMI Wake County and Orange County Rape Crisis Center, they champion inclusive program design, youth engagement, and healing-centered communities.



LUNCH KEYNOTE

SOCIAL MEDIA & YOUTH: A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CLINICIANS

ROOM 1A&B | 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM



Recharge with a free boxed lunch and an engaging talk by Dr. Howard Liu, Chair of Psychiatry at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. The session will open with a welcome from Juliana Chen, setting the stage for an inspiring program.

Dr. Liu is a nationally recognized psychiatrist, educator, and innovator in using social media to promote mental health awareness. His talk will focus on how digital storytelling can advocate for mental health, reduce stigma, and empower AAPI youth and professionals to share their experiences.



He has led national efforts to expand mental health services, train providers, and advance diversity in medical leadership. As Chair of the American Psychiatric Association's Council on Communications, Dr. Liu brings insights on harnessing social media to build community, raise awareness, and create meaningful change—especially within AAPI communities.



Juliana Chen, MD | Welcome Speaker

Juliana Chen is a child and adolescent psychiatrist, Associate Director at MGH's Center for Cross-Cultural Student Emotional Wellness, and Chief Medical Officer at Cartwheel Care. A SAMHSA Minority Fellow, she advances stigma reduction and resilient parenting in Asian American communities.

HEALING IN ACTION: YOUTH POSTERS AND WELLNESS ACTIVITIES

ROOM 1A&B (POSTERS) 1D (ACTIVITIES) | 12:30 PM – 1:45 PM

An Extra Special Session!

This interactive session highlights the voices and creativity of AAPI youth, featuring 35 poster presentations on original research and projects addressing mental health in their communities.

Alongside these youth-led insights, participants are invited to engage in hands-on wellness activities, including flower arranging with Kree's Flowers, tai chi, guided stretching, and a traditional Lion Dance performance celebrating cultural connection and healing.

Exhibitor tables will showcase organizations, resources, and community partners dedicated to uplifting wellbeing. Guests can also enjoy a photo booth hosted by Eden & Grace Photography, creating space for joy and memory-making during the conference.

Checkout the Youth Poster Presentations!



YOUTH POSTER PRESENTATIONS

World of Love: Brushes Blooming for the Youth

Art exhibition
by Jan Xie

Voices

Short film
by Olivia Dai

Fractured

Visual artwork
by Runxin (Cece) Gu

Hidden Crisis: Suicide & Mental Health in AAPI Youth

Research project
by Runxin (Cece) Gu

Tradition & Taboo: Understanding the Role of South Asian Culture in Mental Health

Research project
by Myiesha Iqbal

Suicide Risk Among High School Students in the U.S.

Research project
by John Chen

Social Media Use & Being Electronically Bullied Among U.S. High School Students

Research project
by Sabrina Ye

Use of Cigarettes & Electronic Vapor Products Among High School Students in the United States

Research project
by Ellean Chen

Bridging the Gap: Cultural Responsiveness in Digital Mental Health Interventions for Waitlisted Youth

Research project by
Isabel Rios Pulgar

Happiness in East Asia: The Intersection of Gender Role Attitudes & Domestic Labor for Men vs Women

Research project
by Marybella Zhang

Roots of Resilience: How Indian Culture Nurtures Mental Health

Research project by Aryan Mamilla,
Aathi Karthik & Dr. Sujaya

Bicultural Identity as a Moderator of Academic Pressure & Depression Among Asian American

Research project by
Joseph Cheryeth, Aardhra M.
Venkatachalam & Dr. Sujaya

From Stigma Support: Empowering AAPI Youth Through Resources

Research project by Pihu Sindhwani
& Dr. Sujaya

The Impact of STEM Expectations on AAPI Students

Research project
by Alan Tang

Communication & Closeness: Key Predictors of Mental Health in Chinese American Immigrant Youth

Research project by Hua Lin, Xu Yan,
Ronald Cox & Robert Larzelere

From Solitary Struggles to Shared Solutions: Movement-Based Peer Leadership for AAPI Youth Mental Wellness

Personal story
by Mike Qiu

Preventive Health Care Services for Individuals with Autism in Asian American Communities

Community project
by Alex Zhao

PUSH

Community project
by Noreen Majeed

The Power of Simplicity: Mental Wellness in Youth Spaces

Community project
by Niang Nuam

The Me Book

Community project
by Luanne Wang

Factors Influencing Stress & Mental Health Help-Seeking Among Karen Refugees

Community project by
Hannah Feng, Jian "Lily" Chen
& Warren Lu

Building Evidence for AAPI Mental Health: Evaluation of Peer Support Groups in Research Triangle Park North Carolina

Community project by Krystal W
Zhang, Xinyu Zheng, Lei Jiang, Haiying
Zhao, Yangyan Zheng, Yiqi Zheng, Qi
Fang & Jian "Lily" Chen

Thank God, My Son Is a Boy Again

Short film
by Maggie Li Zhang

Beyond support: An Anthropological Commentary on Cultural Negotiation Among Chinese Diasporic Parents of Transgender Children in Peer Support Groups

Community project by
Krystal W Zhang

Breaking Away: Dance Poetry on Mental Health

Short film by Aditi Ediga

WORLD OF LOVE: BRUSHES BLOOMING FOR THE YOUTH

Through art, we share love, remembrance, and the enduring spirit of all young lives lost too soon. This exhibition from the Asian Culture and Education Society USA features 20 artworks that honor memory and resilience, including *Ocean Heart* by Cecelia Zhang, *The Little Healer* by Zijing Chu, *Shamanism: Echoes of the Ancients* by Yi Luo, *We Rise from Ashes* by Bocheng Hua (Bonnie), *Where the Sunflower Sees Me* by Yingyue Wang, *Stars* by Anya Liu, *Love* by Meihua Zhou, *Bravery* by Catherine Wu, *Missing* by Jason Li, *Quiet* by Avery Yuan, *In Memories* by Parker Shu, *Blue* by Yongchen Long, *Sunny* by Melanie Bai, *Shark* by Erin Sun, *Car* by Ye Feng, *Girl* by Emma Guo, *Sea* by Isabel Sun, *Breaking* by Allison Zexi Pan, *Dog* by Julian Liu, and *Color* by Asher Pengxi Pan.

VOICES

Our project aims to shed light on the overlooked mental health struggles of Asian American youth through a short film inspired by the documentary *Silent War*. Many Asian American teenagers face intense pressure to succeed, driven by cultural stereotypes and family expectations, yet have few outlets to express stress or seek help. This leads to burnout, isolation, and silent suffering that parents often deny or overlook. Often times, this is due to a generational gap in understanding between parents and children. To address this crisis, we will interview 50–60 Asian Americans – including students, parents, experts, and educators – to explore their diverse experiences and perspectives. Our goal is to craft a 10–20-minute creative video to recognize their stories and spread awareness about their situations. Combining our skills in writing and art, we will present these stories in a unique and compelling way, with animated text and art visuals. By sharing this film at community events and libraries, especially during Pacific Islander and Asian American Heritage Month, we hope to spark conversation, reduce stigma, and help Asian American youth feel seen, heard, and supported.

FRACTURED

Our project aims to shed light on the overlooked mental health struggles of Asian American youth through a short film inspired by the documentary *Silent War*. Many Asian American teenagers face intense pressure to succeed, driven by cultural stereotypes and family expectations, yet have few outlets to express stress or seek help. This leads to burnout, isolation, and silent suffering that parents often deny or overlook. Often times, this is due to a generational gap in understanding between parents and children. To address this crisis, we will interview 50–60 Asian Americans – including students, parents, experts, and educators – to explore their diverse experiences and perspectives. Our goal is to craft a 10–20-minute creative video to recognize their stories and spread awareness about their situations. Combining our skills in writing and art, we will present these stories in a unique and compelling way, with animated text and art visuals. By sharing this film at community events and libraries, especially during Pacific Islander and Asian American Heritage Month, we hope to spark conversation, reduce stigma, and help Asian American youth feel seen, heard, and supported.

HIDDEN CRISIS: SUICIDE & MENTAL HEALTH IN AAPI YOUTH

This project aims to explore the increasing rates of stress and suicide among AAPI youth, with a special focus on the cultural and societal pressures that influence their mental health. Drawing on recent research, including Suicidal thoughts and behaviors among ethnic minority youth in the United States (Lee et al., 2023), as well as data from my own survey of AAPI individuals, the poster shows how academic pressure, cultural expectations, racism, and toxic Asian stereotypes contribute to mental health challenges experienced by most AAPI teens. More importantly, the survey results reveal that almost 86.9% of AAPI youth often feel stressed, while trapped between balancing family obligations with the desire to fit into American society, and also struggling with loneliness and unacknowledged stress. By combining research and firsthand perspectives, this project seeks to raise awareness of the urgency of AAPI youth mental health needs and advocate for greater recognition, understanding, and culturally responsive support.

TRADITION & TABOO: UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF SOUTH ASIAN CULTURE IN MENTAL HEALTH

In the United States, about 59.3% of adults experience mental illness each year (National Institute of Mental Health, n.d.), yet in South Asia, only an estimated 7.5–10% of people are identified as having mental disorders (Naveed et al., 2020). Does this mean South Asians experience greater mental health? Not necessarily. A 2020 study showed that South Asians face high rates of mental issues but rarely seek treatment (Shah, 2022). It was hypothesized that while cultural practices like strong community support and shared traditions may positively influence mental health, the taboos that accompany them can also increase stress, anxiety, and feelings of isolation. To test this, an online survey was completed by 53 men and women with a South Asian background. The countries represented included Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and parts of Afghanistan. Most responses (36) were from individuals of Indian background, with Pakistani (14) being the second largest group. The data mostly supported the hypothesis. Many respondents agreed that South Asian culture emphasizes academic success and family support, which they viewed as helpful. However, responses were mixed regarding emotional support and openness about mental health. This suggests that while cultural values foster connection, they can also discourage seeking help. Overall, this study highlights the need for more open mental health conversations in South Asian communities and for culturally sensitive support systems that address both the benefits and drawbacks of traditional values.

SUICIDE RISK AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE U.S.

Background: Suicidal behavior and ideation among high school students are a significant public health concern. Based on a nationally representative survey of high school students in the US, this study examines the prevalence of four suicide risk indicators.

Methods: We used data from the 1991–2023 national biennial Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) for over 250,000 students. Four measures of suicide risk indicators were examined: seriously considered suicide, planned suicide, attempted suicide, and medically injurious attempt. Prevalence was examined by survey year for the total sample and by subpopulations of research interest.

Results: From 1991 to 2009, serious suicidal consideration and planning decreased steadily from 29 to 13.8 percent and from 18.6 to 10.9 percent, respectively. Still, each also increased again after 2011, reaching its peak in the years 2019–2021, and dropping slightly in 2023 (20.4 and 16.4 percent, respectively). Rates of attempted suicide and harmful attempts were around level in the three decades, with slight increases in recent years only (9.5 and 2.3 percent, respectively, in 2023). The highest prevalence of suicide measures was seen among female, LGBTQ+, and American Indian/Alaska Native subpopulations, with no specific grade level.

Conclusion: Suicidal thoughts and plans among U.S. high school students have increased dramatically over the past decade, suggesting an increase in psychological distress in adolescents and an urgent need for intervention strategies, especially for high-risk subgroups.

SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND BEING ELECTRONICALLY BULLIED AMONG U.S. HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Background: Social media use is increasingly linked to negative effects on youth mental health and exposes youths to cyberbullying. The purpose of this study is to examine social media usage and experience of being electronically bullied among a nationally representative sample of U.S. high school students.

Methods: We gathered information from CDC’s 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), which monitors health behaviors and experiences of American youth. This study examines the percentages of high school students who used social media at least several times a day and those who were electronically bullied ever during the past 12 months, overall and by subpopulations.

Results: Among over 20,000 high school participants in 2023, 77.0% used social media at least several times a day, and 16.3% reported being electronically bullied in the past 12 months. Female students were more likely to use social media frequently (81.8% v 72.9%) and experience electronic bullying (20.7% v 12.0%) than male students. Frequent social media use was prevalent across racial/ethnic groups (75% - 78%) and large variations in electronic bullying was observed with the prevalence of 19.6% for White, 12.9% for Asian, 10.8% for Black, and 3.6% for Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students.

Conclusion: Over 3 quarters of US high school students use social media at least several times daily, and 1/6 experienced electronic bullying during the past year. Future research is warranted to elucidate their impacts on youth mental health and wellbeing.

USE OF CIGARETTES AND ELECTRONIC VAPOR PRODUCTS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Background: Various forms of tobacco use are highly addictive and negatively impact the mental health of high schoolers by impairing their brain development, emotional regulation, and stress management.

Objective: To describe the trends of cigarette and electronic vapor usage in United States high schoolers and identify high-risk groups.

Methods: This study uses data from the biannual CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) 1991-2023 to examine the prevalence of current daily use of cigarette and electronic vapor products, among a nationally representative sample of US high school students, overall and stratified by demographic factors.

Results: In 1991, 9.8% of high schoolers smoked cigarettes daily; the prevalence peaked in 1999 at 12.8% and gradually decreased to 0.5% in 2023. In 2015, the first-year electronic vapor usage was measured, 2% of high schoolers used electronic vapor products daily; it peaked in 2019 at 7.2% and decreased to 5.0% in 2023. In 2023, daily cigarette use was most prevalent among Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (1.3%), gay/lesbian (1.7%), and transgender (3.0%) high school students; daily electronic vapor product use was most prevalent among students who were female (5.9%), White (6.5%), 12th grade (6.9%), bisexual (8.6%), or transgender (7.0%).

Conclusion: As daily cigarette smokers decreased over the years, daily electronic vapor usage increased. The high-risk groups for these two forms of tobacco-use overlap partially, underscoring the need for tailored, community-specific intervention programs.

BRIDGING THE GAP: CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS IN DIGITAL MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTIONS FOR WAITLISTED YOUTH

The purpose of this project is to examine whether waitlist-bridge interventions—especially digital ones—are culturally responsive to AAPI youth. Using a systematic review codebook for youth waitlist interventions from 2008 to the present, we will quantify (a) representation of Asian/AAPI youth, (b) whether designs reflect family/collectivist contexts (caregiver contact, group vs individual), (c) accessibility factors (school vs clinic recruitment; smartphone/web delivery; self-guided vs clinician-assisted), and (d) evidence quality and usability/credibility for AAPI participants. We will compare WEIRD vs non-WEIRD countries and test whether culturally aligned features predict engagement and symptom gains. Findings from this project will identify concrete design gaps and high-yield adaptations for AAPI youth on waitlists for mental health treatment.

HAPPINESS IN EAST ASIA: THE INTERSECTION OF GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES AND DOMESTIC LABOR FOR MEN VS WOMEN

Gender role attitudes and division of household labor have shown mixed relationships to partners' quality of life. However, most prior research on these topics explored Western populations, where norms surrounding gender roles may be evolving differently than in East Asian cultural settings.

To address this limitation, we examined how gender, gender role attitudes, and housework frequency interactively affected the marital satisfaction and subjective well-being (SWB) of 6466 spouses from China, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, using the 2016-2018 East Asia Social Survey. All models controlled for education, employment status, and age. Hierarchical model comparisons show that neither gender role ideology, housework frequency, nor gender alone could explain variations in well-being above the effects of demographic factors; only interactions could.

For women who did housework less frequently than average, endorsement of gender egalitarianism predicted higher marital satisfaction and SWB, but for women who did

housework more frequently than average, gender egalitarianism predicted lower marital satisfaction and SWB. For women with lower than average endorsement of gender egalitarianism, housework frequency predicted higher marital satisfaction and SWB. For men, neither gender egalitarianism, housework frequency, nor their combinations had significant effect on well-being.

These findings suggest that in East Asian population, well-being effects of women's (but not men's) gender role attitudes or domestic roles depend on the alignment between the two, while men with egalitarian spouses could contribute to their spouses' well-being and improve their marriage by sharing more housework, and that would not necessarily hurt their own well-being regardless of their gender role ideology.

ROOTS OF RESILIENCE: HOW INDIAN CULTURE NURTURES MENTAL HEALTH

Indian culture supports mental health through a rich combination of family, community, spirituality, and tradition. Strong family and community bonds create a sense of belonging and provide emotional support during times of stress. Spirituality and faith expressed in practices such as yoga, meditation, and prayer encourage inner peace and resilience. Ayurveda highlights the connection between body and mind, offering holistic approaches to balance and healing. Daily practices like eating together as a family reinforce unity and stability, while art, music, and dance provide powerful forms of expression and emotional release. Seva, or community service, cultivates empathy and purpose, strengthening social ties and reducing isolation. Food rituals, festivals, and cultural traditions further reinforce identity and continuity across generations. Together, these elements illustrate how Indian culture weaves mind, body, and spirit into everyday life, nurturing resilience and promoting long-term mental well-being. I will be doing a research project highlighting these effects on mental health.

BICULTURAL IDENTITY AS A MODERATOR OF ACADEMIC PRESSURE AND DEPRESSION AMONG ASIAN AMERICAN

Asian American youth report among the highest levels of depressive symptoms and suicidality, often linked to family expectations and academic stress. Using nationally representative data from the Beyond the Surface (N=1,409) and Young Asian American Health Survey (N=1,000), we tested whether bicultural identity integration moderates the relationship between family obligation/academic pressure and depressive symptoms (PHQ-9 scores). Preliminary analyses suggest that while academic and family-related pressures are positively associated with depression ($\beta = 0.32, p < .001$), this effect is significantly attenuated among youth who report high levels of bicultural identity integration (interaction $\beta = -0.15, p = .01$). These findings highlight the protective role of bicultural belonging in mitigating the mental health consequences of structural and cultural stressors and suggest that school- and community-based interventions fostering bicultural competence may reduce depression and suicidality in Asian American youth.

FROM STIGMA SUPPORT: EMPOWERING AAPI YOUTH THROUGH RESOURCES

My Project will give information and resources on and for mental health, in an attempt to reduce the shame and negative stigma associated with mental illness in Asian American Pacific Islanders. My project will give practical strategies to engage with mental health and make adults/parents understand that their child's and their own mental health needs are not something to be dismissed, and that it is not the child's or their fault for developing them. I also hope to reduce the belief that mental disorders such as autism or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) do not make a child less intelligent or capable than their peers. I hope that by the end parents feel more comfortable talking to their children about mental illness and the youth feel more comfortable reaching out.

THE IMPACT OF STEM EXPECTATIONS ON AAPI STUDENTS

This study aims to investigate how the prominent stereotype that Asian American students naturally excel in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) influences the psychological well-being of high school students within Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS).

While often viewed as a beneficial stereotype, the belief that Asian American students are inherently gifted in STEM imposes expectations that distort self-identity and raise stress and anxiety levels. This stereotype is part of the broader “model minority” myth, which narrows the diverse experiences of Asian American communities. The objective of this research is to dispel that narrative and examine how such expectations—whether imposed by parents, teachers, peers, or students themselves—affect mental health outcomes in Asian American students during a critical stage of their development.

The questionnaire attached to this study will collect both quantitative and qualitative data from high school students of Asian and non-Asian backgrounds. However, there is a primary focus on those who identify as Asian American or Pacific Islander. The survey gathers demographic information, academic interests, experiences with academic pressure, perceptions of STEM-related expectations, and self-reported indicators of emotional well-being. It also includes open-ended questions to better understand personal narratives. Lastly, it compares the results of both student groups (Asian and non-Asian) to see if there are differences in the observed trends.

Ultimately, the goal of this research is to inform educators and policymakers of the often-overlooked psychological costs of so-called “positive” stereotypes on Asian Americans and to encourage more inclusive educational practices.

COMMUNICATION AND CLOSENESS: KEY PREDICTORS OF MENTAL HEALTH IN CHINESE AMERICAN IMMIGRANT YOUTH

Introduction: Second-generation Asian American Immigrants (AAIs) are twice as likely to experience mental health problems (MHPs) as first-generation AAIs. This is concerning given AAIs are the fastest-growing immigrant group in the U.S.; their population nearly doubled between 2000–2019 and is projected to reach 46 million by 2060.

Research shows that second-generation Chinese American youth often lose their heritage language, 93% report speaking only English at home, while their parents make modest English gains. This mismatch reduces parent-youth communication, creating Shared Language Erosion (SLE) (Cox et al., 2021). SLE undermines relationship closeness and increases risk for youth MHPs. This study examined whether parent-youth closeness mediates the link between SLE and MHPs in Chinese American youth.

Methods: Participants were Chinese American adolescents ($N = 59$; grades 6 -12) from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health. Youth were 51% female, 73% U.S.-born, and 30% reported speaking a non-English language at home. Measures included parent-youth communication, depression, suicidal thoughts, and closeness, using standardized scales (e.g., Family Bond Scale; CES-D, $\alpha = .96$).

Results & Conclusions: Parent-youth communication was associated with lower depression ($r = -.28$, $p = .03$) and higher closeness ($r = .51$, $p < .001$). Closeness mediated effects on depression ($a \times b = -.09$) and suicidal thoughts ($a \times b = -.64$, $ORab = 0.53$). Findings provide preliminary evidence that SLE poses risk for Chinese American youth mental health through reduced parent-youth closeness.

FROM SOLITARY STRUGGLES TO SHARED SOLUTIONS: MOVEMENT-BASED PEER LEADERSHIP FOR AAPI YOUTH MENTAL WELLNESS

Many AAPI youth face complex mental health challenges exacerbated by cultural transitions, stigma, and a lack of representation in traditional care systems. As a first-generation AAPI youth, I have experienced these struggles and found healing through community, movement, and connection to nature. This project shares my journey and introduces a peer-led, movement-based approach designed to support the mental well-being of first-gen and international AAPI youth. Through nature walks, reflective art practices, and peer mentorship, our initiative creates safe spaces that foster belonging, emotional awareness, and resilience. Drawing from research in outdoor exercise, cultural psychology, and peer support models, we show how culturally responsive, community-rooted practices can help young people navigate mental health challenges in ways that honor their identity and community.

PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM IN ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

Our objective is to evaluate disparities in preventive health care services within the Asian American community, particularly among individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), who face elevated risks of co-occurring health and psychiatric conditions as well as early mortality. Despite these needs, disability-specific surveillance data are limited, and Asian Americans are often underrepresented in existing research. Cultural stigma and language barriers further complicate access to care. To address these challenges, we established a partnership between Johns Hopkins University (JHU) and the Chinese American Parents of Children with Autism to build a collaborative research network focused on health care disparities. Specific Aim 1 is to establish an academic-community partnership infrastructure to conduct community-driven research, and Specific Aim 2

is to design and implement a culturally adapted preventive health care questionnaire to compare responses between families with and without ASD. This project will engage community members directly, promote equitable access to care, and generate preliminary data for future externally funded studies. This is an ongoing project and funded by JHU CCC CCC CEnR Grant (Community-Engaged Research).

PUSH

In today's world, mental health challenges are exponentially rising leaving no race, age, or gender behind. This crisis doesn't discriminate. But the most powerful intervention isn't clinical or therapeutic- it's human. PUSH is a nonprofit rooted in a singular belief: real connection heals.

Our model pairs youth with individuals experiencing mental health challenges- whether that be a fellow teen, an adult, or a senior. From those navigating anxiety, depression, or loneliness, PUSH offers sustained, compassionate relationships. Volunteers and "patients" communicate via text or call, as often as feels right for them. The best part? Flexibility. PUSH adapts to every need- whether it's a patient with Alzheimer's needing a daily reminder or a teen needing someone to vent once a week.

This isn't therapy. It's about showing up. Listening. Being present. Things many of us take as a privilege but for others, it's life changing. PUSH empowers youth to be more than bystanders to suffering. They become advocates, supporters, and empathetic humans. This symbiotic connection fosters compassion in youth while addressing isolation and disparities across communities.

Our presentation will share PUSH's origin, evolving mission, and our rooted belief: connection is care. When systems fall short, people can still show up. PUSH isn't just a program- it's a movement.

THE POWER OF SIMPLICITY: MENTAL WELLNESS IN YOUTH SPACES

Methods of approach towards the discussion of mental health among the youth can be a challenging topic, especially for those who come from culturally diverse or underrepresented backgrounds. Presented through the lens of ACE, an AAPI identity club at STEM Prep High School, this project highlights how leveraging easily accessible, and simple arts and crafts activities can create a welcoming atmosphere and a sense of familiarity in an environment. The poster also emphasizes the power of having a peer-support network whether it's through school clubs or community connections. By showcasing the efforts of ACE, this project demonstrates how the advancement of conversations surrounding the youth and mental health doesn't always require large-scale campaigns. It aims to inspire and empower driven AAPI youths to launch their own initiatives through the use of their innate talents, knowledge, and creativity to promote mental wellness in their perspective community.

THE ME BOOK

AAPJ youth often experience internalized emotional struggles due to the ongoing cultural stigma surrounding mental health. While coaching at the Athletic Junior Tennis (AJT) tennis club I founded in 2022, I observed that many younger students lacked the tools to recognize and manage difficult emotions. In response, I created The Me Book, a four-week emotional wellness journal designed to help children identify feelings, understand their personal emotional triggers, and develop personalized coping plans.

This journal includes weekly themed chapters with guided prompts, reflection spaces, and a final section to build a personalized self-regulation plan from what each kid learned about themselves. The students completed the journal individually but were supported by weekly check-ins, optional one-on-one discussions. Additional assessments including student reflections, interviews, and parent feedback showed improvements in emotional awareness, increased willingness to express feelings, and stronger coping behaviors.

Responses from The Me Book showed that 90% of students that completed the journal felt that they could use their coping plans when they felt overwhelmed or sad to help them feel better, and 95% of participants reported that they thoroughly enjoyed the journal and expressed interest in filling out additional prompts in the future.

With over 80% of Asian Americans with mental health disorders not receiving treatment (Lipson et al., 2018), early and culturally responsive interventions like The Me Book play an important role in reducing long-term mental health disparities, especially in AAPJ communities. This project demonstrates how youth-led, community-based tools can support emotional literacy and resilience among AAPJ children, especially in environments where mental health conversations are often minimized or overlooked.

FACTORS INFLUENCING STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH HELP-SEEKING AMONG KAREN REFUGEES

AAPJ youth have poor mental health outcomes, including some of the highest suicide rates and lowest rates of help-seeking among all racial groups in the US. Among AAPJ refugee youth, these needs are further exacerbated by resettlement challenges, trauma, and low-income status. This project seeks to fill the AAPJ youth mental health research gap by interviewing 13 Karen parents and youth from North Carolina to better understand factors impacting youth's stress and mental health help-seeking. The interviews revealed four major themes for parents and five major themes for youth. The poster will focus on and specifically discuss Karen parents' experiences in role changes before and after resettlement, youth experiences navigating triple identities as Asian-American Refugees, and the comparison between parent and youth experiences in the mental health landscape. The poster will also offer recommendations on ways to help mitigate the parent-child disconnect described in the research and suggest future initiatives that should be developed to support Karen youth mental health.

BUILDING EVIDENCE FOR AAPI MENTAL HEALTH: EVALUATION OF PEER SUPPORT GROUPS IN RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK NORTH CAROLINA

Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities face unique mental health challenges compounded by stigma, intergenerational pressures, and a lack of linguistically accessible resources. To address these gaps, two closed peer support groups were conducted between March and May 2025 in North Carolina's Research Triangle Park region: one in-person and one online. Across both groups, an average of 14 participants attended 10 weekly themed sessions facilitated by trained peer support specialists. Program evaluation employed semi-structured focus group interviews (n=14, including facilitators) conducted during the final session of each group. Interviews were recorded, de-identified, transcribed, and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis to identify recurring themes.

Findings showed three core benefits: (1) enhanced problem-solving skills through shared experiences and practical strategies, (2) emotional awareness and self-regulation supported by a safe, culturally attuned environment, and (3) strengthened interpersonal relationships, including improved parent-child communication and increased social connectedness. Participants identified barriers such as lack of awareness of mental health resources, limited Chinese-language services, and cultural stigma. Recommendations included thematic support groups (e.g., parenting, trauma), expanded services (hotlines, workshops), and Chinese-speaking professional mental health expertise.

This evaluation demonstrates that culturally tailored peer support programs provide critical, accessible mental health support in AAPI communities in North Carolina. These findings contribute to a growing body of literature on culturally responsive mental health care for underrepresented populations.

THANK GOD, MY SON IS A BOY AGAIN

In this video, I was having a conversation with a mom whose 18 year old son identified himself as transgender and had been taking hormone for two years. Based on the information provided by the parents, the couple had a very bad relationship, and they fought almost on a daily basis. The son and daughter felt their parents were very controlling; and the mom felt the children were ungrateful and irresponsible because the parents paid for everything for them, but they were never satisfied and were not even attending school.

Ever since the family started working with us, we helped the husband and wife work out their conflicts and reduced fighting between them. We also encouraged the parents to celebrate special occasions like birthdays and holidays, which they never did.

In the conversation, the mom shared with me happily that the son wanted to cook Thanksgiving dinner for the entire family for the first time; he also told his parents that since he felt so loved by his parents, he wanted to do something nice for his

parents, too, which was to stop taking hormones. The son also got a haircut and mom felt he looked exactly like a boy again.

The mom was a Christian, she thanked God again and again in the video for sending me to help her. Later, the mom told us both kids were back in college.

BREAKING AWAY: DANCE POETRY ON MENTAL HEALTH

This video project consists of Indian classical dance (Bharatanatyam) and spoken word poetry to explore AAPI mental health, especially the burden that falls on individuals. This piece is inspired by my own lived experiences with mental health and cultural stigma. Through movement and word, hope & voice is given to others who are trying to heal from emotional struggles, a lack of honest conversation, and the fear of being seen as "broken" as prescribed by cultural expectations. This piece calls for destigmatizing vulnerability to call for voices that break away from the silence.



RECKONING ON SCREEN: SILENT WAR DOCUMENTARY FILM PREMIERE

ROOM 1A&B | 2:00 PM – 4:45 PM

Join us for the grand premiere of *Silent War: Asian American Reckonings with Mental Health*, a documentary examining the mental health crisis within AAPI communities. An engaging panel with the film's creators and mental health leaders will follow the screening, including a keynote address delivered by the Vice President of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Victor Armstrong.



Victor Armstrong, MSW | Session Moderator

Victor Armstrong, MSW, is a nationally recognized mental health and equity leader with over 30 years in human services. He currently serves as VP at the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and advocates for marginalized communities.



Changfu Chang, PhD | Session Panelist

Dr. Changfu Chang is the writer and director of *Silent War*. A seasoned documentarian, he has spent years capturing untold stories of mental health in Asian American communities. His work reflects a deep commitment to truth, compassion, and cultural reckoning.



Justin A. Chen, MD, MPH | Session Panelist

Justin Chen is Vice Chair of Ambulatory Services and Vice Chair of Health Justice in the Department of Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medicine/NY-Presbyterian. He is also Executive Director of the MGH Center for Cross-Cultural Student Emotional Wellness, and a former RWJ Clinical Scholar, focusing on cross-cultural mental health and access to care.



Pooja Mehta, MPH | Session Panelist

Pooja Mehta, MPH, is a South Asian mental health and suicide prevention advocate with over a decade of impact. A suicide loss survivor with lived experience, she blends public health and personal insight to challenge stigma and shift how we talk about mental health.



David Scott Binanay | Session Panelist

David Scott Binanay is a violinist, composer, and patient advocate based in Durham, NC. As Director of UNC Health's DooR to DooR program and Founder of Music Over Mind, he champions music as medicine, bringing healing and connection to healthcare and behavioral health settings across North Carolina.



A.C. Brooke | Session Organizer

A.C. Brooke is the assistant director and co-producer of *Silent War*. A multidisciplinary creative with a background in writing, design, and photography, she helped shape the film's emotional tone. She now serves as WAVES' Creative Director.



SILENT WAR

ASIAN AMERICAN
RECKONINGS WITH
MENTAL HEALTH

VIEW HIGHER FILMS PRESENTS A FILM BY **CHANGFU CHANG**. PRODUCED BY **JIAN LILY CHEN**. CO-PRODUCERS **RUMIN HU** AND **A.C. BROOKE**. WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY **CHANGFU CHANG**. EDITED BY **JORDAN GRAFF**. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR **A.C. BROOKE**. DIRECTOR OF MUSIC **BARRY ATTICKS**. MUSIC ASSISTANTS **ZOEY NOBLE-LEAD, NICK BETTENDORF, JAKE FEESER, AND NATALIE MARTING**. ADDITIONAL CAMERA BY **A.C. BROOKE, REED DONNELLY, AND ZHIXUAN JIANG**.



EVENING KEYNOTE

EVENING KEYNOTE HOW TO RAISE RESILIENT YOUTH: MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ROOM 1A&B | 6:45 PM – 9:00 PM

Close the conference with an inspiring keynote by Dr. Gang (Julie) Xie, school psychologist, licensed educational psychologist, and Positive Psychology expert. The evening begins with welcomes from Haipei Shue and Crystal Leng, followed by Dr. Xie's address in Chinese, offering culturally relevant insights for Chinese-speaking families and small-group discussions on their unique mental health needs.

Dr. Xie earned her Ph.D. in School Psychology from Temple University and has served Fremont Unified School District for more than two decades. An adjunct faculty member at Sofia University, she teaches Positive Psychology and Leadership and has published two books.

A renowned national speaker, Dr. Xie will share practical, culturally informed strategies to promote student wellness, strengthen relationships, and integrate the pillars of resilience to help our next generations to flourish.



Haipei Shue | Welcome Speaker

Haipei Shue is President of United Chinese Americans (UCA) and a longtime community activist in Washington, DC. He helped pass the Chinese Students Protection Act of 1992 and the Congressional Apology Resolution on the Chinese Exclusion Act.



Crystal Leng | Welcome Speaker

Crystal Leng is Director of Volunteer Engagement and WAVES Village at UCA WAVES. Based in Atlanta, she is a peer support specialist and Mental Health First Aid trainer, dedicated to empowering volunteers and building community-centered mental health support.

TO ALL THE AMAZING VOLUNTEERS & TEAM MEMBERS WHO MADE THIS EVENT POSSIBLE



Alex Kwiecien



Alice Yu



Allen Zhong



Allison Connolly



Angel Liu



Charissa Cheah



Changfu Chang



Chunying Zhao



Cissy Wang



Crystal Leng



Diana Ding



Feng Xue



Gail Pruett



Grace He



Graham McPhail



Hannah Feng



Hong Wang



Jan Xie



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GET MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINED

You don't have to be a professional to make a difference. With Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training, you'll gain the skills to recognize, respond, and support when it matters most. Just like CPR saves lives in a medical crisis, MHFA can save lives in a mental health crisis.

MHFA is a skills-based training course that teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. The training gives you the skills you need to reach out and provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem or experiencing a crisis.

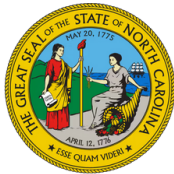
UCA WAVES, in partnership with the Mental Health Association for Chinese Communities (MHACC), conducts Youth and Adult Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training sessions to educate the community about mental health.

Our goal is to empower individuals to prevent or handle crises—helping them become “mental health guardians” for themselves and their loved ones.

SPONSORS

Thank you to all the funders who made today possible.

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MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY!

AAPI youth **often suffer “silently”** with stress, social isolation, cultural expectations, identity issues, and low mental health literacy. **These are only some of the barriers** that stand in the way of getting help. We are here to stand together and work towards **Wellness, Advocacy, Voices, Education, and Support (WAVES)**. As a nonprofit 501(c)(3), we rely heavily on donations to **make our work possible**. Scan the QR code to donate, or visit our website ucawaves.org!

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