

Los Angeles County Department of Mental  
Health

Strategic Communications Division  
API Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Monday

July 27, 2020 2:00pm – 4pm

Present: Joice Chung Fong, Kishen Bera, Leo Lishi Huang, Richer San, Dr. Andy Yang, Benjamin Chang, Dr. Sheila Wu, Hector Ramirez, Daniel Park, Emily Pham, Jizelle Tongi, Mariko Khan, Rocco Cheng, Samin Yoak, Payal Sawhney, Sharon Hillihan, Dr. Yamada, Michelle Wong, Addison, Regina, Jane Park, Vickie, Sunnie Whipple, Bo Uch

DMH Admin: Dr. Luis Guzman, Dr. Sandra Chang

Welcome & Introductions

- Subcommittee Members, Housekeeping, Attendance, Co-Chairs

Review of Meeting Minutes

- Meeting Minutes were approved with minor corrections

Nomination/Election of Co-Chair

- Leo Lishi Huang nominated Richer San to be selected as a Co-Chair
- Leo Lishi asked the members to vote through email, elect Richer as a voting member
- Leo Lishi Huang shared that he is available to discuss further the role of the Co-Chair with Richer San
- Leo Lishi Huang received no objections to the decision made to move forward with the voting.
- Leo Lishi Huang discussed the responsibilities of the Co-Chair and the next steps with voting.
- Dr. Guzman informed the members they can contact him to see if they are eligible to vote.
- Leo Lishi explained the duties of a Co-Chair, facilitating meetings, advocating for the API community.
- Leo Lishi suggested there won't be any changes to the voting rules.

Richer San: provided the subcommittee with some background information about his experiences and organizations he is part of. He is looking forward to the opportunity to become a Co-Chair. Richer is excited to work with Leo Lishi and learn from his experiences as Co-Chair. Richer San accepts the nomination for Co-Chair

## Capacity Building Projects

- Leo Lishi shared that this Year's Capacity Bldg. Project is open for voting by email, no objectives were made on this decision.
- Leo suggested everyone on the floor can vote for this Fiscal Year Project, Leo asked for input or suggestions from the members.
- Homeless API outreach and engagement project due to Covid, will not move forward, the funds will go towards another project.
- Dr. Guzman shared the Korean Navigation Services Project is moving forward, the members voted in March for this project.
- Dr. Guzman stated the Korean Navigation Project will be revised due to Covid, and it will be submitted for a bid from the vendors.
- Leo Lishi stated the voting privileges for the projects will be from the members who have been consistent.

## Payal/Pandemic & Panic: A Community Mental Health and Wellness Project

### Project Description:

This project aims to produce a web-series to address the community mental health concerns of the vulnerable population within the South Asian and Hispanic communities. This project will aim to help children, seniors, pregnant women, non-native English speakers, recent immigrants, and those who have lost someone due to the pandemic. Preventive strategies will be provided, a focus on engagement, disseminating information to the targeted communities. The project shall utilize video hosting platforms such as YouTube and linguistically specific platforms like Bharat FM (South Asian languages like Hindi) to deliver contents that are easily accessible to several users from South Asian origin at no cost. The web-series shall showcase and demonstrate innovative methods and techniques that focus on going about your daily life in the post-pandemic world. The material will be presented in an edutainment (entertainment + education) format alongside a panel of experts that will provide research insights and anecdotes with a take home message. These techniques and methods will be critiqued by licensed mental health professionals as well as domain experts to ensure the quality of the dissemination.

### Project Purpose:

Our project focuses on the current and post-crisis community mental health in a linguistically specific and culturally sensitive manner. Forced changes have occurred and many are imminent over and above proximate problems. People will have to re-adjust and step out of their confines; they will need to face newer realities and normalize social interactions. Current research shows: The risk of anxiety, maladjustment, PTSD, depression, and other mental health issues has increased dramatically. Existing mental health issues can worsen and new ones can emerge. Availability of public healthcare, medical resources, social support, legal education, and self-control are strong protective factors against declining mental health. Exposure to information, overthinking, high self-awareness about health, focusing on the severity of the disease are known mental health risk factors. Public fear converts into stigma, discrimination, and scapegoating of specific people, scientists, and even public authorities. These are a few of the core guiding principles to develop episodes of web-series in how we would help people cope with new challenges and re-establish their social health. Our goal is to extend these and apply them in a friendly, relatable, and accessible way so disadvantaged people have the tools and resources to gain control of their mental health. Our vision is to make mental health principles intuitive and leverage the power of memetic.

### Project Objective:

1. We'll do this by equipping them with information and tools to adjust their mindsets and lifestyles according to the changing environment.
2. Provide psychological first aid to help them cope with the post-pandemic crisis.
3. Our web series is specifically tailored to minority population from South Asia who struggle with language barrier and do not use main stream TV or media for information/education
4. Our approach is geared to spread like a virus, but with a positive impact using positive emotional contagion and memes. We are bringing in experts who are intimately familiar with the needs of vulnerable people with digital behavior
5. We include hooks in our videos for high reliability ad long-lasting "take home messages" in multiple languages. Unlike most other video channels we, have a sharp focus on the future safeguarding of community mental health.

### Project Justification:

Never have people demonstrated such dramatic and incremental changes in behavior. No one would've believed us if we claimed that an unseen object could get people to stay at home for months and watch the Earth heal. This highlights the power people have over themselves. We aim to ride that momentum and facilitate a long chain of positive behaviors. Our project purports to provide the viewers with basic psycho-education and mental health first-aid and this new knowledge is expected to bring about some positive behavioral change in the target population. The new behaviors include adapting to social distancing, school-level personal hygiene, using masks as an accessory, adapting to some form of daily self-care routine (in order to cope with the psychological stress caused by the crisis) seeking help for mental health issues through online resources, etc.

### Cultural Outcomes

1. Facilitated in South Asian languages
2. Use of culture to motivate behavior change
3. Starting a series on national FM channel will spread the word to larger South Asian community
4. Involving prominent people from the community to deliver the message will make a bigger impact
5. Spread education about legal resources during crisis and pandemic

### Payal/Saahas Youth Project

#### Project Description

Saahas for cause is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the South Asian community residing in SoCal. The Saahas Youth project aims to actively engage the youth in the South Asian community in the areas of research and development, bridging the generation gap and spreading awareness on social justice. They will also be involved in assisting the non-profit making public service announcement videos on topics ranging from domestic violence awareness, mental health awareness among others in social media platforms. In addition, the non-profit has a well-established youth counseling program directed by Ms. Payal Sawhney (LCSW) provides support in the areas of dating violence, mental health

challenges, and dual identity challenges that are faced by the first-generation/new-immigrant and second generation middle and high school. Youth will have access to peer mentors to help and coach them.

#### Project Purpose:

The South Asian community is a minority in the country. Engaging the youth in this community enables them to be confident and contributing members of society. The project aims to establish and acknowledge their cultural background, while at the same time acculturating South Asian Youth to the host country's culture. The Saahas Youth hopes to build a strong sense of belonging in youth and provide them with tools to thrive psychologically, academically, professionally, and personally. The project uses youth as a contagion to spread mental health awareness and address the stigma associated with it. Also the project will fulfill this aim as the youth group serves as a support system comprising mental health professionals, peers, and community leader.

#### Project Objective:

1. Propagating mental health awareness addressing the stigma. Keeping the youth informed and involving them in community activities. E.g. participation in food drives for low-income groups, teaching technology classes to South Asian seniors. Bridging the generation gap between two cultures, building cultural sensitivity and at the same time help they acculturate to the local culture of the host country.
2. Teaching research methodologies to youth and involve them in performing research on various current topics.
3. Continue providing a safe space within the South Asian youth community by establishing easy contact with mental health professionals, and mentors. Establishing a discussion forum about current social justice topics. Making mentor-ship opportunities from attorneys on "Know Your Rights".

#### Project Justification:

1. Involving the youth in community activities builds leadership skills. The Public Service Announcements that will be made by the Saahas Youth group will help in addressing the stigma associated with mental health. This will empower the victims of domestic abuse to come forward and seek help through our organization.
2. Engaging in research projects helps build a scientific mindset into the future while helping them understand research methodologies and building a scientific temper. The social justice awareness program spearheaded by the Saahas Youth aims to spread awareness in the South Asian community is minority in the U.S. the organization provides a safe space within the community for the youth.
3. Since the South Asian community is a minority in the U.S. the organization provides a safe space within the community for the youth. They address topics pertaining to bullying, coping with cultural identity issues in school, and family lives. Engaging with other youth with similar backgrounds to assimilate, express, and have a healthy support system.
4. Youth will get an opportunity to contribute to their community by teaching basics of technology to older adults in the community.

Cultural Outcomes:

1. Enhances self-confidence
2. Clarity and confidence in identity and being part of two cultures
3. Harmonious relationship with parents and grand parents
4. Harmonious relationship peers.
5. Leadership Building
6. Research skills
7. Sensitivity to diversity and inclusion
8. Enhance Mental Health
9. Reduction in the rate of suicide attempts
10. Proposer Signature

Addison/Overview of 3 Proposals for Consideration:

1. Mental Health Media Campaign
2. Youth Innovation Lab & Fellowship
3. Liberation Workshop Series

Developed with principles in:

- Trauma-informed Care Approaches
- User-Centered Design
- Long-Term Impact & Sustainability
- Adaptability to COVID-19

Mental Health Media Campaign/It's okay not to be okay Project

This project works to reduce barriers to mental health services for API LGBTQ+ youth during and after COVID-19 through a campaign by

1. Normalizing API LGBTQ+
2. Promoting phone and in-person resources for mental health support
3. Providing representation by well-known API LGBTQ+ advocates and allies

During COVID-19, many API LGBTQ+ youth are experiencing sharp increases in anxiety, depression, and suicidality due to factors such as loss of social connections, violence or invalidating households, and online harassment (Trevor Project)

User Population includes:

- API LGBTQ+ Youth
- Age range 18-24
- Campaign will be targeted to Los Angeles County Residents

### Outcomes Include:

1. Increase in calls and contact methods to featured resources and partners.
2. Increase in API LGBTQ+ youth confidence and resilience to seek support from trusted adults and representatives
3. Stronger “nontraditional” partnerships to address API LGBTQ+ youth mental health

The timeline for this project will be from July 2020 to June of 2021

- Preparation-Develop campaign methods and ideas with insight from experts
- Production- Facilitate production of videography and photography
- Distribution- Launch campaign on various platforms and via partners in March in honor of LGBTQ+ Mental Health Week
- Evaluation- Contact listed resources, featured Talent, and partners used to receive feedback/data
- Primary Goals – Increase in calls and contact methods to featured resources Talent in campaign

### Youth Innovation Lab & Fellowship

This project will work to reduce mental health access barriers for API youth by recruiting Youth Fellows from Los Angeles County to meet and develop user-centered, innovative strategies to violence prevention and barrier reduction to mental health services.

Reports show that, despite decades of progress. API youth continue to experience bullying, harassment, invalidation, and other violence from their peers, teachers, and school administrators in education settings. Our idea is to empower youth as the experts to design their own strategies.

### User Population Includes

- API Youth (emphasis on LGBTQ+ youth, with disabilities, immigration experience)
- Age range 18 – 24
- Fellows must live in Loss Angeles County (-16 Fellows selected)

### Outcomes include:

1. 4+ Innovative Strategies developed by Youth Fellows for implementation:
2. Stronger social connections between Youth Fellows, Facilitators and their Schools
3. Increase in confidence and resilience in Youth Fellows in various settings
4. New tools and resources for Youth Fellows to develop existing/new ideas

The timeline for this project will be from July 2020 to June of 2021

- Preparation – Begin coordinating Lag logistics, (dates, locations, structure or curriculum
- Recruitment – Develop application for Youth Fellows, select and announce cohort of 16 Youth Fellows
- Facilitation – Fellows meet and begin the lab, fellows are divided into 4-5 teams, receive tools and research
- Evaluation – Fellows prototype strategies over the following month, compile feedback and data
- Primary Goals – Develop innovative user centered and designed violence prevention ideas for various settings

### Liberation Workshop Series

This project will work to reduce barriers to mental health services for API street-based sex workers ages 19+ during and after COVID-10 by providing artistic outlets for participants to practice creative writing and ceramics, facilitating discussions around mental health barriers and challenges, and connecting them with relevant resources.

We can provide a space for API sex workers to:

- Express themselves
- Develop stronger relationships and community ties
- Discuss experiences and know they are not alone
- Connected with resources for mental health and more

User Population includes:

- Increase in confidence and resilience in participants.
- Increase in social relationships with peers and community
- Increase in linkage to care (mental health services)
- Increase in trust among participants and with local resources

The timeline for this project will be from July 2020 to June of 2021

- Coordination- Build Partnerships with key organizations for recruitment and facilitation
- Recruitment – Develop multilingual needs assessments/application for participants
- Facilitation- Coordinate participants into ceramics or creative writing classes
- Showcase – Plan an art showcase event for participants/partners, conduct post program evaluation
- Primary Goals- Increase confidence, resilience, social relationships, linkage to care and trust

### Rocco Cheng/Dr. Yamada Our Story and our Journey on Mental Health Recovery and Resilience

#### Project Description

This project proposes to compile helpful mental health wellness information, resources, and personal stories of recovery and resilience in audio-visual format to share with various API communities (e.g. Chinese, Korean, Cambodian, Filipino, and Vietnamese). The audio-visual presentations can be shared via social media (such as: YouTube) and in waiting rooms of clinics to de-mystify mental health issues.

#### Project Purpose:

This project is designed to address an identified need to reach various API communities in their own spoken languages with audio-visual presentations that promote mental wellness and recovery, and to demystify stigma about mental health issues and recovery. As the most vulnerable sectors of the API communities may not be literate in their own languages, printed materials may not be that helpful for them. Hence, the project looks to compile and adapt existing mental health information and recovery stories in audio-visual format to reach more community

members. The project intends to collaborate with members of selected API communities to create culturally and linguistically relevant resources in the members own voices.

Project Objective:

- Make helpful mental wellness information and community resources accessible to API community members in their own languages and voices
- To expand access to those who do not read their own languages via an audio-visual format of information delivery
- To reach a larger population not limited by geographic location by sharing the information online via social media, such as YouTube)

Project Justification:

API UsCC has funded many successful projects in the past few years. Two of the major challenges encountered with these projects were literacy and accessibility of the information. Providing materials in English creates a barrier for those who are not proficient in English; however, materials in written Asian languages may also create barriers for those who are not literate in their own languages. Therefore, using an audio-visual format will avoid the pitfalls of literacy issues, especially as related to mental health, and Moreover, by making the project available online, people will have more access to the much needed information without limitation to time (e.g., only accessible during business hours) and geographic location (e.g., only accessible by personal visit to office/clinics). It also helps avoid stigma as people can watch in their own language and voices.

Cultural Outcomes:

- API community members will be able to access the information in their own languages and regardless of their level of literacy.
- API community members will be more receptive to and find the materials to be more relevant to them with the presentation made by people of their own community.
- Common cultural myths and stigma associated with mental health issues will be addressed by their own community members.

Upcoming Meetings:

**9/28/20, 2-4pm**