

**Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
Stakeholder Engagement Unit
API Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2024, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm**

Present: Richer San, Sithea San, JR Kuo, Vicky Xu, Norio Iwahori, Mirtala Parada Ward, Violeta Leones, Blanca E. Watson, Tuan D. Nguyen, Aaron Icedo, Maria Tan, Moses Lim, Ruth Wen, Cynthia Song-Mayeda, Dr. Sheila Wu, Hyun Kyung Lee, Kerry Chhay, Mariko Kahn, Payal Sawhney, Pastor Peter Kim, Emily Wu Truong, Angie Chu, Parag Sawhney, Zeel Ahir, Julia Francia, Jennifer Alquijay, Apoorva Vishwanath, Belinda Rabano, Alex, Jennifer, Michelle Wong, Neel Iyer, Pia Antoinette Vasquez, Riku Matsuda, Sheetal S. Ayyathan, Sanchi Kohli, Soh Yun, Sovanna Pouv
Korean Interpreters – Samantha and Sun
DMH Admin – Alan Wu

Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions
Welcome & Introductions	Subcommittee Members, Housekeeping, Attendance, Co-Chairs
Review of Meeting Minutes	Motion by Tuan D. Nguyen to approve minutes and seconded by Sithea San.
DMH Updates	<p>Mirtala Parada Ward provided the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MHSa received all recommendations from the subcommittees and will update on what programs will be elevated and making sure to have the funding to move forward with more culturally specific outreach services for the department. • UsCC Leadership have completed the revision of the UsCC bylaws. • For the 2024/2025 capacity building projects, \$350,000 allocated for this subcommittee. Typically, in January and February we engage in coming up with new capacity building projects for next fiscal year. Usually it is 3-4 projects per subcommittee depending on the size and magnitude of the projects. Preferably, we would like to have all the proposals ready by April and May so that the Statements of Work can be developed in a timely manner to ready for the solicitation process for the projects. Currently, two projects are being implemented and completed the initial vendor meeting. We had administrative delays and able to transfer funds from last year to this year. We have been working on projects for two back to back years and will elevate six projects for this group. • We are in the process of hiring new staff and have new staff on board. Jennifer Alquijay will take over the administrative supervision of the UsCC units and work with the co-chairs and subcommittees. Riku Matsuda just joined us and in the training process and will provide administrative support. Dr. Hyun Kyung Lee will be taking over the liaison duties for the API UsCC and is being trained by Alan, Mirtala, and Jennifer to ensure there is no lapse in coverage. I want to welcome Dr. Lee. She has been with the ARDI Division for many years and worked in

	<p>the DMH cultural competency unit. She is well versed in terms of culturally appropriateness and understands the mental health needs of various API communities and will be a perfect fit for this role. Alan is leading the ARDI Division and has a passion for data. He is going to be my right-hand man and his new assignment is analyzing data and collecting outcomes for the ARDI Division.</p>
<p>Retreat Survey Results</p>	<p>Alan Wu reported on the results of the retreat survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total of 21 survey responses • All 21 respondents indicated their interest in having an in-person retreat • Majority of respondents (11) prefer having the retreat on Thursday • Majority of respondents (11) prefer having the retreat in the afternoon • The following topics received the highest number of responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ API capacity building project strategies and priorities (14) ➢ Identify strategies to decrease mental health disparities among the API community (14) ➢ Develop common goals and mission around the work of the API UsCC subcommittee (14) <p>Based on the above survey results Mirtala Parada Ward suggests elevating the three topics with the highest responses and they go in hand with the capacity building projects. She provided the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data presentation to look at the disparities for the LA County API community including the South Asian community to drive the discussion • Have a professional facilitator, Dr. Rigo Rodriguez • Require 60-70 days for planning and securing the funding and facility • Centralized retreat location • API community is mostly in Service Areas 3, 4, and 8 • Have retreat at the regular API UsCC meeting time and extend for 2 hours, 11 am to 3 pm. <p>Emily Wu Truong suggests determining the retreat location by looking at the Service Area of each member. Mirtala suggests conducting an online survey to gather members' zip codes to help us identify the best location. Mariko Kahn prefer having the retreat at the DMH Headquarters because of the new facility, parking, and centrally located. Dr. Lee reminded us that the two regular meeting days, March 25 and May 27 are County holidays and may not be a good option to hold the retreat.</p>

Capacity Building Project Brainstorming

Alan Wu shared an overview of proposal guidelines and requirements:

- Projects must focus on 4 key areas: stigma reduction, education/knowledge about mental illness, identifying gaps in service delivery, and increasing access to care;
- Increase access to care for underserved API communities across all age groups: children, transitional aged youth (TAY), adult, older adult
- Should be consistent with the language, cultural needs and demographics of the specific API community;
- Must be for the community and be community-based and include culturally effective outreach, engagement, education, and respond to historical and geographic disparities and barriers to services;
- Proposals can be submitted by individuals (consumers, families, community members) or organizations (CBOs, mental health provider, non-mental health provider);
- Not intended for delivery of mental health services, training community members, mental health staff, or providers;
- Should not be clinical oriented projects like therapy or group sessions;
- Amount of creativity that can go into them is unlimited;
- Proposer decide how they want to propose a project in a way that's culturally congruent with the API community they're focusing on;

Oral History Project for Cambodian American Families – Mariko Kahn

This project will record the oral histories of six to eight Cambodian American families who survived the Khmer Rouge genocide. A prior API UsCC project completed 15 oral histories of 1.5 generation Cambodian Americans and strongly recommended collecting more oral histories from Cambodians of different ages. There is some urgency as many of the older Cambodians are dying, especially given their higher death rate and the impact of trauma on their emotional well-being.

Collecting oral histories using an extended family approach rather than the individual narrator is innovative. It addresses several challenges for this underserved community to share their stories. First, having a family share their stories helps to expand and improve the accuracy of the memories. A family member may remember an incident, a date or location which can be corrected or confirmed by others. An individual may not be willing to do an individual oral history but will take part in a group setting.

The family approach is culturally appropriate because Cambodians emphasize family connections as a major source of their identity. They are more group oriented rather than individualistic. Cambodians view "family" as an extended one, well beyond the nuclear family to include relatives by marriage and distant cousins. The "family" is a way to protect against hardships. The 1.5 Generation oral histories showed how important the "family" connection was for survival from sponsorships to food for survival. This approach may help to overcome the stigma of mental illness because the survivors share a collective experience of the genocide and immigration rather than a diagnosis. Mental illness can be viewed as a result of a collective community trauma which normalizes symptoms and decreases stigma.

	<p>Open Conversations with Courage – Sheetal S. Ayyathan</p> <p>The current societal structure has created a vicious cycle where, fearful of being judged and ridiculed, individuals seldom discuss their problems and realities, creating stigma. Stigmas lead to discrimination. Discrimination leads to people going mute on their sufferings. This in turn creates a false façade of what is “normal” in society, hence leading to inaction and obstruction of discussions on the effect of these on the psyche of individuals.</p> <p>We wish to dismantle this cycle by expanding the boundaries of acceptance in the community with the guidance of qualified South Asian professionals and participation of community members with lived experience. We aim to promote cultural awareness while spreading education about important issues. Our mission is to create dialogue within a community where personal decisions are influenced by the opinions of others.</p> <p>Through these discussions, we strive to shed light on the struggles that often remain hidden, particularly mental health challenges arising from life circumstances. By empowering individuals to openly discuss their experiences, and provide them with support, we hope to break down taboos and inspire others to do the same, ultimately fostering a supportive community.</p> <p>We will focus on discussing topics relevant to TAY and Adults from the South Asian community. For the purposes of reaching a wider audience, Saahas for Cause will use its existing platform called Saahas Sit-down for conducting podcasts and also relay it on Saahas for Cause’s YouTube channel.</p>
<p>Open Discussion on non-agenda items/Community Announcements</p>	<p>Emily Wu Truong inquired if anyone wants to collaborate with her to work on her upcoming Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander event for the San Gabriel Valley and will have planning meeting on Tuesday, 1/23/24 at the Blossom Market Hall, 11 AM.</p> <p>Sitheia San shared an announcement that the Cambodia Town will host the Cambodian American model curriculum study tonight at 5 PM. This curriculum will be implemented in California in 2025 from 5K to 12K.</p> <p>Pia Antoinette Vasquez shared the National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse is accepting applications for adults to join program focus on tough conversations for adults and how to start these conversations with youth.</p> <p>Payal Sawhney shared Saahas in collaboration with the ABC school district will be holding a community-wide awareness event on May 18, 10 AM – 3 PM and will have game of cricket to break the stigma of mental health.</p> <p>Richer San shared the 16th Cambodia Town Culture Festival and Parade will be on April 7 in Long Beach to heal our community.</p> <p>Emily requested the subcommittee to have a presentation from the LA County Department of Health Emergency Services Bureau on how they interact with people of immigrant backgrounds when handling a 5150 or any psychiatric mobile crisis. Richer approved and requested Alan to invite speaker for the next meeting.</p> <p>Michelle Wong introduced two potential projects - one that addresses epidemic of anxiety and isolation for youth that teaches techniques from Traditional Asian Medicine and Circle Council. The other project is Sharing Tea Sharing Hope 2.0, originally introduced in 2019 and turned virtual, will include the South Asian communities and traditions of chai, will serve up deep listening, traditional Asian tea service, and linguistically relevant mental health resources to our API communities, especially elders and new immigrants. She will present them in the upcoming meetings.</p>

Follow Up Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct retreat survey to determine location• Secure speaker from the LA County Department of Health Emergency Services Bureau for February meeting
Upcoming Meeting: February 26, 2024	