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Topic: Examining the Effectiveness of YMHFA Among Asian Americans: A Randomized Controlled Trial.

Project Summary

In my study, I aim to understand the effects of Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training among Asian American parents who have adolescent children between the ages of 11 and 20. While Asian Americans are often portrayed as the “model minority,” recent research suggests that second-generation Asian American youth have higher rates of mental health disorders. Due to high levels of stigma attached to mental illnesses in the Asian community, and because of lower mental health literacy among foreign-born immigrant parents, Asian American parents may be unable to offer support to their children when they may experience mental health challenges.

Thus, targeting this vulnerable population is critical, and in my study, we aim to provide YMHFA training to 80 Asian American parents. I will be adopting a randomized controlled trial design, which will help us understand the true effects of the training. Specifically, I will examine if the training impacts parents’ (a) mental health literacy, (b) help-seeking intentions, (c) mental health stigma, (d) attitudes towards professional help, (e) behavioral intentions, (f) confidence in MHFA skills, and (f) engaging in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Action Plan (ALGEE) behaviors. In addition, I will examine if the training impacts the recipients of the aid, i.e., the adolescent children of the parents who complete the training, with regard to their (a) mental health, (b) perceptions of quantity of parental support when in distress and (c) quality of parental support.

The study will make a significant contribution to the literature via its several strengths such as (1) the use of a randomized controlled trial design, (2) focus on Asian American parents, a population not examined within the context of the YMHFA training in the past, (3) examination of actual behavioral change in the participants (engagement in MHFA Action Plan (ALGEE) behaviors), and (4) examination of the impact of the training on adolescent children of the participants.