**PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESSORS FROM ANTI-AAPI RACISM AND POTENTIAL PROMISING PEER SUPPORT MODEL THROUGH INTERACTIVE THEATER**

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**BACKGROUND:** Yale Compassionate Home, Action Together (CHATogether) is a mental health initiative and culturally-based peer support group that centers on providing mental health coping strategies to Asian American youth and parents through online digital theater vignettes. This culturally-focused program facilitated mental wellness in the Asian community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and amidst the rise in anti-AAPI violence. We aim to: 1) introduce CHATogether’s media as a vehicle to promote mental wellness and 2) present a qualitative study examining stressors faced by Asian Americans during the pandemic.

**METHODS:** CHATogether actors first performed a skit depicting specific parent-child interactions. Next, a licensed clinician debriefed the scene, highlighting skills to improve the child-parent interaction. The same skit was performed a second time, with actors utilizing the skills highlighted by the clinician. In a related study, six CHATogether members who produced vignettes participated in a focus group to discuss anti-Asian racism associated with the pandemic. We conducted qualitative analysis supported by NVivo to identify overarching themes.

**RESULTS:** Five preliminary themes related to racism stressors were identified: 1) increasing anti-AAPI racism involving political rhetoric and violence against Asians; 2) differential family approaches to dealing with racism including cultural gaps and language barriers; 3) different types of racism stressors involving systematic oppression and social exclusion; 4) the impact of racism stressors including feelings of alienation and hopelessness; and 5) positive coping methods such as discussing shared experiences or attending support groups. Themes of growth, resilience, and optimism were also identified, in which participants hoped to reassert their Asian cultural identity and restore cultural pride post-pandemic.

**CONCLUSIONS:** The pilot implementation of CHATogether during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates a preliminary model that can increase Asian American resiliency and political mobility. This study provides a potential promising model of online peer support to address anti-AAPI racism for future implementations.

**CONTENT CATEGORY:** Clinical Science/Patient Care

**KEYWORDS:** Asian Mental Health, COVID-19, Digital Learning, Racism, Stress