

Fall 2021

ASIAN AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST

*The official newsletter of the Asian American
Psychological Association*



December 2021

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**Asian American Psychological
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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

NELLIE TRAN, PH.D.
AAPA PRESIDENT

It is with gratitude, pride, exhaustion, and sadness that I write this final presidential column on behalf of myself, Dr. Richelle Concepcion, and Dr. Anne Saw.

I sit in reflection of the many opportunities I had had to lead and serve our AAPA membership. I first served AAPA as a co-chair of the convention volunteer committee with Dr. Matt Lee. I never thought I would be sitting here 15 years later as your outgoing President. I sit in awe and admiration for the work that every presidential team before me has taken on-- all the visions, service, and load they carried to get us to this day. What a charge and what an honor. Thank you! Thank you for entrusting me with the work of AAPA over the last 15 years in the many ways I have been allowed and especially over these last 6 months. I did not think nor wish to ever serve in this role but sometimes our community, and perhaps even our ancestors, have different roles, jobs, and work in mind for us. And sometimes they see abilities and greatness in us that we would not dare to see in ourselves. May each of us individually and collectively continue to serve and be together in this way- trusting the people who see us and love us-- trusting in the vision they see of us.

Over the past several years, Richelle, Anne, and I have done more than we thought possible in ways that we could never have anticipated. The trauma inflicted by the last U.S. presidential administration, COVID-19, the amplification and visibility of anti-Asian hate experiences led to many efforts and opportunities to show up for our AAPA and broader AAPI community. We leaned into our partnerships with our Alliance partners, especially the Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi) and the National Latinx Psychological Association (NLPA). Anne spearheaded work on the COVID-19 Needs Assessment, engaging with our NH/PI colleagues to study the needs of our communities and the wide-ranging ways the syndemic of COVID-19, economic and social devastation, and anti-Asian racism have impacted us. We uplifted the voices of our communities by partnering with local, regional, and national community organizations all across the United States, and disseminated our findings back to communities as well as to members of Congress and other policy makers, the White House COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force (who shared our work with President Biden!), public health departments, community organizers, philanthropists, and civil rights leaders. Anne also started partnerships with Stop AAPI Hate and we will continue to work with them and other national Asian American organizations on mental health initiatives. Alongside ABPsi and NLPA, we

jumped headfirst into social media and amplified the work and presence we had through partnerships with Provoc and Facebook. We held more healing spaces, functions, and office hours, gatherings in the virtual domain than we ever have before. And we created permanent infrastructure for AAPA, including a new banking structure, expanded EC capacity with more co-officers and graduate assistant supports, and new divisions on Southeast Asians and soon for International Students and Professionals.

It's hard for me to acknowledge this, and I know it is important for me to give life to this thought and feeling. These have also been some of the most difficult times of my life. During my time in the VP and President role, I gave birth to my second child, went up for tenure, and felt the sometimes unspeakable pain of watching my community and family be reminded of their experiences of racial trauma and for some dealing with their own racial reckoning for the first time. Richelle was called to active military duty, and faced her own health challenges. When news of the Atlanta shootings flooded the media, Anne and I were finalizing the AAPA written testimony for the House Judiciary Hearing on "Discrimination and Violence against Asian Americans." Needless to say, we understood the amplified weight and scale of our work. We pushed through what felt incredibly hard times. Richelle did more than anyone will ever know to keep our team and organization running. She fought her own battles with her health and continues to model for us the very real toll of this sometimes all-consuming work. We are a community and we proved it during these trying times. When someone needed to step away, we always had someone to step up. Our elders returned home and our new generations sought to join us. As trying as these times continue to be, I am proud of the community that we (all of us) built. As imperfect as we remain, I have faith in our resolve to keep facing our imperfections and showing up to do the work.

Lastly, I am honored to have been allowed to add a Vietnamese surname to ones that held the presidency. Anne and I realize it was only six months, but it was an honor to have the roles of president and the vice president held by two people from Southeast Asia (Vietnam and Burma respectively). We now look forward to our first South Asian president, Dr. Anjuli Amin!



Nellie Tran
AAPA President

FINANCE REPORT

JAN ESTRELLADO, AMANDA BREEN &
MICHELLE MADORE
CO-FINANCE OFFICERS

AAPA's Co-Finance Officers (FOs) Jan Estrellado, Amanda Breen, and Michelle Madore are happy to report that AAPA's bank accounts are in good condition. Our total combined balance from ETrade and PayPal is \$343,094.67 as of October 24, 2021. Subtracting fiscal agent accounts and AAPA Division balances, AAPA's main account has \$269,023.41 in working capital.

The FOs are pleased to share the following updates with the AAPA membership:

- **Saying goodbye and thank you.** After graciously serving as a co-FO for the past several years, we are sad to say goodbye to Dr. Estrellado. Much gratitude to you! You will be missed.
- **Welcoming a new FO.** We are excited to announce that Dr. Catherine Bitney will be brought on board as the new co-FO this November.
- **Chase accounts.** We have opened AAPA's bank accounts with Chase and are in process of bringing all of the division FOs up to speed and getting debit cards for all of the divisions.
- **Reincorporation.** We have officially re-established AAPA's 501(c)3 non-profit status.
- **2020 Taxes.** We filed our 2020 taxes in October.
- **Finance Assistants.** Two graduate students, Sophia Sablan and Stephanie Ong, are currently serving as finance assistants to help with administrative tasks.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

KAVITA K. ATWAL, PH.D.
MEMBERSHIP OFFICER

Happy Fall!

Thank you for being an AAPA member. We are excited to report about recent updates to the AAPA website related to membership. The automation of various tasks has improved the overall AAPA membership process. As a result of those changes, some members received emails asking them to update their accounts. We appreciate our members' patience as we have gone through this process.

Currently, AAPA has a total membership count of 1,272 members. Student members continue to comprise the majority of our membership. See the table below for a breakdown of our membership by membership type.

With the website updates, members can now make changes to their accounts by logging in online on aapaonline.org. If you cannot remember your password, there is an option to reset it. By logging in online, you can join our wonderful AAPA Divisions and change your email address for the listservs.

Your AAPA membership lasts for a year from the date that you signed up and will be automatically renewed after the year is complete. Please email us if you would like to opt out of having your membership automatically renewed. If you have any questions or concerns regarding AAPA membership or the new website changes, please do not hesitate to contact our membership team at membership@aapaonline.org.

Thank you for your continuing support of AAPA! We are thankful for this community.

Best Wishes,
AAPA Membership Team (Oscar, Carla, Amanda, and Kavita)

Membership Category	Number of Current Members
Student	749
Professional	514
Retiree/Emeritus	9
Total	1272



COVER ART STORY: ON THE RISE

Working with a 1st generation Filipina woman as a 2nd generation Filipina woman, I found myself coming full circle with everything I've researched while in graduate school about the Filipino population, the cultural values, and how to provide multiculturally-informed clinical interventions. In this journey, venturing into understanding my cultural identity, the breast cancer

patient I worked with provided me more insight into her perspective of the world. She is ingrained in the traditional collectivist values and Catholicism, both of which I've battled within myself growing up in the United States. I experienced countertransference fighting between individualistic values and collectivist values. As a counseling trainee, I continued to reflect and take a step back, reminding myself to honor her needs, even if I disagreed with them. Often, I felt like I was speaking with my mother or aunts, where we don't necessarily see eye to eye on issues. However, being my patient utilizing clinical services, the patient had to practice what I've learned in withholding biases and providing non-judgmental support. I witnessed growth and progress. She built a foundation of advocating for herself and her needs among her friends. The turbulent waves of emotions on the bottom half of the painting represent her anxiety and the challenging paths she had to navigate. As a therapist, I learned and exercised the skill to take a step back and provide guidance and validation as needed but allowed her to find her truth and authentic self to cultivate self-confidence. As the younger therapist, I'm looking upward from these crashing waves as she rises upward into the sky like the Filipino star sun symbol in the painting. Engaging in therapy with this patient as a trainee, I found myself resonating with her lifestyle of constantly having things to do and high expectations for ourselves. These expectations are prominent in similar cultural upbringing. Together, we worked on easing her anxiety levels by going with the flow, which I learned alongside her progress. I'm appreciative of her willingness and eagerness to engage in the therapeutic process with me. There were ebbs and flows within the relationship; however, in the end, she taught me

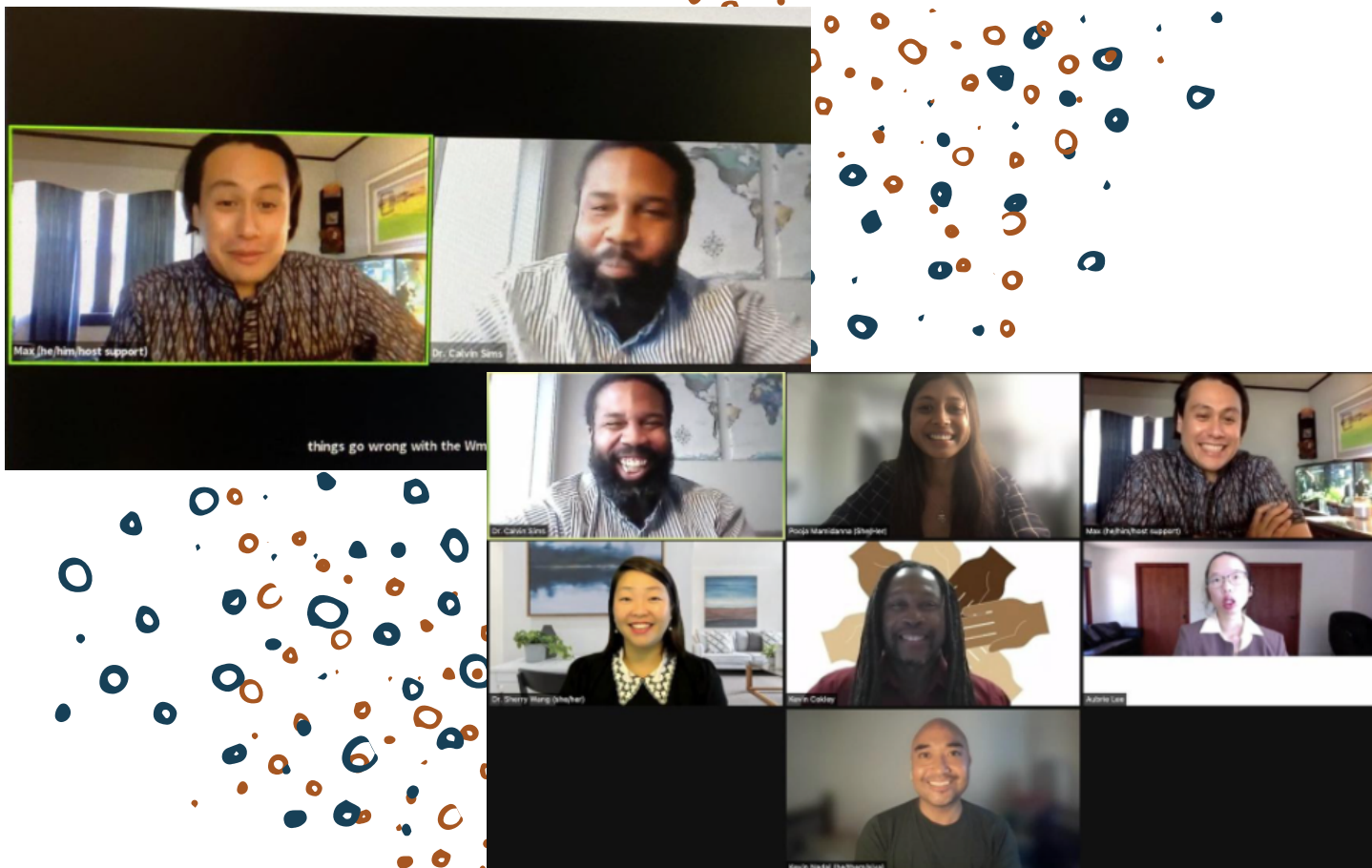
more about appreciating my cultural roots.

This art piece was created in part of my thesis and is a mixed media (acrylic paints, charcoal and ink)

Artist bio: Before switching my career path from advertising to psychotherapy, I worked for ten years in marketing as an art director, graphic designer, and illustrator. After a couple of years working as an art teacher at homeless shelters and leading community art projects, I recognized the power of what art could do for an individual's mental well-being. And that's when I found art therapy. I am a recent graduate of Adler University in Chicago and completed my Master of Arts (M.A.) in Counseling: Art Therapy. Currently, I am currently a Licensed Eligible LPC (Licensed Professional Counselor) & Provisional Eligible ATR (Registered Art Therapist) in the Chicagoland area. As an active advocate of mental health, particularly the benefits of the expressive art therapies, I have spoken at several Ignite Talk Chicago events about reframing the stigmas related to mental health and have hosted several art-focused self-care workshops with the American Institute of Graphic Arts-Chicago and Creative Women's Co. I joined the Asian Mental Health Collective to open up the Chicago Chapter and collaborate with my team in providing roundtable discussions concerning the stigmas of mental health within the Asian community. When I'm not advocating for the importance of a multiculturally-informed approach to counseling, I am busily training at the dance studio or traveling to complete an art bucket list: see each city's art museum at least once.

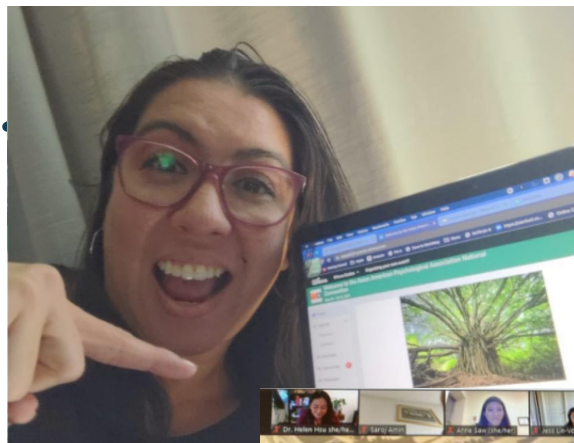
2021 AAPA CONVENTION SNAPSHOTS

MELE KRAMER



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AAPA Annual Convention

The Division on Students (DoS) of the Asian American Psychological Association

As the Division on Students (DOS), we shared some updates about DoS, and students had the opportunity to connect with each other. We also announced the winners of our student awards. Congratulations!

AAPA DoS Clinical Practice Award Winner – Thanh P. Nguyen

AAPA DoS Research Award Winners – Lydia HaRim Ahn and Thomas P. Le

AAPA DoS Social Justice Award Winners – Tania Chowdhury and Keiko M. McCullough

Student testimonials about their experiences at the Convention

“

It was my first time attending a national convention and I am very happy that I chose to attend the 2021 Asian American Psychological Association National Convention. The experience was very memorable and I would like to share my highlights from the event. First, thank you so much to all the presenters and staff that made this event possible. Being on Zoom, I was initially worried that it would not be as interactive, but there was so much discussion and opportunity to have interpersonal conversations. One of my favorite sessions was the Yale CHATogether: Exploring AAPI Mental Health Through Comics presented by Nealie Tan Ngo. I learned so much about graphic medicine and felt grateful to see how visual arts can help AAPI mental health. Mental literacy is a very important topic that all students should learn about. I also enjoyed the mentoring sessions where I got to hear from professionals working in college counseling centers. I learned more about navigating the transition from graduate school to working in clinical fieldwork. This will help me tremendously as I finish my studies. I felt thankful to have this opportunity to hear from professionals and students. The AAPI community provided a welcoming atmosphere that helped me process my own identity as an Asian American woman.

”



Attending the AAPA Convention helped with my professional development through giving me the opportunity to present and share my research about queer Asian American men's experiences. It felt rejuvenating to discuss these topics with fellow queer Asian men and allies, as well as to receive questions and comments that inspired future research directions. Moreover, it felt connecting to share space with fellow Asian Americans and queer Asian Americans and process topics like clinician shame, queer Asian isolation, and empowerment against white supremacy."



The AAPA Convention significantly contributed to my professional development. In the opening session, the panelists' responses were very enlightening about current issues related to Asian American mental health, the direction of the field, and challenges in making progress. In particular, I resonated with Dr. Kevin Nadal and Dr. Sherry Wang in their response to recent anti-Asian violence and its placement within the broader historical context of racism against the AAPI community. I felt less alone in my desire to advocate for and support the AAPI community, and I agree that conversation needs to keep going beyond the convention. Additionally, I felt the mentoring session was very helpful in my own process of navigating graduate school and applying for internships. I connected with Ashley Nguyen and Dr. Jane Tram in clarifying my direction in the field and assuaging my insecurities about being a competitive applicant for internship. They provided wonderful resources and advice on how I should proceed in getting more experience in research and leadership roles. I plan to continue to keep in touch with both of them throughout my graduate school journey.



The 2021 Asian American Psychological Convention fed my clinical, activist, and researcher soul. As an Asian-Canadian aspiring psychologist, the opportunities to divulge into my identity in a professional setting are very rare, and the chance to do so within an Asian community is nearly null. Representation is vital to the institutions we become a part of and the communities we form. Not only did I feel the presence of our Asianness, I saw and heard a new diverse generation of clinicians and scholars, especially Southeast, South, and multiracial Asians. I hope to continue to see the evolution of Asian psychologists and mental health professionals.

The convention gave me the groundwork and community to fully inhale the diversity and complexity of Asian-American identities. I was allowed the privilege to struggle with difficult questions: what constitutes Asian-American? How are our ethnic histories vulnerable to White supremacy while also fundamental to solidarity? How can we help the next generation of students survive in oppressive academic institutions? How is anti-Asian racism related to anti-Black racism? How can research account for multiple intersecting identities and experiences of structural oppression? I was able to learn by simply being present and honest. Not only was I encouraged to think about me and my communities; I was motivated to imagine new possibilities. As I head into this

round of fall applications, I am sustained for another year to keep pushing the boundaries of the psychology field. While my immediate environment may be lonely, I know I have a community of Asian psychologists striving to keep me learning, growing, and reaching towards an equitable future. I am humbled by the reminder that community connection is an essential component of community care, and community care is foundational to our survival as Asian psychologists.

In terms of our future DoS student events and resources, please be on the lookout for upcoming mentor office hours, social events, and funding opportunities.

2021 AAPA CONVENTION: CLOSING SESSION – ON GROOVES AND GROVES: WATERING OUR ANCESTRAL ROOTS & CULTIVATING INTERCULTURAL SOLIDARITY THROUGH MUSIC WITH FUNKADESI

PORTIA CHAN

How often has the AAPA Convention included a world premier of a song, a sneak peak of a documentary, and footage of key leaders and executive committee members dancing? For that matter, how many conventions or conferences about psychology culminate in song and dance, like this? Probably not that many.

Therein exists part of the magic that is Funkadesi. Often the language of the social sciences can divide us -- researchers from the general public, the traditionally educated from those who possess the "genius of grassroots" (Maparyan, 2017), and us from, well, us. It would be too easy and misguided to say "us from them". When words separate and divide individuals and the communities they represent, then music can bring them back into harmony.

Funkadesi was founded in 1996 by Dr. Rahul Sharma. The band includes ten members who juxtapose and blend Afro-Caribbean grooves with bhangra,

Bollywood, Indian folk with reggae and funk. At the closing session -- or we could even say the closing ceremony -- of the convention, Dr. Sharma and five of the ten members presented "On Grooves and Groves: Watering Our Ancestral Roots & Cultivating Intercultural Solidarity Through Music with Funkadesi." In virtual space, the connections commenced with a pre-recorded prayer circle with band members touching toes and holding hands. This practice is done prior to all of their performances. As music is air that is

refined through breaths and beats, whether through voice or instruments, the next part of the session included grounding breathwork led by Dr. Sharma. The communal breathing became one sound, and Sarasvati, the Hindu goddess of music and art, was invoked as the intention for belonging and welcoming was set. These steps set the virtual stage for connecting even across the ethers of Zoom and Whova.

Dr. Sharma, the man behind the music shared his CHAI recipe, which is an acronym for Compassion, Humility, Accountability, and Insistence that we all belong. The band's founding drummer, the late Baba Meshach Silas believed that "our ancestors wanted us to be together." He was also the member who insisted upon the prayer circle, even when performances ran late, as they often do in the industry. Funkadesi's first album, *Uncut Roots* (2000), was dedicated to their ancestors. As art can and often does imitate life, Baba Meschach Silas passed away just one week prior to what would have been his 44th birthday in 2005. As a musician with no health insurance and being part of a racial minority group, he was a casualty of the disparities in the healthcare system. As Funkadesi was bringing groups together from segregated parts of Chicago, Baba Meshach embodied the hazards and risks of a system that prioritized some over others. In Baba Meshach's obituary, Dr. Sharma stated, "He had a remarkable openness to ... people who, regardless of race or background, are truly interested in progress for all people. If there's anything I take away from my getting to know him and that may be important for other people to know: Imagine creating community with those who do not share your socioeconomic status; your race; your background. He floored all of us with his fierce love and conviction" (Chicago Tribune, 2005). These sentiments continue to be embodied in the band's music and performances.

In my conversation with Dr. Sharma, the narrative revealed that all the people, parts, and places had to align for this jam to happen. When he was applying to internships in clinical psychology, one of the last cities where he wanted to be, Chicago, turned out to be where everything that needed to come together did. His



Dr. Rahul Sharma

With permission from Funkadesi

family's journey includes his grandparents' migration from India to Kenya, then his parents' and two older sisters' migration from Kenya to Kalamazoo, where he and his elder brother were born. The backdrop of their upbringing was a small town in Michigan.

"Growing up in the 70s and 80s in Michigan, talking about racial issues was often pitted as Black and White and I was neither Black nor White," Dr. Sharma stated. During summers, he and his family traveled to visit with his family in Kenya, and these trips had a profound impact on him. "Traveling from the Midwest to Kenya, just experiencing and shifting cultural environments...how is the Indian Community in Kenya socially positioned in relation to Europeans and Black Africans in Kenya ...then coming back to the Midwest and what's the cultural ethos here?...That definitely piqued my curiosity and becoming an observer. I wasn't given a framework and language to start thinking about this more critically until I went to college and started thinking about culture, ethnocentrism, cultural lenses and filters, and issues of power and privilege...that helped me to navigate the complexities."

"My history really is rooted in this rich set of stories and happenings...I'm surrounded by a culture in the U.S. that would be perfectly fine with me forgetting."

On one summer visit to Nairobi, he was listening to his father and his two brothers (Dr. Sharma's uncles) talking, and he had a revelation. One question led to many answers and stories. "Some of them were really funny. Some of them were really deep and painful and poignant. And it hit me like a ton of bricks. I am not from the United States. My history does not originate here. My history really is rooted in this rich set of stories and happenings. If I don't claim it for myself and embrace and uncover this, then I could lose my connection to it." He continued, "I'm surrounded by a culture in the U.S. that would be perfectly fine with me forgetting. That terrified me. And I wanted to do anything I could to hold onto it."

These uncut roots have expanded across continents and now span two and half decades. In December of this year, Funkadesi will celebrate their 25th anniversary. Four years ago, the band started a collaboration with filmmaker Sree Nallamotheu to share their story. A sneak peak was shared during their presentation. The video is accessible on their Youtube channel, [funkadesipoeple](#). In viewing the trailer, one can feel the same connections that Dr. Sharma described hearing his uncles and father talk. This is what he calls "deep listening."

During the pandemic, other parts of Dr. Sharma's professional life aligned and he founded Strategic Inclusion Consulting. While he had been contemplating this type of change for some time, events prior to and during the pandemic gave him the "push" to make the shift. One aspect of his consulting in diversity, equity, and inclusion is multicultural drumming facilitated by four Rhythm Ambassadors.



The dialogue becomes visceral, as drum beats often echo heart beats, and when tapped in unison, the participants become one sound larger than themselves. An example is putting one of the foremost identifiers of an individual -- their name -- to a beat. And most people have many names, including a given name, nicknames, roles, like mom or dad, and so on. He said, "Drumming together...self identifying your own roadblocks...not just through music but through representational multicultural music. To see folks from different racial backgrounds and to see the four drummers (the Rhythm Ambassadors) gives a model."

In his consulting, Dr. Sharma also draws distinctions between safe spaces and brave spaces. "Distinguishing between feeling unsafe or feeling uncomfortable...from the status of privilege (and being) used to feeling comfortable...and feeling uncomfortable but claiming you're feeling unsafe to creating a brave space to lean into the discomfort and have open dialogue," he said, "bravery is what happens when you quiet yourself and listen to what you usually tune out."

In keeping with the Funkadesi philosophy of "one family, many children, insisting we all belong," five of Dr. Sharma's bandmates were on the closing panel with him. Bandmate Maninderpal Singh described their music and message as "intersectional solidarity." Baba Kwame Steve Cobb was invited into the group by Baba Meshach Silas, who passed away on his (Baba Kwame) wife's birthday. These types of serendipities give a type of confirmation that their "ancestors wanted them to be together." Lloyd King explained that he practices "solitude as a deliberate practice" and this strengthens their grooves when they come together. Carlos Cornier said that "Funkadesi is everything that I wanted to do in music." The lead singer of the band, Pavithra Anand summed it all up by sharing that "no experience is complete until one learns from it." The comments section was filled

with emojis for cheering, clapping, and dancing. Dr. Matthew Mock commented that he knew that Dr. Sharma was brilliant and would be a leader in the field, even back then when he encouraged him to attend his first AAPA convention. The session closed with the world premier of “Terribly Wrong” and cameos included AAPA leaders dancing. The final clip featured Dr. Sherry Wang and her adorable baby. The image is beautiful and symbolic, as babies embody the hope that our Banyan tree will continue to expand.



Clockwise from top left: Dr. Rahul Sharma; Rhythm Ambassador in circle; Funkadesi performance; Funkadesi performs at Millenium Park; Funkadesi in solidarity with Black Power; members of Funkadesi. All images used with permission from Funkadesi

"WE NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO AND KNOW THAT IT WAS SAFE TO DO SO"

Responses and Results from the 2021 AAPA Mentor Office Hours Program Evaluation

THANH NGUYEN

STEPHANIE CHIN*



On January 2021, our AAPA presidential duo—Drs. Richelle Concepcion and Nellie Tran—officially launched the Mentor Office Hours program in collaboration with the Division on Students (DoS) and the Education and Training Committee (ETC) to give members a chance to seek advice, guidance, and support. The presidential initiative specifically aimed to provide

additional support and a sense of community for AAPA members during the unprecedented times of the global COVID-19 pandemic, political uncertainties, racial reckoning, and increasingly visible anti-Asian hate crimes. The Mentor Office Hours program provided a virtual space (i.e., Zoom) for mentors and mentees to meet, converse, and connect. A wide range of topics was offered to mentees including, but not limited to: social justice (e.g., dealing with microaggression, racism, etc.), career, leadership, LGBTQ-related issues, intersectionality and the challenges as an Asian American woman and international student.

From the month of February to May, the Mentor Office Hours program offered a total of 44 group-mentoring sessions with one to eight sessions held per week for seventeen consecutive weeks. Each Mentor Office Hour session could have up to ten mentees meeting with their designated mentor. Based on registration data from the EventBrite platform, a grand total of 200 “slots” were filled/signed up by AAPA members seeking mentoring. After the last Mentor Office Hour session, the first author developed and implemented a program evaluation survey with the help and contributions from the second author, Lisa Cruz, and Dr. Nellie Tran. The objective of the survey was to assess the effectiveness of program and the potential ongoing needs of members who participated. Responses to the Mentor

Office Hours program evaluation survey were collected between June 6 and June 22, 2021, with the majority of mentee and mentors self-identified as female and Asian American from various ethnic backgrounds (e.g., Chinese, Filipinx, Burmese, Korean, Vietnamese, Indian, and multi-ethnic).

Responses collected via the program evaluation survey indicated that most mentors and mentees participated in the AAPA Mentor Office Hours program one to two times. It should be noted that almost 10% of mentees attended five or more office hours. This suggests that mentees were eager to meet and connect with multiple mentors to discuss various topics. For the majority of mentees, participation in the Mentor Office Hour sessions was experienced as very to extremely helpful. However, due to the group-mentoring format, a few mentee did express not feeling as connected with the mentor during the session as they had hoped and felt that the topic of conversation did not match well with what was advertised. Nevertheless, an encouraging number of mentees reported that they connected with the session mentor after and outside of the Mentor Office Hour program. From the mentors' perspective, the majority experienced their Mentor Office Hour session(s) as very to extremely meaningful. Some written responses submitted by mentees and mentors that speaks to the majority of participants' experience from the Mentor Office Hours program are as follow:

"It was meaningful to be able to form connections with others who identify similarly and can relate to the struggles that I have experienced in my grad school program. I appreciated the openness of the mentors to being in contact even outside of office hours, which I hope to tap into as I continue on in my training and professional career."

–Mentee

"At a time that has been really difficult to establish new connections (especially as a new grad student during COVID at the height of anti-Asian hate crimes), these mentor office hours provide a space to meet people that I look up to. It can sometimes be intimidating to reach out to people over email before establishing any sort of connection, and these office hours provide the opportunity to get to know mentors in a more structured way. I also enjoyed getting to know people at different points of their careers (students, postdocs, professors, practitioners). As well, I appreciated the honesty in which mentors approached talking about anti-Asian violence and discrimination in academia - it was helpful to see how others have navigated discrimination and what to prepare for." –Mentee

"...it was so wonderful to hear from folks interested in social justice work in academia and outside. I appreciated the ways that members were vulnerable and direct about

experiences as professionals and students. As a first generation college student, you don't necessarily hear about the struggles of what being an Asian American in academia is actually like. It is part of dispelling and addressing barriers." –Mentee

"Please continue this program! We need someone to talk to and know that it is safe to do so, outside of our own work environment! Thank you AAPA!" –Mentee

"I appreciate the opportunity to help trainees be successful in the field." –Mentor

"[This was] an opportunity to give back to the association and to support students, especially those who are isolated in their own programs" –Mentor

"The Mentor Office Hours program was an opportunity to connect and help nurture future clinicians, this is something that I wish I had." –Mentor

All together, 100% of mentee and mentor respondents expressed a desire for the AAPA Mentoring Office Hours program to continue, as means to foster relationships with one another and to provide/receive guidance and support. In moving forward, there are plans to transition the Mentor Office Hours program to be housed under the Division on Students. Please look forward to future updates! Lastly, the AAPA Mentor Office Hours program would not be possible without mentors' dedication and volunteering. Hence, we want to take this opportunity to publically thank all our amazing mentors for their time and willingness to support members of our organization.



A very special **THANK YOU** to our amazing AAPA mentors:

Richelle Concepcion	Karen Suyemoto	Pa Her
Nellie Tran	Grace Kim	Shu-wen Wang
Anjuli Amin	Diana Hu	Sunny Ho
Christine Catipon	Michelle Madore	Jennifer Hsia
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Ben Gulick	Kavita Pallod Sekhsaria	
Soeun Park	Elizabeth Bong Shil Smith	

***We want to acknowledge Nellie Tran and Lisa Cruz for their input on aspects of this article, and express gratitude for their contributions to the program evaluation survey.**

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I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT I'M FEELING SHANG-CHI TOO

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What makes Taylor Swift's words of being "happy, free, confused, and lonely at the same time" so relatable to the movie, Shang Chi? One resounding theme that stood out to us was the desire to freely forge one's destiny, despite expectations that come from others or are self-imposed. This path means that there may be fear and confusion along the way, and even though many of the movie's characters did cultivate resilience, it does not negate the hurt, loneliness, and pain they experienced in the past. What also spoke to us after watching Shang-Chi was how open, vulnerable, and imperfect different characters were conveyed, and that it is ok to make mistakes before reaching a level of self-acceptance to finally find that confidence in becoming a hero. As viewers who could connect to these important lessons, we each provide insights on how certain characters reflect our own identities and sentiments of what it means to be Asian American navigating through life's challenges.

Michael: As the protagonist of the movie, Shang-Chi takes on different expected roles for his family and society, but rather than claim these eagerly, he is initially fearful and hesitant about whether he can truly live up to that potential and wants to do so. For me, there have also been many roles in my life to be the ideal student, friend, leader, and older brother. While being the first in my family to pursue a doctoral degree is an amazing privilege and honor, the fear of disappointment and pressures to succeed have also made this path challenging to not let others down and stay true to myself. Seeing Shang-Chi's vulnerability through subtle facial expressions and conversations in the movie was, in some ways, both reassuring and inspiring to witness a hero who does not have to be 100% fearless, and only after accepting his past does he embrace the role to pave his future on his own accord.

Almost more surprisingly, I was amazed to appreciate the character of Shang-Chi's father, Wenwu. Most film antagonists are one-dimensional where I wouldn't offer signs of compassion, but

Wenwu's motivation to destroy the village of Ta Lo is fueled by grief and an aching desire to reunite with someone he loved. I cannot remember any open conversations I've had with my family about grandparents or relatives who passed away. Without this dialogue in one's close network, there can be a disconnect in attachment to cling onto the memories of people who are gone instead of cherishing those who are still living. It is this understanding that makes Wenwu a compelling human being and father to show his imperfect actions that can resonate with many Asian American families about the hurt that comes from unspoken conversations of loss.

Christine: Katy Chen is perhaps one of the most relatable characters to me in Shang-Chi. She lives at home after graduating from UC Berkeley and isn't under any pressure to "grow up." Moreover, Katy finds it difficult to pursue things she's unsure of, a feeling that manifests in the kind of self-doubt that I, and many other Asian Americans, resonate with. At 24, the fear of uncertainty and failure is crippling. I'm often hesitant to step out of my comfort zone out of fear of disappointing myself. But as Katy is reminded, "If you aim at nothing, you hit nothing." There's an innate risk we take when we navigate uncertainty, but we find our passions and purposes by taking action. Whether it's diverging from tradition or choosing a career outside of law, engineering, or medicine, we can all learn a thing or two from Katy, who realizes she's a skilled archer. Growing up doesn't mean we

have to have everything figured out; sometimes, we just need to shoot our shot.

Shang-Chi's sister, Xialing, is a stark juxtaposition to the character of Katy, but I found myself empathizing with her and, in turn, relating to her experiences. Underneath Xialing's tough exterior is a young woman grappling with the effects of childhood trauma. Her life circumstances, however, lead her to establishing her own personal destiny. As a first-generation Vietnamese American, there's an added pressure to make my parents proud; it's the only way to justify their sacrifices. For a long time, I believed the only way to make them proud was to pursue a prestigious career in medicine - the immigrant parents' dream! At the same time, I felt obligated to be fiercely independent because I didn't want them to add to their worries. But, through Xialing's experiences, I was encouraged to see the normalization of going against our parents' wishes. It doesn't mean we love or appreciate them any less. It's a gentle reminder that our personal destinies are just that - personal.



Simu Liu plays protagonist Shang-Chi in Marvel's first film with an Asian American lead

Unlike other Marvel films with dramatic cliff-hangers or heartwarming closings, Shang-Chi does not have a traditional, full-circle ending. Shang Chi and Katy return to their regular lives, but that doesn't mean they have everything figured out. They are still the same people with a little more self-assurance and understanding of their pasts. But when Wong comes through a portal to recruit them for another adventure, we are reminded of the gray coexistence between their old and new stages of life. They are neither just "regular" people nor full-fledged superheroes but a mixture of both. We learn through this film that moving forward in life doesn't automatically mean we have to know all of the answers or have all of our problems resolved. As we continue to grow and develop as individuals, it's important to acknowledge the uncertainties of our past and embrace the fact that we may not always have all of the answers. As Taylor Swift would say, living in that middle gray area is "miserable and magical," but everything will be alright as we enter 2022.



Top: Michael P. Huynh

Ph.D. Student, University of California, Irvine

Bottom: Christine T. Nguyen

M.P.H. Candidate, University of California, Irvine

AAPA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: DERALD SUE

DARCY ING
JACEY SONG



We wanted to hear from some of the pioneers and founders in the field of psychology, so we invited Dr. Derald Wing Sue, co-founder and first President of AAPA, for an interview. Derald Wing Sue is Professor of Psychology and Education in the Department of Counseling and Clinical Psychology at Teachers College and the School of Social Work, Columbia.

Dr. Sue received his doctorate in Counseling Psychology from the University of Oregon and has been a training faculty member with the Institute for Management Studies and the Columbia University Executive Training Programs. Dr. Sue has been the recipient of numerous awards from institutions, community agencies, and professional organizations. He has presented and traveled in Asia and other countries, is a spokesperson on advocacy and diversity, and is often interviewed by the media. He was co-founder of AAPA and its first president, and also served as past president of both Division 45 and Division 17. Dr. Sue has been editor of *Personnel and Guidance Journal* (now *Journal for Counseling*

and Development), associate editor of *American Psychologist*, and is currently on the Senior Editorial Board of *Asian American Journal of Psychology*.

A pioneer and founder in multicultural psychology, Dr. Sue has researched and published extensively in multicultural psychology, counseling and education over a period of decades. In addition to over a dozen books and numerous research articles, his classic *Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Theory and Practice* (with David Sue, Helen A. Neville & Laura Smith) is now in its eighth edition. Another book, *Microaggressions in Everyday Life* (with Lisa Beth Spanierman) is now in its second edition. His latest book *Microintervention Strategies: What You Can Do to Disarm and Dismantle Individual and Systemic Racism and Bias* was published in December 2020.

The AAPA newsletter team was pleased to be able to conduct an interview with Dr. Sue about his inspiration to study multicultural psychology, the psychology of racism

and antiracism, the formation of AAPA, his current research on microinterventions, and some thoughts to share with other scholars, practitioners, and AAPA readers.

Darcy: Can you tell me a little bit about your journey as one of the foremost researchers and scholars on multicultural counseling? What were some of your early inspirations?

Dr. Sue: A lot of people have asked about how I got into the field, and how it was that all three of my brothers and I became psychologists. The inspiration that you talk about, I would characterize it more as me trying to understand why, as a young child, I was teased for being Chinese. I was born and raised in Portland, Oregon by Chinatown, where, in my younger years, all the people that I knew were primarily Chinese. Then, my dad moved us to the southeast district of Portland Oregon, which was almost all white.

We attended a primarily white elementary school, and I recall that my siblings and I were teased by fellow classmates for being Asian. My teacher and counselors played a part, too. I was a victim of stereotyping. In fact, my counselor in high school counseled me into the sciences at first, with the comment: "You people are good at that." I believed that the only option available to me was to be a scientist. This was one of the reasons why I took chemistry and other sciences at the beginning of my undergraduate career, which I hated. It was later during my junior year—where I was forced to take social studies and

humanities courses—that I realized I loved psychology, anthropology, and the social sciences.

Stereotypes also affected my interactions. I was shy, inhibited, and awkward around people. I felt inadequate and socially awkward, because I began to believe—and was trapped in—these messages that others were sending to me. At one point in my life, I even wished I wasn't Chinese. I wished I was white. I was buying into white Euro-American perceptions and standards. As a result, I felt ashamed of my own racial ethnic identity.

It wasn't until after receiving my doctorate in counseling psychology and being exposed to the Third World Movements in the 1960s, that I began to question: Why should I feel ashamed of who and what I am? This generated an interest in me to try to understand why people responded in stereotypical ways toward Asian Americans. Why do people behave that way? Why do they see us in such a negative fashion? This is when I began to break out of the trap of trying to live up to Western European standards. That's what brought me to this field and why I focused in on issues of race, culture, ethnicity, racism, discrimination, prejudice, and so forth.

Darcy: Because of your foundational pioneering work, you're frequently cited for multicultural counseling research. What kind of changes have you seen over time, and which ones do you think are among the most important?

Dr. Sue: My first work after my doctorate was at the University of

"...I began to question: Why should I feel ashamed of who and what I am?"

California at Berkeley's Counseling Center. I began to encounter a lot of Asian American students coming in for counseling, and I realized that much of what I was taught in terms of counseling and psychotherapy was not applicable to those Asian American students.

I began to see that many of the standards of what is healthy in counseling and psychotherapy, were culture-bound, class-bound, and could not tackle issues of individualism or interdependence. I saw that therapists and counselors could actually engage in what I call cultural oppression. Suddenly, I realized that if I impose all of what I've been taught to be therapeutic behavior on Asian American clients, I would, in essence, silence them—oppress them, in a sense—and not allow them to really understand what was happening to them.

With that in mind, I think one of the major changes that I've seen in multicultural counseling has been the recognition that race, culture, ethnicity, is a function of everyone and is not limited to Asians, Blacks, and Latinx individuals. White people are also part of the dynamic of race, culture, and ethnicity.

Second, I realized the invisibility of whiteness. Recently, there has been a realization and a recognition that whiteness is a default standard that is invisible. As long as it's invisible—to people of color and professionals alike—it serves as a standard that disadvantages people of color, all the while upholding traditional means of counseling and psychotherapy.

Third, there has been an emphasis on systemic factors and a realization that socio/political/cultural factors affect individuals. We've realized that therapists and counselors that see problems as residing simply in the individual are forgetting the external factors of racism, discrimination, sexism, and class oppression. These systemic, external factors are something that people of color and therapists need to acknowledge.

The fourth trend I've seen is a recognition that the traditional ways of therapy—how you're supposed to respond in therapy, and what I call the therapeutic taboos—represent a clash with what other groups and cultures consider healing to be. For example, some of the therapeutic taboos are

(a) therapists do not give advice and suggestions, (b) therapists do not self-disclose their thoughts and feelings, (c) therapists do not serve dual-role relationships, and (d) therapists do not accept gifts from individuals because it unduly obligates them. There are legitimate reasons for these therapeutic taboos, but therapists fail to realize that many of these behaviors are precisely what many different societies consider to be therapeutic and helpful. This has created a major orientation change.

Fifth is the recognition that theories of counseling and psychotherapy represent the world views of primarily white European men. When you think about psychodynamic, existential humanistic, cognitive behavioral, existential gestalt—all of them are the creation of white European men. If you don't recognize that those represent specific worldviews and impose them on clients, it can harm and hurt them greatly. There cannot be one system of counseling that is equally applicable to all populations and all situations.

Lastly, a sixth change is the movement towards cultural competence and cultural humility. These are major changes that are occurring in which counselors and therapists are being asked to become culturally aware, culturally knowledgeable, and to engage and culturally appropriate intervention strategies. Those are some of the things that I think are really changing in the field. I feel blessed that I've been able to contribute to these movements—to have been able to contribute to the field of cultural competence.

Darcy: Tell me about your motivations at the time AAPA was founded. What were those early days like? How has AAPA evolved over time?

Dr. Sue: In those early days, there was nothing that dealt with Asian American psychology. I had just graduated from the University of Oregon with my doctorate, and my brother Stan was in the last year at UCLA in the Clinical Psychology Program. We would get together and talk about the whole issue of—at that time—the Black Power and Brown Power Movements, which were part of the Third World Movement. These groups wanted to redefine who they were as racial-cultural beings.

Stan and I were greatly influenced by that and decided that we would form the Asian American Psychological Association.

At first, there were no more than eight to nine members. We wrote bylaws, we produced a newsletter, and we elected officers. Then, we contacted the American Psychological Association, because they had just begun to fund and to support black psychologists who confronted the APA about the racism that was going on in the field.

I felt that we, as Asians, were left out of the racial dialogue, so I wrote a strong letter to APA. In response, they invited me to appear before the Board of Social and Ethical Responsibility, at which I presented the social-political issues that Asian American faced, such as the Model Minority Myth. I asked them to support us through funding and recognition, at some level. They did, eventually, on a very minimal basis.

From there, we began to identify key Asian American individuals that would join our organization. It was a hard battle to constantly be visible, because we were so few in number, especially when many thought, "You're Asian American! What does race have to do with you?" They would say, "You're a successful minority. In fact, as Asians, you're whiter than white." We wrote an article that was accepted in American Psychologist combating this notion, and there were many reactions to that article.

Throughout the years, AAPA has grown in numbers, power, and influence. Now, AAPA has its own journal and conventions. Asian Americans who are members of AAPA are also very influential in the American Psychological Association, as AAPA is one of four ethnic psychological associations that are recognized by APA. We became influential in Division 45 and a number of other divisions. The success of our association was achieved with the help of many other Asian American psychologists. We're very proud of what AAPA has accomplished. Being a part of the older generation, I am fortunate to be able to enjoy and appreciate how socially active and influential AAPA is now.

Darcy: What kind of direction do you think AAPA should go?

Dr. Sue: I think AAPA is going in a direction of aligning with and becoming very much a part of the overall ethnic minority movements that are occurring. We're getting a lot of respect from African American psychologists, from Latinx Americans, and from the Society

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of Indian Psychologists. It's becoming truly a multicultural movement.

Of course, we have our own concerns and issues, but I admire the way that AAPA has become central to the movement of social justice and has branched out in terms of dealing with inequalities that affect all groups. I was proud when AAPA came out with the statement dealing with the killing of unarmed men and the Black Lives Matter movement. The building of bridges with our other brothers and sisters of color is something that I value very much, and I see AAPA moving in that direction.

Darcy: This year, we got to see your book, *Microintervention Strategies*. Can you tell us a little bit more about the strategies and what Asian American psychologists should know about them?

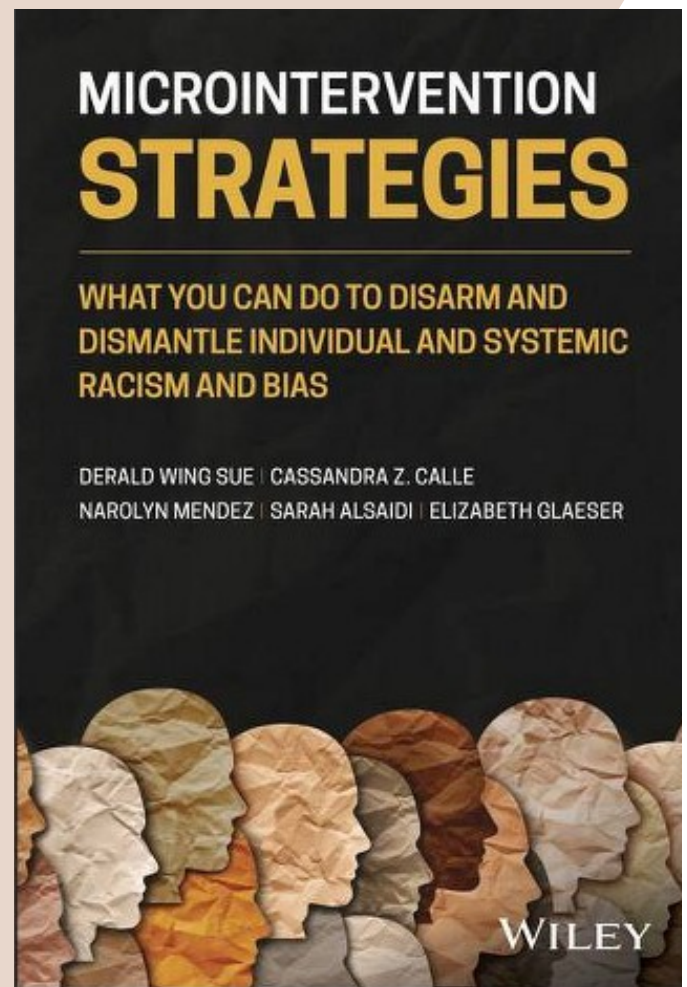
Dr. Sue: This relates to all the work that I've done with my research team on microaggressions, which was a concept that was explored in the 1970s by an African American psychiatrist named Chester Pierce. In 2007, my research team and I began a 10 to 20-year study

on microaggressions.

Microaggressions are the everyday slights, indignities, insults, and put-downs that people of color experience in their day-to-day interactions with other well-intentioned white people, who are unaware that they are behaving in an offensive and demeaning way. We showed how harmful microaggressions impact the psychological well-being and even the physical health of people. One of the first conclusions we drew from interacting with participants of color was that before tackling microaggressions, targets of microaggression need to take care of themselves first. Then, having done that, the issue is: what are the anti-biased actions that one can take to disarm and dismantle individual and systemic bias that are directed towards them?

When we turn back to process microaggressions, a lot of individuals of color said that they knew they were experiencing microaggression, but didn't know what to do. They were frozen and paralyzed. Many white allies feel the same way, lamenting that "when I see one of my brothers and sisters of color being mistreated, I want to do something, but I don't know what to do." It was then that my team and I began to turn our attention to microinterventions, the everyday anti-bias strategies, tactics, and techniques that targets, bystanders, and white allies can use to combat and neutralize microaggressions. What can people individually do when they encounter microaggression?

We begin to develop strategies on



how to deal with it. To concretize this, here is an example of a microaggression that many Asian Americans encounter: "You speak excellent English." This is a microaggression, because while on the surface it sounds like the person is giving a compliment, in essence, the metacommunication—the hidden communication—is that you are a perpetual alien in your own country. So now, a microintervention can be used to disarm and educate the perpetrator. For example, you could respond, "Thank you, I hope so, I was born here," or "Thank you, you do too." These responses are both thanking the conscious intent and undermining the metacommunication that I'm a foreigner and perpetual alien.

In *Microintervention Strategies*, we devised a toolkit of different strategies of microintervention that not only are aimed at individual expression of bias, but to overcome systemic racism—the individual microinterventions that can combat programs, policies, and practices of institutions that send what I call *macroaggressions*.

It's important for Asians to have this repertoire of responses, because most of the time people of color experience

behavior to all the onlookers. So micro-interventions benefit not only educates and disarms the perpetrator, it also benefits targets and models appropriate behavior to all the onlookers that may be present. In our studies, we're finding fantastic positive changes in targets when they use this repertoire of microinterventions.

In our research, we were able to categorize literally hundreds of anti-bias tactics under four strategic goals:

“If no one intervenes or takes on some microintervention, it communicates that [microaggressions] are acceptable.”

microaggressions, they do nothing. In our research, we found that when people of color fail to do anything—when they remain silent—they end up taking it out on themselves. They feel disempowered. They feel angry at themselves for not being able to stand up for their rights. But when they are able to come back with short, quick rebuttals, it empowers them. And even more strongly, if you think about it, microaggressions often appear in the presence of many onlookers—it doesn't happen in isolation.

If no one intervenes or takes on some microintervention, it communicates that these types of comments are acceptable. But when one person intervenes, it models appropriate

(a) make the “invisible” visible, (b) disarm the microaggressions, (c) educate the perpetrator, and (d) seek outside support and advice. Under each of these four categories are a dozen or so of tactics. One of the tactics under “educate the perpetrator,” for example, is to help the offender differentiate between intent and harmful impact.

Arguing over intent is a no-win situation, because it is difficult to prove intent, and it evokes defensiveness. So, one of the tactics is simply to say “I know you meant well, but that really hurts.” “I know you meant it to be funny, but that that really offended Aisha.” In that way, you focus the discussion on the impact rather than the “good intentions” of the perpetrator.

Darcy: Where do you think your research will go in the future?

Dr. Sue: We will be continuing to keep up with research on microaggressions and on microinterventions. And keep up with the literature on microaggressions. We did a 10 to 20-year study on microaggressions, gathering that information. We are continuing to work on appropriate interventions, and arming people with the education and training on how to use them. And researching the positive effects to the targets, to onlookers, how to use them to invite allies and even the perpetrators, and to try to find out more about their impact on suffering.

Darcy: There's been a lot of growing scholarship and transformation of counseling practices, thanks to your work. How do you feel about the psychologists, scholars, and practitioners who continue to be informed by your work? Do you have anything you'd like to share with them?

Dr. Sue: Just want to say, keep it up! Keep on moving, keep on heading forward. Our knowledge of the human condition is constantly changing and nothing is set in stone. There are always ways to better, I think, ourselves, our abilities, our strategies, and how we work with others to help people.

Darcy: Do you have any last tips or general wisdom that you'd like to share with our readers?

Dr. Sue: This is what I would say, more than anything else, is the realization that the struggle is just as important as the outcome. Because of our work on social justice, the task of helping out society to

combat the "isms" of our society is often times exhausting. In some respects, it may never be possible to eradicate racism, for example, but we need to continue to fight for what we believe in. So what it means is that we need to be true to our values and our integrity because it is an expression of our humanity.

FOUR STRATEGIC GOALS FOR MICRO- INTERVENTIONS

1 Make the "invisible" visible

2 Disarm the microaggression

3 Educate the perpetrator

4 Seek outside support and advice

Each goal has a dozen or so more tactics

The "Asian American Psychologist" seeks editors, columnists, and reporters to join our team.

The AAPA Newsletter is currently seeking candidates to fill open positions within the Newsletter Team, including Co-Editors-in-Chief, Layout Editor, Columnists/Reporters, and Copy Editors. Positions will begin January 1, 2022 and end January 1, 2024.

Below are descriptions of the AAPA Newsletter and each of the positions for which we are currently recruiting. If you are interested in any of these positions, please submit a brief statement of intention and a list of relevant experiences to our newsletter team (newsletter@aapaonline.org) by Friday, December 17, 2021.

The AAPA Newsletter

- The AAPA Newsletter is one of the primary ways for members to communicate their theories, research, ideas on social policy, and important news/events to other members; for AAPA Divisions to communicate their perspectives and events to the AAPA membership; and for the AAPA Executive Committee (EC) to connect and to distribute pertinent AAPA information to its members.
- Each year, there are three issues, including the Spring, Summer, and Fall issues. The deadline for submitting articles and announcements to the newsletter are as follows: April 1st, July 1st, and October 1st of each year.
- The AAPA Newsletter Team consists of two Co-Editors-in-Chief, two Layout Editors, several Copy Editors, and several Columnists/Reporters.

Copy Editors

- Receive submissions from the Co-Editors-in-Chief and provide editing of these submissions
- Ensure submissions are no longer than 1,000 words and that they abide by other editing protocols as agreed upon by the AAPA Newsletter Team
- Forward edited submissions to the Distributor
- Position duration is 2 years

Co-Editors-in-Chief (CEiC)

- Act as the Team Liaisons, or delegate this function to the EC Communications Officer, between the AAPA EC, the AAPA community, and the AAPA Newsletter Team.
- Coordinates administrative matters with the AAPA Newsletter Team.
- Recruits submissions for each issue, including designated articles from the AAPA Executive Committee and from the AAPA community.
- Facilitates discussion among the Newsletter Team should editorial disputes arise.
- Generates a list of articles and announcements submitted on an Excel spreadsheet and distributes the submissions and the spreadsheet to the AAPA Communication Officers.
- Responds to advertising requests.
- Position duration is 2 years.

Columnists/Reporters

- Write articles of 1,000 words or less about general topic areas of interest to Asian American psychology
- Conduct interviews, as needed, of Asian American psychologists who have made noteworthy contributions to the field
- Prior experience is preferred; however, applicants who wish to refine their writing skills and build their C.V. by contributing to a national publication are welcome to apply.
- Position duration is flexible depending on the applicants' commitment

Layout Co-Editors

- Provide typesetting and design the overall layout of the newsletter
- Receive final submissions from the Distributor
- Design layout to ensure inclusion of all edited submissions in creative but easy-to-follow format
- Submit completed newsletter to the Co-Editors-in-Chief and make revisions, as needed
- Position duration is 2 years
- Prior experience in layout and knowledge of design software (e.g. Canva, Adobe InDesign) is preferred; however, if someone is eager to learn and has an eye for detail and sense of creativity, we will consider their application.

Please keep in mind that you will need to be an AAPA member in order for you to be eligible for these positions. If you have questions about any of the positions, feel free to let us know via email (newsletter@aapaonline.org).