

Guide for Parents of Asian / Asian American Adolescents

*COVID-19 has dramatically
impacted our Asian community*



**how are
you and
your
children
talking
about
racism?**



**WILLIAM JAMES
COLLEGE**

**Center for Multicultural &
Global Mental Health**



The MGH Center *for*
Cross-Cultural Student
Emotional Wellness

Have you ever ...

been told to "go back to where you came from"?

had someone imply that Asian food was dirty or unsafe?

been concerned about physical safety in public?

worried whether you would be harassed more for wearing a mask?

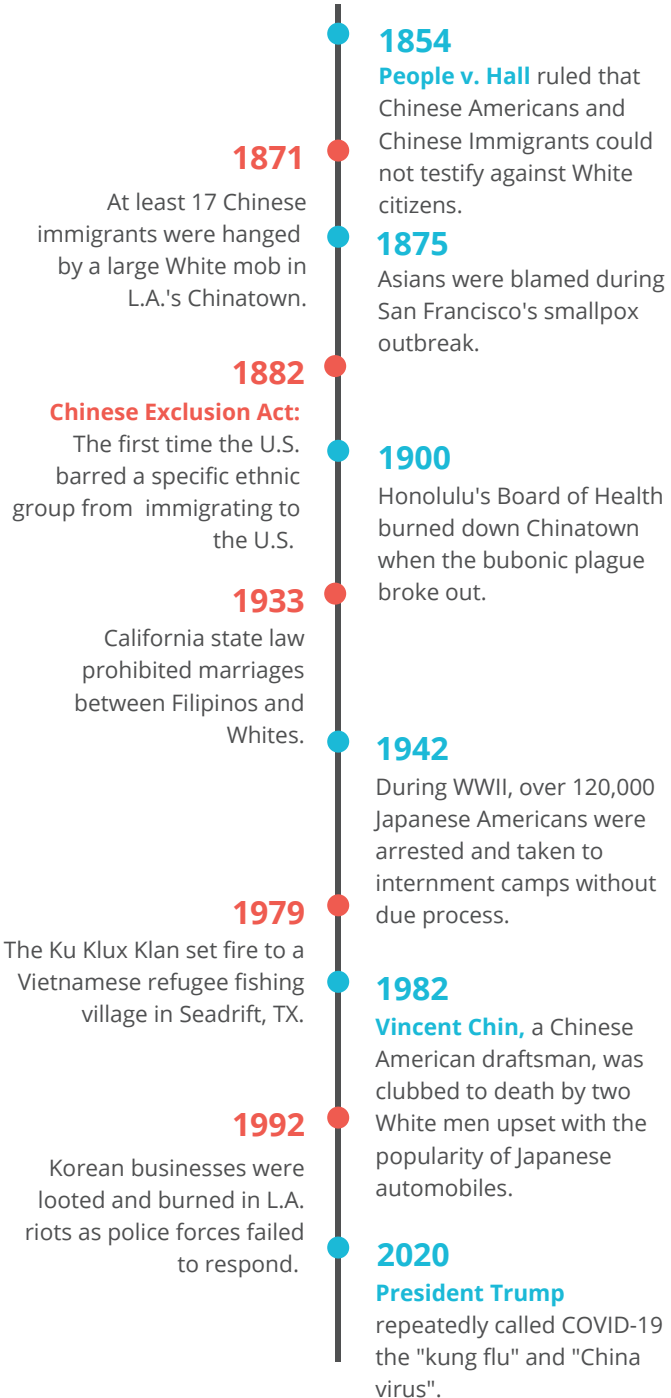
been more hesitant to speak a language other than English in public?

worried how others would respond to President Trump saying "China virus"?



Your kids probably have too!

THERE IS A LONG HISTORY OF ANTI-ASIAN DISCRIMINATION IN THE UNITED STATES^{1,2}



BUT THERE'S ALSO A LONG HISTORY OF ASIANS FIGHTING DISCRIMINATION^{3, 4}

1869

Central Pacific Strike:

Approximately 2,000 Chinese railroad workers went on strike for a week, demanding better work conditions and pay equal to their White counterparts.

1886

Yick Wo V. Hopkins ruled that San Francisco law targeting Chinese laundry businesses and denying them business permits was unconstitutional.

1898

United States v. Wong Kim Ark:

Born in San Francisco, Wong challenged the government's refusal to recognize his citizenship, and the Supreme Court ruled in his favor.

1903

Japanese-Mexican Sugar Beet Strike: By striking together, Japanese and Mexican workers successfully earned higher wages and better working conditions.

1920

Oahu Sugar Strike: Filipino Americans and Japanese Americans successfully went on strike together for a pay raise.

1974

Asian Americans for Equal Employment led the first protest over discriminatory labor practices at Confucius Plaza in Manhattan.⁵ Their demands were met.

2014

#Asians4BlackLives began in Oakland, CA after the non-indictment of Daniel Pantaleo, the police officer who killed Eric Garner.

WHY ASIAN FAMILIES NEED TO TALK ABOUT RACISM



COVID-19 RELATED RACISM

The outbreak of COVID-19 has led to a rise in anti-Asian discrimination and attacks. Over **2,500** hate incidents against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have been recorded between mid-March and early August 2020.⁶

ASIAN FAMILIES DON'T TALK ABOUT IT

Asian parents may be least likely to report conversations about discrimination or inequality among all non-White racial/ethnic groups.⁷



SILENCE HURTS OUR KIDS

Adolescents receiving fewer messages about race and ethnicity from parents are most at risk for **psychological distress** if they have experienced discrimination.⁷

Collectively, Asian American high school students wrote:

"Our mental health is deteriorating, and our grades will drop, impacting our futures in higher education. We feel unsafe returning to schools with unaddressed racism."⁹

Does your child feel the same way?

WHY ASIAN FAMILIES NEED TO TALK ABOUT RACISM

CONVERSATIONS HELP

One of the primary functions of teaching children about their race and identity is to help them **recognize** societal discrimination.⁷



MULTIPLE POSITIVE OUTCOMES



Talking about racism may lead to more favorable outcomes for Asian American youth, including higher self-esteem,^{10, 11} increased school engagement,¹² and stronger family cohesion.¹³

PARENTS ARE ESSENTIAL

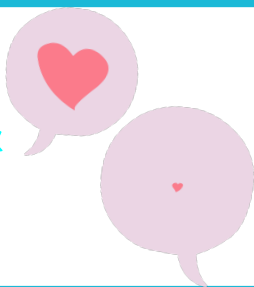
Asian parents are skilled at teaching children about the culture, traditions, and languages of their native country. Parents also play a critical role in teaching children about identity, and can learn more on what it means to be an Asian person in America.



It's okay if you don't know all the answers, you don't know what to say, or even if you're scared you may traumatize your child by talking about racism.

Listening and validating your child's feelings and experiences are important ways to help build resilience. Plus, nobody is ever done learning, so maybe you can figure things out together!

LET'S START LISTENING & LEARNING¹⁴



create opportunities for your child to talk

Conversations can happen more naturally in the car, over mealtime, or during shared activities, and family members will feel less on the spot.



be curious and respectful

Ask questions without judgment and be open to hearing your child's answers. Really make an effort to respect your child's views even if you don't agree.

Encourage your child to be curious too!

bring it up

Don't be shy about initiating conversations. Use current events or TV shows/films to talk about issues. Ask your child what they think.

be open

Share your own stories. Consider talking honestly about some of your own experiences and feelings. Hearing about a parent's difficult experiences can help children learn about their own strengths.

validate feelings

Let your child know that whatever they feel is OK, even if you don't fully agree or understand. This helps your child know they are not alone.

encourage their voice

Promote ways for your child to get involved in issues they care about. This helps promote problem-solving and combat feelings of helplessness.

A REMINDER...

**DON'T
REACT**

**DON'T
JUDGE**

**Keep your face
neutral/calm**

**Don't tell kids and teens what
they should or shouldn't feel**

JUST LISTEN

That
sounds
really hard

Tell me
more

Okay

Thank
you for
sharing

IDEAS TO START THE CONVERSATION

Do you feel safe going back to school? What will help make you feel safe?

Have you felt angry about how Asians are treated and didn't know what to do with it?

Have you ever experienced anyone call you a name or a slur like "Lingling*"?

Do you worry about being looked at differently because you're Asian?



*Lingling is a derogatory word used in high schools and on tiktok towards all Asian groups.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Asian Mental Health Program Center for Multicultural and Global Mental Health William James College

As the world fell into the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, there has been an increase in anti-Asian bias and xenophobic behaviors. To reduce the negative psychological consequences experienced by Asian American youth, William James College's Center for Multicultural and Global Mental Health's (CMGMH) Asian Mental Health Program (AMHP), developed a Parent Guide to provide parents with the skills to effectively support their children who might be subjected to anti-Asian racism.

We are sincerely grateful to the Community Health Network Area (CHNA-17) for funding this important project. CHNA-17's mission is to foster community engagement, best practices, racial equity, and learning opportunities, to address the needs of marginalized communities. The coalition is funded by Mount Auburn Hospital, McLean Hospital, and the Cambridge Public Health Department/Cambridge Health Alliance.

We would like to acknowledge Dr. Catherine Vuky, who oversaw the implementation of the project. Additionally, we would like to recognize Ellen Yang, AMHP student leader and the guide developer, Dr. Natalie Cort, CMGMH Co-Director and the project's grant writer, and Michelle Mu, Ellen Yang's mother, for her consultation. We also extend our appreciation to our project partners at Massachusetts General Hospital's Center for Cross-Cultural Student Emotional Wellness; Drs. Justin Chen, Juliana Chen, and Cindy Liu. Lastly, we extend our gratitude to guide translators Oanh Bui, Ivy Chuang, Tim Kim, Hyung-jib Lim, Ayaka Nariki, Thanh Phan, Rymane Tsouria, Xinru Wang, James Yeung, Hongcheng Zhang, and Manrou Zhen.

Lastly, the Asian Mental Health Program dedicates this parent guide to the late Dr. Jean Lau Chin. She was a pioneering leader of multicultural psychology and a strong advocate of this program. Dr. Jean Lau Chin was the first Asian American licensed psychologist in Massachusetts, and an ally for diversity, equity, and inclusion.



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FURTHER RESOURCES

- **Resources to Address Coronavirus-Related Racism**

- Yellow Peril: tinyurl.com/ss9673t
- MGH Center for Cross-Cultural Student Emotional Wellness: www.mghstudentwellness.org
- Bystander intervention trainings: www.afsc.org/bystanderintervention
- Asian American Racial Justice Toolkit: www.asianamtoolkit.org

- **Educational resources for parents to talk to children about race**

- EmbraceRace: www.embracerace.org
- www.gse.upenn.edu/news/talking-children-after-racial-incidents
- talktokids.net
 - What does racism have to do with me? Asian American kids get talking youtu.be/j75eoC9WXrE



- **Activities**

- Workbook to help teachers/families talk to their Asian American kids about race and racism: bit.ly/RacismAAKids

- **Reporting Resource**

- Stop AAPI Hate to report hate incidents: stopaapihate.org



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