

# Addressing Post-COVID Asian Hate: The Importance of AAPI Groups in Schools

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## Abstract

“From March 19, 2020 to December 31, 2021, a total of 10,905 hate incidents against Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) persons were reported to Stop AAPI Hate. Of the hate incidents reflected in this report, 4,632 occurred in 2020 (42.5%) and 6,273 occurred in 2021 (57.5%)” (Stop AAPI Hate, 2021). This poster is a model to respond to Asian Hate within a high school setting.

This session integrates theoretical perspectives and practice innovations, providing strategies for promoting inclusion, addressing discrimination, and fostering healing within school communities.

## Background

According to Stop AAPI Hate (2021)

- Asian Americans who have experienced racism are more stressed by anti-Asian hate than the pandemic itself.
- One in five Asian Americans who have experienced racism display racial trauma, the psychological and emotional harm caused by racism.
- Asian Americans who have experienced racism have heightened symptoms of depression, anxiety, stress, and physical symptoms. Experience of racism during COVID-19 is found to be more strongly associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms.
- After reporting, Asian Americans who have experienced racism have lower race-based traumatic stress.

This group was run Skokie Illinois at a high school of 2,500 students. The Asian population of students makes up 33.1% of the student body.

## Model

This group follows a curriculum for 8 sessions. The group is a social emotional group. The curriculum of the group was carefully created to address the needs of the AAPI students. The curriculum consists of using a Social Emotional Learning lens when choosing activities and the flow of the group. The group is a closed group that has 6-8 participants. The group members were identified through referrals from school psychologists, social workers, and school counselors. The group facilitators for this group identified as part of the AAPI community and also worked within student services.

**Goals** – The group overall goals were for students to develop coping skills, create a community within the school, share experiences, and embrace their AAPI heritage.

### Typical Session

- Check In
  - Example: Rose, Bud, Throne, Mood Meter, Emotion Wheel, Reflection Journals
- Activity
  - Example: Emotion Charades, Feeling Journal, Role Playing Scenarios, Mindfulness
- Discussion

### Session Examples

#### Session 4-5 Experience Sharing

**Goal:** Students will share their personal experiences with Asian Hate, and how they reacted to the given situation. The group members will provide a safe and supportive environment.

**Activity:** This week every group member will be asked to share an experience they had when they encounter a form of Asian Hate.

If students decide to not share a personal experience, then they are asked to bring a video clip (from a TV show, movie, social media, etc..) to show during group.

- After students share there will be room for discussion, making sure that everyone keeps the group norms discussed in session 1.

**Post Session Feedback from a Student:** “I really enjoyed the activity! The ice breakers that we did the first couple of weeks helped me to feel comfortable sharing my experiences. It helped me to know that I am not alone and that there are people I can turn to when I need support.”

#### Session 6- 7 Embracing Heritage

**Goal:** Students will teach each other about their Asian Heritage. This session will be a space to embrace being Asian, and allow students to feel pride when speaking about their heritage. Students will also learn about Asian American figures in history.

**Activity:** Students will prepare to share about their heritage in any method they choose (poem, PowerPoint, video, etc.).

- The facilitator will also provide a PowerPoint that highlights Asian American figures and their accomplishments.

**Post Session Feedback from a Student:** “This activity helped me to feel pride in being Asian. For so long I have been told that it is bad to be Asian, and I have felt embarrassed about my heritage.”

## Findings & Conclusions

“AAPI group allowed me embrace my heritage at a time when I was being told I should be ashamed of it. Group also taught me how to deal with strong emotions that I was feeling.” (Group Member)

“AAPI group provided me with a safe place to come to every week. I learned that I am not alone.” (Group Member)

Students reported that the group allowed them to have a safe place to share about their experiences of being Asian American.

Facilitating the group also helped me to find community within the school I work at. The group helped me to also reflect on some of the experiences I have had as an Asian American.

## Limitations

Groups within the school settings can run into barriers such as, time constraints, student attendance to group, and getting administration approval to run the group.

In the school I worked at it was mandatory to receive parental consent for students without an IEP to receive social emotional services. That was a barrier for some students, because their parents did not understand the need for mental health help.

## References

Stop AAPI Hate. (2021, May 27). **Stop AAPI Hate mental health report**. Retrieved from <https://stopaapihate.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Stop-AAPI-Hate-Mental-Health-Report-210527.pdf>

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