

Preventing Domestic Violence in Four Asian American Communities with a Gender Equity and Empathy Approach

Utilizing parent and youth support groups to transform family beliefs and behaviors

October 2022

Partners



AAPI Equity Alliance

AAPI Equity Alliance (AAPI Equity) is dedicated to improving the lives of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders through civic engagement, capacity building, and policy advocacy.



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Center for the Pacific Asian Family

Center for the Pacific Asian Family (CPAF) has provided culturally-grounded, linguistically-accessible support to Asian/Pacific Islander (API) survivors of sexual and domestic violence in Greater Los Angeles since 1978. CPAF's mission is to build healthy and safe communities by addressing the root causes and consequences of family violence and violence against women.



Special Service for Groups Research and Evaluation Team

Since 2003, SSG's Research & Evaluation Team (SSG R&E) collaborates to build research and evaluation capacity to bring about programmatic and policy change. Specifically, SSG R&E specializes in mixed-methods community health assessments; customized training and technical assistance for research and evaluation; program development; designing research instruments and protocols; conducting data analysis; participating in quality assurance activities; disseminating and using data to improve program effectiveness and leverage resources; and compiling secondary data for policy advocacy.



Blue Shield of California Foundation

This report was developed through the generous support of the Blue Shield of California Foundation. The Blue Shield of California Foundation is a health care foundation with the mission to build lasting and equitable solutions that make California the healthiest state and end domestic violence. Its strategic areas of work include breaking the cycle of domestic violence, collaborating for healthy communities, and designing the future of health.



Asian Pacific Counseling
and Treatment Centers



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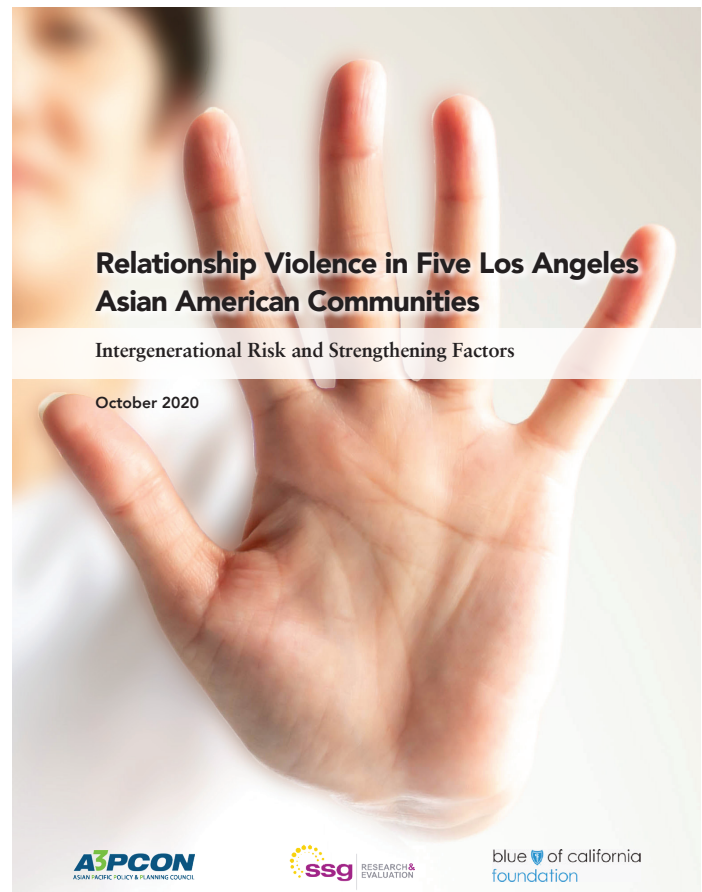
Executive Summary

Domestic violence (DV), also known as intimate partner violence, is experienced by 16-55% of Asian American women in their lifetime.¹ This violence can be physical/sexual, psychological or emotional abuse, financial control and coercion, expose children to family violence, lead to attitudes about violence, and result in stalking, trafficking and homicide.²³ The good news is that this can be prevented. With generous support from the Blue Shield of California Foundation, AAPI Equity Alliance and its partners worked to develop a two-generation training curricula to better address this violence, to help reduce and prevent DV in Asian American communities in Los Angeles County.

Domestic violence manifests differently across communities, especially among Asian American (AA) subpopulations with traditional norms, culturally rooted practices, and attitudes around DV and help-seeking varying widely. With this in mind, AAPI Equity Alliance and its partners tapped into their deep knowledge and experience working with the Cambodian, Chinese, Korean and South Asian communities in Los Angeles County to develop a culturally-attuned prevention curriculum. The partners developed and culturally-tailored a parent and youth-curricula, trained 18 bilingual and bicultural facilitators, and piloted the curricula with community members. The curricula, *PEACE for Parenting* and *Know Your Roots*, intended to break the cycle of violence, was grounded in social justice with a focus on practicing non-violence through a focus on empathy and gender equity. This report represents the pilot project learnings and provides recommendations for future practice.

Background

The collaborative project was led by AAPI Equity Alliance, in partnership with Korean American Family Services (KFAM), Koreatown Youth & Community Center (KYCC), Pacific Asian Counseling Services (PACS), Asian Pacific Counseling & Treatment Centers (APCTC), Special Service for Groups – Research &



Evaluation (SSG R&E), South Asian Network (SAN), and Center for the Pacific Asian Family (CPAF). CPAF led the design, training, and implementation support for the curricula. SSG R&E led the evaluation for the pilot project in partnership with all collaborative members.

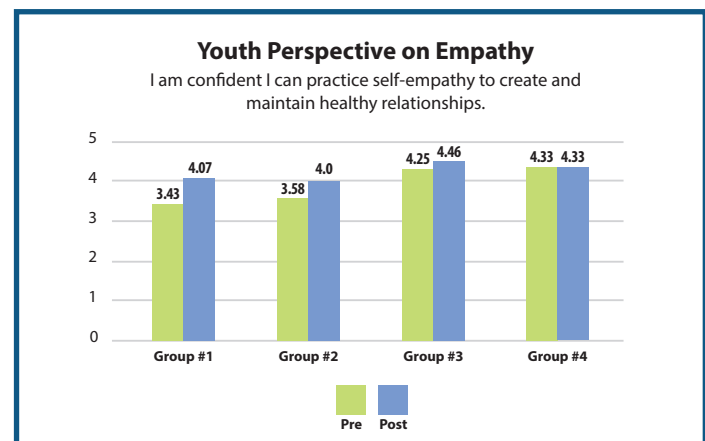
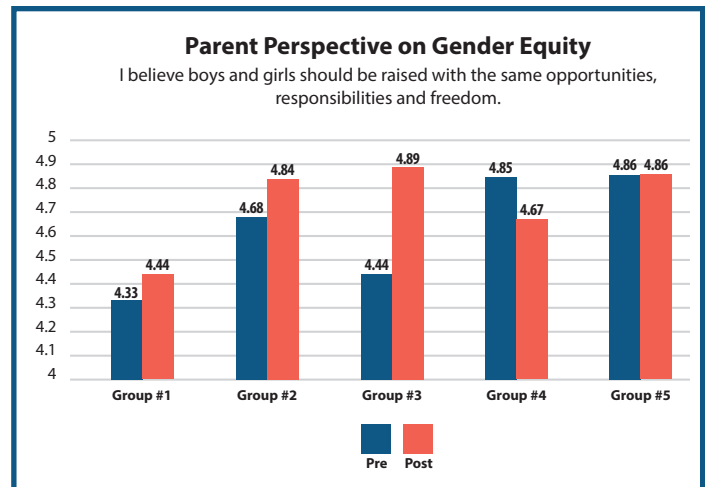
The pilot project aimed to develop a culturally-attuned prevention curricula for parents and youth with the goals of 1) increasing demonstration of empathetic and gender equity-oriented attitudes and practices among participants, and 2) testing the curriculum (both the content and implementation) around enhancing empathy and gender equity through an inter-generational support group model for four Asian American communities. The pilot engaged the Cambodian, Chinese, Korean, and South Asian

communities of Los Angeles County. The pilot project included 5 parent cohorts (73 parents) and 4 youth cohorts (54 youth) with a 127 total participants. The content was delivered by two co-facilitators in a support group model format via Zoom, due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Parent groups were facilitated in Khmer, Mandarin, Korean and Hindi respectively, while youth groups were facilitated in English. Participant knowledge, attitudes and behaviors were measured by pre and post-surveys. Focus groups were conducted with training facilitators to gather perspectives on the content, training implementation, and learnings from participant engagement.

Findings

The project data revealed that among participants, there were increases in the awareness and understanding of empathetic and gender equity-oriented attitudes and practices. This understanding helped to enhance participant knowledge of healthy relationships, which was reflected in increases in the belief that there should be gender equity and demonstrated positive growth in understanding and practicing empathy. The following two figures represent the parent perspective on gender equity and youth perspective on self-empathy, respectively. Among the various groups there are improvements from pre to post in the beliefs and practices around gender equity and empathy. In some groups, beliefs and practices were reported as high, at pre-survey, and stayed high, at post-survey, reflecting maintenance of beliefs and behaviors.

The project also assessed the content and implementation of the developed curricula. Focus groups and training debrief sessions with facilitators revealed the curricula content was timely, relevant, and thought-provoking; helping to create safe spaces for both parents and youth to discuss germane topics. The sessions allowed for participants to connect and engage with others and encouraged discussion of sensitive topics. Additionally, during a time of isolation and sheltering in place brought on by COVID-19, the sessions allowed for participants to connect with others and to validate feelings and experiences. Notably, participants in the pilot sessions shared that they felt seen through this experience, echoing a need to continue efforts focused on diverse Asian American subpopulations. Project data revealed that



the modules provided relatable content and delivery could be strengthened with more intentional learning and linkages to domestic violence prevention, creating a cohesive curriculum around DV prevention. Additionally, for parents, it was suggested that a module on parenting as an immigrant in America be added. For youth, it was suggested to reorganize existing modules to provide a clearer progression in content. Overwhelming feedback was to allow for more time to provide the training material and to allow for participants to process the training material.

Pilot facilitators also provided thoughtful feedback on formatting, training activities, and techniques for facilitation. An important finding is the need to utilize the correct terminology to describe domestic violence in language, and to identify a shared set of terms to discuss the content in the training



While domestic violence is taboo in many communities, it is important to identify terms that can soften the conversation, but open space to discuss violence. While the topic is sensitive, it is important to give space to unpack domestic violence.

materials. This highlighted the nuance of cultural and linguistic adaptation and the need to also consider generational differences (e.g. language evolves with time and migration patterns, these changes also inform cultural beliefs and practices) in cultural and linguistic adaptation. In addition to opportunities to strengthen the curricula, learnings also informed considerations for organizational readiness and capacity to implement this type of curricula. The pilot identified the importance of committed partner organizations to the philosophy of the curricula and the readiness and willingness of training facilitators to learn and practice nonviolent parenting to be successful in training participants. Having facilitators from the respective communities, who are bilingual and bicultural, have experience working with community (adults and youth), and have a growth mindset that embraces the nonviolent and social justice grounded curriculum were pivotal. Additionally, organizational commitment included a community partner's ability to allocate appropriate time, at least a full time equivalent staff to serve as the trainer/facilitator was noted. Lastly, facilitators felt that the curriculum was highly needed and should continue to be refined and strengthened

and made available; participants also overwhelmingly echoed the need and interest for the training content.

The pilot demonstrated AAPI Equity Alliance and its partners' ability to 1) promote more open discussion about intimate relationships and domestic violence, 2) develop trainings and social groups to build domestic violence prevention skills for parents and families, and to 3) educate, recruit and organize community leaders to adapt traditional norms to promote gender equity. The two-generation curricula, *PEACE for Parenting* and *Know Your Roots*, supported language and skills building among parents and youth participants, increasing overall awareness and understanding of empathetic and gender equity oriented attitudes and practices.

Lessons Learned

The pilot offered an opportunity to learn about the utility of the curricula and lessons learned on recruitment and implementation. As noted prior, the curricula showed change via increased awareness and knowledge around healthy relationships, gender equity, and empathy. The nonviolent oriented content of the curricula were effective; however deep consideration is needed in adapting and tailoring the materials into diverse languages and context for diverse subpopulations to ensure that the content is relatable to participants. Finding appropriate language, in English and native languages, to open space for the conversation is important. Identifying language equivalents or aligned descriptions are important to ensure that key topics discussed are aligned with the original English curriculum content. While domestic violence is taboo in many communities, it is important to identify terms that can soften the conversation, but open space to discuss violence. While the topic is sensitive, it is important to give space to unpack domestic violence; it cannot be directly called out. Translation is then the beginning of the process to ensure materials are available and accessible. Following translation there is a need to review the language and ensure that it aligns with cultural beliefs and practices of communities. Lastly, it is important to consider participant literacy – to align translation of training materials and evaluation tools with appropriate reading levels - so that participants can actively participate and engage at all levels.

In terms of recruitment, community partner organizations identified a convenient sample of adults and youth who were available and willing to engage with the pilot project. Participants were predominantly heterosexual and represented immigrant communities. While the curriculum was effective in creating space for pilot participants to learn and share, future opportunities include opening up recruitment and engagement to other community members who have different gender and sexual orientation identities. It will also be important to understand how different generational experiences, including immigration experience and time in the United States, may impact how the curriculum content is discussed among more diverse participants. It will be important to consider how language, especially in-language materials will best address these additional communities. Cultural beliefs and practices will also need to be considered to ensure inclusion and a sense of belonging for all participants; participant groupings for training cohorts will need to be considered. Along with grouping like participants, it was noted that youth participants focus in on those ages 15-18, as some of the content may not have been age/stage appropriate for younger participants. As well, this is the age at onset when relationship violence, child abuse, and crime increase precipitously in adolescents⁴, making this an opportune time to engage in this dialogue. Lastly, from this pilot, participants reflected the importance of creating space to discuss new values and practices, especially around family relationships for immigrant families. This will continue to be an important part of the trainings and dialogue, considering time in the US and family migration history. As the work continues and expands into other communities, recognizing these patterns and histories will be important in informing curricula implementation.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The *PEACE for Parenting* and *Know Your Roots* curricula helped to promote more open discussion about intimate relationships and increased awareness and understanding of empathetic and gender equity-oriented attitudes and practices. The survey data showed that most participants had positive shifts in knowledge and understanding. Participants reported developing skills and putting these into practice around



The learnings from this pilot, lead the AAPI Equity Alliance and its partners to recommend the continuation of this pilot, refining and revising the curricula, identifying appropriate and committed community organizations/partners to further offer the training for other members of the pilot communities, and to expand into other Asian American communities.

empathy and communication; behaviors that could lead to less harm and more healthy familial and intimate relationships. The focus group data highlighted that the CPAF led training and debrief sessions prepared community-based staff and volunteers to deliver the group curricula. Facilitators and participants echoed the importance of the topics covered in the curricula, respectively, and expressed interest in the opportunity to continue to build space for these conversations.

Despite the quality of the curricula content and effective training and implementation model, there are recommendations to improve the curricula, implementation, and considerations for organizational commitment to the curricula.

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Parent Curriculum: *PEACE for Parenting*

- Add an orientation session to ground participants on the curriculum
- Add more visuals
- Allow more time with each module, as needed
- Consider immigration history/experience, literacy and technology needs of participants
- Keep the group sizes small, 10-12 participants

Youth Curriculum: *Know Your Roots*

- Reorganize the current modules to allow for a clearer progression in content
- Add an orientation session to ground participants and their parents on the curriculum
- Communicate examples on a spectrum, not as binary such as good or bad
- Focus on participants ages 15-18
 - Consider groupings closer in ages such as 15/16 and 17/18
- Consider immigration history/experience, literacy and technology needs of participants
- Keep the group sizes small, 10-12 participants
- Conduct in-person, if possible

Organizational Partnership

- Commitment from partner organizations to the curriculum and its philosophy around nonviolent parenting and social justice, through empathy and gender equity
- Commitment of at minimum, one full time dedicated staff person to support the curricula

- Identifying staff with experience working with adults and/or youth from the respective community, bilingual, bicultural, connected to the cultural values, norms and language of the community, and comfortable training the philosophy of the curricula
- Ability to provide technology supports to staff and participants (e.g. Zoom, internet, etc.)
- Physical (private) space to conduct sessions (in person or via Zoom)

The learnings from this pilot lead the AAPI Equity Alliance and its partners to recommend the continuation of this pilot, refining and revising the curricula, identifying appropriate and committed community organizations/partners to further offer the training for other members of the pilot communities, and to expand into other Asian American communities. Additionally, the partners would be interested in sharing this core content, replicating it with other Asian American communities, in other geographic areas, to assess the utility of the curricula in diverse geographic locales. The pilot implementation demonstrated the capacity to hold, value, and adapt cultural values and practices, while learning new and different ways to engage in supportive and nonviolent behaviors supporting the building of healthy familial and intimate relationships. Addressing life course factors, particularly relationship factors, may indeed contribute to decreasing the chances that a person will engage in abuse toward intimate partners, their children or other family members.



Vision

- To cultivate an inclusive environment for community-based organizations to contribute to the design and implementation of broad scale approaches to domestic violence prevention in Asian American communities by providing more resources and opportunities to exercise their cultural expertise and access to community stakeholders.

Goals

- To provide insight into cultural dynamics surrounding intimate relationships and healthy relationships in Los Angeles County Asian American communities.
- To develop recommendations for how to approach the multi-layered issue of domestic violence within Asian American communities, recognizing that it requires parallel approaches at different levels across different stakeholder groups to craft a complex solution for a complicated problem.

Recommended Strategies

- Promote more open discussion about intimate relationships and domestic violence.
- Identify and train community stakeholders to integrate culturally specific terms and concepts in training materials and curricula.
- Develop a prevention model that values the shared experiences and cultural norms of individual communities.
- Train group facilitators to conduct parenting and youth groups to prevent domestic violence, utilizing community facilitators as models on how to engage and communicate.
- Implement a curriculum that promotes gender equity and frames the importance of empathetic practices.
- Facilitate a support group model that allows participants to engage with curricula in a supportive and judgment free environment.

Introduction



Introduction

Domestic violence, also known as intimate partner violence, is a major public health problem in the United States and California that affects all age and socio-economic groups. Among Asian American women, 16-55% report experiencing intimate physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime.⁵ To better address this violence, partnership support was provided to build a culturally attuned prevention curriculum that was piloted in this project with the generous support of the Blue Shield of California Foundation. The curriculum was intended to engage four Asian American communities and to break the cycle of violence by addressing the intergenerational life course framework. The pilot aimed to train twenty community facilitators to conduct parenting and youth groups to prevent domestic violence in the Cambodian, Chinese, Korean, and South Asian communities of Los Angeles County. AAPI Equity Alliance coordinated the pilot and its

evaluation in partnership with Special Service for Groups – Research & Evaluation (SSG R&E), Korean American Family Services (KFAM), Koreatown Youth & Community Center (KYCC), Pacific Asian Counseling Services (PACS), Asian Pacific Counseling & Treatment Centers (APCTC), South Asian Network (SAN), and Center for the Pacific Asian Family (CPAF). Please see Appendix I for more information on the organizational partners.

This report provides the opportunity to look into four Asian American communities and to gain more insight into the diverse cultural dynamics that inform the development of familial and intimate relationships. While these four communities have some of the highest reported incidents of domestic violence among Asian American communities, not enough is known or understood about opportunities to better reduce and prevent domestic violence.



Background

In October 2020, Relationship Violence in Five Los Angeles Asian American Communities: Intergenerational Risk and Strengthening Factors, a phase I report led by the AAPI Equity Alliance (formerly known as AP3CON) was issued, highlighting determinants and context that contribute to domestic violence in Asian American communities. This phase was a community assessment of the identified Asian American communities, so that a deeper understanding could frame an opportunity to respond to community needs and interests. Recommendations from that report led to the development of a curriculum for parents and youth to prevent violence with a focus on gender equity and empathy. Eighteen community facilitators from the four Asian American communities (Cambodian, Chinese, Korean and South Asian – specifically, North Indian Hindu and Pakistani Muslim) were recruited to conduct parent and youth support groups to prevent domestic violence.

The intergenerational life course framework for domestic violence stated that early exposure to violence in the family context can lead to the perpetration of domestic violence in adulthood.⁶ While the life course framework offered ways to better understand social problems and to develop interventions and solutions, it has not been widely applied to Asian

American communities. This pilot project provided the opportunity to apply this framework into an understanding of how family immigration experience affects intergenerational relationships, especially among Asian American communities. Different communities may draw from ecological, behavioral, and human development risk factors in very different ways. Each of these factors is built upon socio-cultural norms, attitudes, beliefs and histories of communities. Understanding these factors can help to strengthen domestic violence prevention, thereby reducing domestic violence perpetration.

Risk and protective factors in communities include cultural traditions, norms, attitudes and beliefs. Among Asian American communities, these factors are varied and not monolithic due to the diverse array of ethnic and faith-based communities. Collectively, for the Cambodian, Chinese, Korean and South Asian communities in this pilot, distinct norms around gender roles, family and relationship dynamics, and cultural and immigration backgrounds emerged as key areas to consider in response to developing domestic violence education and prevention. Cross-cultural findings around the interrelatedness of intergenerational dynamics with immigration experience, the role of marriage in a community, the contrast between





community and family expectations, and gender roles were key findings from across the communities.⁷ These findings led the collaborative to set forth a vision of cultivating an inclusive environment for community-based organizations to contribute to the design and implementation of broad scale approaches to domestic violence prevention in Asian American communities by providing more resources and opportunities to exercise their cultural expertise and access to community stakeholders.⁸ The collaborative partners would provide insight into cultural dynamics surrounding intimate and healthy relationships, and provide approaches to address the multi-layered issues of domestic violence in Asian American communities.⁹ The result of these efforts is this pilot which has produced a parent and youth curricula, centered around nonviolence through increased empathy and gender equity.

Recognizing that Asian American communities are very heterogeneous, it is important to understand the dynamics and context of Asian American subpopulations, so that information and education can be developed and tailored to address unique and cross-cutting community themes around domestic violence. The report by the collaborative partners from 2020 provided recommendations to develop a culturally humble two-generation solution to preventing domestic violence.

The three recommendations were to:

- 1) Promote more open discussion about intimate relationships and domestic violence;
- 2) Develop trainings and social groups to build domestic violence preventions skills for parents and families; and
- 3) Educate, recruit, and organize community leaders to adapt traditional norms to promote gender equity.

The drafted curricula was piloted in the four noted Asian American communities to address domestic violence prevention by enhancing parent and child relationships focused on individual skills building around gender equity and empathy. The intended outcome for the pilot was that increased demonstration of empathy and gender equity in four Asian American communities through an intergenerational support group model would lead to more awareness of harmful cultural norms and practices and less harmful and healthier familial and intimate relationships. This report represents the evaluation of the curricula and its implementation, sharing learnings and recommendations on opportunities to strengthen and scale the curricula to more broadly serve other Asian American subpopulations.

The Curriculum

The Center for the Pacific Asian Family (CPAF) led the curriculum development. A curriculum to be implemented in person was originally developed, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the team pivoted to a virtual setting to implement the pilot.

The parent curriculum was based on the principles and practices of Parenting with Nonviolence developed by Ruth Beaglehole.¹⁰ An adaptation of the original 12-week, evidence-informed training shapes the modules for the parent curriculum. The curriculum was grounded in social justice and was intended to raise participants' awareness and inspire them to create a more just world by practicing nonviolence.

The parent curriculum is called PEACE for Parenting. PEACE stands for Parenting with Empathy and Ahimsa for Child Empowerment.

The curriculum framed the importance of empathy and utilized group facilitators as models on how to engage and communicate, making intentional efforts to use language that was non-judgmental and devoid of harmful labels, and instead inclusive of ensuring words and tones. The training series has six modules intended to encourage participants to strengthen their relationships with one another (especially between parent and child) and to reject and avoid shame, judgment or criticism. The curriculum was intended to serve as a journey with participants and was not about a short-term solution, but rather engagement in a paradigm shift towards nonviolence and relationship building (particularly parenting) with empathy and compassion, focused on individual skills building.

The parent curriculum is called ***PEACE for Parenting***. PEACE stands for Parenting with Empathy and Ahimsa for Child Empowerment. Ahimsa is the Sanskrit term meaning noninjury – the ethical principle of not causing harm to other living things. This principle informs the nonviolent practices of the curriculum. The parenting curriculum has six modules which include Parenting with Intention, Childhood Reflections, The Child's Brain, Power with Anger, Setting Limits with Supportive Guidance, and Practicing Supportive Guidance.

The following demonstrates the detail for each module:

- 1) Intentional Parenting – the intentional passing on of values to our child/children through understanding our expectations and roles as parents and caregivers;
- 2) Childhood Reflections – asks that parents reflect on their own past and childhood journey that consciously and subconsciously influences parenting choices;
- 3) The Child's Brain – build an understanding of the science of a child's brain and development; recognizing the importance of self-regulation and stress responses, building practical ways to manage and cope with challenging situations;
- 4) P-O-W-E-R with Anger – seeks to understand anger through nonviolence, learning about self-regulation and management of our own anger;
 - a. P = pause, self-empathy and self-regulation by the parent,
 - b. OWE = observe, wonder and practice empathy,
 - c. R= reflection, restoring connection and reflective resolution;
- 5) Supportive Guidance – empowering children with skills and strategies to make healthy choices; and
- 6) Practice of Supportive Guidance – putting into practice the skills that are learned.

The objectives of the parent curriculum are as follows:

- 1) Increase awareness of one's own parenting practices to address gender inequality and cultural freeze;¹¹
- 2) Enhance abilities and skills to articulate one's own needs and emotions with empathy and gender inclusive practices;
- 3) Acquire the tools and skills to express oneself with empathy and gender inclusive language when communicating with one's child/children.

The six modules involved 2-hour weekly virtual sessions. The goal was to create a safe space, creating a non-traditional learning setting, such as being seated in a circle formation. However, due to high COVID-19 transmission at the height of the pilot implementation, sessions were conducted via Zoom and the physical creation of space was limited by virtual technology. Zoom sessions consisted of two co-facilitators. Adult groups varied in size from eight to twenty-one participants. Sessions were conducted in-language in Khmer, Mandarin, Korean, and Hindi. The original curriculum was created in English and translated into these four languages.

The sessions were framed around a social support group model, focused on allowing participants to share personal experiences and feelings and to receive support and encouragement. Information was shared to allow for a dialogue acknowledging participant's experiences and thoughts and feelings, followed by exercises that engaged participants and required interaction and practice of vocabulary and skills introduced. All sessions opened up with a check-in and grounding with participants, which included group agreements for engagement and participation. The check-in process used reflective questions to identify needs and feelings of participants. These check-ins were intended to build emotional literacy among participants, with modeling from the facilitator. At the end of every session, questions were asked to explore individual experiences on the content and discussion, focused on self-reflection. This self-reflection included assessing knowledge and skills gained and considerations on how to practice and apply the knowledge and skills with their child. Rounding out each session, participants had a homework assignment which focused on reflective questions for the participants and encouraging the practice of things learned. It was made clear that the goal was to hold space, to learn and to share, but not to formulate solutions to any particular issues. While healing and comfort may have taken place in sessions, sessions were not meant to be therapeutic.

The youth curriculum, referred to as *Know Your Roots*, was built from CPAF's existing curriculum Community-Building for Healthy Relationships and Gender Equity, called "CHARGE." This curriculum is

currently used throughout the school year with CPAF youth programs and is divided into activities designed to educate, challenge, and encourage youth to share their thoughts and viewpoints. The activities represent ideas from various authors and organizations, including CPAF, and have been tailored to meet the needs of Asian American youth. From the "CHARGE" curriculum six key topics were selected and expanded for the learning journey for youth participants in this pilot. These topics were then organized into 6 modules with activities designed for youth ages 14-18 and attending high school. Additional to the modules are suggestions for journaling, homework and readings which can be utilized at the discretion of the facilitator.

The youth curriculum has six modules which include Healthy Relationships, Gender Norms, Culture, Power, Privilege, and Self-Empathy. The following demonstrates details for each module:

- 1) Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships – learning about boundaries and consent, learning healthy communication skills to address one's needs and feelings, building healthy relationships;
- 2) Gender Norms – articulating how social norms and expectations may influence one's own views and behaviors; understanding gender identity and sexual orientation, especially in the context of cultural norms and practices;
- 3) The Cultural Iceberg – defining culture and how personal experiences and practices may be influenced and shaped by cultural norms;
- 4) Tapping into Power – differentiating levels of power and how they are projected in the contexts of family and society;
- 5) Confronting Privilege – defining privilege and articulating how this affects access and power and how it informs different social identities and examining how power can be used in an inclusive way; and
- 6) Nurturing Self-Empathy – identifying self-empathy and discovering inner strength by using self-empathy as a means to experience power from within.

The objectives of the youth curriculum include:

- 1) Increase youth's understanding of gender violence within the context of unhealthy cultural norms and institutional and societal inequities; and
- 2) Increase the demonstration of empathetic and gender equity oriented attitudes and practices among youth.

The six modules were taught virtually in 2-hour weekly sessions. Sessions were conducted via Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions. Two individuals co-facilitated the sessions. Youth sessions varied in size from nine to twenty participants. All sessions were conducted in English. All meetings started early, allowing participants to create informal connections with one another before training modules. Meetings included community agreements established by the participants. Sessions also included a brief review and takeaways from the previous session to ground everyone in moving forward together. Youth modules were activity based and framed in action learning, with youth participants engaged in various individual and group activities. Keywords and phrases were always highlighted to allow for discussion and understanding of training terminology. At the closing of each session was an empathy challenge or poll which often asked youth participants to consider how they could personally express or challenge a norm. The empathy challenge was a reflective call to action based on the skills and resources introduced in each module – this process encouraged youth participants to practice skills they had learned. Facilitators used the 6 Guiding Principles to a Trauma Informed Approach¹² to create a safe and trauma-sensitive environment centered on collective healing, which offers hope, trust, well-being and support. It was made clear that the goal was to hold space, to learn and to share, but not to offer a solution to any particular issues. Similar to the adult sessions, participants may have experienced healing and comfort as a result, but sessions were not intended to be therapeutic. As noted with the parent curriculum, the youth curriculum was intended to serve as a journey with participants and not a short-term solution, but rather engagement in a paradigm shift towards nonviolence and relationship building with empathy and compassion, focused on individual skills building.



The curricula were intended to challenge normative concepts in Asian American culture, and to build space to honor and respect the dignity of all human beings. The curricula were focused on nonviolent beliefs and practices and empathy, asking individuals not only to be kind to others, but also to themselves. Specific to the work of the collaborative partners, the curricula focused on relationships between parent and child and building healthy relationships. The curricula approached emotional literacy and learning through child-rearing, which has intentional and unintentional practices. Pulling from the life course framework, the curricula aimed to foster healthy relationships between parent and child to reduce early exposure to violence in the family context, which could lead to perpetration of domestic violence or intimate partner violence in adulthood.¹³ The modules were developed in response to recognizing that domestic violence and how it was discussed varies greatly among different communities. This included possible stigma, language that allowed dialogue about domestic violence, and various risk factors and interpersonal dynamics. Relationship Violence in Five Los Angeles Asian American Communities: Intergenerational Risk and Strengthening Factors, the phase I report, explored risk and protective factors from the Cambodian, Chinese, Korean, North Indian Hindu and Pakistani Muslim communities of Los Angeles County, informing the curriculum development with insight into cultural dynamics. Gender roles, intergenerational family dynamics, immigration experience and history, and

child rearing approaches were underlying themes by which modules were developed and implemented. The intent of the curricula was to shift parents' and youth's paradigm to challenge unhealthy norms, build skills for empathy, reflection and self-regulation, ultimately minimizing harm to oneself and others. The curricula did not provide a fix, but offered tools to help manage interpersonal relationships through building introspection, emotional literacy and intelligence. The pilot project was conducted from February through August 2021. The evaluation focused on assessing the content and implementation of the curricula and identifying opportunities to refine and strengthen the curricula, as well as to consider its utility among other Asian American communities.

Population Served

The communities of focus for this pilot were parents and youth from the Cambodian, Chinese, Korean, and South Asian communities of Los Angeles County. AAPI Equity Alliance convened critical community partners who had strong ties and history working to support the four communities identified in this pilot project. Specifically, organizations were identified that had mental health and/or youth programming or services. The partner organizations were Asian Pacific Counseling & Treatment Centers (APCTC), Korean American Family Services (KFAM), Koreatown Youth & Community Center (KYCC), Pacific Asian Counseling Services (PACS), South Asian Network (SAN), and Center for the Pacific Asian Family (CPAF).

The South Asian community engaged in this pilot consisted of individuals who were North Indian Hindu and Pakistani Muslim. The parent pilot participants consisted of North Indian Hindus. The youth pilot participants included a mix of North Indian Hindu and Pakistani Muslim individuals. While there are key differences and distinctions between these communities in terms of language, culture, religion, values and norms, because youth sessions were conducted in English, facilitators did not need to modify/adapt the curriculum to these cultural nuances.

A total of 73 adults participated in the pilot. All participants did not attend every module in their cohort and all participants did not report their demographic data. Figure 1 demonstrates the racial/ethnic background of adult participants in the pilot.

Figure 1. Adult Participant Race/Ethnicity (N=57)

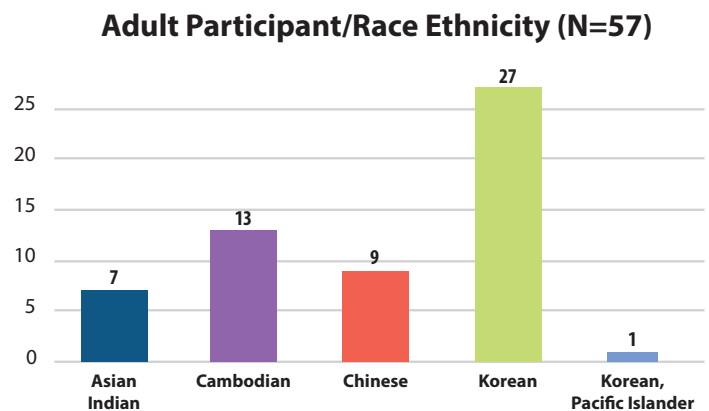


Figure 2. (N=57) represents the reported gender of adult participants.

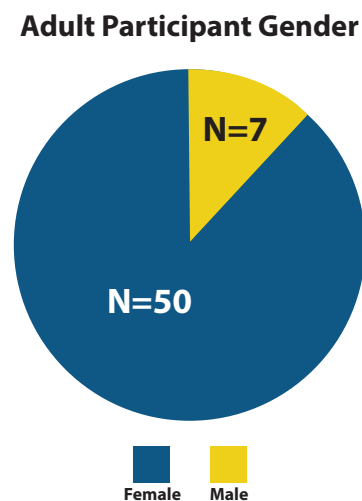
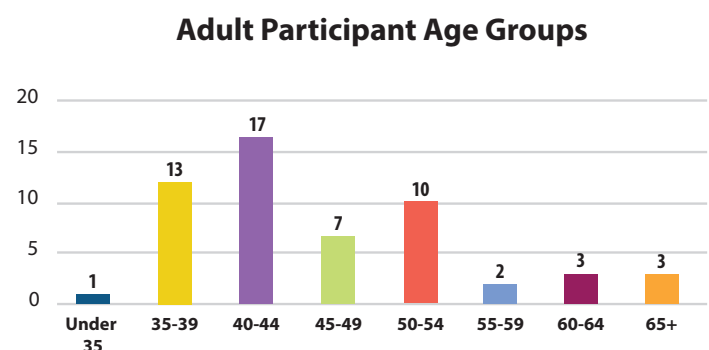


Figure 3. (N=56) represents the age of adult participants, with the largest group of participants in the 40-44 year old age group, with 17 participants.



Fifty-three youth participated in the pilot and their racial/ethnic categories area noted in Figure 4 (N=46), following. Not all youth attended every module in their cohort and not all youth reported their demographic data.

Figure 4. (N=46) represents race/ethnicity as reported by youth participants.

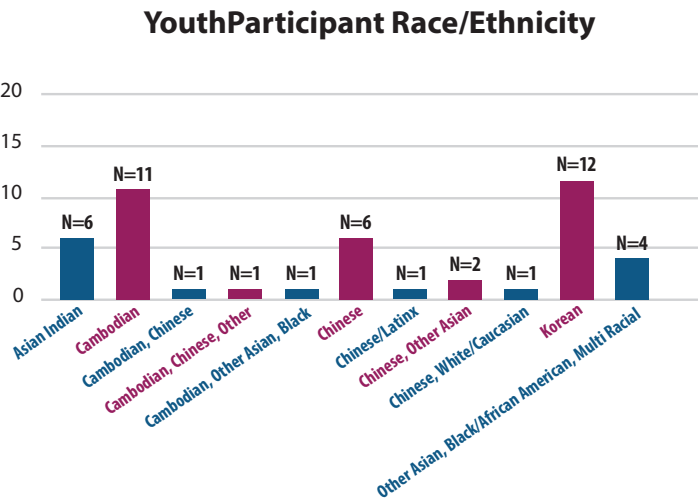


Figure 5. (N=46) represents gender as reported by youth participants.

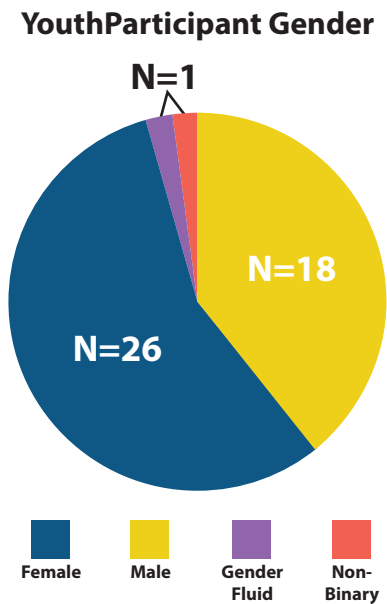
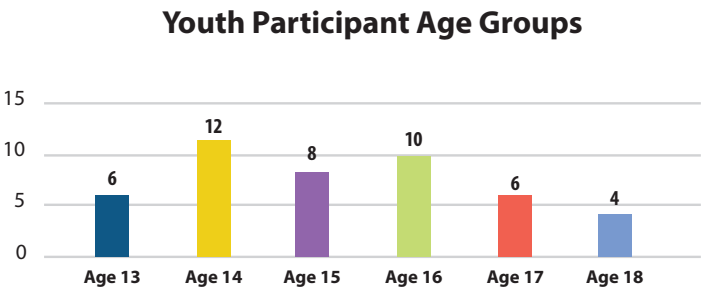


Figure 6. (N=46) notes the age of youth participants with the largest group being 14 year-olds, with 12 participants.



The Pilot Project

The pilot project was framed to test the *PEACE for Parenting* and *Know Your Roots* curricula, which included assessing the appropriateness of the training content and implementation. In particular, the pilot project aimed to recruit twenty community facilitators, ten staff and ten peer leaders, to train to implement the curricula in the community. The community facilitators ran culturally tailored multilingual parenting and youth groups focused on preventing domestic violence. The pilot project aimed to hold 50-60 group sessions focused on building gender equity and empathy in Asian American parents and youth through a social support curricula (6 modules).

Facilitators were recruited from the partner organizations. Leadership from partner organizations were asked to each identify two parent and two youth facilitators, totaling twenty facilitators. These individuals co-facilitated sessions with parents and youth. General criteria was shared to help identify individuals that may be a good fit for the facilitator role. This included staff who had experience working with parents and youth, were willing to try a new and different approach to parenting, and would support group content and formats. Parent facilitators also needed to be bilingual and bicultural to provide sessions in-language.

Across the five partner organizations, 18 facilitators were identified of which 15 were staff and 3 were volunteers. There were ten parent facilitators and eight youth facilitators recruited; one partner organization did not conduct youth sessions and did not recruit for youth facilitators. Among the facilitators, six were licensed therapists or mental health practitioners, six were individuals who had experience supporting domestic violence and sexual assault work, and four were staff with experience working with and engaging youth. The facilitators shared foundational knowledge and skills working with parents and youth in the specific ethnic communities. Trainings for parent facilitators took place from February to June 2021. Trainings for youth facilitators took



place from February to August 2021. Trainings included an orientation, with two possible dates to ensure every facilitator could attend, and weekly training and debrief sessions. A final facilitator debrief session followed one to three weeks following the implementation of the final module, to gather all facilitators by group, parent or youth, and then collectively (both parent and youth facilitators) by community partner agency.

Evaluation Design

The evaluation included quantitative data collection from participants and qualitative data collection from training facilitators. The pilot project aimed to:

- Increase demonstration of empathetic and gender equity-oriented attitudes and practices; and
- Pilot test a curriculum to enhance empathy and gender equity through an inter-generational support group model.

The key evaluation questions were:

- Did the curricula lead to an increase in the awareness and understanding of empathetic and gender equity-oriented attitudes and practices?
- To what extent did the facilitator training prepare the facilitators to deliver the group curricula?

Pre/post survey data was collected from participants to assess changes in awareness and understanding of empathetic and gender-equity oriented attitudes. Debrief sessions and focus groups were held with training facilitators to provide detail on what went well, what didn't work, what was challenging in terms of curricula implementation, and any unexpected highlights from the process. The evaluation design intended to capture both the process and impact outcomes of this pilot. The intent was to learn if the developed curricula led to increased empathetic and gender-oriented attitudes and practices in the four Asian American communities, and to identify opportunities to strengthen the content and implementation, while finally understanding how this could be adapted for broader use in other Asian American subpopulations.



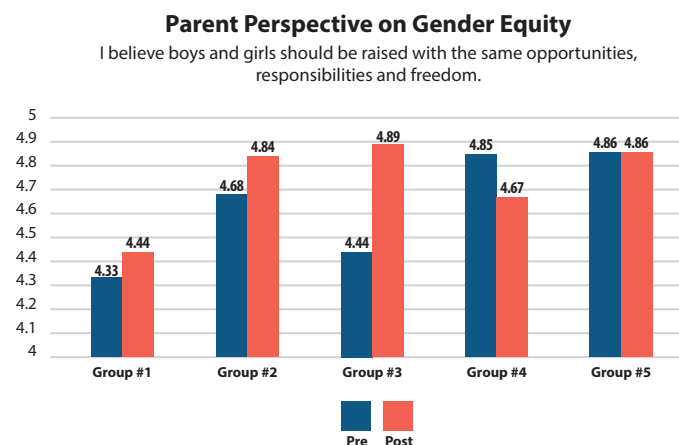
Key Findings

The curricula was piloted with five parent groups (73 parents) and four youth groups (54 youth) to a total of 127 participants. A total of 54 sessions were held, 30 adult sessions in Khmer, Mandarin, Korean or Hindi, and 24 English language youth sessions. Among the 73 adult participants, 56 pre/post tests were completed and matched for analysis. Among the 54 youth participants, 46 pre/post tests were completed and matched for analysis. Not all participants attended all modules and not all participants completed a pre or post survey.

The pilot aimed to increase demonstration of empathetic and gender equity-oriented attitudes and practices among participants. Pre/post surveys demonstrated pilot findings around this first aim. Pre and post training surveys were developed and collected at the end of the first module and the last module with parent and youth participants. Responses were provided on a 5-point Likert scale. Surveys were conducted electronically via Google forms. Surveys were available in Khmer, Mandarin, Korean, Hindi and English for adults and English for youth. In addition to participant self-report on the surveys, facilitators also reviewed survey findings and shared insights on results.

Overall, survey data showed that participants stayed relatively the same in their responses or increased their agreement to positive changes or moved into strongly agreeing, and decreased agreement to negative changes, such as staying in an unhealthy relationship. Data across the four communities were not aggregated, due to the need to adapt trainings for cultural nuances, and the difficulty contextualizing the data by purely aggregating the quantitative information. While data was not aggregated across groups some common trends were noted.

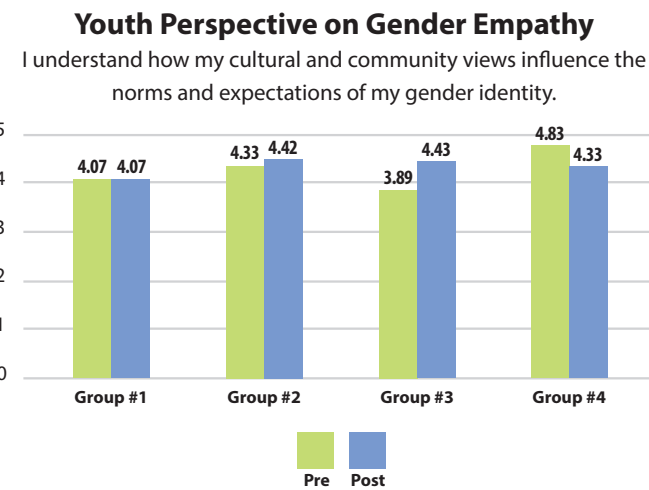
Figure 7. demonstrates the increase among parents in their belief around gender equity. This is an example from the series of questions directed to parents.



Facilitators noted that the parent curriculum did not have a gender focus and there was not a specific module on gender equity, however gender equity naturally came up in conversation when parents thought about the ways they were parented, the way their elders were parented, and recognizing how they were parenting their children currently. This allowed the objective around gender equity awareness and practices to be discussed as a means of preventing violence in communities, illuminating how to break cycles of behaviors. Figure 7 notes a general increase in the belief about gender equity, with one group (group #4) showing increased disagreement at post-survey.

Among youth, there was less demonstrated change around gender equity. However, data showed that youth may have had a higher understanding around gender equity, at baseline, and this was sustained or slightly increased at post-survey. Figure 8, following, notes the youth perspective on gender equity, as related to their gender identity.

Figure 8. Youth Perspective on Gender Empathy



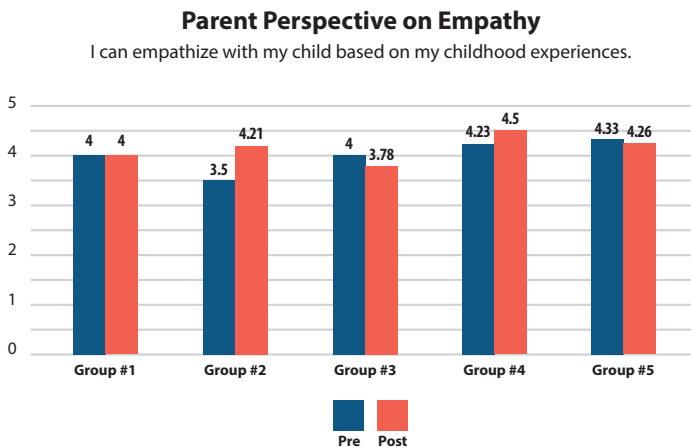
Facilitators did not feel as though they introduced new material to youth participants around gender equity, rather they may have strengthened beliefs on this topic. Youth noted that this awareness and knowledge came mostly from peers and social media. Youth participants shared that they experienced gender discrimination from their own family and acknowledged that this may have been a result of the influence of culture. One group explicitly noted that they experienced toxic masculinity in their community and that there are very clear and biased gender roles placed on girls versus boys. In one group, it was mentioned that it was as if youth live a double life. Among this same group of participants, it was noted that youth expressed that their parents do not understand gender equity and inflict gender bias ideals on them, and so they must navigate their home and life outside of the home with differing beliefs from their parents.

In examining empathy, survey data demonstrated increased knowledge among adults and youth. Among parents there appeared to be positive growth and understanding around empathy, increased ability to communicate with and support their child, understanding how traumatic childhood experiences can cause harm to a child’s brain development, recognizing how words and action influence

development, an improved understanding of their child’s feelings and needs, and increased confidence in the ability to console or comfort their child when they or their child are in distress.

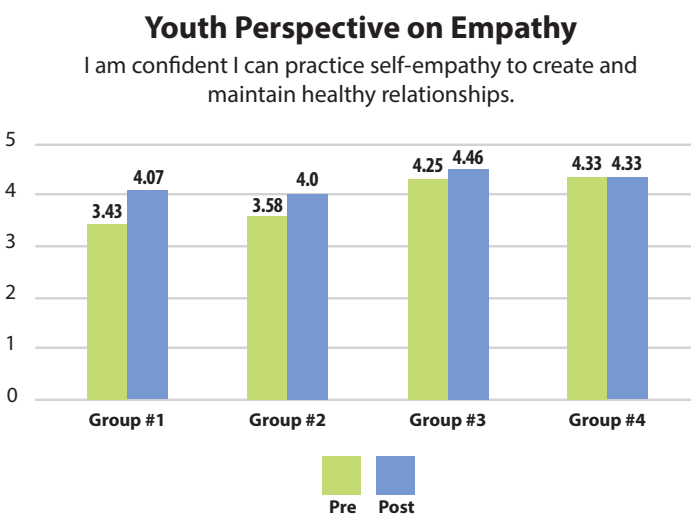
Figure 9, represents parent responses to a question on empathy. The survey question reviewed by facilitators was, “I can empathize with my child based on my childhood experiences.” This was pulled from module 2 in the parent curriculum and showed increases in stronger agreement or maintenance of strong agreement at post-survey. However, a number of participants reported that they disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. Facilitators noted that for many parents, this was the first time they heard about and discussed empathy. In fact, for most, the term “empathy” itself was very new. This discussion for many parents was about reflecting on their own upbringing and practicing similar parenting skills, and understanding how this may affect their child. While this was new for most parents, many agreed about wanting to try to be more empathetic toward their child, but recognized that practicing this behavior was challenging. Additionally, facilitators noted that while this was a new topic, early on, as they moved forward through the other modules, the sense of understanding about empathy and how to practice it became clearer to participants. Generally, parents reported increased empathy towards their children after introspection and reflection on their own childhood experiences.

Figure 9. Parent Perspective on Empathy



Youth also reported increases with their understanding of self-empathy, improved their ability to communicate feelings with their family and others, and increased confidence in practicing self-empathy and self-care. Figure 10, notes a question regarding youth reported confidence to practice self-care and to discuss their feelings with others. The data showed maintenance and increases in strong agreement to the statement, “I am confident I can practice self-empathy to create and maintain healthy relationships.” It appeared to the facilitators that most youth had heard of and understood empathy. However, while this was the case, experiences shared by youth showed that youth practice empathy with their friends, but not with their family or relatives. A reason shared by some youth for this is because empathy is not discussed at home. A few facilitators remarked that this module was very well set up and the flow of the entire curriculum provided a great segue to learning about and practicing self-empathy. A few facilitators shared that discussing this topic was valuable and very understandable to youth. Lastly, a few facilitators themselves noted that this session left a lasting impact on them in better understanding and practicing empathy. They shared that it was heartwarming to see that they could also learn in this space with youth.

Figure 10. Youth Perspective on Self-Empathy



Lastly, in reviewing questions about gender equity and empathetic attitudes or practices, healthy relationships were also examined. Generally speaking, parents had increased knowledge about healthy relationships

noted with increased confidence in establishing boundaries with their child, increased confidence in modeling behavior and an increase in disagreement about needing to have more control over their child. Facilitators discussed the survey statement “I believe the more control I have over my child, the safer they will be,” to demonstrate parental understanding around healthy relationship boundaries. Generally, at post-survey more parents moved towards disagreement with this statement, as noted in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Parent Perspective on Healthy Relationships

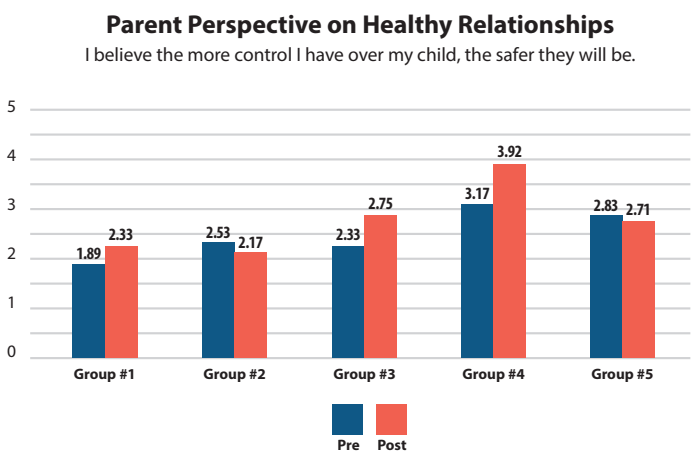
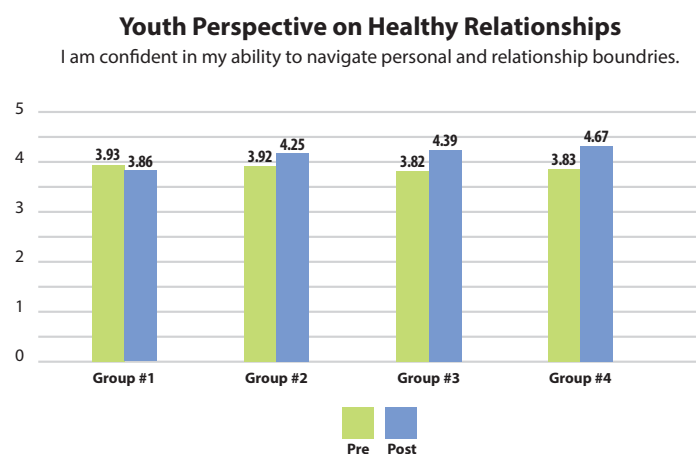


Figure 11 represents the varied changes among parents regarding their understanding of control and healthy relationships. Two cohorts decreased their agreement with the need for control to feel that their children were safe. However, three groups reported increases in agreement about control over their child yielding a sense of safety and a healthy relationship with their child. Facilitators noted that this may have reflected the varied understanding of control among participants, which may have influenced the understanding of the survey questions and therefore responses at post-survey. In particular, facilitators noted that the wording that was used to discuss control may not have reflected the conversations that were had, and so language equivalence in this case may have been a key contributor to different conversations and understandings. This highlights the importance of translation and common language/terms, noted prior, to be used throughout the training materials and evaluation tools.

Among youth participants, there was also a general increase in knowledge of healthy relationships as demonstrated by an increased confidence in the ability to communicate needs and feelings, confidence in the ability to navigate personal and relationship boundaries, and the ability to navigate power structures, including within their own family. A survey question examined to reflect on increased knowledge about healthy relationships was, “I am confident in my ability to navigate personal and relationship boundaries.” Generally, at post-survey more youth moved towards agreement or strong agreement with this statement, noted in Figure 12.

Figure 12. Youth Perspective on Healthy Relationships



Overall, data showed and facilitators noted that there was an increased understanding and confidence to navigate personal and relationship boundaries among youth. Most shared that youth had some ideas about boundaries (as noted in Figure 12 with relatively high pre-test scores), but the curriculum helped to give them a deeper understanding of the concept, which increased their own confidence around how to facilitate/manage a healthy relationship. However, all students did not show increases in this area, as for some this deeper understanding was new and in one cohort, because it was the first module, there was not much in-depth conversation, even though terms were understood. One set of facilitators remarked that they were surprised that youth took to discussing this so deeply, because culturally this would not be a topic that they would openly be ready to share and discuss. This reflected the importance of creating a space with culturally relatable examples that helped youth to open up and to share.

Overall, facilitators were not surprised by survey results and provided context, noted prior, for some of the possible unexpected findings that were revealed. They attributed results to the complexities of translating concepts with no clear language equivalence, and inconsistently translated terms between the curricula and pre/post surveys. Even so, survey results showed that the curricula can lead to an increase in the awareness and understanding of empathetic and gender equity-oriented attitudes and practices.

Facilitator Focus Group Findings

In addition to pre/post surveys to understand participant changes, SSG R&E conducted English language focus groups with the 18 curricula facilitators to examine curricula delivery and learnings about the training content. A total of six sessions were held, one with all parent facilitators, one with all youth facilitators and one with each community partner organization, with both parent and youth facilitators (for a total of four sessions).

Facilitators noted that the curricula helped participants learn new ways of communication, as well as new terms to express oneself. Facilitators noted a cultural communication gap between parents and youth, with parents reflecting on their experiences being raised in another country and the youth experiences grounded in growing up in the United States, raised by immigrant parents. Facilitators also noted that communication styles and language were different between parents and youth, especially when it came to expressing their emotions. For example, youth shared that they may want to hear “I love you” from their parents, but parents would share that they expressed their love by asking “did you eat anything today?” Generally, both parents and youth learned new and better ways to communicate with others to express themselves. Facilitators noted that they felt the youth curriculum better addressed these concepts, especially in addressing healthy and unhealthy relationships, with a distinct module. While facilitators felt that both curricula provided the building blocks to domestic violence prevention, the curricula could be more straight forward in how to address and reduce domestic violence.



Parent Curriculum

The strengths from the parent curriculum were the ability to help share better ways for parents to understand their children, allowing parents to consider different ways to raise their children (different from their own experiences), defining violence and nonviolence, providing nonviolent parenting skills and resources, providing parents with better communication tools, and increasing awareness of their own feelings and self-empathy. Facilitators reported that parents gravitated towards Modules 3 and 4, the Child's Brain and P-O-W-E-R. The concepts about a child's brain development and how to "pause" when angered, sat with parent participants. Across the six modules, modules 2, Childhood Reflections, 3, The Child's Brain, and 4, P-O-W-E-R were highlighted by facilitators in resonating with parent participants, having had lively sharing and storytelling from participants.

As shared by the facilitators, parents felt that the sessions were worthwhile and went beyond the expectations of many. The sessions provided a safe space and allowed for parents to connect and engage with others. This was particularly heightened with the COVID-19 stay at home protocols. A facilitator noted that coming together was important for parents, "They

Participants noted that the training sessions were important because they felt seen. The training sessions also gave parents an opportunity to gain skills for themselves in terms of parenting and also to reflect on their own experiences and understanding of how this informs their parenting.

just needed validation from other parents." Parents were eager to participate and were in fact "watching the clock to be on time." One facilitator shared "The group was anxious to attend the class. They were waiting for the classes [to start]. They were watching the clock to be on time [to the training sessions]."

Participants noted that the training sessions were important because they felt seen. The training sessions also gave parents an opportunity to gain skills for themselves in terms of parenting and also to reflect on their own experiences and understanding of how this informs their parenting. Parents expressed that they gained knowledge and awareness of other ways to parent. Echoing the duality of learning objectives, it was noted that typical parenting classes focused on the children, but this training focused on the parents and gave them opportunities to learn skills and more about themselves.

Key Findings | continued

Technology, language, time and outside factors were the main challenges to implementing the curriculum. Among adult participants, there were challenges with having reliable internet access, learning how to use Zoom (logging in and navigating breakout sessions) and accessing/completing evaluation tools (pre/post surveys). In many instances, this required facilitators to stay on for up to 2 hours following a session to help participants complete their evaluation surveys and to become more tech savvy. While technology may have afforded ease of access (not needing to travel to a location), the circumstances of some participants made it challenging to fully participate. Some participants were in domestic violence shelters or currently experiencing domestic violence, so it was not always easy to find a safe space to sit and join the training for two hours. Secondly, language was a pivotal component of this pilot. Not only was there a need to translate and culturally adapt materials, but finding appropriate terminology to describe and discuss domestic violence was highlighted. Translation of the training materials was a challenge due to a lack of equivalent terminology or a lack of appropriate descriptive words. For instance, empathy was a key term and concept for the curricula, but facilitators shared that there was not a literal translation in every language. This highlighted the importance of working together collectively to agree on how to explain key terms and concepts, which would require a time-intensive process that was not afforded in the pilot. This segued into the feedback that more time was needed in various ways. Facilitators shared that more time was needed to review and comprehend training materials - for facilitators and participants, more time was needed to translate and review materials to ensure cultural and linguistic appropriateness and relevance, and more time allocation for staff to support this pilot. With regards to staff time, all partner organizations supported the development and piloting of the curricula, however staff allocation to support the pilot varied and in some cases, facilitators had competing priorities and were not able to solely focus on this effort. This highlighted the importance of organizational commitment to adequately allocating staff time for this curricula. Facilitators supported the pilot and expressed the need to have more time dedicated to learning, tailoring, implementing and supporting the pilot project. Lastly, the pilot was

strongly influenced by COVID-19 and stay at home orders, which required the team to pivot from in-person trainings to virtual Zoom trainings. This pivot created technology challenges, noted prior, as well as influenced how relationships were built among facilitators and participants. The virtual space introduced a different element in facilitators building trust with participants to discuss sensitive, private and taboo topics. These four elements were identified as key challenges in implementing the parent curriculum.



Youth Curriculum

The strengths of the youth curriculum were creating space to allow for conversations about culturally specific issues youth identified with in regard to healthy relationships, centering discussions on the pros and cons of cultural norms that influence healthy and unhealthy relationships, intergenerational issues, discussion around gender norms, and providing an approach that expands youth awareness of nonviolence, especially as it relates to domestic violence. Overwhelmingly, it was shared that the youth curriculum was widely thought-provoking, timely, and necessary. Youth facilitators felt that the topics offered were very relevant to a larger societal conversation. While youth were already aware of the topics, most had shared that they never had an open space to talk about the topics. Facilitators and youth participants were comfortable challenging themselves to grow through the entire process and facilitators felt participants achieved success having reached new realizations about themselves.

The youth facilitators felt that the participant handbook was both thorough and very helpful to guiding the facilitators on how to implement the curriculum. The handbook made the preparation for trainings easy. Additionally, facilitators liked having all training materials and resources centrally located through Trello, a web-based project management system. For youth focused trainings, content was in English, so translation was not required. However, each facilitator did need to adapt content for cultural context. Much of this took place real time and required facilitators to tap into their own experiences and to relate this to the experiences of the participants.

The youth curriculum concepts for which there was high participation, lively discussion, more open storytelling, and sharing among participants were Modules 3 – Cultural Iceberg, Module 4 – Tapping Into Power, and Module 5 – Confronting Privilege. Module 3 served as a good grounding discussion and allowed youth to get comfortable with one another. This created a space where participants felt that they could relate to one another based on shared cultural experiences.

Recruitment and virtual engagement stood out as key challenges in implementing the youth curriculum. Youth recruitment for the pilot fell towards the end of the school year, which meant reaching into places where youth already were, became limited. Additionally, facilitators noted the importance of recruiting through existing programs and services from partner organizations, as the training topic was sensitive, and having some prior engagement with the youth could help create rapport to discuss the curriculum content. Associated with this was the focus on intentional recruitment for age-appropriate participants. There were youth participants on the younger side of the scale, 13-14 years of age and in junior high school, and facilitators felt that the curriculum content was not as age/stage appropriate for these individuals. Facilitators also noted that youth engagement included establishing communication with parents, and that this could be improved to ensure transparency and fostering trust both with youth participants and their parents; they felt this could help ensure youth would stay fully engaged. Associated with recruitment and engagement was group size. Facilitators noted that larger group sizes tended to be



The strengths from the youth curriculum were creating space to allow for conversations about culturally specific issues youth identified with in regard to healthy relationships...

more challenging and did not allow for adequate time and space to discuss curriculum content. Particularly, on Zoom it could be difficult to manage the space, especially if youth were not on camera. Facilitators shared that in a few cases participants were triggered or in crisis during the sessions and it was very helpful to have a co-facilitator that could handle the crisis scenario.

Across both the parent and youth curricula implementation, successes noted were technical assistance (TA) sessions and having readily available resources for facilitation. Check-ins and debrief sessions with the CPAF lead trainers and the other facilitators piloting the curriculum, were pivotal to allowing the facilitators to gather support and resources from others to best prepare them for sessions with participants. The weekly TA sessions were pivotal in terms of feeling and receiving emotional and tangible support. Additionally, training resources were centralized via Trello (a web-based project management tool), which facilitated the implementation process with ease of access to materials. A facilitator shared “The training and TA sessions were great. We felt very supported and had great resources – I felt confident going into each training session.”

Key Findings | continued

The focus group findings reflected that the facilitator training prepared the facilitators to deliver the group curricula. The findings also provided great detail on the strengths and challenges presented from the curricula implementation. This information gives rise to opportunities to refine and strengthen the content and delivery methods. Most notably, the hard work to develop the curricula and its resources, in English and in-language, housed via Trello, were acknowledged as pivotal tools to preparing the facilitators for their implementation of the curricula and engagement with participants. Having facilitators from the respective communities, who are bilingual and bicultural, have experience working with the community (adults and/or youth), are connected to the cultural values, norms and language of the community, and have a growth mindset, embracing the training philosophy was pivotal to communicating the curricula content. Training and debrief sessions with the CPAF lead trainers were noted as important to understanding content and identifying

ways to implement effectively through peer learning and exchange. As a pilot, facilitators felt that more time to familiarize themselves with the content and tools, would allow for a richer and deeper experience for all involved. More time among facilitators to culturally and linguistically adapt and tailor the curricula, could also strengthen the pilot project. Facilitators felt that keeping the group size small (less than 12 participants) and knowing some participant background and/or experiences could lead to stronger group dynamics and deeper discussions. What has been initiated with this pilot can be grown and deepened to better serve the Asian American communities in this pilot project. The pilot goals were met in increasing knowledge about gender equity and empathy among most participants. The findings also showed that there is room for continuing to provide the space for dialogue around the important topics covered by the curricula and to expand in deepening the conversations and practices that are inspired by the curricula content.



Lessons Learned and Recommendations

The design, implementation, and evaluation of the pilot has revealed many lessons learned and recommendations for refining and strengthening the parent and youth curricula for delivery to diverse Asian American communities. The recommendations from the experiences of the facilitators provide ways to strengthen the core content, considerations for tailoring for diverse (current and additional) Asian American communities, and considerations for ensuring a successful and positive training experience, for both facilitators and participants. The following are key recommendations overall, followed by parent and youth curriculum recommendations, respectively. In addition to learnings from the focus groups on the curricula content and implementation, organizational readiness/capacity and participant recruitment learnings are shared for additional consideration, for other organizations and communities considering the implementation of this curricula.

Overall Learnings and Recommendations

As a key goal of the project was to prevent and reduce domestic violence, facilitators shared feedback on how more explicit linkages between curricula content to domestic violence would be important; helping to create a more cohesive curriculum around domestic violence. Starting with the parent curricula, facilitators noted that domestic violence topics are strongly expressed, but not directly addressed and it was hard to directly talk about violence or domestic violence due to stigma and cultural understandings of violence. The youth curriculum does not directly address domestic violence and facilitators highly recommended a module be added to primarily focus on addressing domestic violence. Additionally, it was suggested if domestic violence prevention is the goal, that this underlying theme could better underline each module within the youth curricula, like how culture currently permeates throughout the modules. Suggested activities were



to more actively ask questions about violence and explicitly discuss domestic violence prevention and have actions, for instance asking youth to pledge to domestic violence prevention. While this is a primary recommendation from facilitators, it should be noted that domestic violence is a taboo and sensitive topic in many communities, including Asian American communities. To explicitly call this out and to name it early and up front, may in fact lead participants to walk away from being part of the discussion and dialogue. As a result, it is important to ease them into these discussions by focusing on healthy relationships, cultural identity and understanding harm from traditional norms and practice. Finding appropriate language and terms may help soften the conversation, allowing for space to open for this dialogue. With this in mind, it is important to contextualize DV prevention and reduction as primary goals of the training, and as participants open up to this discussion, more explicit language and linkages can be shared.

In regards to cultural tailoring, facilitators had insights about opportunities to better adapt the content to multiple cultures. First, facilitators expressed that the language used is important to opening space for conversation, especially around domestic violence, as noted above. They suggested terms that would help to soften the conversation about domestic violence. There were recommendations to use terms like emotional regulation, coping, and anger management. Facilitators also noted that emotion is shown differently in cultures, so having an understanding about this and adapting the curricula to help use this knowledge to open up space is paramount. Language, more than just translating the terms, was very important. Facilitators noted that the translations were not equivalent. This was not a result of poor translation, but the nuances of translation and not having words and concepts that are equivalent in Khmer, Mandarin, Korean and/or Hindi. An example was the acronym P-O-W-E-R. This is a key topic in the training content, but translating this word does not yield an equivalent in-language acronym. Facilitators noted the importance of understanding the content well enough to communicate and train it with others, and needing to frame this in the understanding of cultural beliefs and practices. This component is very grounded in not being judgmental, but offering enough compassion and understanding to create a safe space for introspection and learning among participants.



Cultural tailoring comments were different for the youth curricula. Language in terms of translation was not necessary. However, adapting content to more appropriately address generational needs was noted. Facilitators felt that the curriculum was more targeted to second generation youth and that it may need to be somewhat different for first generation youth. Most facilitators felt very comfortable adapting and tailoring the curriculum based on their knowledge and experiences, yielding some autonomy for these types of adaptations may be warranted.

The following are recommendations for the parent and youth curricula itself, as well as suggestions for strengthening delivery of the curricula.

Parent Curriculum Recommendations

- Allow for more time to translate and culturally adapt the content to be more appropriate
 - Ethnically and generationally
 - Shared language to discuss content
 - Find appropriate/equivalent translations for acronyms
 - Assess appropriateness of activities and provide a few options for different groups
 - Note examples on a spectrum and not as binary, e.g. positive or negative

- Consider adding a module on parenting as an immigrant in America
- Add more visuals
- Allow facilitators more time to become familiar and comfortable with the content and training techniques/activities
- Consider piloting or testing curricula with community members to assess if the material resonates
 - Have community members review survey questions for understanding/comprehension
- Continue debrief sessions for peer learning and exchange

Parent Curriculum Implementation Recommendations

- Provide an orientation prior to any training to ground participants and prepare for expectations – content and technology
- Allow for more time with each module
 - Allowing for deeper discussion and ensuring common understandings of curriculum topics
 - Allow for space for difficult conversations – group readiness to move forward
- Allow for time to develop rapport and to build trust with participants
 - This may allow for deeper understanding and discussion
 - Allow participants time to build rapport with one another in order to increase feelings of connectedness and validation
- Ensure adequate staff time/allocation to support the implementation of the curriculum and its associated tasks



- Consider participant literacy – use visuals and other ways to gauge learning (not just reading and writing tools such as a survey)
- Consider technology needs
 - Available internet
 - Available device to connect and participate
 - Technology comfort to navigate and complete surveys
- Keep small group size (10-12, allowing for diverse perspectives yet manageable)

- Be prepared for limited to mixed changes in values and behaviors
- Continue to offer this due to interest and need to create space for dialogue on these important topics
- Continue to focus on growth of the individual participant (e.g. focus on the parent not the child in the training content)

Youth Curriculum Recommendations

- Rearrange the modules to start with the Cultural Iceberg, this was perceived as a good grounding for the curriculum
- Communicate examples on a spectrum and not as binary, e.g. good or bad
- More explicitly connect the curriculum to domestic violence prevention
 - Integrate DV prevention through related concepts and themes such as healthy relationships, communication, gender equity, cultural norms, etc.
- Consider participant groupings (experience, age, background, etc.) to create more common groups
 - Focus on youth ages 15-18 and have youth groupings be closer in age range, e.g. 15/16 or 17/18
- Continue to debrief sessions with the lead trainer and add weekly check-ins between co-facilitators to plan for training sessions

Youth Curriculum Implementation Recommendations

- Keep Trello, however, better organize versions of materials, with only the latest and most updated materials centralized, archive older versions
- Recruit during the school year if possible
 - Especially among youth with existing relationships through other programs or services
- Add and implement an orientation session to ground youth and their parents on content and expectations



- Have ongoing communication with parents fostering trust building and possibly support youth engagement
- Recommend focusing on older high school aged students, as content is more age/stage developmentally appropriate for these youth
- Make considerations in communicating content based on participant demographics (immigration experience, family time in US, etc.)
- Recruit youth from existing programs, where relationships and trust have already been established
 - Curriculum content is sensitive and having some foundational relationship will help for richer discussion sessions
- Keep group size small (10-12, allowing for diverse perspectives yet manageable)
- Conduct in-person, if possible
- Consider participant technology needs
 - Stable internet access
 - A device to log-into Zoom sessions
 - Knowledge to navigate Zoom and electronic surveys

- Protocols to address mental health supports, in case participants are triggered
- Recognizing the importance of the relational aspect to this work
 - Needing to build relationships and trust with participants
- Allow for more time
 - For facilitators to learn and get comfortable with the content
 - To foster relationships with participants
 - To engage in dialogue with participants
 - To allow participants to sit with the information and content and process understandings and feelings

In addition to the lessons learned around the curricula content and its implementation, organizational readiness and capacity for participant recruitment should be considered to allow for the greatest possible success in promoting transformation among individuals.

Organizational Readiness/Capacity

In reviewing organizational readiness to participate in the pilot, all partner agencies expressed interest in developing and supporting the implementation of the pilot. This commitment included reviewing training materials, recruiting facilitators and supporting facilitators to be successful in outreach and recruitment, and curricula implementation. However, facilitators had varied understandings of the goal of the pilot. This was a result of having different roles within the parent organization, and depending on the role, an individual may have had more information or understanding about the purpose and goal of the pilot. It was recommended that trainers be trained in the curricula and domestic violence and to have experience with case management and facilitating groups, to better connect to the content. Additionally the professional background of the facilitators were influential to their approach and experience with this pilot. While being a behavioral therapist could be helpful, it was cautioned that therapy techniques not

be brought into the sessions, as these are not intended to be therapy sessions or solution driven sessions. The group environment was meant to be focus-group in nature with elements of peer learning and support, allowing participants to explore curriculum themes without feeling a need to diagnose or fix any situations. The space was intended to be nonjudgmental without noting anything as right or wrong, but really focusing on skills and knowledge building. As a result, identifying appropriate staff was key. Having individuals with experience working with adults and/or youth from the respective community, being bilingual and bicultural, connected to the cultural values, norms and language of the community and comfort with the philosophy of the training curricula was important. For instance, having facilitators with experience working with youth was noted as important; the knowledge and experience in other spaces, helped to inform facilitators engagement with the youth and helped them with experiences and resources they had from prior engagements (such as how to talk with youth and put their own spin on things, bringing in activities that better suit the group) that could be applied to these sessions.

Time was identified as a key element for successful implementation. Facilitators noted the importance of allocating appropriate time for the identified staff to be able to engage in and to implement the curriculum as a primary task. Appropriate staff were identified in the pilot; however many were pulled in competing directions with other key roles within the organization. Additionally, facilitators noted that staff not have administrative or clinician roles. They believed that the workload of these positions would not match well with the facilitator needs; in fact stating that it could be overwhelming. Specifically, while clinicians have appropriate professional training and experience, it was noted that they may have tendencies to want to treat participants and this strays from the intent of the curricula and the format, which is not therapeutic. Facilitators also noted needing more time to translate and review the curriculum content and to tailor and adapt content culturally to make it resonate with participants. Facilitators recommended continuing with two facilitators, including the ongoing debrief and technical support, and tailoring sessions.

Facilitators implemented the same content, however there were different approaches in facilitating the support group sessions as well as different observations and recommendations for improving the curriculum and implementation process. Participant demographics, including the community they represented, age, gender, and immigration experience were also contributing factors to the varied implementation and facilitation styles of facilitators. Facilitators highly recommended more time, specifically longer sessions with small groups to allow for deeper discussions about the content. Facilitators felt that participants needed more time to sit with the training content and to be able to come back to discuss further, if needed, especially among parents. The relational aspect of the work was key, allowing facilitators to build trust and to build space for the discussions. Longer sessions with participants will also support this relationship building component. For youth, it was especially helpful to have small breakout rooms, again this echoes the need for more than one facilitator. Lastly, it was recommended that different techniques and media be used for sessions. Videos, Power Points, pictures, arts and crafts were suggested as media to communicate session objectives. Role playing was noted as being especially difficult among parent participants, so considerations should be made around cultural and age/generational experience with various proposed activities. Lastly, despite these many opportunities for changes and improvements, facilitators and participants noted that the curricula provided useful tools to foster discussion about healthy relationships and it offered individuals language and space to have introspection to improve the way in which they care for themselves and others.

Recommended criteria for organizational participation

- Organizational commitment (from leadership) to the curriculum content, implementation and its intended outcomes
- Identifying at least 2 staff who have experience working with parents and/or youth, case management and group facilitation (in-person and virtual)
 - Bilingual and bicultural
 - Connected to the cultural values, norms and language of the community
- Ability to translate training content
- Cultural knowledge and comfort to discuss appropriateness of language and activities
- An ability to outreach and recruit participants, beyond a convenience sample, finding more like participants to group together
- Staff knowledge and comfort with technology
 - Use and troubleshooting to support participants
 - Comfort with different mediums to share content (e.g. videos, Power Points, pictures, arts and crafts, etc.)
- Time
 - Dedicated time to support the curriculum design, implementation and its associated tasks
 - At least one full time dedicated staff person to support
- Physical space for conducting the sessions via Zoom and/or in-person
- Growth mindset – being open to learning, re-learning, reflecting on ideas

Participation Selection Criteria

For the pilot, parent and youth participants were conveniently recruited through the partner organizations. Parents were recruited from the four Asian American communities, based on individuals who had at least one child under 18 years of age living in the home. Lessons learned from facilitators led to the following recommendations for parent selection criteria:

- Identify parents with young kids around the same age or recruit parents with children in similar age groups to be grouped together for the training sessions
- Identify parents who are engaged in, and curious about their child/children's emotional well being and growth
- Screen and interview participants based on knowledge of the topics, to gather some common baseline of participants, if possible

- Ability to participate – commitment and time
- Consider participant needs – such as safe space to participate, technology needs, literacy levels
- Consider possible incentives to help with participant engagement and retention (e.g. an iPad to address technology barriers or gift cards to honor their participation time)
- Growth mindset – being open to learning, re-learning, reflecting on ideas

Lastly, it was noted repeatedly, that all those who participate, need to be open to new ideas and considerations for reflecting on their own experiences to learn and change future ideas and behaviors.

For the pilot, youth were recruited who were 14-18 years of age living at home with an adult ally (parent, caretaker, grandparent or relative). Facilitators recommended that the age range for participants be narrowed and to screen and interview participants based on knowledge of the topics to gather a group with a common baseline of knowledge. In addition to the criteria, noted previously, it was noted that participants who are younger (younger than 14 years of age and in junior high school or lower grades) may find the training content more challenging. Specifically, recommendations were to engage youth ages 15-18 years, as content may be more age appropriate. Additionally, it is this age at which there is an increased onset of relationship violence, child abuse and crime among adolescents,¹⁵ building on an opportune time to engage, learn and shape future attitudes and behaviors.

As has been shared, the curricula appeared to resonate with and have value for parent and youth participants. The content itself was relevant, however there were recommendations made to refine and strengthen it, making the curricula even more approachable. Specifically the connection to domestic violence reduction and prevention should be made more explicit, as participants are comfortable discussing this topic. It was also overwhelmingly recommended that an overview orientation should be provided. Translating is only the first step in culturally adapting content to train with participants and may be an ongoing learning and refinement process.



Sessions should continue with two co-facilitators with experience facilitating groups (in-person and virtual), with the ability to triage anyone triggered by the content. Smaller groups, with some common experiences, may allow for deeper understanding and discussion about training topics. Very intentional participant recruitment may yield deeper and richer engagement and dialogue opportunities. Considering the age of participants, especially among youth, may impact opportunities for deeper understanding and discussion leading to increased changes in attitudes and behaviors. When possible, conducting sessions in-person may be more ideal. If the setting is virtual, ensure that technology needs of participants are met prior to the first training session. Despite challenges in delivering the curriculum, the content is timely and there is community interest in having space to discuss these topics. This acknowledgment suggests that the implementation of the curricula should continue and be considered for replication in additional Asian American communities. Lastly, the goal to revise and implement is to make the curriculum even more accessible to additional community members from the pilot communities and to share this content with other diverse Asian American communities, training more facilitators and further disseminating the rich content developed in *PEACE for Parenting* and *Know Your Roots*.



Conclusion

This pilot project was developed in response to a need to address diverse contributing factors in heterogeneous Asian American communities to address domestic violence prevention and reduction. Leadership from seven key community-based organizations in Los Angeles County came together to share their knowledge and expertise in offering programs and services to the Cambodian, Chinese, Korean and South Asian communities to design a parent and youth curriculum to increase knowledge around healthy relationships, gender equity and empathy.

Learnings from the pilot exemplify the importance of language and cultural considerations, contributed by diverse partners and facilitators, that enrich the curricula content and make the delivery relatable to diverse Asian American communities.

The collaborative aimed to:

- Promote more open discussion about intimate relationships and domestic violence.
- Identify and train community stakeholders to integrate culturally specific terms and concepts in training materials and curricula.
- Develop a prevention model that values the shared experiences and cultural norms of individual communities.
- Train group facilitators to conduct parenting and youth groups to prevent domestic violence, utilizing community facilitators as models on how to engage and communicate.
- Implement a curriculum that promotes gender equity and frames the importance of empathetic practices.
- Facilitate a support group model that allows participants to engage with curricula in a supportive and judgment free environment.

The result was a parent curriculum developed in English that was then translated into Khmer, Mandarin, Korean and Hindi, and a youth curriculum that was developed in English that embraced concepts of nonviolence and social justice, with a focus on gender equity and empathy. With these two curricula, addressing a two-generation solution, the *PEACE for Parenting* and *Know Your Roots* curricula supported language and skills building among parents and youth which increased, overall, awareness and understanding of empathetic and gender equity-oriented attitudes and practices. The survey data showed that most participants had positive shifts in knowledge and understanding with reported skills developed and put into practice that may influence less harm and more healthy familial and intimate relationships.

The focus group data highlighted that the CPAF led training and debrief sessions prepared community-based staff and volunteers to deliver the prevention curricula. The training and on-going peer learning and support enriched the facilitator skills for curricula delivery. Identifying specific criteria for facilitator and participant recruitment may enhance desired improvements for those exposed to the curricula. Facilitators critically reviewed and reflected on their experiences to provide recommendations that can refine and strengthen the curricula, and this may inform processes to more effectively deliver the curricula with other parents and youth in diverse Asian American communities. Learnings from the pilot exemplify the importance of language and cultural considerations, contributed by diverse partners and facilitators, that enrich the curricula content and make the delivery relatable to diverse Asian American communities. The pilot showed that the curricula stimulated awareness and built knowledge around gender equity and empathy, providing skills for introspection and reflection to inform attitudes and behaviors around healthy familial and intimate relationships.

AAPI Equity Alliance and its partners came together to contribute to the design and implementation of broad scale approaches around relationship factors, along the life course framework, developing a two-generation *PEACE for Parenting* and *Know Your Roots* curricula. The cultural expertise and access to community members allowed for the piloting of the nonviolent

Ultimately, the pilot demonstrated that one does not have to stop learning about new and different ways while holding cultural values.

parenting and social justice oriented curricula to be implemented in the Cambodian, Chinese, Korean, and South Asian communities. The curricula initiated the journey towards nonviolence through improved communication and empathy for pilot participants. From the learnings in this pilot it is recommended that this curricula be replicated for other communities and expanded into different geographic locales. This core content should be considered, to address relationship factors, to help reduce the chances that a person will engage in abuse toward intimate partners or family members. Replication with organizational community partners who have and can identify staff with experience working with adults and/or youth from the respective community/ties, are bilingual and bicultural, are connected to the cultural values, norms and language of the community/ties, and have comfort training the philosophy of the curricula, will be key in ensuring successful delivery of the curricula. Not only will replication further disseminate the curricula, it may help to shape a new norm around domestic violence in Asian American communities, creating space to better reduce and prevent domestic violence. While it is important to note that nonviolent, gender equitable, and empathetic practices are part of a life learning journey, this curricula can help to start those important conversations now to foster learning and skills building towards healthy relationships. Ultimately, the pilot demonstrated that one does not have to stop learning about new and different ways while holding cultural values.

To view the first report and learn more information about the Blue Shield of California Foundation and Domestic Violence Prevention Project, please visit:

<https://bit.ly/BSFDVPPR>



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Endnotes

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⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Principles and Practices of Parenting with Nonviolence: A Compassionate Guide to Caring for Younger Human Beings*, Beaglehole R and Pesenti K. Accessed at <http://ruthbeaglehole.com/the-guide/> on May 19, 2022

¹¹ Cultural freeze - Cultural freeze is when an Immigrant (individual/ community) “gets stuck” in their view/perception of norms (religious, cultural, etc.), there is an illusion that culture is universal, and it remains frozen to the specific time period they left their home country. It often is not aligned with contemporary/current norms and values of the country they emigrated from.

¹² 6 Guiding Principles to a Trauma Informed Approach, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention accessed at https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/infographics/6_principles_trauma_info.htm on May 19, 2022.

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¹⁴ *Breaking the Cycle: A Life Course Framework for Preventing Domestic Violence*, Blue Shield of California Foundation, 2019.



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