



Lotus Project

CENTER FOR TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE AND PREVENTION FOR ASIAN
AMERICAN AND ASIAN IMMIGRANT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES





The Lotus Project is funded by the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Lotus Project is a collaboration between the Public Health Institute (PHI) and Richmond Area Multi-Services (RAMS) that provides technical assistance, such as workshops, webinars, and consultations, to mental health service providers, clinicians, community health workers, and school staff who work with Asian American & Asian Immigrant (AAAI) children and families affected by traumatic events and stress. We aim to reduce immediate distress from exposure to traumatic events by providing technical assistance and resources regarding the implementation of culturally competent and evidence-based interventions and promising practices.

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Who we are



Public Health Institute (PHI) is a non-profit organization in Oakland, California. For more than 55 years, PHI has accelerated the impact of public health. PHI and its programs improve health, equity and wellness by discovering new research, strengthening key partnerships and programs, and advancing sound public health policies. PHI's hundreds of programs have impacted millions of people, creating an architecture that will continue to impact communities for generations to come.

PHI builds the capacity of diverse public health and healthcare leaders, in the U.S. and globally. PHI strengthens the work of public health and builds community power through three key roles: as a fiscal sponsor, as a thought leader and as a partner.



Richmond Area Multi-Services, Inc. (RAMS) provides and advocates for mental health and wellness services that are centered in clients, community and culture, with expertise in serving Asian and Pacific Islander Americans. Since 1974, the agency has supported those who have the least resources and opportunities to achieve their highest potential. We do this by providing integrated services that include counseling, job training, capacity building for partner organizations and advanced training of mental health professionals. Annually, RAMS provides clinical services to 16,000+ children, youth and adults in 30+ languages across San Francisco and Alameda counties. The agency is recognized for and has received awards for culturally competent service delivery, clinical training, and community leadership. RAMS was named 2022 California Nonprofit of the Year for Assembly District 19 Assembly.

The Lotus Project is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (Grant No.: SM085087; Project Director, Tooru Nemoto, Ph.D., PHI).

Why the Lotus Project?

The issues of trauma-informed care and prevention for AAPI children have been neglected and a large number of AAPI have been suffering from traumatic experiences because SAMHSA's EBPs do not address cultural issues specific to AAPI and very few service agencies are equipped to efficiently provide services to AAPI.

Since 2016, as a NCTSI Category III Center, we have been implementing the IWAY (Improving the Well-being for Asian Youth) project, providing culturally appropriate trauma-informed care and prevention for AAPI children in Alameda County, California. [e.g., in the past 4-year project period, 339 outreach activities, 49,686 youth contacts (4,754 direct contacts and 44,932 through online), 25 presentations at high/middle schools, 56 children completing professional counseling, 102 children enrolling in youth empowerment activities, 377 participants in community events/forums, and 7 CBOs established MOUs; see [IWAY website](#).

Based on our experience and knowledge gained through IWAY, the Lotus project will respond to compelling needs for training and education on early intervention, mental health promotion, and prevention of long-term consequences of childhood trauma in AAPI communities. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, AAPI have been exposed to violence and harassment and many are suffering from the trauma; however, mental health issues are often stigmatized and specific needs for AAPI children have been neglected. There is a pervasive lack of access to and a low utilization of mental health care among AAPI. Despite the rapid growth of AAPI populations and compelling needs for culturally competent trauma-informed care and prevention services, very few agencies and a limited number of workforce/clinicians are able to provide comprehensive trauma-informed services for AAPI children. The Lotus project will address compelling service needs and fill large gaps in the availability of trauma informed care for AAPI children and families.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tooru Nemoto'.

—Tooru Nemoto, PhD
Project Director and Founder of HIPUP

What we do



ADVOCACY

Our center advocates for and promotes policy changes to increase cultural competency in providing trauma-informed care and prevention for AAPI children and families. We reach out to local and state governments where a large number of AAPI reside, as well as identify cities, counties, and states with a high incidence of mental health problems and hate incidents targeting Asians due to the pandemic, in order to suggest program implementation and policy changes to improve trauma-informed care and prevention for AAPI.

ONLINE & IN-PERSON TRAININGS

Our center provides workshops and webinars about trauma-focused approaches and services for use in child mental health clinics, schools, child welfare, and juvenile justice settings, and other service areas. These trainings are developed based on wide-scale dissemination and implementation of effective, evidence-based treatment and service approaches in child trauma that are specific to AAPI populations. We also provide individual consultations to service providers, educators, and other professionals.

“Helpful to hear real anecdotes about working with Asian or Asian American clients. Clinicians had good suggestions about how to best support clients. I liked hearing from a few different folks instead of just one panelist. All were excellent!”

—MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL AT TRAINING





“As a speaker/trainer, I am thrilled to notice that there are so many professionals serving the AAI population across the country and eager to develop more. I am humbled as a speaker while witnessing how the awareness and discussion of AAI healing is growing.”

— CRUZ CHAN, M.A., LMFT, RDT

NETWORK BUILDING

Our center serves as a growing network and community of service providers, school teachers and counselors, public officers of child welfare and public health departments, behavioral health students, and researchers for trauma-informed care and prevention for AAI children and families. We collaborate with network members and organizations to develop and disseminate mental health resources and training material for webinars and workshops.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Our center develops and distributes various resources on for the service providers addressing the needs in the AAI communities (e.g., fact sheets training materials, educational videos, etc.)

CONSULTATION

Our center provides individual consultation to service providers, educators, and other professionals who provide services to the AAI youth and their families.

Meet our team

THE LOTUS PROJECT



Tooru Nemoto, Ph.D., *Principal Investigator & Research Project Director*

Dr. Tooru Nemoto is Research Program Director at the Public Health Institute (PHI), Oakland, CA. Before joining PHI, Dr. Nemoto was Associate Professor, Department of Medicine, University of California San Francisco (UCSF). He has been mainly engaging in mental health promotion for Asian and Pacific Islanders, as well as substance abuse and HIV prevention studies and service projects for underserved and stigmatized populations, such as transgender and gender nonbinary people, men who have sex with men (MSM), and sex workers in the U.S. and Asian countries, such as Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Malaysia. He has been awarded a number of grants and service contracts from NIH, SAMHSA, CDC, HRSA, and private foundations. As Project Director, he recently completed a 5-year SAMHSA-funded project providing trauma-informed care and prevention services targeting Asian youths in Alameda County. He co-authored a number of research papers in the field of substance abuse and HIV prevention and health promotion for underserved sexual, gender, and racial minority groups in peer-reviewed journals.

Mariko Iwamoto, M.A., *Project Coordinator*

Mariko has a Master's degree in social psychology and oversees multiple community-based projects in the field of HIV, substance abuse, and mental health prevention/ intervention targeting ethnic and gender minorities in the U.S. and Asian countries. Her background also includes vital social services experiences in the Asian community. She had volunteered and worked at the local organizations for many years, advocating for Asian victims of domestic violence and Japanese immigrant seniors. Working for the Asian and underserved communities to promote their health and well-being has been her passion.

Angela Tang, MSW, LCSW, *Project Coordinator (RAMS)*

Angela Tang is the Chief Executive Officer of Richmond Area Multi-Services, Inc. (RAMS), which is a subcontractor under Public Health Institute for The Lotus Project. In addition, Ms. Tang is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, has served as a Clinical Assistant Professor at the Smith College School for Social Work (honorary) and a Program Advisor for Boston University School of Social Work. She was also on the founding Board of Directors for Friends of Roots, a volunteer-run genealogy organization that promotes an awareness of the Chinese American identity. A San Francisco native, Ms. Tang earned her Bachelor of Social Work degree at SF State University and received her Master of Science in Social Work from Columbia University. Her areas of interest include macro-level, systems, and strengths-based theories & practices; organizational development; and program evaluation.



Cruz Chan, M.A., LMFT, RDT, Trainer

A Cantonese and Mandarin-speaking clinician, Cruz graduated from California Institute of Integral Studies (San Francisco), with a Masters of Arts in Counseling Psychology with a specialization in Drama Therapy. Cruz is the Clinical Manager for RAMS Healing for Asians program, which provides trauma informed mental health services to limited English speaking Asian victims of crime. This RAMS program is part of San Francisco's multi-system, initial answer and collaborative solution to the "Anti-Asian Hate". Cruz is a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist as well as a Registered Drama Therapist. Cruz's background also includes providing mental health services to children, youth, families and adults at RAMS outpatient and school-based programs.

Ellen Chang, B.A., Project Assistant

Ellen is a second generation Taiwanese American and helps to develop and disseminate the project website, resources, webinars/workshops, and support project advocacy interns and high school volunteers as the project assistant. Ellen obtained a Bachelor's of Arts in Cognitive Science and a minor in Global Public Health at UC Berkeley in 2020 and is currently pursuing an MSW/MPH dual degree at UC Berkeley to strengthen her ability to better support the AAPI community in reducing mental health disparities, increase culturally sensitive mental health programs, and work towards the long-term healing and empowerment of these communities.

Min Zheng, B.S., Research Assistant II

As an immigrant herself, Min is eager to forge connections within the Asian American and Asian Immigrant (AAAI) communities. In her role as a Research Assistant at PHI, she channels her efforts to address the mental health needs prevalent in the community. Min earned her Bachelor of Science in Psychology with a concentration in Human Factors from USC East Bay in 2022. As a member of the Lotus Team, Min often works with field experts to continue improving her grasp of effective strategies to support the mental health of AAAI populations. With a steadfast commitment to her community, Min aims to make a meaningful impact by promoting mental health awareness and hopes to contribute to building a healthier, more resilient future for these communities.

Keye Xu, Ph.D., Research Associate IV

As a Research Associate, Keye is dedicated to bridging evidence-based programs and rigorous psychological research with culturally-relevant mental health practices to better support children and families in AAPI and immigrant communities. She gained her Ph.D degree in Education (human development and psychology focus) from University of California, Los Angeles, with her dissertation exploring the cultural nuances of parenting among Chinese American mothers.

Meet our Boards

LOTUS PROJECT COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD (CAB)

Mory Chhom, *Richmond Area Multi-Services (RAMS)*

Laura Coelho, *Center for Empowering Refugees & Immigrants (CERI)*

Vincent Crisostomo, *San Francisco AIDs Foundation (SFAF)*

Sangita Gautam, *Center for Empowering Refugees & Immigrants (CERI)*

Emilie Laik, *DaVita Dialysis*

Sonya Mital, *Narika*

Pysay Phinith, *Korean Community Center of the Easy Bay (KCCEB)*

Kimberly Wong, *Past program youth*

Gulshan Yusufzai, *Muslim American Society-Social Services Foundation (MAS-SSF)*

“I am grateful that Lotus Project has created space with intentionality and inclusion of voices and insights from providers serving to achieve mental wellness among some of the most marginalized Asian populations. The Lotus Project is a valuable resource to many of us who prioritize serving communities with competence in culture and language while maintaining high quality services.”



— MORY CHHOM, RICHMOND AREA MULTI-SERVICES (RAMS)

“To be part of the Lotus Project Board, working collectively to address the often-neglected traumas among the Asian American community, has been a privilege. The positive feedback I’ve received about the work of the Lotus team has buoyed and challenged me—I’m proud of we’ve accomplished.”



— DOROTHY CHIN, PH.D., UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

LOTUS PROJECT PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY BOARD (PAB)

Dorothy Chin, Ph.D., *University of California, Los Angeles*

Diana Chu, M.A., LMFT, RDT

Julian Chun-Chung Chow, Ph.D., *University of California, Berkeley*

Jun-chih Gisela Lin, Ph.D., *American Board of Professional Psychology*

Velma Kameoka, Ph.D., *University of Hawaii*

Don Operario, Ph.D., *Brown University*

Frank Y. Wong, Ph.D., *Florida State University, Tallahassee*



“I have witnessed firsthand the significant difference this project makes in the lives of Asian American & Asian Immigrant children and families, providing providers and clinicians with culturally attuned, trauma-informed care and support. The commitment and positive change fostered by the Lotus Project are truly inspiring.”

— DIANA CHU, M.A., LMFT, RDT

Our Work: 2022–2023

WEBINARS

Anti-Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) hate has played a role in the lives of those who identify as a part of the AAPI community since the 1800s in the United States (US).

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, acts of prejudice, hatred, and violence targeting members of the AAPI community have drastically risen, both in the US and around the globe. Racial stress and trauma can be caused by direct or indirect exposures to racism throughout one's lifetime and influenced by an accumulation of unavoidable exposures to racism across generations, communities, and history. Stress incurred by race-based hate and violence can have serious impacts on minoritized children and families, including but not limited to, increased risk for depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Racial Trauma Among Asian American & Asian Immigrant Communities Webinar Series

To bring more awareness to the issue of anti-Asian hate, its impacts on the mental health of AAPI children and families, and how service providers can better support these communities, the Lotus Project hosted a **3-part webinar series** dedicated to these topics.

1. Historical Context & Mental Health Impacts

February 1, 2023

Webinar 1, with over 400 attendees, was moderated by Dr. Dorothy Chin and explored important concepts such as the Yellow Peril, the Model Minority Myth, and racial triangulation. Featured speakers addressed the impacts of these concepts and stereotypes within a historical context and in the present day. Speakers also discussed the mental health impacts of racism and trauma on AAPI communities, including issues of stigma and common inner voices. The webinar concluded with a fruitful panel discussion and audience Q&A.



PAST SPEAKERS AND TRAINERS

Qais Alemi, PhD, MPH, MBA

Andrea Chan, Psy.D

Cruz Chan, M.A., LMFT, RDT

Christine Chang, PhD

Ellen Chang, MSW/MPH Candidate

Diana Chu, MFT, RDT/BCT

Caroline Giroux, M.D

Hyeouk “Chris” Hahm, Ph.D., LCSW

Brandi Hawk, PhD

Mohammad Sediq Hazratzai, MD, MPH

Helen Hsu, Psy. D.

Russell M. Jeung, PhD

Andrew Wooyoung Kim, PhD

Khoban Kochai, MPH

Marius P. Koga, MD, MPH, FRSPH

Patrick Marius Koga, MD, MPH, FRSPH

Soo Jin Lee, LMFT

Anne Lew, M.S., AMFT

Yarou Ou

Omar Reda, MD

Andres Felipe Sciolla, M.D

Sonnara Sen, ASW

Sherry C. Wang, PhD

Michele Woo, Psy.D

Christina Yu, LCSW

Gulshan Yusufzai

2. Implications for Clinical Practice

April 25, 2023

Webinar 2 took a deeper dive into the impact of COVID-19 anti-Asian discrimination on Asian Americans & Asian immigrants (AAAI), how to support AAAI youth in school settings, and clinical considerations when working with AAAI clients in therapy. The webinar concluded with a meaningful panel discussion and audience Q&A about topics including changes in clinical symptoms and mental health concerns of AAAI clients during COVID-19, how to notice these changes, how a clinician’s own Asian background affects how they support AAAI clients, drama therapy, and more.

3. Community Programs in Action

August 16, 2023

In Webinar 3, our last webinar of this series, professionals with experiences implementing and leading community programs specifically addressing the impacts of anti-Asian hate on AAAI communities presented on culturally competent and trauma-informed community-based programs that have been successfully implemented to support AAAI children, youth, and families who have experienced any form of racial discrimination, stress and trauma.



From Crisis to Care: Trauma-Informed Treatment Strategies for Supporting Afghan Refugees World Refugee Day Webinar

June 21, 2023

Following our first in-person workshop in November 2022, the Lotus Project commemorated World Refugee Day through our webinar, “From Crisis to Care: Trauma-Informed Treatment Strategies for Supporting Afghan Refugees”.

In this webinar, we dived into the unique challenges faced by Afghan refugees and the necessity for trauma-informed care in addressing their mental health needs. Our speakers and panelists featured leading experts in the fields of refugee health, psychiatry, and psychology. Their insights offered a comprehensive perspective on trauma-informed care tailored to the unique needs of Afghan refugees.



WORKSHOPS

Sehat wa Salamati (Health & Wellness): Addressing Child Trauma In Afghan Refugee Families Workshop

November 1, 2022

The Lotus Project launched our first in-person workshop in collaboration with MAS-Social Services Foundation and UC Davis with over 60 attendees. The workshop took place at the UC Davis Health School of Medicine Education building and featured presentations and discussions with leading experts in the field of mental health and trauma treatment of children and families of Afghan refugees. Topics covered included the historical context of Afghan refugees and trauma, clinical manifestations, strengths and resilience, sharing of lived experiences, and culture-informed prevention and treatment strategies!

Addressing Barriers & Building Bridges Workshop: Supporting Asian American & Asian Immigrant (AAAI) Communities in Healing from Racial Trauma

May 18, 2023

The Lotus Project hosted our second in-person workshop on May 18th at the San Francisco State Building! It was a memorable day of learning, networking, and discussion. Experts in the field of AAAI/AAPI mental health joined us to speak on important topics including the historical context of anti-Asian discrimination in the states, barriers to mental health access in AAAI communities, culturally-informed clinical practices for AAAI mental health, and building healthy community alliances. Workshop attendees had the opportunity to engage with presenters through Q&A's after each session along with each other through networking discussion groups.



YOUTH ADVOCACY INTERNS

Mental Health Blog Project

The goal of the Lotus Project Youth Mental Health Blog Project was to provide a platform to amplify AAAI youth voices, stories, and experiences. This project was spearheaded by our two Youth Advocacy Interns, who assembled a team of 6 passionate writers to be part of the Youth Mental Health Blog Project. They met on Zoom every week to brainstorm, plan, discuss, and write about mental health issues in the AAPI community. Responding to the rise in hate crimes against the AAAI community, the team decided to center their blogs around the theme of anti-Asian hate.

WHIAANHPI Mental Health Summit

On July 20, 2023, our two high school youth advocacy interns, Wesley and Jessica, spoke at the White House Initiative AANHPI Mental Health Summit in Washington DC. Jessica spoke about her lived experiences with anti-Asian hate and discrimination on the first panel discussion of the day, "The Impact of Hate Crimes, Violence, Racism and Microaggressions on Mental Health: Harnessing Collective and Cultural Strengths". Wesley spoke about his lived experiences with the school mental health system in the second panel discussion, "Beyond Stigma: Expanding Access, Integrating Care". By stepping up to take on this opportunity to speak about their own stories, Jessica and Wesley were able to bring an incredibly valuable youth perspective and voice to the summit and to the discussions that took place that day.

The Advocacy Youth Internship will continue under IWAY2 (Improving the Wellness of Asian Youth).

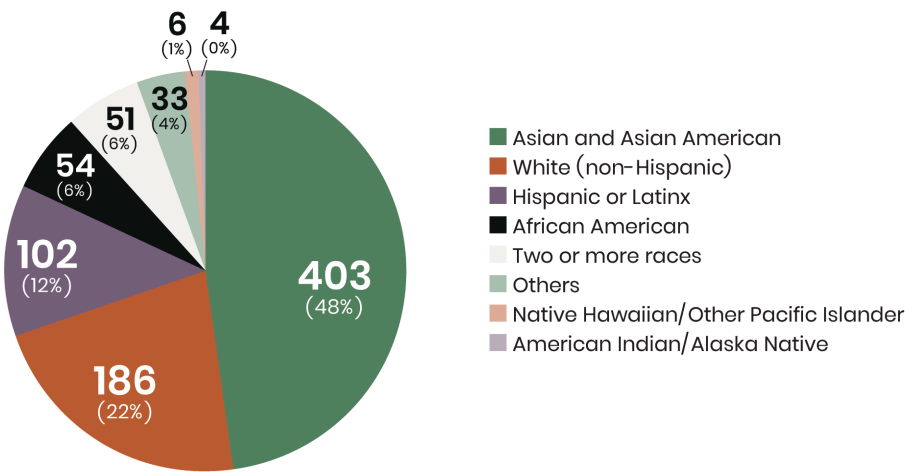


BY THE NUMBERS

In FY2, we conducted a total of 4 webinars and 2 in-person workshops. A total of 1,758 people registered. Among these registrants, nearly half of them (48%, n=870) attended our online or/and in-person training/s.

Demographics of attendees (webinars, workshops)

RACE (N=839)

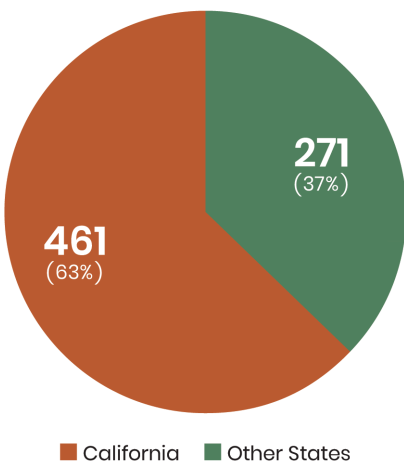


“Highlighting that for this population, the journey for mental wellness is a marathon that may take many months to even start was an important takeaway for me.”

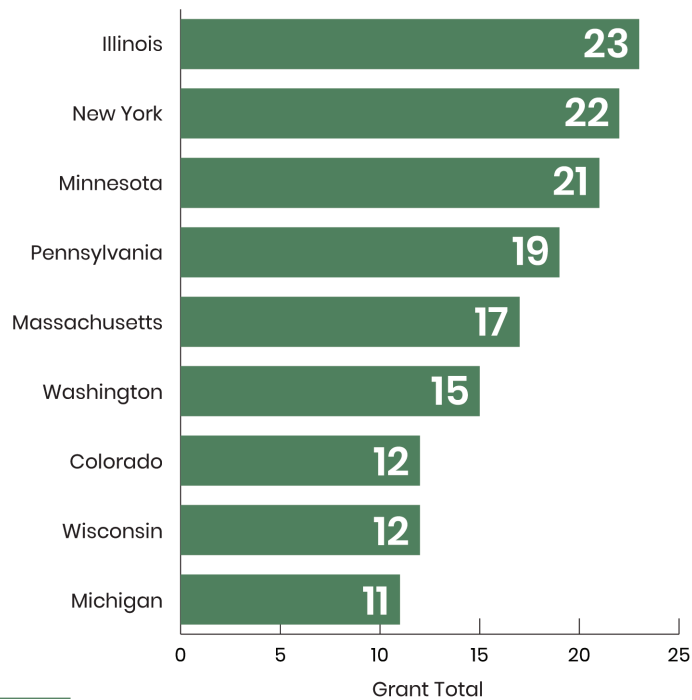
—ATTENDEE

TOTAL NUMBER OF LOTUS PROJECT NETWORK MEMBERS: 1,926

RESIDENCY (N=732)



RESIDENCY—OTHER STATES

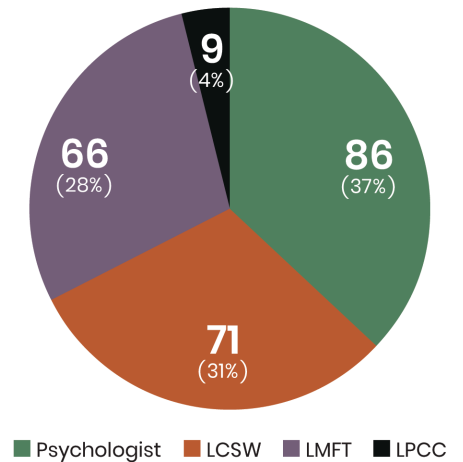


Mental Health Professionals Trained

Out of the total 870 attendees, 54% indicated that they were working in the mental health-related workforce (e.g., Mental Health Coordinator, Mental Health Specialist, Clinical Psychologist, Psychiatric Social Worker, etc.).

Of the group, 232 attendees indicated their intent to earn continuing education units upon joining our training. Their professional training distribution is shown at the right.

PROFESSIONALS ACCREDITED BY TRAININGS



“I absolutely loved this webinar. Thank you so much to everyone who spoke for sharing your expertise, and personal stories. I learned so much and it made a huge impact on me.”

—MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL AT TRAINING

Evaluation

Overall, participants expressed satisfaction with the educational experience, the method of instructional delivery, the virtual/physical environment, the qualifications of speakers, and the accessibility of the facilities. Additionally, attendees reported learning something valuable from the program.

Distribution of Mental Health Awareness Messages

We have reached over 7,000 people through the dissemination of mental health awareness messages in FY2.



690

people by Instagram



1,579

people by listserv



1,168

people by YouTube



4,025

website views

“I really enjoyed the trauma-informed training and how it tied to the refugee experience.”

—MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

Resources & How to Get Involved

In collaboration with the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), forming the NCTSN AAPI Resource Collective, the Lotus Project developed and published two resources on historical trauma in AAPI communities and on having tough conversations about anti-AAPI hate with children.



Rise of Anti-Asian American and Pacific Islander Hate: Brief on Historical Trauma in AAPI Communities and How We Got Here

This resource highlights the importance of acknowledging historical trauma and its impacts by providing a brief overview of key historical events that the AAPI community has experienced that continue to impact the community to this day.



Talking with Youth about Anti-Asian American and Pacific Islander Hate

This AAPI and age-specific resource discusses how anti-AAPI hate can impact children and youth and how to best support and talk to them about anti-AAPI hate, race, and ethnicity.



**FOR CONSULTATIONS,
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Instagram
[www.instagram.com/
thelotus.proj/](https://www.instagram.com/thelotusproj/)

IWAY2 website
iway2project.org

The Future

The Lotus Project plans to continue expanding our webinars, workshops, and resources to other topics, populations, and locations.

In the upcoming year, the project is addressing the topic of intergenerational trauma in AAPI communities in a new webinar series. This series will focus on the impacts of intergenerational trauma on different AAPI communities and how mental health professionals and others can better support families in their healing. Future webinar topics will also address mental health and trauma-related issues in LGBTQIA+ AAPI communities as well as in other specific Asian ethnic groups.

The Lotus Project also plans to host in-person workshops in Atlanta, Georgia and Hawaii in collaboration with local community partners and organizations to address mental health needs and trauma-related issues specific to AAPI communities in these areas.

Lastly, we continue to collaborate with partners within NCTSN to develop resources to support mental health & trauma-related issues in AAPI communities.



“My biggest takeaway from this project is to know that I am not alone. Clinical work sometimes can be isolating. The Lotus Project helps me to see the collective effort to decolonize mental health practices for Asian immigrants and Asian Americans. I am grateful to be in a community that focuses on supporting AAPI children, youth, and families in the process of healing from racial trauma and cultural burdens.”

—CHRISTINE CHANG, PHD

