



# Barriers to Accessing Mental Health

## Services in the AAI community:

## Youths and Families

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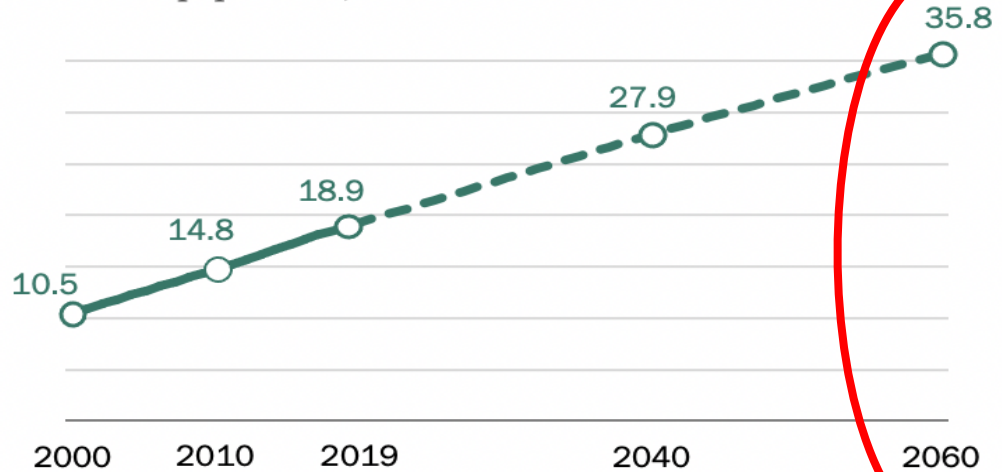


AA projected  
to be the  
**fastest growing**  
minority group

**1 in 10** children  
in US forecast to be  
Asian

**... and their population is projected to pass 35 million  
by 2060**

*Asian American population, in millions*



Source: Pew Research Center, Census Bureau 2017  
projections 2020-2060  
[The State of Asian American Children](#)

## Asian Americans were the fastest-growing racial or ethnic group in the U.S. from 2000 to 2019 ...

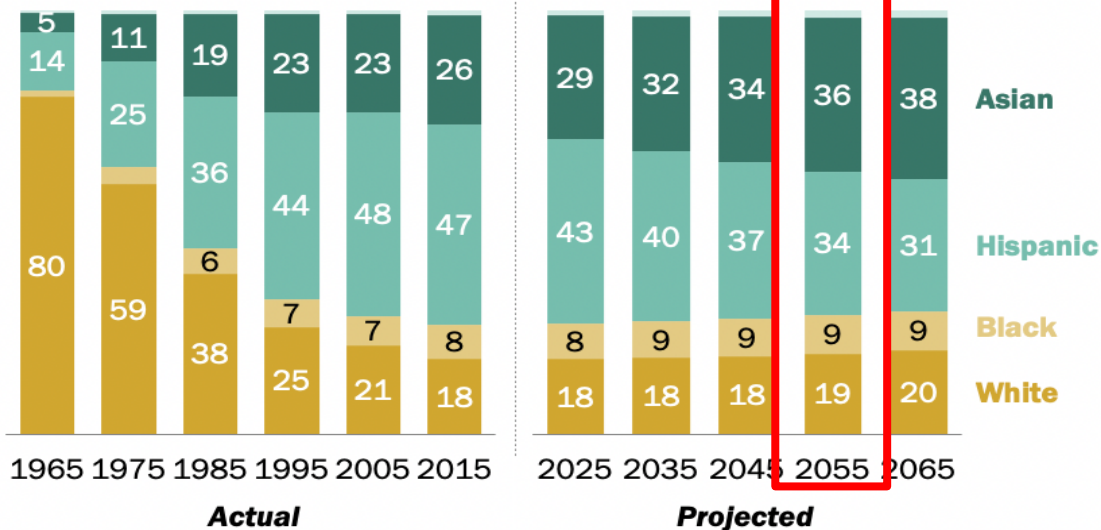
*U.S. population change by race and ethnicity, in thousands*

	2019	2000	Change '00-'19	% Change '00-'19
<b>Asian</b>	18,906	10,469	8,437	81%
<b>Hispanic</b>	60,572	35,662	24,910	70
<b>NHPI</b>	596	370	226	61
<b>Black</b>	41,147	34,406	6,742	20
<b>White</b>	197,310	195,702	1,608	1
<b>Total</b>	328,240	282,162	46,077	16

Source: [Asian Americans are the fastest-growing racial or ethnic group in the U.S.](#)

## Asians projected to become the largest immigrant group in the U.S., surpassing Hispanics

*% of immigrant population*



Note: White, Black and Asian populations include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Asians include Pacific Islanders. Hispanics are of any race. Other races shown but not labeled.

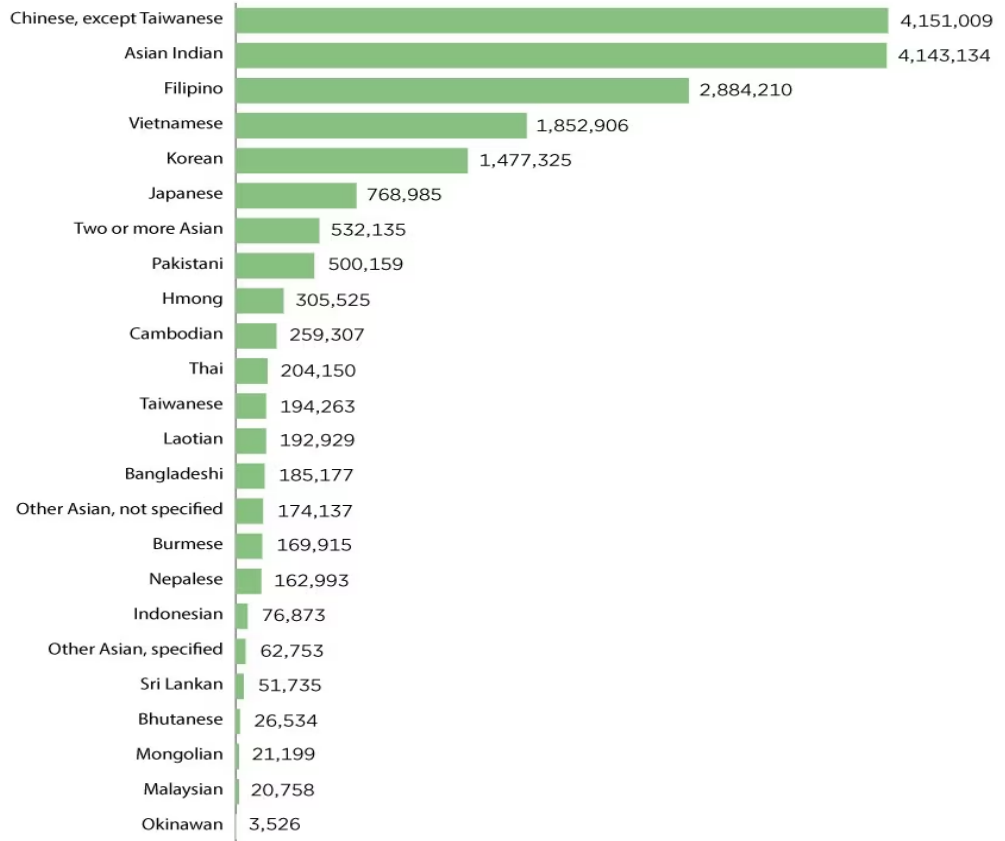
Source: Pew Research Center estimates for 1965-2015 based on adjusted census data; Pew Research Center projections for 2025-2065.

- Asian Americans:  
extremely Diverse >  
**20 subgroups**

- Among the group:  
varied income,  
poverty rates,  
education,  
geographic  
settlement, faith  
English proficiency,  
immigration status

### Asian Alone Population in the U.S. by Selected Groups

(Period Estimates: 2016–2020)



Source: U.S Census Bureau and 2016-2020 ACS 5 year estimate



# Asian American Languages

- Significant language diversity
- LEP (Limited English Proficiency): **35%** Asian alone
- **More than half** of Asian Americans over 55 have limited English language proficiency
- 77% speak a non English language at home
- About **1/5** (20%) AA household linguistically isolated



# Mental Health Engagement

**37 %** of Asian American adults, ~7.7 million people, report poor mental health in 2017

AAPIs adults are the racial group least likely to seek mental health services - **3 X** less likely than their whites

AAPI adults with a mental illness, 73.1 % didn't receive treatment compared to **56.7 %** of the overall population

# Adolescents Mental Health

- Suicide: **leading** cause of death for AA ages 15-24
- AA girls, grades 9-12, were 20 percent more likely to attempt suicide compared to their non-Hispanic whites
- Major depressive disorder is one of the highest in AA, particularly female adolescents
- Asian American youths at greater risk for internalizing behavior





# Barriers

White superiority  
Racism

Poor  
mental  
health  
literacy

Model  
minority myth

Foreigner

Values  
Help seeking bx

Prioritizing  
financial,  
education,  
housing

Providers  
issues

Work conflict  
Language skills  
Transportation

Stigma/  
**Shame**

Pandemic

Yellow peril

High expectations  
Guilt for parents  
sacrifices

Unaware  
of MH  
resources

Less referral  
made for  
internalizing  
bx at school

Immigration  
status/lack of  
health  
insurance

# Salience of Shame in Asian Americans



## Interpersonal shame

- 1) External shame: perceived negative judgement by others ie bullying
- 2) Family shame: perceptions that one has brought shame to one's family ; vicarious shame (shame from perceived failures from in group)

Associated with depressive sx's+antecedents to suicide outcome+avoid asking for help + self-sufficiency behavior



## Values:

- Collective ideals-prefer decision making with family
- Suffering is inevitable (no intervention needed)
- Value of a person: ability to take care of your family

## Help Seeking Behavior: ( primary vs complementary)

- From friends and families
- Faith/religious leader
- Self-control/self-responsibilities





# Fawning as Trauma Response:

Please and appease behaviors to avoid conflict and  
establish a sense of **safety**



Model minority myth



Increase more disaggregate data on AAPI adolescents' mental health needs

Develop pipeline to increase AAPI mental health careers

Support groups/social activities on campuses/Reframing language for mental health service

Greater language accessibility in mental health services

Promote culturally responsive mental health providers

Expand affordable cost for all

Coordinated care with primary care provider



## **Student:**

“ I feel guilty and don't want to burden my parents with my problems. They faced a lot of hardships to get our family here. I feel ungrateful that I can't get better grades so I can take care of them later”

## **Parent:**

“ My son can't have depression. He doesn't have struggles like we do. We sacrifice everything to come here. He has everything he needs. All he has to do is do well in school”; “ I tell my son to keep his head down and avoid conflicts”



## Sources

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LOTUS  
PROJECT

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