



NJ SELF-HELP CLEARINGHOUSE NJGROUPS.ORG



For many Asian-American communities, mental health is a topic that often goes unspoken. Conversations about hardship and personal struggles can be met with silence, confusion, shame, or sometimes even anger. Many grow up hearing that stress and other types of emotional discomfort is "just a part of life," and that having mental health issues is "a matter of personal weakness to be overcome through sheer willpower."

You might be wondering to yourself, "why are we talking about mental health in Asian-American communities right now? Isn't AANHPI Heritage Month in May?" While it may

seem odd to talk about this topic now, this is something that is near and dear to my heart.

Hi! My name is **Megan Macapagal** and I am the coordinator of the Self-Help Group Clearinghouse. I want to take this opportunity to formally introduce myself—and what better way to do so than by sharing my passion for my identity as an Asian-American?

In this newsletter, we'll cover the following topics:

- 1. SHCH Update
- 2. Mental Health Stigma in AA Communities
- 3. The Power of Self-Help
- 4. Lack of Resources
- 5. Call to Action
- 6. Community Resources

Before we get into the nitty-gritty aspects of this newsletter, let's first start off with a Clearinghouse update.

□SHCH Update □



Spring has sprung, bringing with it a season of renewal, growth, and new opportunities to connect. At the NJ Self-Help Clearinghouse, we've been working hard to expand our reach and provide more support for communities in need. Whether it's helping individuals find self-help groups, assisting new groups in getting started, or spreading awareness about the power of peer support, we remain committed to making mental health resources more accessible across New Jersey. Here's a few notable updates:

- Our previous administrative assistant, Megan Macapagal (that's me!), has stepped
 into the role of coordinator! She's eager to go out into the community and form
 connections, both old and new! One goal she strives to achieve is making
 meaningful connections with cultural and community-based organizations to better
 serve diverse populations, with a focus on getting her own community—FilipinoAmericans—to come together to form support groups of their own.
- NJSHCH continues to provide informative trainings to group

facilitators! The last training, **The Art** of Peer Facilitation: Building Stronger Support Groups, was a great success. The 6-hour training held over two days, March 17th and March 19th, was jam-packed with information on essential facilitation



skills, such as active listening, conflict resolution, group engagement, etc. **Kelly Uhland** did an incredible job designing this training, and it was evident in the high level of engagement from participants. The energy was palpable, with attendees actively participating, asking thoughtful questions, and sharing their own experiences. A huge thank you to everyone who showed up!

Now, let's shift back to this newsletter's main topic—mental health in Asian-American communities.

Mental Health Stigma in Asian-American Communities



As an Asian-American, I grew up believing I was weak for letting my mental health "get in the way." In response to my desperate attempts to talk about my feelings, I was often told to be grateful and that gratitude "heals everything." There was no need for me to seek help; I just needed to toughen up and count by blessings, *right?*

Mental illness does not discriminate; it can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, social status, etc. According to research conducted by the CDC in 2018, "around 2.7 million people in the AANHPI

community have a mental health and/or substance use disorder" (as cited in American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2020). Yet, the National Institute of Mental Health found that this community is only a third as likely to seek mental health services compared to their white counterparts (as cited in APA, 2020). So many Asian-Americans are struggling with their mental health, but an alarmingly low percentage of Asian-Americans actually receive the help that they need.

Stigma is the "negative social attitude attached to a characteristic of an individual that... implies social disapproval and can lead unfairly to discrimination against and exclusion of the individual" (American Psychological Association, 2025). In Asian-American cultures, mental health stigma is pervasive and is rooted in cultural values, generational differences, and systemic barriers. Many Asian cultures emphasize resilience, self-reliance, and prioritizing the collective well-being of the family over individual struggles. The concept of saving face—maintaining honor and avoiding social humiliation—plays a major role in discouraging individuals from openly discussing mental health concerns. Admitting to struggles with anxiety, depression, or other conditions is often seen as

bringing shame not just to oneself, but to the entire family. This can lead many to suffer in silence rather than seek professional help. Additionally, limited access to culturally competent mental health services, language barriers, and the lack of representation in the mental health field further contribute to the gap in support. Many Asian-Americans also face pressure to conform to the "model minority" stereotype, which can make it even harder to admit to personal challenges. The result of all these factors combined is an environment where mental health conversations are avoided.

The Power of Self-Help \square

In cultures where openly discussing mental health is discouraged, many individuals turn to friends—especially those with a shared cultural background—as their primary source of emotional support. Without the ability to speak openly with family members, friendships often become a safe space to vent frustrations, share struggles, and seek validation. From personal experience, these struggles come up in conversations with my friends all the time—it's



something that every one of my Asian friends can relate to. However, this can sometimes lead to **trauma bonding**, where relationships are built primarily on shared pain rather than mutual growth and healing. While leaning on friends for support is valuable, relying solely on these connections may not always provide the tools needed to navigate challenges in a healthy way.

This is where self-help support groups can make a meaningful difference. Unlike casual conversations with friends, these groups create structured, judgment-free spaces where individuals can share their experiences while also learning effective coping strategies. Led by peers who understand the cultural nuances of mental health stigma, self-help groups foster a sense of belonging without reinforcing cycles of unprocessed trauma. They offer a community of understanding, where individuals can support one another without fear of shame or social consequences.

By joining a self-help group, Asian-Americans can break the cycle of silence and isolation, finding strength in shared experiences while also learning ways to heal.

Lack of Resources

Despite the many benefits of self-help support groups, I do want to address the noticeable lack of groups tailored specifically for Asian-American communities. While some culturally specific groups do exist, they are often limited in number and not widely known or accessible. Many support groups cater to broader audiences, which can make it difficult for Asian-Americans to find spaces that truly understand their unique cultural experiences and the stigma they face. This lack of visibility can reinforce the misconception that such support doesn't exist, discouraging people from seeking help altogether.

Call to Action

One of our missions at the NJSHCH is to increase awareness and outreach. To ensure that Asian-Americans have access to culturally relevant self-help support groups, we

need to work together as a community to form groups, find existing resources, and spread the word! By making these groups more visible and accessible, we can help break the stigma and ensure that no one has to navigate their struggles alone.

The NJSHCH invites you to share any Asian-American support groups or related resources you know of! If you have resources, if you're part of an Asian-American organization in New Jersey and willing to connect, or if you're interested in starting a support group, please reach out to us using the contact form on our website at www.njgroups.org or by sending us an email at njgroups@mhanj.org. We'd love to hear from you!



References

- 1. https://www.psychiatry.org/File Library/Psychiatrists/Cultural-Competency/Mental-Health-Disparities/Mental-Health-Facts-for-Asian-Americans-Pacific-Islanders.pdf
- 2. https://dictionary.apa.org/stigma

Community Resources

Taking the first step toward seeking help can be challenging, but support is available.

Below are some general mental health resources, as well as organizations that specifically cater to Asian-American communities.

General Mental Health Resources

- 1. National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): www.nami.org I the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. They provide groups in several NJ counties
- 2. United by Wellness (MHANJ): https://www.mhaac.info/ubw.html I a VIRTUAL Wellness Center that is a program of the Mental Health Association in NJ. They offer numerous online groups every week.
- 3. Pay What You Can Peer Support: https://www.paywhatyoucanpeersupport.com/ | a non-profit organization born out of a desire to have low barrier mental support available to whomever needs it. PWYCPS offers online peer support groups that span a broad variety of topics, from specific diagnoses to more general issues that people often struggle with.

Asian-American Mental Health Resources

- 1. **Asian Mental Health Collective**: www.asianmhc.org I Fosters healing, resilience and connection in Asian communities in the US through culturally-informed clinical services, virtual peer support spaces, and support for Asian mental health providers.
- 2. National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association (NAAPIMHA): www.naapimha.org | A nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote and redefine the mental health and well being of the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander individuals and communities in the United States through training, programs, policy & advocacy, centering those with lived experience.
- 3. **NAMI CAMHOP**: https://naminj.org/organizer/camhop/ I a NAMI New Jersey initiative to serve individuals with lived experience of mental health conditions and their family members from the Chinese community in NJ and beyond, through support, education and advocacy.

We hope this newsletter sheds light on the importance of mental health support within Asian-American communities and the need for more accessible, culturally relevant self-help groups.

Before you click away, make sure to view the wonderful flyers sent in by various organizations showcasing their groups and other related services!

Until next time,

The NJ Self-Help Clearinghouse Team

Community Flyers



Click Here to Register



different perspectives to live happily again, sponsored by Angelic Health.







mhaac@mhanj.org



609-652-3800



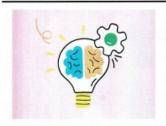
MHAAC.INFO







SUPPORT GROUPS



Mon @ 1:00 PM

DBT - Life Skills

Learn essential life skills based on Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) techniques, including emotional regulation, distress tolerance, interpersonal effectiveness, and mindfulness. This peer-led class will provide practical tools to navigate challenges and build a more balanced, fulfilling life.



2nd & 4th Wed @ 7:00 PM

Trauma Support Group

Our trauma support group provides a safe and understanding space for anyone who has experienced trauma, not just veterans or those with PTSD. Trauma can stem from various life experiences, including abuse, accidents, loss, or difficult relationships. Join us to find support, healing, and coping strategies in a compassionate community.



Wed @ 1:30 PM

Anxiety Support Group

This is a peer-led group where individuals with shared experiences of anxiety come together to support one another. Led by someone who has personally navigated anxiety, the group provides a safe and understanding space to share feelings, discuss coping strategies, and offer mutual support.



Thurs @ 6:00 PM

Alcoholics Anonymous/12-Step

Join us for a welcoming AA 12-step meeting where individuals share their experiences, strength, and hope in recovery from alcohol addiction. Through fellowship and the 12-step program, we support each other in achieving and maintaining sobriety, one day at a time.

For more information about any of these support groups, please email info@hasrcc.org, visit our website www.hasrcc.org or follow us on Facebook.

Click Here for More Information



Anxiety Support Group

There is a difference between occasional anxiety and anxiety disorders. Occasional anxiety involves temporary worry or fear.

While an anxiety disorder is characterized by anxiety, worry, or fear that is strong enough to interfere with daily activities.

Wednesdays @ 1:30pm

Hope & Serenity 174 Edison Road Lake Hopatcong, NJ Skylands Medical Building (downstairs)





This is a peer-led group where individuals with shared experiences of anxiety come together to support one another. Led by someone who has personally navigated anxiety, the group provides a safe and understanding space to share feelings, discuss coping strategies, and offer mutual support.

This support group is confidential and free

For more information please email: info@hasrcc.org

Click Here to Email for Information



SMART RECOVERY MEETINGS

TUESDAYS 12:00PM

Edison Public Library 340 Plainfield Ave Edison, NJ 08817

FRIDAYS 1:00PM

Clara Barton Public Library
141 Hoover Ave
Edison, NJ 08817

For more information, contact Holly Onorato, Township Recovery Coach at 732-248-7295

Additional information: www.SmartRecovery.org

Click Here for More Information

LOST ANGELS BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE FOREVER CHANGES US. WHEN EXPERIENCING THE TRAGEDY OF A CHILD'S DEATH FROM DRUGS AND ALCOHOL, PARENTS AND LOVED ONES OFTEN FIND THEMSELVES ISOLATED AND CONFUSED.

LOST ANGELS IS A BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP THAT OFFERS SUPPORT, UNDERSTANDING, COMPASSION AND HOPE TO BEREAVED PARENTS AND LOVED ONES STRUGGLING TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES AFTER THE DEATH OF CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, OR SIBLINGS AS A RESULT OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE OR ADDICTION.



MEETING INFO: ST. MARY'S CHURCH

10 LENOX AVE ROOM 205

POMPTON LAKES, NJ

WHEN: 1ST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH

TIME: 7:00PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT DONNA ANDELORA

DANDELORA@YAHOO.COM OR 973 713 9962

Click Here to Email for More Information

Our Support Groups...

HDSA New Jersey Chapter offers both in-person and virtual

newjersey.hdsa.org

All are Welcome

- Individuals living with HD, whether juvenile or adult
- Family members
- √ Those at-risk for HD
- Current or past caregivers
- Friends

to share that... when I've had a not-so-good week, I know I'll feel better from talking with members who understand what I am going through."

people were with us as we walked in our journey and our experience with HDSA: we found practical solutions to the challenges of everyday HD life

"My spouse had HD and I have been his caregiver...th group understands how difficult this is **emotionally** and resources. I don't feel like I am managing this alone anymore

Northern NJ Support Group



St. Clare's Behavioral Health

niversity Doctor's Pavilion 30 Powerville Road, Boonton, NJ, 07005

2nd Thursday of the month September to June

For more information, please contact:

Janet Polizois

janet.polizois@gmail.com

Where

are our

In-Person

Support

Groups?

Southern NJ Support Group



New Jersey Institute For Successful Aging

For more information on meeting dates and times, please contac

Lisa Burkholder, LCSW

Manahawkin Support Group



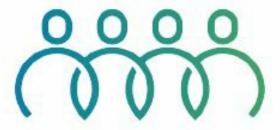
Ocean County Library Stafford Branch 129 North Main Street, Manahawkin, NJ, 08050

3rd Wednesday of the month

Bob Sylvia

bobsylvia1948@gmail.com

Click Here for More Information and to Register



"STRENGTH THROUGH SUPPORT"

IN PERSON STROKE SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

In-Person Meetings are every last Wednesday of each month for Stroke Survivors and Caregivers

MORRIS COUNTY LIBRARY
30 EAST HANOVER AVE
WHIPPANY, NJ
TIME: 1:00-3:30 PM

PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL FOR MORE INFORMATION

Lois - Stroke Caregiver 908-578-0812 loisfirz@yahoo.com Rich - Stroke Survivor 201-230-8204 rchclr@gmail.com

Click here for More Information

Welcome!



We have a new schedule:

Tuesdays (in person) - 7:00 to 9:00 pm Wednesdays (in person) - 11:00 am to 1:00 pm Thursdays (online) - 7:00 to 9:00 pm (Contact us for online meeting info.)

In-person Location

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church 201 N. Warwick Road Magnolia, New Jersey 08049 (near corner of Warwick & Evesham)

Supportive family and friends are welcome to attend.

We also enjoy activities such as picnics and holiday dinners.

Call or text: (609) 471-0676 NewBeginningsNJ@gmail.com NBgroup.org

facebook.com/NBpeersupport

For more information:

We are happy to answer questions!

Call or text: (609) 471-0676 NewBeginningsNJ@gmail.com NBgroup.org facebook.com/NBpeersupport

In-person Location Holy Trinity Lutheran Church 201 N. Warwick Road Magnolia, New Jersey 08049 (near corner of Warwick & Evesham)

(Contact us for online meeting info.)

*Our meeting room is at the front of the church, facing Warwick Rd.

New Beginnings is not equipped to help someone in immediate crisis.

If you have an emergency or feel like hurting yourself or others, do one of the following NOW:

- **Call 911**
- Go to the emergency room
- Call one of these hotlines:
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline 988 (call or text)
- NJ Hopeline

1-855-654-6735

New Beginnings



Supporting peers with mood disorders since 1987

If you experience symptoms of depression, anxiety, bipolar, or related mood disorders, we invite you to our free peer support group.

Come and share support and coping strategies with others like you!

Tuesdays (in person) - 7:00 to 9:00 pm Wednesdays (in person) - 11:00 am to 1:00 pm Thursdays (online) - 7:00 to 9:00 pm

Call or text: (609) 471-0676 NewBeginningsNJ@gmail.com NBgroup.org facebook.com/NBpeersupport

New Beginnings Mission Statement

Our mission is to support one another as we empower ourselves to live successfully with mood disorders.



You are not alone...

- A mood disorder is a real health issue. It is not a weakness or character flaw, and we can't just "snap out of it". It takes strength and courage to seek help.
- At a support group, you can share with others who have had similar experiences.
- You are welcome to be a part of our group. We can help one another achieve and maintain wellness.

Call or text: (609) 471-0676 NewBeginningsNJ@gmail.com NBgroup.org facebook.com/NBpeersupport

Group Guidelines

- Confidentiality: What is said in group stays in group. We respect privacy.
- 2. Safety: Observe boundaries and respect others with language and actions. See a facilitator if you have any concerns.
- Medicine & Doctors: We do not prescribe, diagnose, or give advice. Advice only comes from professional care givers. We do not name medications of any kind.
- 4. Participation: You have the right to pass. Participation is voluntary
- 5. Unrelated Activities: No cell phones, texting, or food during group. Cell phone must be on vibrate.
- 6. Listening: Listen to others without interrupting. Raise your hand to respond. One person speaks at a time.
- 7. "I" Statements: Use "I" statements and share from your own positive experiences, insights, and coping skills.
- Judgment: We do not judge or criticize
- 9. Sharing: Our time is limited, and we start and stop on time. We need to give equal opportunity, for sharing as well as feedback, to all group members.
- 10. Accountability: We are responsible for ourselves, our actions, and our wellness.



More About Us

- · We strive to successfully manage our disorders and live well.
- We share positive support, encouragement, and coping strategies in a safe, confidential
- All meetings are free.
- · All meetings start and end on time.
- · Everyone present must be at least 19 years old.
- All participation is voluntary.
- We offer peer support, not therapy or education.
- The facilitators are peers from the aroup.
- We are not professionals, nor is our group a substitute for professional treatment.
- · We maintain a positive environment. We want to feel better when we leave a meeting than we did when we arrived!

Click Here to Visit their Website





Parent Partnership... supporting families impacted by addiction

supporting families

Parent Partnership is a branch of the nonprofit organization, Be a Part of the Conversation. Be a Part of the

When parents and other caregivers recognize that their loved one is struggling with substance use or addiction, we need support and understanding from those who have "been in our shoes." Parent Partnership meetings are led by volunteers with lived experience and take place Sunday through Thursday.

Come once, once in a while, or as often as you like.

We are not professionals - we are simply parents helping parents. Meetings are friendly and confidential.

St. Paul's Church

218 Nassau Street, Princeton, NJ

Enter using the door down the ramp leading from the parking lot to the basement of the church. We meet in the Fireside Room.



In Person Only - Every Monday from 7 to 8:15 pm

Learn more about Parent Partnership:

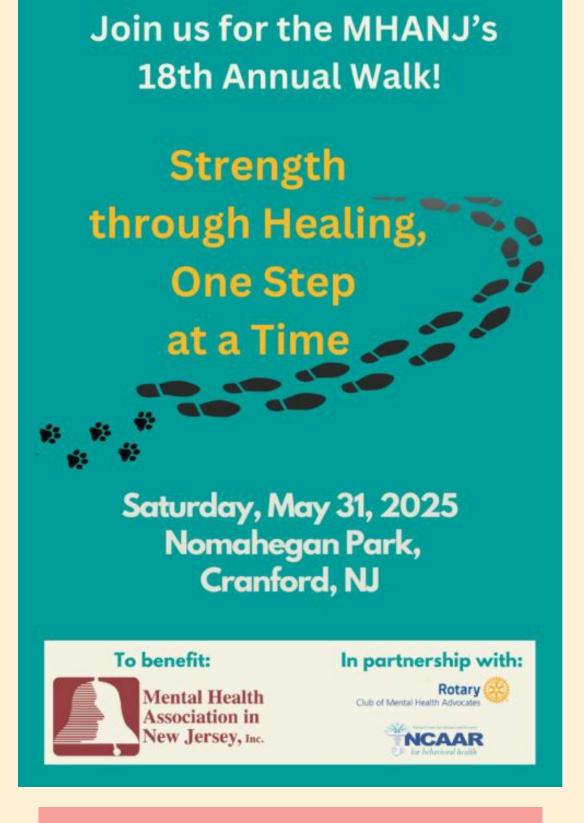


conversation.zone/partnership



Questions: Contact Michelle King mokingnj@gmail.com / 609-468-8708

Click Here to Visit their Website



Click Here for More Information and to Register





Try email & social marketing for free!