



Taking Charge of Your Health and Wellness

Presented By the San Mateo County Filipino
Mental Health Initiative

What do “health” and “wellness” actually mean?

Health

- Includes physical, mental social and spiritual

Wellness

- Process of adapting patterns of behavior that can lead to improved health and heightened life satisfaction → also known as well-being

Mental Health!

First, we are going to discuss how mental health fits into overall health and wellness



Mentally Ill vs. Mentally Healthy

- What are some characteristics of mentally healthy people?
 - Having good self-esteem and generally feeling good about themselves
 - Realistic in accepting imperfections in others and in themselves
 - Optimism
 - Kindness and caring toward others and themselves
 - Being able to bounce back from difficulties
 - Having a sense of control over their lives and feeling capable in solving problems

STRESS

- Stress makes it more difficult to be mentally healthy!
- Good thing high school isn't stressful!
- Just kidding

Common High School Stressors

- School-based pressure (grades, clubs, sports, balancing it all)
- Social pressure (friends, dating, social media)
- Family
- Making decisions about the future (college, work, leaving or staying at home)
- Work overload
- Additional responsibilities (work, helping at home etc)
- Significant life events (examples - illnesses or deaths of family or friends, moving or housing instability)

.....to name just a few

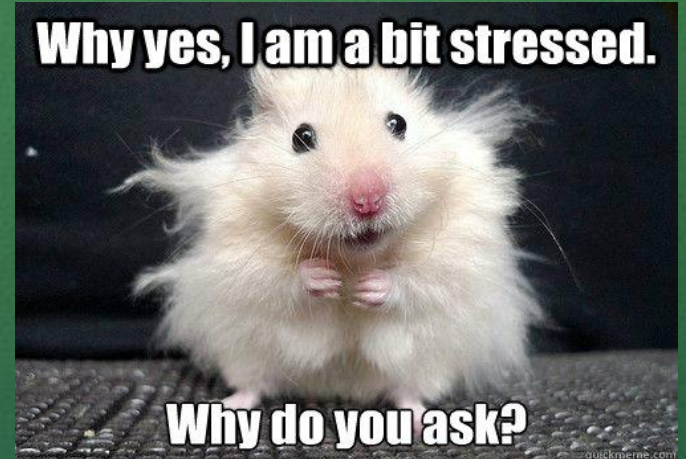
Do you mean to tell me a stress ball isn't for throwing at people who stress you out?



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Managing Stress

- Time Management?
- Healthy Lifestyle
 - Exercising (this can take only 20 mins!)
 - Eating well
 - SLEEP
- Social Support → friends, family
- Relaxation techniques → why is this important?
 - When your mind and body are constantly stressed, you stop relaxing naturally! You have to work to bring yourself to a state of relaxation
 - This could be anything that works for you!
 - Yoga
 - Mindfulness/meditation
 - Music
- **This are all lifestyle choices!**



Chronic stress can lead to ...

Depression

- Feelings of hopelessness
- Disruption in sleep and eating patterns
- Irritability
- Loss of interest in activities that you once enjoyed
- Persistent sadness, crying often
- Trouble concentrating
- Thoughts of suicide

Anxiety

- Feeling nervous or tense
- Sweating, trembling, breathing rapidly
- Excessive worrying
- Not being able to sleep
- Trouble concentrating or thinking about something else other than the current worry
- Feeling tired or weak
- → **Notice any overlap??**

What is the difference between everyday problems from mental disorders?

- How much is it affecting your life?
- Anxieties, fears, feelings of depression and stress are normal, however, when they impact your **everyday functioning**, it may be a mental disorder
 - Also, how long has it been going on?
- If you have been significantly affected by feelings of anxiety or depression for a time period lasting over two weeks, it may be time to consult a professional!

What does treatment look like?

- IMPORTANT: There is no “one size fits all” approach to addressing mental disorders
- Treatment can look like
 - One on one therapy
 - Group therapy
 - Art therapy
 - Music or dance therapy
 - Wilderness/nature therapy
 - Psychiatric medication
 - Spirituality
 - Martial arts
 - Being in community
 - Any combination of these approaches and much more!



Filipino Mental Health in San Mateo County

- Over 70,000 live in San Mateo County which is about 10% of the county's population. However, Filipinos make up less than 4% of clients receiving mental health services from the county.
 - This trend is also seen within the Filipino youth community
 - The take away?
 - → The Filipino community is not receiving the support it needs.



Four Main Filipino Values

- *Kapwa* (fellow being) – kinship and connectedness to other Filipinos, even strangers
- *Utang ng loob* (debt of reciprocity) – being generous to others, having those favors returned
- *Pakikasama* (social acceptance or conformity) – the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few
- ***Hiya* (shame) – “Don’t bring dishonor to the family) → relates to mental health

Why don't Filipino Youth Seek Mental Services?

- Cultural Stigma- what does stigma mean ?
- The role of *hiya* (shame)



Why don't Filipino Youth Seek Mental Services?

- Embarrassment around admitting they are having difficulty handling their problems
- Afraid of gossip
- Encouraged to turn to religion
- Based on these things, youth may not feel supported by families in seeking mental health treatment
 - Are sometimes discouraged from discussing problems with people outside the family, including mental health professionals
- **Also**, there are fewer Filipino or Filipino American providers and Tagalog speaking staff/providers (but there are some!)

Other things to think about...

- What are the expectations from different communities that we are part of?
 - Collectivist vs individualist societies
 - Cultural identity formation (What is this?!?)
- How do these issues vary from the Filipino American to the Filipino immigrant community?
 - How do we promote inclusivity and community between groups?

So what to do if you or a friend need help?

- School counselor/wellness center (colleges have wellness centers too!)
- For 24/7 local and national support, call (650) 579-0350 or 1 (800) 273-TALK (8255)
 - OR text “START” to 741741
- San Mateo Access Call Center: 1-800-686-0101
 - they will direct you to appropriate services and support!
- Reach out for the support you need!



PhotoVoice Activity: What does mental health look like in the Filipino community??

Question 1: How do you relate to this photo?

Question 2: Have you or someone you know experienced a similar issue?

References

- Teague, M.L, Mackenzie, S.L, Rosenthal, D.M (2013). *Your health today: choices in a changing society*. Boston: McGraw Hill.