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 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)

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

- Time Management?
- Healthy Lifestyle
  - Exercising (this can take only 20 mins!)
  - Eating well
  - SLEEP
- Social Support \( \rightarrow \) friends, family
- Relaxation techniques \( \rightarrow \) 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?