



# Effective Mental Health Strategies For Asians

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# Disparities in Depression Treatment

## **Patients with Depressive Disorders:**

- White Americans: 40% to 70% treated
- Black Americans: 20% to 30% treated
- Latino Americans: 20% to 30% treated
- Asian Americans: 10% to 15% treated

# Barriers to Mental Health Care

- Cultural Beliefs: Stigma of Mental Illness and MH Treatment
- Availability and Use of Alternative Treatments
- Culturally Different Illness Experience (Physical not Emotional)
- Actual Hurdles and Systems Issues

# Stigma of Mental Illness

- 5 Levels of Stigma Formation:  
Fear, Shame. Distortion.  
Miscommunication, Discrimination
- Asians have greater Stigma of Mental Illness and Mental Health Treatment at all 5 levels

# How to Combat Stigma

- Public Education
- Testimony from Recovered Patients and Family
- Cultural Events
- Part of Culture Change

# Client Use of Alternative Treatments

- Unavoidable therefore Emphasize Collaboration
- Acknowledge Ignorance
- Involve Providers of Alternative Treatments in MH Care
- Explain MH Treatment in Culturally Acceptable Terms

# Culturally Different Illness Experience

- Proper Recognition and Diagnosis of Somatic Symptoms:  
Dizzy, Blurred Vision, Tinnitus, Palpitation, Insomnia, Nausea, Anorexia, Shortness of Breath
- Concerns over Anorexia and Weight Loss
- Explain Diagnosis and Treatment in Culturally Acceptable Terms

# Systems Barriers and Issues

- Hurdles of Language, Customs (Making and Keeping Appointments, Confidentiality, Individual Rights)
- Unfamiliar Mental Health Concepts and Terms
- Need for Long Term Maintenance Treatments
- Segregated Care

# Overcoming Systems Barriers

- More Flexible Appointments (Days not Times)
- Involve Family with Consent
- Language and Culturally Competent Staff
- Community Outreach/Whole Person Care

# Building A System of Care

- Culturally Competent Staff
- Culturally Acceptable Practice:
  - Continuity of Care
  - Whole Person
  - Problem-Solving not Psychodynamics
  - Social (Clubhouse) not Medical (Day-Hosp)
- Inter-Agency Collaboration
- Emphasize Combat of Stigma

# Continuing Challenges

- Parent Agency Acceptance and Support (Unless Free-Standing)
- Funding Issues
- Staff Shortage/Training
- Staff Burnout
- Inter-Agency Competition
- Community Support