

CONVERGE COVID-19 Working Groups for Public Health and Social Sciences Research

Research Agenda-Setting Paper

This paper was written to help advance convergence-oriented research in the hazards and disaster field. It highlights areas where additional research could contribute new knowledge to the response to and recovery from the pandemic and other disasters yet to come. Questions about the research topics and ethical and methodological issues highlighted here should be directed to the authors who contributed to this paper.

Working Group Name:

Asian American and Pacific Islander Families and COVID-19

Working Group Description:

The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the problem of family and intimate partner violence (IPV) across the globe. This study investigates how illness, racism, and economic instability related to COVID-19 affect Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) young adults' mental health and relationships with their families and peers, further compounding the risk of violence. Our study uses in-depth interviews with AAPI young adults, parents, and representatives from community-based advocacy, health services, and student services providers to address the following questions: (1) How do external stressors related to COVID-19 influence family dynamics and the relationships that AAPI young adults have with their families? (2) How do AAPI young adults negotiate social support within their families, with their peers, within their communities, and within the healthcare system? This research has important implications because AAPI young people's experiences of family violence and mental health remain understudied, due to stigmatization of IPV among AAPI communities and the limited cultural competency of most national studies on IPV.

Priority Research Topics and Specific Research Questions:

Priority Research Topics	Potential Research Questions
1. Family relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do external stressors related to COVID-19, such as racism, illness, and economic uncertainty influence family dynamics and the relationships that AAPI young adults have with their families? • How do AAPI young adults returning to their family homes negotiate personal boundaries and self-expression? • What types of roles do AAPI young adults take to assist their family with economic changes and shifting caregiving responsibilities?
2. Family violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do external stressors related to COVID-19 trigger and exacerbate family instability, in turn affecting the well-being and safety of AAPI young adults?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do AAPI young people navigate unstable family dynamics amidst the constraints of the pandemic?
3. Differences among AAPI ethnic and multiracial communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of ethnic differences exist around family living arrangements? How has this changed amidst the pandemic? • How do ethnic differences around labor and exposure shape the risks that AAPI young people face? • What types of specific risks do multiracial AAPI young people encounter?
4. Differences among LGBTQ AAPI young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of specific vulnerabilities do AAPI LGBTQ young people are also likely to encounter if they are stuck with homophobic families • How have campus evacuations and changes in social environments affected queer AAPI young people and their relationships with their families?
5. Education and work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do AAPI young adults balance academic responsibilities and expectations amidst major curricular disruptions? • How do external stressors such as racism, illness, and economic uncertainty shape AAPI young people's feelings about their futures?
6. Mental health and social support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do AAPI young adults negotiate social support within their families, with their peers, within their communities, and within the healthcare system? • How do AAPI young adults, particularly those with mental health challenges, negotiate social support within their families, with their peers, and within the healthcare system?
7. Community action and advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do AAPI young adults and community organizations perceive to be best ways to address issues of domestic violence and mental health in order to support AAPI young people?

Ethical / Methodological Considerations:

Key methodological, ethical, and logistical dimensions of this project are associated with the dynamics of conducting research on sensitive topics given heightened constraints related to the pandemic. In addition to standard issues around consent, recording interviews, and anonymity, a critical issue is the logistics of conducting research when home environments are unstable yet public environments biologically unsafe. We are prepared for scenarios in which participants may not feel comfortable conducting an interview in their homes about sensitive issues such as family violence. Based on public health protocols at the time of the interview, we will either offer suggestions for alternative locations (university, public location) or recuse the participant from the study if necessary. We will not pressure participants to leave their homes if it is potentially dangerous. If participants have difficulties with accessing a stable Internet connection, we will conduct interviews over the phone. Given the complexities of negotiating these ethical questions, we are also open to suggestions for how to navigate these logistics with the goal of minimizing risk to our participants.

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