

Behavioral Health Equity for Asian Americans: Structural Problems and Community- Centered Solutions

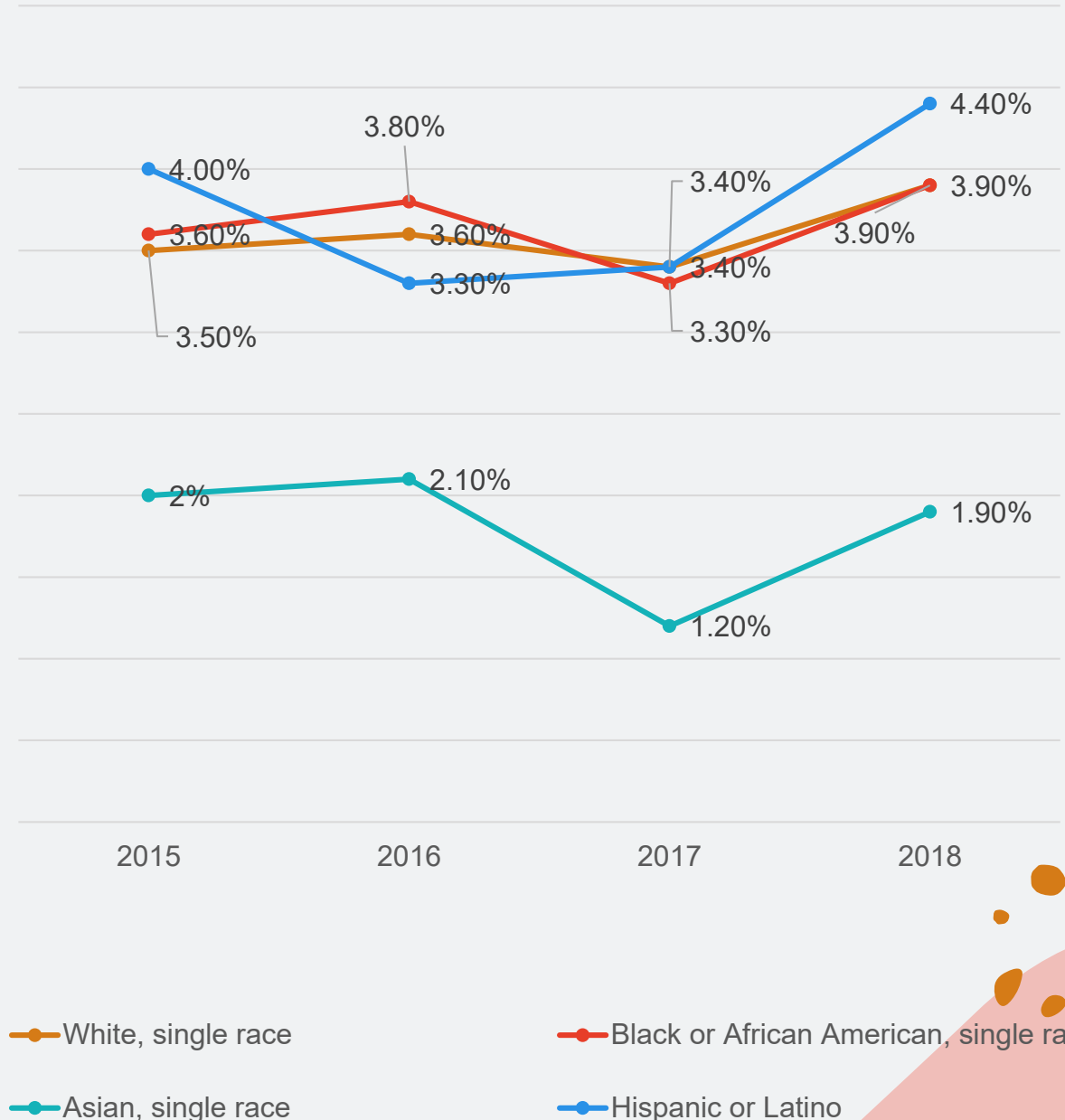
Anne Saw, PhD, DePaul University

Grace Chan McKibben, Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community

Presentation for Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnerships Integration Forum

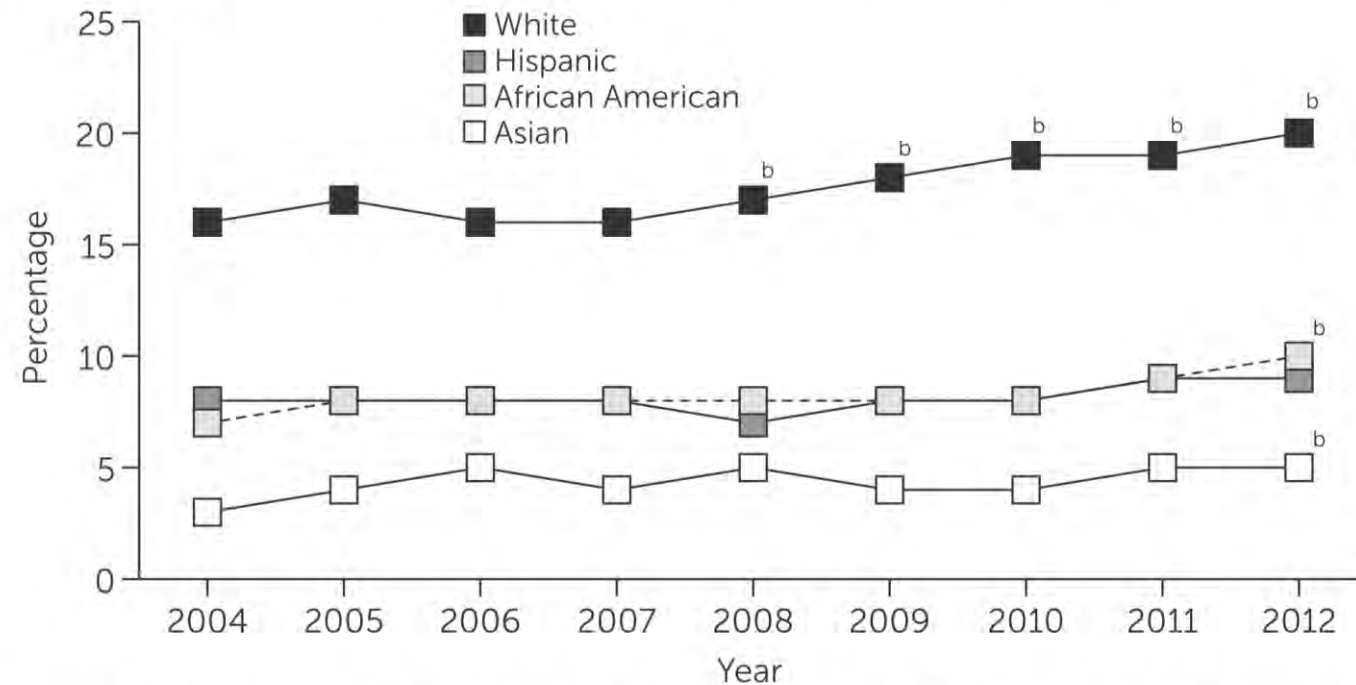
December 1, 2021

Crude percentages of serious psychological distress for adults aged 18 and over, United States, National Health Interview Study 2015-2018



Use of Any Mental Health Care by Race/Ethnicity 2004-2012, Medical Expenditures Panel Survey (Cook et al., 2017)

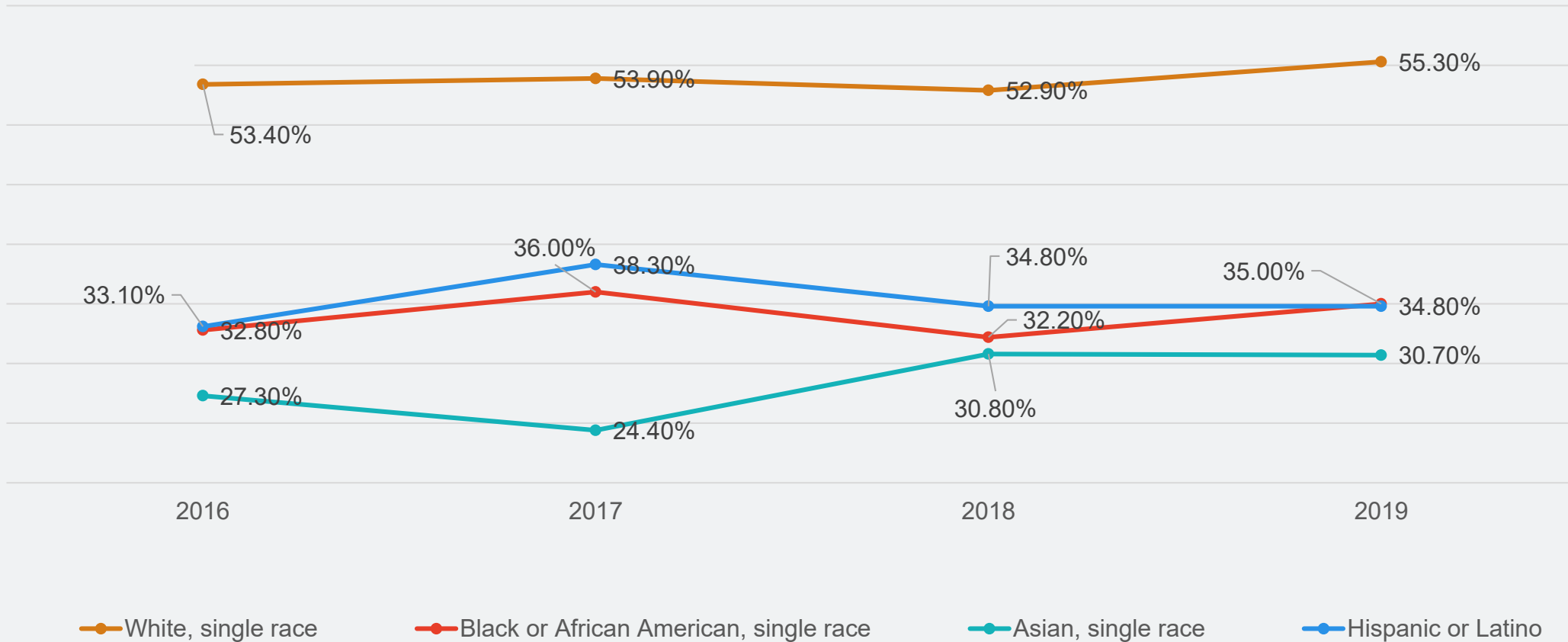
FIGURE 1. Unadjusted trends in use of any mental health care by race-ethnicity, 2004–2012^a



^a Source: 2004–2012 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (N=214,597). All differences between the three minority groups and the white group are significant ($p < .05$).

^b In the indicated year, the value is significantly different from the 2004 value for the same group.

Among those with past-year serious psychological distress, received any MH treatment for adults aged 18 and over, United States, National Study of Drug Use and Health 2015-2019



Structural Problem: Poor understanding about the population

Lack of understanding of Asian Americans, including:

- Distinct subgroups
- Distinct issues related to behavioral health
 - e.g., pre-migration, immigration and resettlement experiences

Structural Problem: No data or bad data

- When data are collected Asian Americans are often lumped together, lumped together with Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders, or put them in an “Other” category
- When research studies are conducted, they often do not include Asian Americans who are less proficient in English



“Without data, there’s no equity.”
(Dr. Stella Yi, NYU)



DATA



PROBLEM
DEFINITION



EQUITY-DRIVEN
SOLUTIONS

*Structural Problem:
Poor investment in infrastructure to support Asian
Americans' behavioral health needs*

- Access to linguistically and culturally appropriate behavioral health care services

Community-Centered Solutions



Acknowledge the rich complexity of Asian American communities.

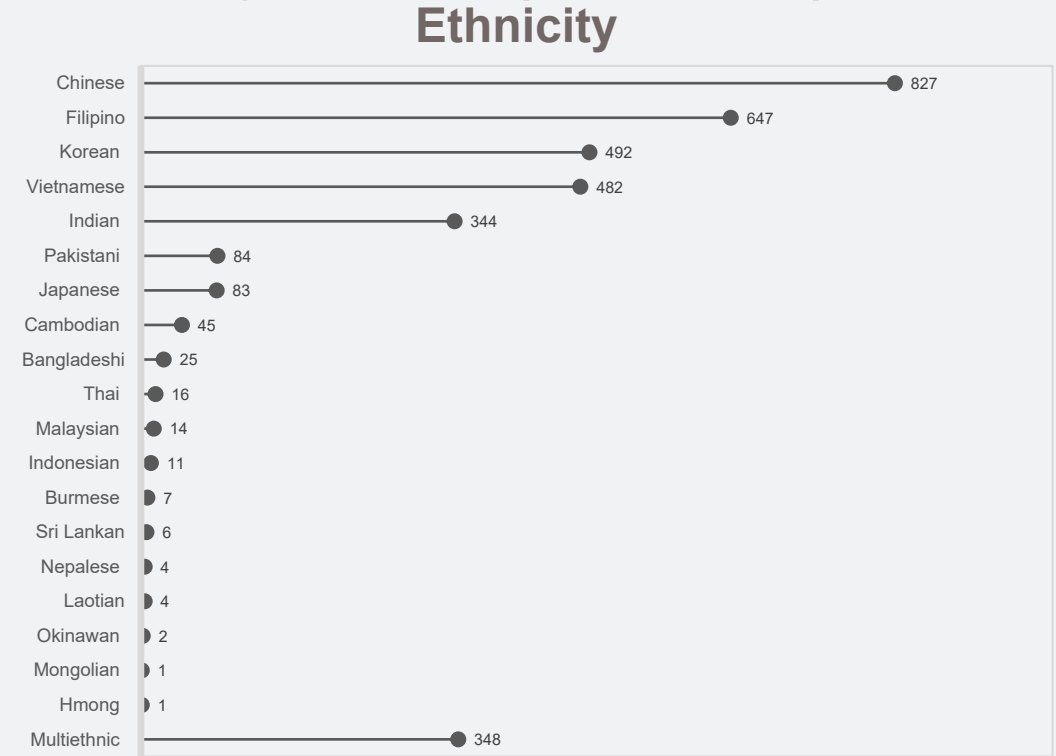
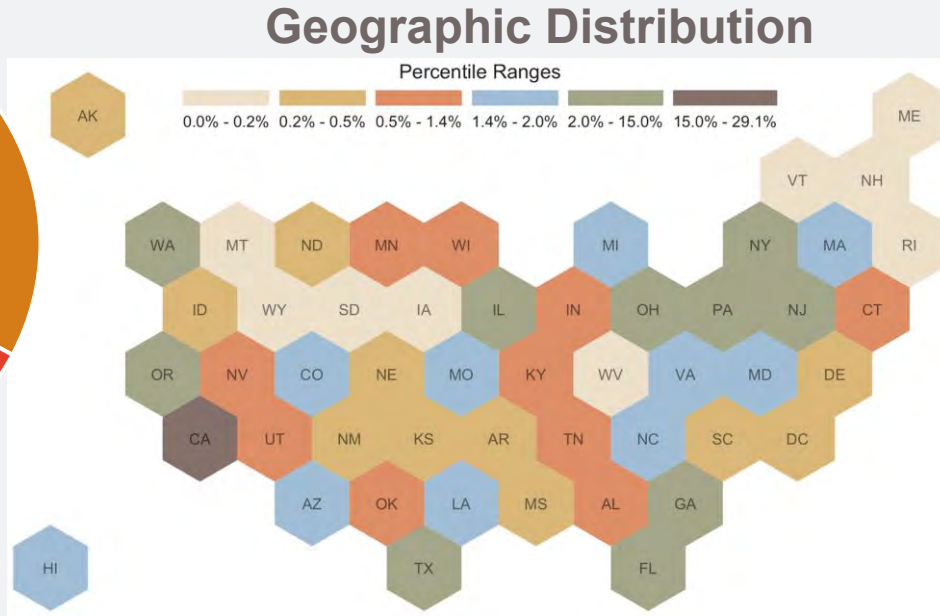
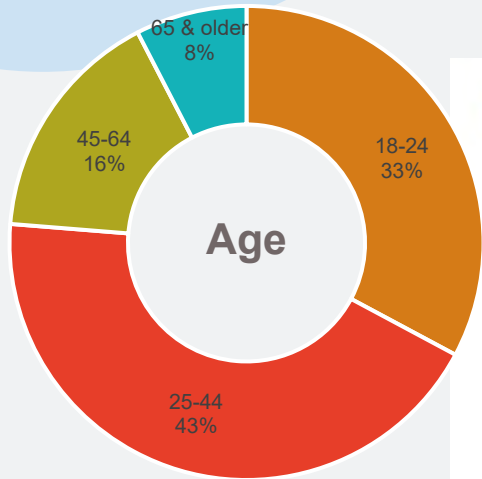


- **Fastest growing** racial/ethnic group in the US
- 7.3% of **Massachusetts'** population (2020 US Census)
- Over **40** Asian ethnicities/languages
- **Two-thirds** of Asian Americans are immigrants
- **Income & education disparities:** bimodal distributions
- **Health disparities:** cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, COPD, tobacco use
- Diverse **pre-migration, migration, resettlement** experiences

*Partner with
community
organizations and
center community
perspectives*

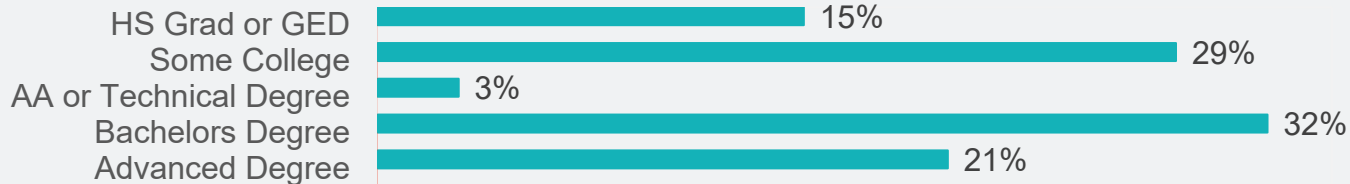


Asian American Needs Assessment Sample Demographics (N = 3,736)

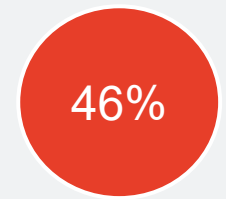


Ethnicity data are missing for some respondents.

Education



Household Income



Foreign Born



Children under 18 at Home



Adults 65 or older at Home

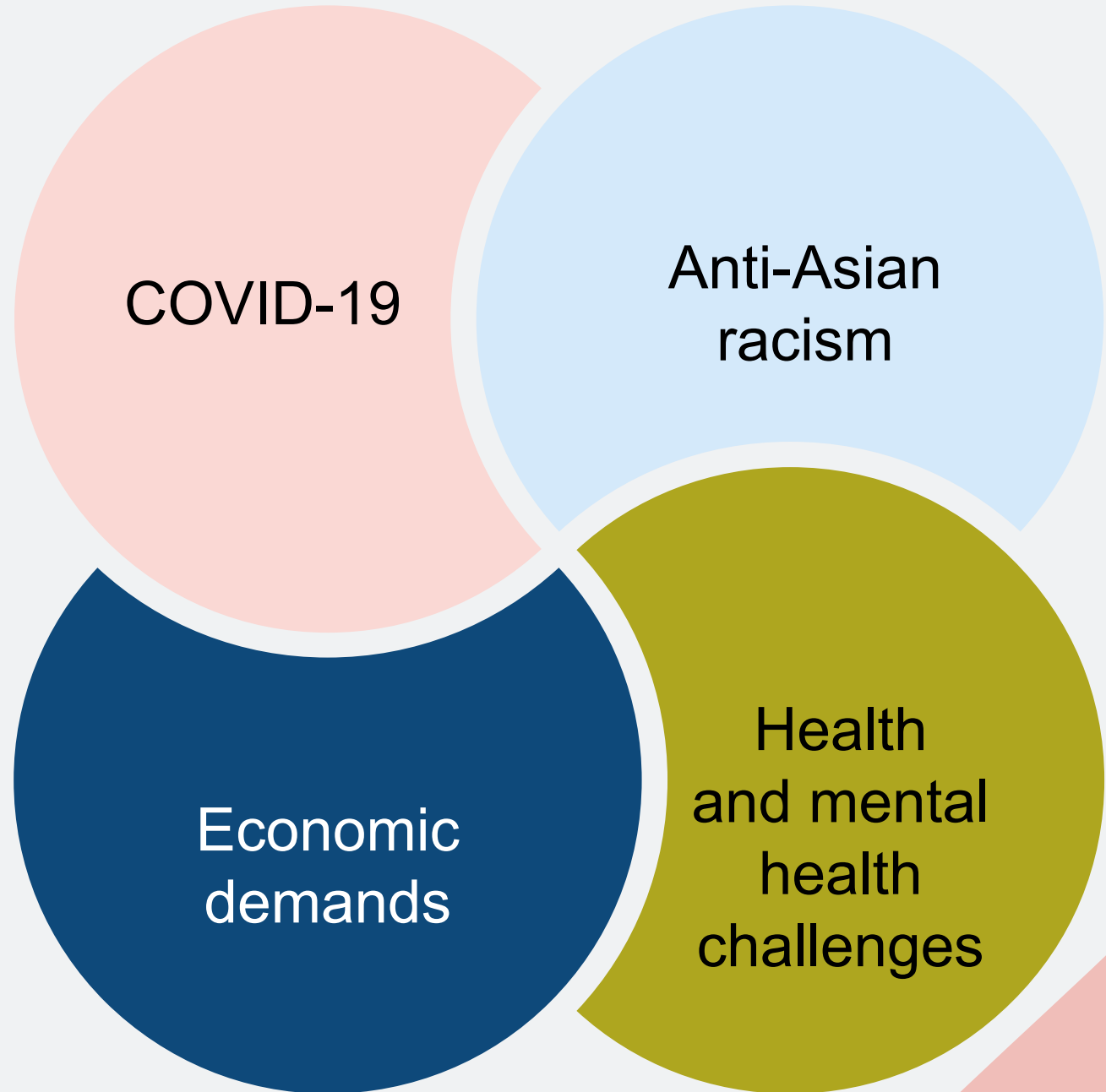


Essential Worker

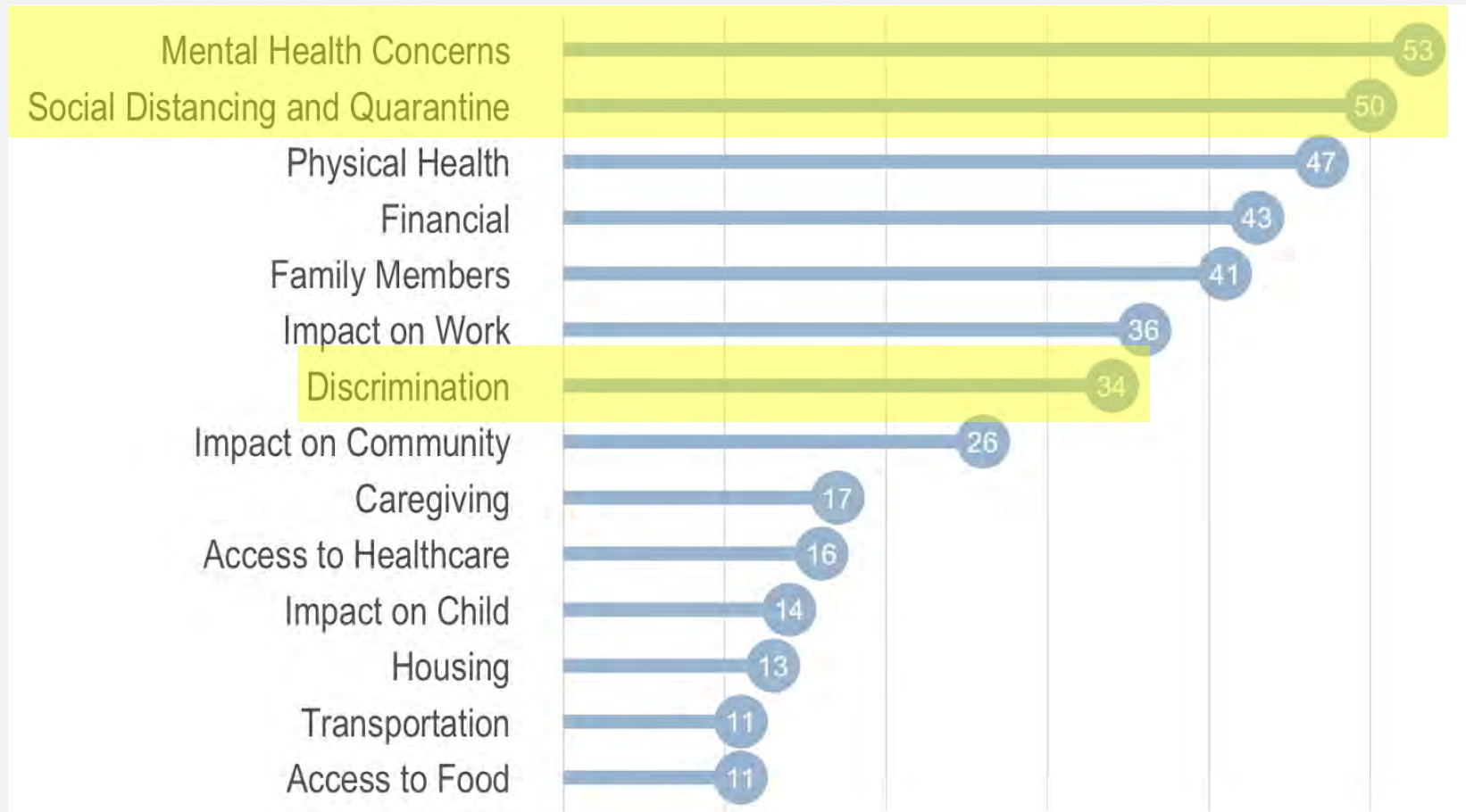
Community and Advocacy Network Partners



Asian Americans are facing a **syndemic** of multiple, interacting threats.



COVID-19 Stressors



ANTI- ASIAN RACISM

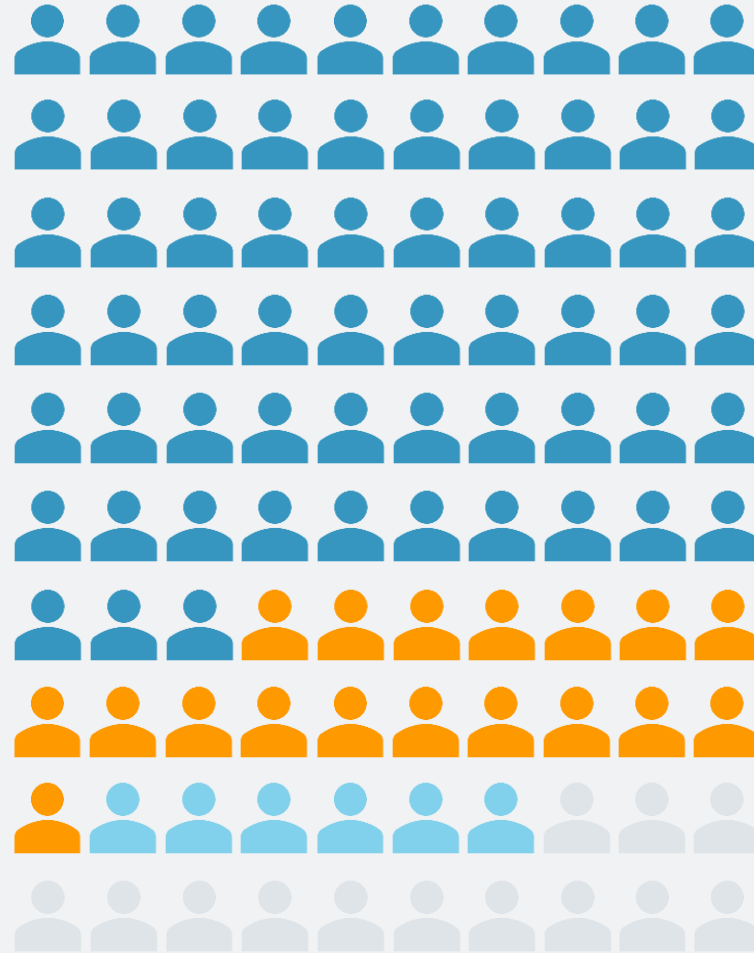
A guy tried to block my way on the street while I was walking, and he pointed to my face and called me “Corona Ch***.”

In black marker, someone wrote “G***” on my car. *I’m more fearful to go out on my own now.*

Types of reported anti-Asian racism (total > 100% since many reports included multiple types)

- Verbal assaults (63%)
- Physical assault, including coughed and spat upon (18%)
- Shunning/avoidance (6%)
- Other, including civil rights violations, threats, graffiti (30%)

Guys drove by in a truck and spit on me and said I gave them the coronavirus.



Anti-Asian racism during COVID-19

61%

Have seen an
increase in
cyberbullying

31%

Have **faced**
discrimination

34%

Reported that
discrimination is a
major stressor

75%

Believe the US has
become **more**
dangerous for
Asian Americans

ECONOMIC DEMANDS

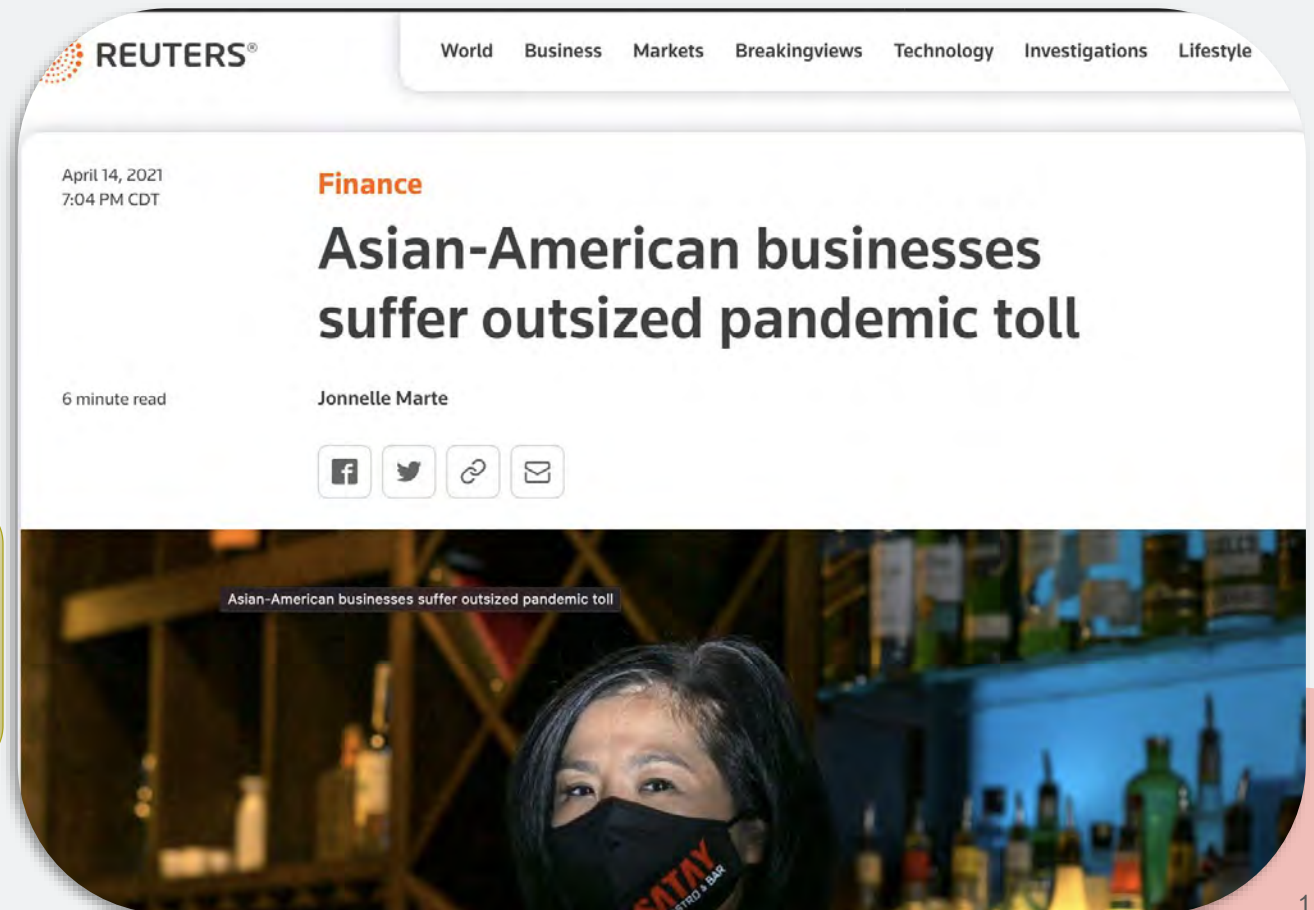
Lost work

I needed to help my parents navigate unemployment benefits since English is not their first language.

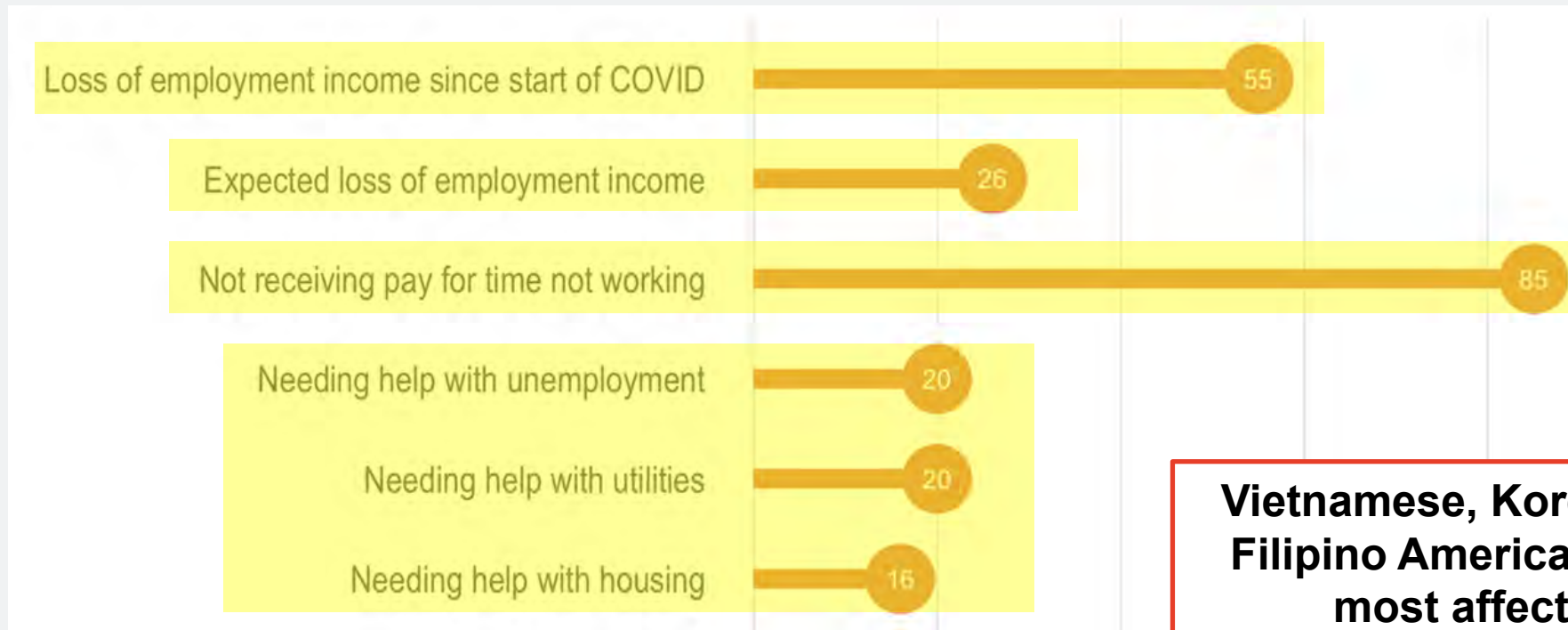
My father's business was greatly impacted and of course we are easy targets for hate crimes.

Will be laid off soon.

Lost income



Economic demands



Vietnamese, Korean, and Filipino Americans were most affected.



Can therapy ease the trauma of U.S. racist attacks and systemic racism?

Barbara Goldberg, Sharon Bernstein



atherine Shieh (from left), Milana Dam and Jaye Hobart: The pandemic and anti-Asian violence have put added stresses on Asian Americans. | Pat Nabong, Mengshin Lin / Sun-Times

POLITICS

‘Trauma upon trauma’: Asian Americans say mental health has suffered amid COVID-19, anti-Asian violence

Seven Chicagoans talk about how anti-Asian violence coupled with the pandemic has affected their mental health and their everyday lives.

By Pat Nabong | Apr 9, 2021, 5:45am CDT

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Health and mental health impacts

44%

Reported a **decline**
in self-rated health

41%

Delayed getting
medical care

41%

Reported
depression or
anxiety symptoms

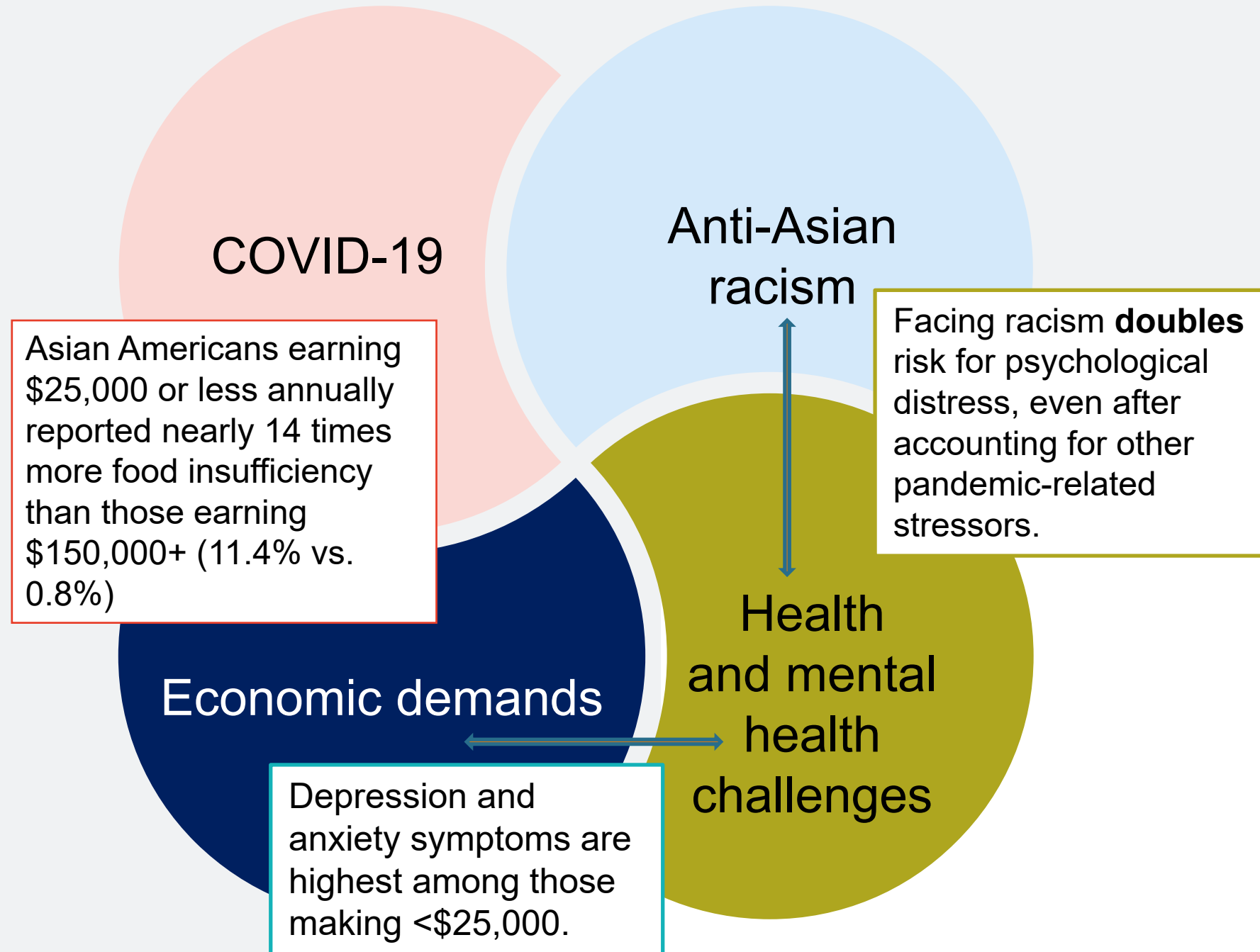
62%

Have **unmet mental**
health need

LEP and young
adults are in
most need of
help.

Young adults and those with low income are most
vulnerable.

These threats **interact and compound**, resulting in **long-term impacts for well-being.**



Community-Centered Strategies

- Providing in-language outreach and education about behavioral health
- Partnering with non-behavioral health services, such as youth afterschool tutoring programs
- Supporting community-centered models of healing and resilience
 - Tai chi, gardening, cooking, storytelling, escort programs
- Tending to other social determinants of health
 - Food, housing, employment assistance
- Advocating for policy change that includes Asian Americans in health equity action plans

*Grace Chan McKibben,
Executive Director,
Coalition for a Better
Chinese American
Community*





Community-centered research, policy, and service delivery solutions can help achieve health equity for Asian Americans (and other groups)



Cultural and structural factors underlie Asian Americans' underutilization of behavioral health services.

Key Takeaways

Thank you!

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