How Legal and Aging Service Providers Can Better Serve AAPI Older Adults

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Justice in Aging is a national organization that uses the power of law to fight senior poverty by securing access to affordable health care, economic security, and the courts for older adults with limited resources.

Since 1972 we’ve focused our efforts primarily on fighting for people who have been marginalized and excluded from justice, such as women, people of color, LGBTQ individuals, and people with limited English proficiency.
To achieve Justice in Aging, we must:

- Acknowledge systemic racism and discrimination
- Address the enduring negative effects of racism and differential treatment
- Promote access and equity in economic security, health care, and the courts for our nation’s low-income older adults
- Recruit, support, and retain a diverse staff and board, including race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and presentation, sexual orientation, disability, age, economic class
Housekeeping

• All on mute. Use Questions function for substantive questions and for technical concerns.
• Problems with getting on to the webinar? Send an e-mail to trainings@justiceinaging.org.
• Find materials for this training and past trainings by searching the Resource Library, justiceinaging.org/resource-library. A recording will be posted to Justice in Aging's Vimeo page at the conclusion of the presentation, vimeo.com/justiceinaging.
Roadmap

• Background on AAPI Older Adults
• Tips to Serve AAPI Older Adults
• Resources for Advocates and Professionals
• Q&A
NAPCA’s mission is to preserve and promote the dignity, well-being, and quality of life of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) as they age.

- In-language and culturally competent (cultural humility) resources
  - National Community Resource Helpline for Older Adults and Caregivers

- Minority Organization Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC) w/ Administration for Community Living (ACL)
  - 1 of 5 minority organizations in the US providing targeted technical assistance and training to the aging services network and other relevant stakeholders and consumers

- Advocating for the unique needs of AAPI family caregivers and diverse AAPI representation in research
  - CARE Project (www.careregistry.ucsf.edu)
  - COMPASS Project (www.compass.ucsf.edu)

- Supporting a mature workforce and building economic security
  - Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) w/ Department of Labor (DOL)
  - Senior Environmental Employment Program (SEE) w/ Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Supporting the Livelihoods of Close to 100,000 Older Adults

• Nationwide reach with:
  • Offices located in major U.S. cities: Los Angeles, Seattle, Chicago, and Washington D.C.
  • Workforce development programs serving African American, Latino, white, and AAPI older adults in 16 states

Seattle (Headquarters)
1511 Third Avenue
Suite 914
Seattle, WA 98101
(206) 624-1221

Los Angeles
767 N. Hill St.
Suite 301
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 617-8553

Chicago
122 S. Michigan Ave.
Suite 1360
Chicago, IL 60603
(312) 913-0981

Washington DC
1001 Connecticut Avenue
Suite 320
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 776-0306
National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA)  
ncea.acl.gov

NCEA strives to improve the national response to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
Background
The Diversity of AAPIs

- AAPIs are a heterogeneous group representing diverse and unique cultural and racial identities originating from over 30 countries in the Asian continent or the Pacific islands.

- Asian Americans are the fastest growing racial group in the US:
  - 7% of the population
  - 20 million Asian Americans
  - 1.6 million Pacific Islanders
  - AAPIs 65+ expected to grow by 232% to 7.3 million representing 21% of the total AAPI population by 2060

- AAPI older adults make up:
  - About 4.6% of the total U.S. older adult population
  - About 10.2% of the total AAPI population
Language Access

- AAPIs represent over 100 spoken languages.
- About 60% of Asian older adults are Limited English Proficient (LEP).
- LEP = speaks English less than “very well”.
- 27% of AAPI older adults reside in linguistically isolated households.
- 1/3 of all Cambodian, Laotian, and Chinese American older adults, 45% of Korean American older adults, and 46% of Vietnamese American older adults are linguistically isolated.
- Language barriers can lead to isolation, loss of opportunities, prevent someone from medical and social services.
  - Direct impact to quality of life

% of AAPI Older Adult Population who are Limited English Proficient
Poverty & Economic Status

• In aggregate, AAPI older adults face lower levels of poverty compared to other minority counterparts.
• However, within certain AAPI sub-populations, poverty rates are extremely high.
• 1/4 of all Micronesian older adults, 1/5 of Bangladeshi, Burmese, Cambodian, Korean and Nepalese older adults, and 15% or more of Chinese, Hmong, Laotian, and Vietnamese older adults live in poverty.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2016
Health Disparities

• AAPI older adults:
  • Experience worse access to care than White Americans by 17% and worse care by about 30% (US-DHHS, 2012)
  • Have disproportionately high prevalence of hepatitis B, tuberculosis, and dementia
  • 65+ and are women (of all women in the US) have the highest suicide rate
  • Are more likely to be uninsured compared to the total US population
  • Only 33% of Asian American older adults have private insurance compared to 52% of all American older adults
  • 1 in 7 Tongan, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi older adults are uninsured
Many AAPI older adults are unable to overcome linguistic, socioeconomic, and health inequities in a broken system.

Los Angeles Times

Opinion: Koreatown needs a homeless shelter. It also needs city officials to learn from the mistakes of the past

By Joon Bang
MAY 18, 2018 4:05 AM PT

"Dowajuseyo." In Korean, it means “help me.”

A few months ago, I received a call from an L.A. County mental health facility. They had just taken a frail Korean grandmother into their care, and officials couldn’t figure out what to do with her. In her 70s, with a full head of gray hair, the woman probably weighed no more than 85 pounds and had been living on the streets after being evicted from her Koreatown home. She was afraid to be alone in a facility with people who were unable to communicate with her and wanted to be released.

I often find myself in this somewhat fraught position — a bridge between the limited-English-speaking Korean immigrant community and the service providers who have the resources to help them. I spoke with the grandmother’s family, who told me that their financial hardship made their grandmother’s mental illness difficult to manage on their own. I tried again and again to broker some kind of arrangement. Ultimately, we were unable to find a solution. The grandmother was released to the streets. She’s currently among a growing number of Korean American seniors who are experiencing homelessness.
The Importance of Cultural Awareness

• Cultural awareness is the first and foundational element of cultural competence.

• Historically, AAPI cultures are highly group-oriented and place a strong emphasis on the family as the sole source of identity. The traditional household is comprised of multiple generations; it is normal to find three to four generations living under one roof (Ogawa, 1978). AAPIs often value the family unit over oneself.
  • An example: Hanai.
  • The importance of filial piety.

• Caveat: We need to be careful not to generalize, profile, or stereotype people; an individual may, and more likely will, deviate from cultural norms.
Language, Culture, Identity, and Community Go Hand in Hand

• Language is the embodiment of culture, history, and identity. In its purest form, language is power.

When Joon Bang asked his team to look over translations of some public messages about coronavirus, some of them raised an important question.

One Mandarin translation, with information about limiting exposure to SARS-CoV-2, included the characters ‘暴露.’ Technically, it wasn’t incorrect: The characters mean ‘exposed.’ But not quite in the way Bang, the president and chief executive officer of the US National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA), had intended.

People who aren’t proficient in English—particularly those who are older, and may not be tech-savvy enough to find the resources they need online—have largely been left out of the conversation around Covid-19, and their care has fallen through the cracks. Non-profit organizations like NAPCA, the National Indian Council on Aging, and the National Hispanic Council on Aging, as well as several smaller, locally-based organizations have had to step in to try to fill those gaps.
Cultural Competence Best Practices

• Best Practice #1: Acknowledge and Recognize the Challenges of AAPI older Adults and Care About Them
• Best Practice #2: Value AAPI Diversity
  • Demonstrate that the organization values AAPI diversity by fostering a multicultural and age-diverse work environment.
  • Target funding for services and ensure resource allocation to match the needs of AAPI older adults and their caregivers.
• Best Practice #3: Assess Your Organization
  • Develop an internal team to conduct regular organizational assessments to evaluate operational impacts on AAPI older adults.
  • Assess policies and procedures (i.e. disaggregated AAPI data collection, ensure a process of identifying and documenting preferred language, etc.).
• Best Practice #4: Manage the Dynamics of Difference
  • Consider implementing a mechanism for AAPI older adults and their families to provide feedback.
  • Solicit input from AAPI staff in organizational planning for AAPI older adults.
• Best Practice #5: Acquire and Institutionalize AAPI Cultural Knowledge
  • Identify opportunities for staff to learn about AAPI cultures (i.e. regular cultural competency trainings).
Focus on Language Access

• Review and implement policies to ensure appropriate language access
• Create and maintain a language access plan
  • Include details like the types of interpretation and translation services provided and needs of local community
• Use bilingual staff who are qualified
• AAPI older adults may not share as comfortably with professional interpreters
Data and Internal Policies

- Prioritize recruitment and retention of a diverse staff that includes AAPI employees
- Collect and disaggregate client data for specific sub-groups
- Encourage staff to identify case trends with intersectional approach
Partner with CBOs

• The role of CBOs in the AAPI community
• Create ways for robust collaboration
• Explaining the importance of legal or aging services
Trauma-informed Practices

• Recognizing the significance of childhood trauma, historical trauma, racial trauma
  • Providing accommodation for client interviewing
  • Extensive witness preparation to alleviate anxiety

• Impact of current Asian American hate

• Give clients power and control back over their cases and lives
Additional Resources

• National Center on Law and Elder Rights
  • Trauma informed lawyering
  • Access to public benefits for older immigrants
  • Language access rights
  • Accessing SSA services for LEP individuals

• Justice in Aging blog posts on COVID-19
  • COVID-19 Response
  • Vaccines
Practice Tips

• Interpreter and/or local translator
• Training from and with "gate keepers"
• Collaborations & partnerships
• Consider consumers’ varying literacy levels (for both English & in-language fact sheets)
• Images in promo materials / fact sheets
• https://ncea.acl.gov/NCEA/media/Publication/NCEA_LimitedEnglish_Tips.pdf
NCEA Research Briefs

- Mistreatment of Chinese Elders (2021)
- Mistreatment of Korean Elders (2021)
- Mistreatment of Asian Pacific Islander (API) Elders (2013)

Access all NCEA research briefs:
https://ncea.acl.gov/What-We-Do/Research/Research-Briefs.aspx
NCEA In-language Fact Sheets

• 5 Things Everyone Can Do to Prevent Elder Abuse
• Facts About Elder Abuse
• Red Flags of Elder Abuse
• Scammed, Now What?
• And more!

• NCEA Publications Library: https://ncea.acl.gov/Resources/Publications.aspx
NAPCA x NCEA Fact Sheets

- Identifying Financial Exploitation
- Planning to Protect Yourself from Financial Exploitation
- AAPI Financial Exploitation Series Guidelines for Professionals
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Six Ways to Care for Yourself When Caring for Someone with Dementia

NCEA Publications Library: https://ncea.acl.gov/Resources/Publications.aspx

- Chinese
- Japanese
- Korean
- Samoan
- Tagalog
- Vietnamese
NAPCA Resources

www.napca.org/resource

www.napca.org/helpline
Questions?

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