

Honoring AAPI Heritage & Mental Health: A Guide for Our Communities

May is Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, a time for us to celebrate and honor the unique cultures, contributions, histories, and experiences of our AAPI communities — including those of Native Hawaiians — that make our country and our state of California so unique. It's also a time for reflection on how we can better support one another, especially when it comes to our mental wellbeing.

Our communities still face barriers to seeking mental health support, including stigma, cultural expectations, and the impact of racism and discrimination. These barriers, coupled with further challenges — such as the rise in hate crimes and a lack of culturally affirming mental health care — make open conversations and access to support more important than ever.



Creating Space for Open Conversations This Month

Speaking openly about our own mental health is a powerful way to support our communities. In many cultures, talking about mental health struggles can be seen as shameful, or a sign of weakness. But staying silent can reinforce harmful stereotypes — like the “model minority myth” — that pressure AAPI individuals to appear strong, resilient, and successful. By sharing our experiences, we validate the diverse realities of our communities and help normalize conversations about mental well-being.



Talk about it — for yourself.

Speaking to someone you trust about your struggles is a first step to feeling better and can encourage others to do the same. If you don't have a trusted person, or aren't ready to talk in person, consider:

- Exploring the multiple resources available where you can talk to trained professionals and community members with similar experiences. Check out the culturally affirming mental health organizations and providers listed at the end of this guide!
- Reading blogs and social media posts or watching YouTube videos that focus on mental health topics.
- Participating in online support groups that discuss mental health in AAPI communities.

Hearing other people's stories can make us feel less alone and encourage us to get the support we need.





Talk about it — with a friend or loved one.

If you're looking for ways to start talking about mental health with a family member or friend, here are some ways to get started:

- Find a time and space where you can talk without distraction. If you're not able to do it in person, try connecting by phone, video call, or text.
- Ask open-ended questions about what's going on in their life or follow up on past concerns. Example: "Seems like something is bothering you. Do you want to talk about it?"
- Listen without interrupting, refrain from any judgment, and validate their feelings with responses like, "That must be hard" or "It sounds like you're feeling really frustrated."
- Let them know you care and want to help. Offer to help them get support or look for resources such as a therapist or support group that can validate their identity, culture, and experiences.
- If you are worried they might be thinking about suicide or otherwise harming themselves, ask them about it directly. You won't plant the idea in their head — it could actually bring them relief to have a conversation. Call or text 988 to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline for free, confidential 24/7 support.

Check out some California-wide and national resources:

- **Asian Mental Health Collective**
Support groups and tools to locate an AAPI-identifying therapist near you.
- **Asians Do Therapy**
Featuring stories of diverse and prominent AAPI individuals and their mental health journeys, with information and resources for anyone who wants to get mental health support.
- **Asian Pride Project**
Stories of 2SLGBTQIA+ AAPI individuals from the point of view of their parents, elders, and families.
- **NAMI AAPI Information and Supports**
Information and various supportive resources for diverse AAPI communities.
- **Trevor Project**
Support for 2SLGBTQIA+ young people, including AAPI youth. You can contact the Trevor Project at any time by calling 1-866-488-7386, texting START to 678-678, or visiting TrevorChat.org.
- **CalHOPE**
A free statewide California program offering confidential, culturally competent mental health support and resources, including referrals plus peer support and coaching. Chat online, or call or text the CalHOPE warm line at 833-317-HOPE (4673).
- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**
And remember, if you or someone you know is ever in crisis or distress — or if you just need someone to talk to — you can always call or text 988 to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline for free, confidential, 24/7 support.



For more information, visit TakeAction4MH.com/toolkit-categories/2025-AAPI-Heritage, and make sure to use this month to **Honor Our History & Our Mental Health.**

