

## **ARE THEATRICAL VIGNETTES A VIABLE MEDIUM TO SUPPORT ASIAN AMERICAN FAMILIES AFFECTED BY COVID-19? CHATOGETHER IN SECONDARY BOARDING SCHOOLS**

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Background: Yale Compassionate Home, Action Together (CHATogether) is a group focused on using theater to address emotional wellness in Asian American children and parents on stigmatized issues. In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, CHATogether helped Asian American boarding school students converse openly and safely with their families about mental health and emotional well-being.

Objectives: We aim to promote mentalization, empathy, and effective communications in Asian American boarding school students and families during pandemic transitions.

Methods: CHATogether members 1) enact the role of a parent or teen in a live skit where there are differences in perspectives 2) a moderator steps in to reflect and offer guidance towards improved communication, and 3) the skit continues using the skills just learned. Our event depicted a quarantined Asian American family that highlights an argument between a high school junior and his parents about phone usage. After acting and audience discussion, a preliminary survey study was conducted.

Results: 17 out of 18 participants gave a rating of 7 out of 10 or above in helpfulness when addressing emotional wellness. 15 out of 18 participants felt like the relatability was above a 7 out of 10. As first-time attendees, 38.9% of them either agreed or strongly agreed that the event changed their perspective of their own teen-parent relationship. 72.3% of participants suggested that their parents or children should participate in this in the future, while 88.9% of participants suggested that more boarding school students and faculty will benefit from this program.

Discussion: Preliminary results suggest that a theatrical vignette may be a great medium to support Asian American families during the pandemic. This is a relatable and interesting way for participants to explore controversial issues and family relationships. Future goals include expanding to more boarding schools and assessing longer-term outcomes.

### Full List of Authors

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### Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Attendees will be able to learn this methodology to appreciate culturally-adapted communication in Asian American families.
2. Attendees will be able to raise awareness of the mental health issues among minority students in boarding schools.

#### References

Boal A. Theatre Communications Group; 1985.

Rohd M. Heinemann Drama; 1998.

<https://youtu.be/EqMXc2UJXe0>