

Group Project Assignment (Jenna Lee)

- **Research the topic and research question:** Topic: Addressing Korean American Women's Mental Health Issues with Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction During COVID-19. / Research Question: Can Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction reduce depression and anxiety experienced by Korean American women affected by COVID-19?
- **Describe special populations that you are interested in:** Widespread outbreaks of infectious diseases, such as COVID-19, exacerbate existing mental health problems and increase psychological distress. Due to acts of racism and discrimination, Korean Americans face a higher risk of developing mental health issues than their other ethnic counterparts. As a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic, Korean American women in the United States are being attacked verbally and physically, harassed, and stigmatized.
- **Describe social problems that the special populations experience and/or cause:** The challenges Korean Americans face not only threaten their personal well-being, but also have a significant effect on their mental health. Studies have demonstrated that racial discrimination increases the risk of mental health problems (Priest et al, 2013). An Asian American study (Gee et al., 2007) found that racial discrimination was associated with an increased risk of anxiety disorder and depression.
- **Identify the target client group:** The research proposal will target Korean American women between the ages of 21 and 65 who suffer from depression, anxiety, worry, and stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and anti-Asian sentiments. There should be no immediate risk of suicide, developmental delay, or active psychosis symptoms among participants.

- **Discuss services that promote changes in clients :** Clients would benefit from evidence-based interventions such as cognitive behavior therapy, meditation, or stress management groups. In this research proposal, I propose that Korean American women can benefit from a group therapy model that uses the theoretical orientations and interventions of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR).
- **Address why your research topic is important:** In the midst of this global health crisis, it is critical to devise and test an effective psychotherapeutic intervention such as MBSR to determine whether or not it can help reduce depression, anxiety, worry and stress in vulnerable Korean American women. Pre-existing mental health conditions, acculturative stress, racial discrimination, harassment, complex traumas, and low socioeconomic status have already made life challenging for Korean American women. In the COVID-19 pandemic, Korean American women will likely experience heightened fear, anxiety, and worry because they are easily targeted for racist harassment.
- **Discuss the gaps in understanding existing research and knowledge about your research topic:** There is a scarcity of research studies on effective psychotherapeutic interventions for Korean American women. As a result of COVID-19, there is an emerging social and mental health problem.

References

Gee, G. C., Spencer, M., Chen, J., Yip, T., & Takeuchi, D. T. (2007). The association between self-reported racial discrimination and 12-month DSM-IV mental disorders among Asian Americans nationwide. *Social science & medicine* (1982), 64(10), 1984–1996.
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Priest, N., Paradies, Y., Trenerry, B., Truong, M., Karlsen, S., & Kelly, Y. (2013). A systematic review of studies examining the relationship between reported racism and health and wellbeing for children and young people. *Social Science & Medicine*, 95, 115-127.
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