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Many college students may find it challenging to discover and create a supportive and consistent community or establish meaningful relationships in school. Asian American college students, in particular, have cultural values, experiences, and ideologies that can limit seeking mentors and establishing a social support network. The consequences of this could be increased feelings of loneliness and isolation, worse mental health, lower academic performance, lower attendance, and an increased likelihood of dropping out of school. To address these challenges, I have created an interactive presentation bringing awareness to students in a mentorship program within the Asian and Pacific Islander Association (APIA) at California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB) in Seaside, California.

To clarify some key terms, when "mentorship" is mentioned, it simply refers to the relationship between an older, more experienced person who agrees to advise or guide a younger, less experienced person. Within the context of this paper, mentorship will often refer to an older, more experienced college student who has agreed to formally befriend a younger, less experienced college student. The phrase "Asian American" is generally quite broad and can refer to several people groups including, but not limited to Americans who are also Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipinx, Hmong, Indian, Vietnamese, Taiwanese, Thai, Cambodian, and Pakistani. Many academic works cover various ethnic groups, although in general only cover "six origin Asian countries," which are Chinese, Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese (Budiman & Ruiz, 2021).

Needs Statement

Asian American college students are less likely to seek out mentorships and community due to several factors affecting their relationship-building behaviors. The consequences of this problem are greater feelings of loneliness, worse mental health, and lower academic performance. The contributing factors include but are not limited to mental health stigma, lack of effective coping techniques, and the consequences of trying to "save face".

According to research, Asian Americans are more likely to be depressed in comparison to European American college students (Kalibatseva et al., 2017). They are also less likely than other Americans to use social coping strategies to manage stress (Kim et al., 2008). Even simple steps like asking others for help prove to be a challenge. These issues can be attributed, at least in part, to the trend of mental health stigma in Asian cultures. Leong, Kim, and Gupta state that in Asian cultures, the "mental illness of an individual reflects failure on the family and can translate toward disgrace of the whole family unit" (2011). Having such a vital institution view an aspect of health with a heavy lens of shame can foster harmful habits in addressing mental health-related problems. If the idea of poor mental health is invalidated as a real struggle, then it will likely not be seriously addressed either. They may choose to cope by engaging in harmful behaviors like drinking alcohol or drugs to reduce stress. Furthermore, if someone learns they cannot be vulnerable with their family members (a close-proximity unit), that lesson may also carry over to their other relationships. The combination of minimizing health issues and lack of effective coping strategies is troubling and points to a problematic attitude toward mental health.

In addition to mental unhealth, a lack of vulnerability can hinder developing relationships. In many Asian cultures exists a concept known as "saving/losing face." Losing face involves embarrassment, humiliation, and shame. While saving face refers to gaining the

respect or admiration of others and better social status. The threat of losing face can positively affect a person's social behavior (Hall et al., 2005). However, its adverse effects prove detrimental to individual self-esteem and perception of their social status to their family or community (Leong, Kim & Gupta, 2011). To save face, a person may withhold personal information or not participate in sharing common experiences. This lack of depth can prevent individuals from experiencing intimacy, a key component of cultivating relationships. Intimacy is also an important aspect of psychosocial development in young adults, which will be explored more in-depth later. The expectation of saving face implies honoring one's family, making oneself appear composed, and individual competency. Maintaining those things long-term, independent of others, is not only a daunting task but can result in harm if issues threatening that person's well-being are not disclosed to others. Part of the solution to addressing this is cultivating an environment that feels safe to be transparent. This can be achieved through a welcoming group of similar people with the goal of helping each other, which is a tenet in mentoring communities.

Mentorship is effective and practical for college students and can aid in several problem areas. Mentorship as a form of student self-leadership has several benefits. A study in the Journal of American College Health found that student self-leadership correlated with decreased stress levels, student retention, academic achievement, graduation rates, and lower engagement in undesirable behaviors, such as poor study skills, self-medicating, drug use, and binge-drinking (Maykrantz & Houghton, 2020). Mentorship programs, like those found in affinity groups, also function as an extra-curricular activity, which links to benefits for students (Ahern & Norris, 2011).

In summation, Asian Americans are less likely to seek meaningful relationships or community connections due to sociocultural influences unique to their demographic. With circumstances exacerbating stress in college, it is crucial to raise awareness of the benefits of such relationships for Asian American college students. This project aims to educate the members of APIA at CSUMB about these struggles and equip them with the knowledge to contribute to the community's betterment.

Theory and Development Section

The theory I chose to base my project on is Erik Erikson's Eight Stages of Progressive Psychosocial Development. In this theory, Erik Erikson describes eight stages through which a person progresses as they age. He believed they were biologically locked, as when you reach a certain age range, you definitely enter a specific stage. Each stage is marked by a struggle between two values, and those change depending on where an individual is in their process of development. There are psychological and social factors (i.e., specific relationships an individual has) which play into the struggle. The success or failure of each stage results in the acquisition of a specific characteristic. Success results in the acquisition of a psychosocial strength. Failure results in a negative impact on an individual's ego and impairs them in the subsequent stage. However, failure in one does not necessitate failure in the following stages. It just becomes more difficult. This is why each stage's set of struggles is referred to as a "crisis."

Most college students are emerging adults ranging between late teens to twenties in age and thus fall into stages five: identity versus role confusion and six: intimacy versus isolation. These stages result in similar virtues of love and fidelity, respectively, but the crisis and significant relationships differ. For stage five, the struggle is in what identity an individual wants to become and choosing between the many potentially presented to them. The significant

relations of adolescents in this stage are peer groups and leadership models. In stage six, the struggle for young adults is forming one or more intimate relationships. Being known and sharing oneself with another is the goal, but it leads to isolation or emotional distance if unachieved. The significant relations for this group are partners in friendship and romantic partners (Cavanaugh & Blanchard-Fields, 2019).

These are the stages the participants are conceivably in and directly relate to the concerns at hand. For instance, newer college students are likely to be in unfamiliar environments when they matriculate and have few or no social connections. If they join a peer mentor program, they connect with upperclassmen (leadership model) and other newer students (peer groups). Those who stay in the program and continue to be mentors themselves are more likely to have lasting relationships with the others in the program. If sustained long enough, they can even achieve generativity into adulthood, the seventh stage of Erikson's Psychosocial Development.

In the case of APIA's Big and Little program, the goal is to have members join early in their higher education career, stay in it for the remainder of their schooling, and eventually convert each mentee into a mentor. Because my participants are within the fifth and sixth stages, it is important for them to have connections with peers and form intimate relationships, platonic or romantic. Mentorship is meant to facilitate these relationships, which I emphasized in my presentation. The club's mentorship program aims to foster community by joining students together and providing an ongoing base for activities and social gatherings. These goals can be generalized to other mentoring programs and community-minded organizations. The benefits of community engagement and mentorship, in general, are highlighted in this project with emphasis on how it can help with the issues and obstacles our particular demographic faces.

Consideration of Diversity

As mentioned throughout the paper, this project focuses on Asian American College students. With this ethnic/racial emphasis in mind, it seems important to note that the population of Asians in the United States is 7% of the overall population, occurs shared at CSUMB specifically, the number is slightly higher, with 8% of students identifying as Asian American (Budiman & Ruiz, 2021; Institutional Assessment and Research & CSUMB, 2021). In the execution portion of the project, I presented to students of California State University Monterey Bay, particularly those in the Asian and Pacific Islander Association Club who are members of the Big and Little Mentorship program. I do not expect my audience to reflect the overall population of Asian American college students for several reasons. Most of them are originally from California. Many of them are specifically Filipinx. My audience was relatively small. There are probably unknown commonalities, such as certain characteristics or inclinations, that made them likely to enroll in CSUMB and join APIA and the Big and Little program.

I delivered mainly to them because of convenience since I already had strong connections with the club, personally and professionally. While participants were not required to be a part of the program or club, most of them happened to be, with a few Asian American college students from other schools I reached out to personally. Because the theory was predicated on a specific age range of young adults, requiring that participants be college students or at least recent college students (who graduated within the last two years) was helpful but unnecessary for my project. Participants were required to use a device such as a laptop or a tablet to access the presentation. Also, they needed to be proficient in English since the presentation was in all English and computer skills to navigate the gamified presentation.

With some alterations to the language, my project could easily be applied to age groups other than college students since the main focus is on Asian Americans. For example, this content could be delivered to Asian American high school students instead, with a lower expectation that they have participated in mentorships before. The general idea of mentorships and community being beneficial to students could also apply to other groups with considerations for a different race and ethnicity, for example, African American or Latinx American students. However, the socio-cultural barriers section would likely see more significant adjustments. The content could be generalized to include more minorities in the United States but potentially sacrifice the specificity that helps identify barriers to successful mentorships.

Learning Outcomes

In order to educate my audience of Asian American College Students on the importance of mentorship and community, I created a gamified presentation with a curriculum about the challenges this demographic may face as influenced by sociocultural factors. In future tense, by the end of my presentation, my participants should be able to achieve the following learning outcomes:

1. Identify one sociocultural barrier to developing community and mentorships.

2. Identify one benefit of mentorship

3. Identify one benefit of joining a community

Method

In order to execute my presentation, I performed the following steps. I first needed to find an appropriate audience for my curriculum. I already had the Asian and Pacific Islander Association club in mind when planning my capstone project. I simply had to reach out to them and ask if they were interested in participating. I already have an established relationship with

this audience since I was the Big and Little program coordinator last year (the 2020-2021

academic year) and have been an active member for the past two years. In lieu of a formal

introduction, I explained the reasoning behind my project, that apart from being convenient for

me as a capstone student, it could be beneficial for the members of the club to know relevant

research on a demographic many of them are in or proximate to in addition to providing more

formal training for the mentorship program that was primarily casual. Once they agreed, I used

the usual channels of our club's communication (email and discord) to announce my project and

share the presentation link with them.

My presentation was created using a combination of Slido — an online widget capable of

being added to presentation-making software that can incorporate interactive tools into a

slideshow — and Jamboard — an online digital whiteboard. Due to the nature of my

presentation, participants were able to start it at their convenience and complete it at their own

pace by moving through the informational slides and answering the interactive slides. Prior to

each interactive slide that served as a learning outcome checkpoint, information directly relating

to the question was presented. The interactive slides consisted of Jamboards posing different

questions. The first one asked, "what obstacle do you think prevent Asian American students

from developing mentorships or joining a community?". See Appendix 1. I posed this question

before the information to get ideas of what they already thought or knew. The following

questions directly addressed the learning outcomes and came after the lesson was taught. The

second question slide asked, "what is a benefit of joining a community?". See Appendix 2. The

third asked "what is a benefit of mentorship?" See Appendix 3. Finally, the fourth asked, "what

are some sociocultural obstacles? What are some personal obstacles?" See Appendix 4. Most

participants did it individually, but they had the option to do it together for those who had contact

with each other in person. I also provided incentive for participation by telling them those who joined would enter into a raffle for a twenty-dollar gift card upon completion of the presentation. This was extra enticing since the holiday season was upon us. All they had to do was send me a screenshot of their completed presentation via email. As of writing this paper, I have yet to perform the raffle and award a winner. After a week, I closed submissions and began analyzing the data.

Results

Learning outcome one was for students to identify one sociocultural obstacle to accessing community and successful mentorship. To assess this, I had participants write their answers onto a Jamboard linked in the presentation. They did this activity at the time of their participation in the slideshow. In order to analyze the data, I counted the number of responses, noted their answers, and compared them to the information I taught. If it was reasonably relevant to the content, I considered it as a correct answer to the prompt. I found that the majority of participants met the learning outcome. Their responses can be seen in Appendix 2.

Learning outcome two was for students to identify a benefit of mentorship. To assess this, I had participants write their answers onto a Jamboard linked in the presentation. They did this activity at the time of their participation in the slideshow. In order to analyze the data, I counted the number of responses, noted their answers, and compared them to the information I taught. If it was reasonably relevant to the content, I considered it as a correct answer to the prompt. I found that the majority of participants met the learning outcome. Their responses can be seen in Appendix 3. Their answers were fairly similar, indicating that the lesson around this learning outcome had more specific and consistent information.

Learning outcome three was for students to identify a benefit of joining a community. To assess this, I had participants write their answers onto a Jamboard linked in the presentation. They did this activity at the time of their participation in the slideshow. In order to analyze the data, I counted the number of responses, noted their answers, and compared them to the information I taught. If it was reasonably relevant to the content, I considered it as a correct answer to the prompt. I found that the majority of participants met the learning outcome. Their responses can be seen in Appendix 4. Their answers were connected to each other and less similar as compared to the previous set of responses. This indicated that the lesson around this learning outcome touched on the topic more generally allowing room for interpretation, but still communicating the core idea. The summary of learning outcomes and the participant's responses can all be seen in Appendix 5.

Discussion

I believe my project was successful because participants were able to complete the training and achieve the learning outcomes. They were mostly successful in meeting the learning outcomes of the project. Overall, the participants found the information helpful and preferred controlling the presentation themselves as opposed to listening to someone else present.

If this project were to be delivered again, I would change several aspects. Firstly, I would have done this in person with a group. It seems ironic to have a whole presentation about community, the importance of certain relationships, and the benefits of connecting with others, but have the audience participate by themselves. I think it would also make the content more tangible if done within the context of the group and doing the activities with others. Secondly, I would have liked to reach out to students in CSUMB who are not already a part of the club or mentorship program. Presenting to those already in the club and program seems helpful for

retention, educating them more formally on relevant issues in our community, and informing future members. However, practically, it seems most helpful to present this kind of information to students who are not yet connected to convince them to do so.

I hope that such mentorships programs receive more attention in my school and connect with each other. There are several peer mentorship programs, Big and Little programs, and buddy programs in the school. If intersectionality were not only talked about in the classroom but put into practice by connecting these groups, I am convinced the sense of connectedness on campus would increase and lead to the overall improvement in student well-being, morale, academic success, and community. I would even like to see more mentorship between undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, high school students, and community college students in the area.

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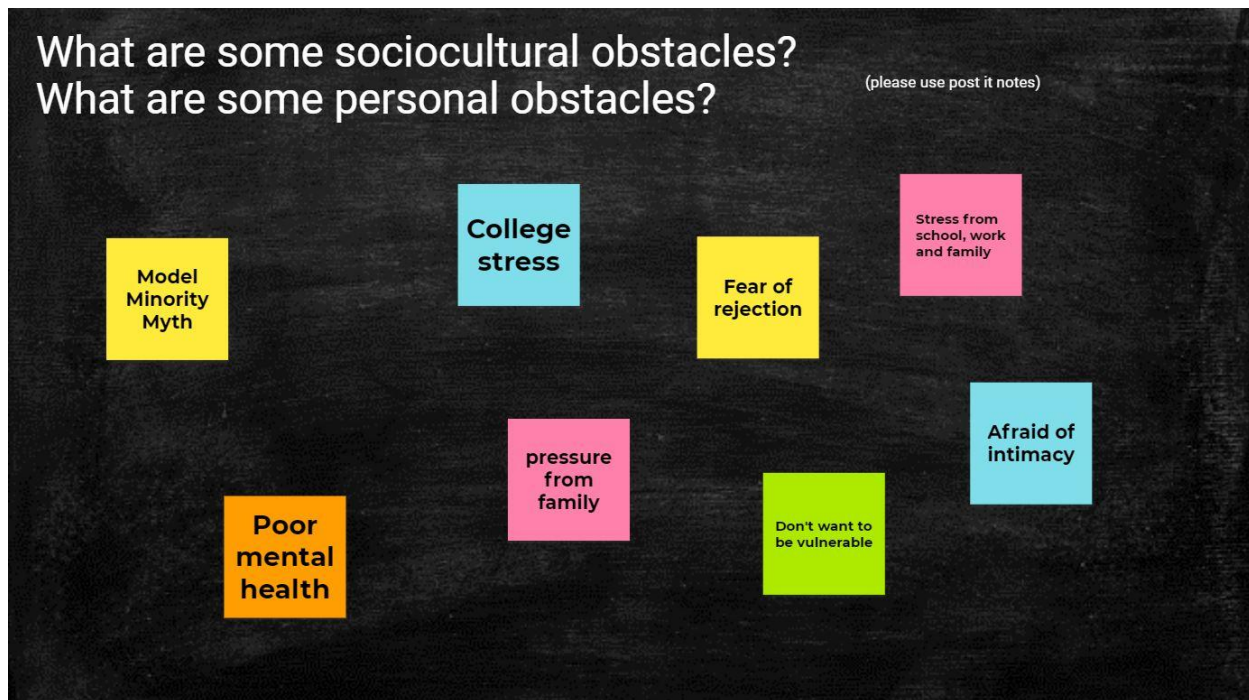
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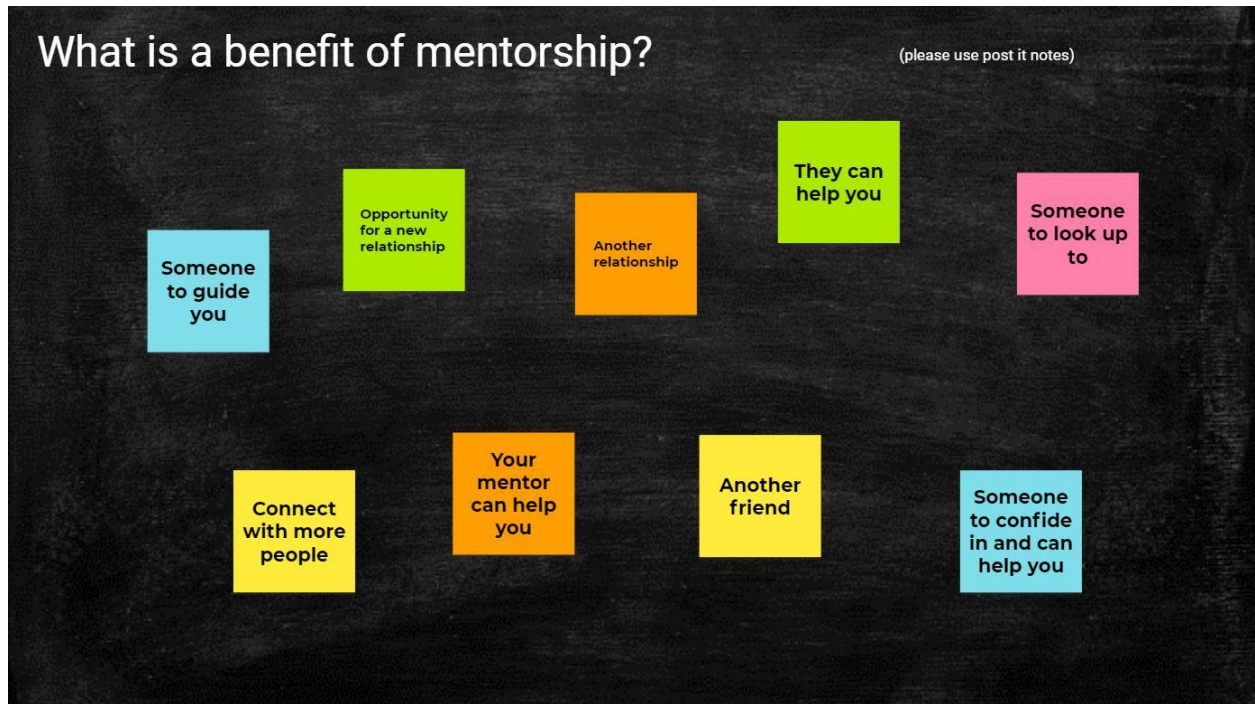
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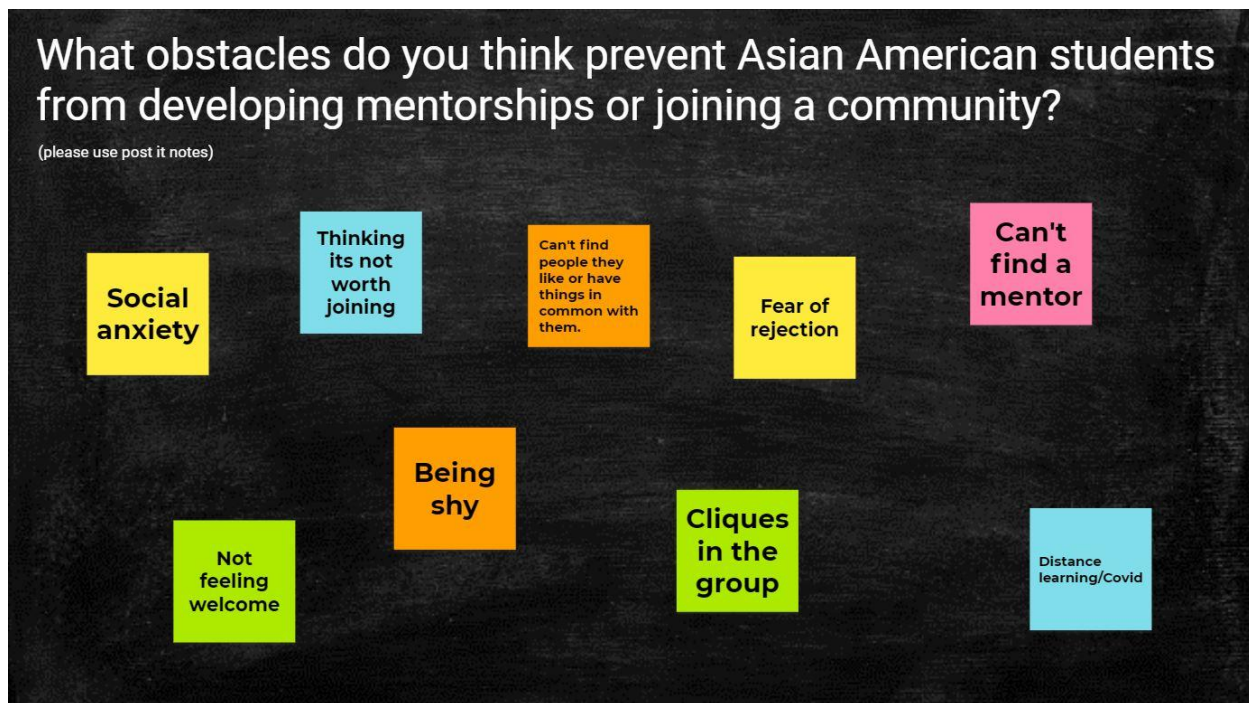
Appendix 1

Appendix 2

Appendix 3

Appendix 4

Appendix 5

Table of each participant's responses to each learning outcome question.

	LO1 Benefit of mentorship	LO2 Benefit of community	LO3 Sociocultural or personal obstacle
Participant 1	Met "Make more friends"	Met "Someone to guide you"	Met "Model Minority Myth"
Participant 2	Met "Get connected with more people"	Met "Opportunity for a new relationship"	Met "Don't want vulnerability"
Participant 3	Met "Things to do other than school"	Met "Another relationship"	Met "College stress"
Participant 4	Met "Group of people who can help you"	Met "They can help you"	Met "Fear of rejection"
Participant 5	Met "Social Support"	Met "Someone to look up to"	Met "Stress from school, work, and family"
Participant 6	Met "Having a support network"	Met "Connect with more people"	Met "Poor mental health"
Participant 7	Met "Opportunities to socialize"	Met "Another friend"	Met "Pressure from family"
Participant 8	Met "More friends/acquaintances"	Met "Someone to confide in and can help you"	Met "Afraid of intimacy"