

**Multicultural Competence for
Working with Asian Males:
Examination of Crucial Concepts
through a Korean Psychologist's
Experiences**

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ACCTA Conference

September 28 – October 3, 2012

Objectives

- By attending this workshop presentation, participants will be able to
 1. Define 3 critical concepts in understanding life experiences of Asian males.
 2. Describe their biases toward Asian males.
 3. Improve their knowledge on Asian males.
 4. Gain skills for working with Asian males.

True or False?

Asian men are:

either a nerd, kungfu master, or video gamer.

False

introverted and shy.

False

upset that all White men are stealing their Asian women away from them.

False

not considered sexy.

True

small downstairs.

False

Case of Matt

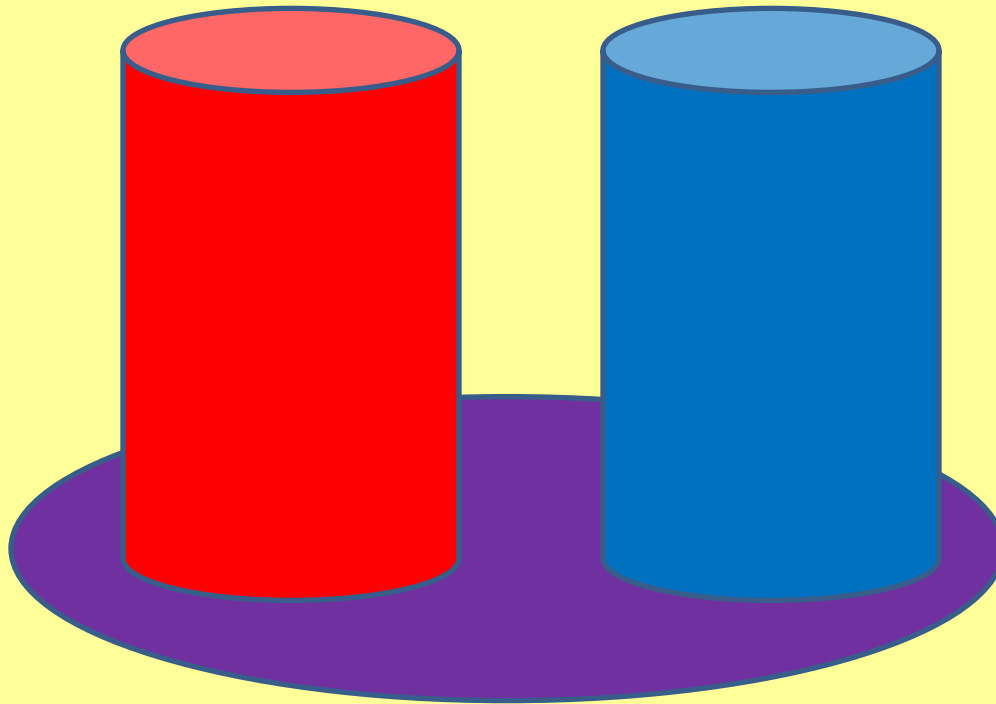
Matt is a 20 year-old Korean American single male engineering student. According to the paper work that Matt filled out, he was referred to the counseling center by his academic advisor. His main presenting concern was academic issues. According to the CCAPS-62 results, Depression, General Anxiety, Social Anxiety, Academic Distress, and Family Distress were elevated.

Things to Check Before Seeing Matt

1. What is my definition of masculinity?
2. What are my assumptions and stereotypes about Asian men?
3. How do I feel about Asian men regardless of their sexual orientation?
4. How much knowledge do I have about Korean culture and Asian culture?

Critical Concept #1: Asian Men's Racial Identity

Bicultural Racial Identity Model



Acculturation Type (Berry's model)

| Action | Accept new culture (American) | Reject new culture (American) |
|---|---|---|
| Accept indigenous culture (Asian) | Integration | Separation |
| Reject indigenous culture (Asian) | Assimilation | Marginalization |

Lived Experiences



rudimentary English—*milk, pop*—
ble with words like onion and union. They don't seem to
care. They want to play. Lelia recognizes this, too, and they
all gallop on broomsticks while they recite an old nursery
rhyme. Maybe this will work, Lelia says to me, hopping in
her turn. Sing, she tells them, let's all sing the song.

Will they remember the verse? I still know the one that
ancient chalk-white woman taught me with a polished
fruitwood stick. Mrs. Albrecht was her name, her bony
hands smelling of diapers.

“Henry Park,” her voice would quiver. “Please recite our
favorite verse.” I'd choke, stumble inside myself. And this
was her therapy, struck in sublime meter on my palms and
the backs of my calves:

*Till, like one in slumber bound,
Borne to ocean, I float down, around,
Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound . . .*

Peanut Butter Shelley, I'd murmur beneath my breath, un-
able to remember all the poet's womanly names. It was my
first year of school, my first days away from the private realm
of our house and tongue. I thought English would be simply
a version of our Korean. Like another kind of coat you could
wear. I didn't know what a difference in language meant
then. Or how my tongue would tie in the initial attempts,
stiffen so, struggle like an animal booby-trapped and dying
inside my head. Native speakers may not fully know this,
but English is a scabrous mouthful. In Korean, there are no
separate sounds for L and R, the sound is singular and with-
out a baroque Spanish trill or roll. There is no B and V for

us, no P and F. I always thought someone must have invented certain words to torture us. *Frivolous*. *Barbarian*. I remember my father saying, Your eyes all *led*, staring at me after I'd smoked pot the first time, and I went to my room and laughed until I wept.

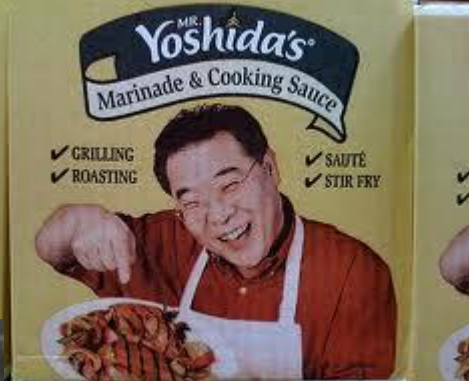
I will always make bad errors of speech. I remind myself of my mother and father, fumbling in front of strangers. Lelia says there are certain mental pathways of speaking that can never be unlearned. Sometimes I'll still say *riddle* for *little*, or *bent* for *vent*, though without any accent and so whoever's present just thinks I've momentarily lost my train of thought. But I always hear myself displacing the two languages, conflating them—maybe conflagrating them—for there's so much rubbing and friction, a fire always threatens to blow up between the tongues. Friction, affliction. In kindergarten, kids would call me "Marble Mouth" because I spoke in a garbled voice, my bound tongue wrenching itself to move in the right ways.

"Yo, China boy," the older black kids would yell at me across the blacktop, "what you doin' there, practicin'?"

Of course I was. I would rewhisper all the words and sounds I had messed up earlier that morning, trying to invoke how the one girl who always wore a baby-blue cardigan would speak.

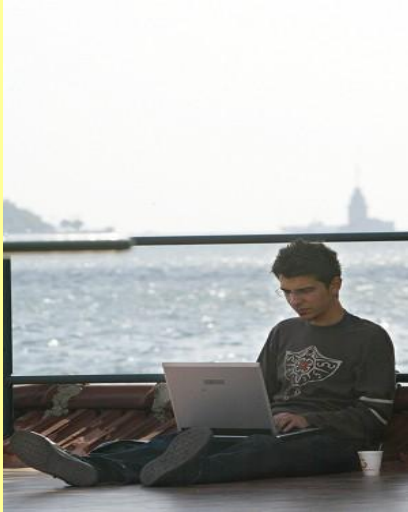
"Thus flies foul our fearless night owl," she might say, the words forming so punctiliously on her lips, her head raised
Alice

Asian (Men)'s Stereotypes



Model Minority?

Bright



Well-To-Do

Overachiever



**Problem
Free**



Perfidious Foreigner



Critical Concept #2: Racism Experience

Eight Themes of Asian American Racism Experience (D. W. Sue et al., 2007)

1. Alien in own land
2. Ascription of intelligence
3. Exoticization of Asian women
4. Invalidation of interethnic differences
5. Denial of racial reality
6. Pathologizing of cultural values/communication styles
7. Second class citizenship
8. Invisibility

Racism and Asian Men's Mental Health

Lee & Ahn (2012)'s meta study

- 23 independent studies with 99 correlations
- Statistically significant ($\bar{r}=.23$) relationship between racial discrimination and mental health

Critical Concept #3: Cultural Values

- *American vs. Asian cultural values*
 - Individualism vs. Collectivism

Asian Traditional Values (Ho, 1992)

- *Filial piety*
 - *Shame*
- *Self-control*
- *Assuming the middle position*
- *Awareness of the social milieu*
 - *Fatalism*
 - *Inconspicuousness*

Comparison of the East and the West (Rhee, 1992)

| West | East |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Doing (Having) | Being |
| Negative | Positive |
| Alienation | Relationship |
| Verbal | Non-verbal |
| Conception | Perception |
| Theory | Practice or Reality |
| Technique | Personality |
| Artificiality | Spontaneity or Naturalness |
| Existential Anxiety cannot be removed | No existential anxiety by facing death without anxiety |
| Contract | Trust |
| Self | Self-transcendence |
| Empathy, love, God's grace | Jen (仁), compassion |
| Explanation | Understanding |

What Do Asian Men Have to Say About Their Experiences?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHli11HX0tE&playnext=1&list=PLD2D4B496EF12554C&feature=results_main

How to Do Therapy with Asian Men?

1. Beginning

- Goals: Building therapeutic alliance, gaining credibility, & finding therapy goals
- Methods: “gift giving” by reducing symptoms and saving “face” (e.g. equal or one-down relationship)

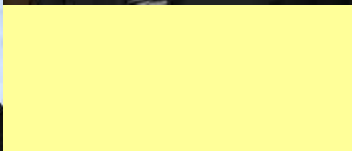
2. Middle

- Goals: Working on the therapy goals
- Methods: Various therapy approaches

3. End

- Goals: Finishing up therapy work
- Methods: Reflection on therapy experiences

Asian Men's Images



Resource List to Gain More Knowledge and Raise Awareness on Asian Issues

- <http://www.microaggressions.com/>
- <http://blog.angryasianman.com/>
- <http://www.asian-nation.org/>
- <http://www.asianamericanalliance.com/index.html>
- <http://www.pewforum.org/Asian-Americans-A-Mosaic-of-Faiths-overview.aspx>