

# Moving Beyond Exclusion:

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Focusing on the Needs of  
Asian/Pacific Islander Youth  
in San Francisco

THE SERVICES AND ADVOCACY FOR ASIAN YOUTH [SAAY] CONSORTIUM

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## **I. Introduction**

Asian and Pacific Islander (API) youth comprise approximately 43% of youth of ages 5-17 years in San Francisco, and yet are often overlooked or not prioritized in conversations about their mental health, substance abuse, and juvenile justice needs, or are considered to be unaffected by these experiences. However, Asian American families and youth experience many of the same behavioral health and criminal justice issues that affect other communities and that resonate, to a particularly strong degree, among other communities of color.

Common misconceptions of Asian Americans are strongly influenced by the widely held belief of the “model minority,” which holds that Asian Americans are more successful, financially and educationally, than other ethnic minorities because of their “exemplary commitment to family values, thrift, educational achievement, and a strong work ethic” (API Center, 2001, p. 3). This myth, however, does not take into the account the various challenges that face Asian youth, both those that are born in the U.S. and new immigrants, particularly those from Southeast Asia who faced hardships of war, refugee camps, and difficult escapes from their native countries. The model minority myth is further perpetuated by a lack of disaggregated data (i.e., data that is displayed by specific Asian ethnicities rather than collapsed into one group), where a disservice is done to the heterogeneous and multicultural communities under the homogenous label of “Asian.” Aggregated data hides the special issues and problems of specific Asian ethnicities that may be smaller in number. In addition, the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) estimates that 25% of Asian students have a native language other than English and thus may be facing language obstacles, further indicating a need for services and data

to be disaggregated in order to better understand and meet the needs of Asian youth in the city.

In 1987, the San Francisco Services and Advocacy for Asian Youth (SAAY) Consortium was funded by the federal Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (then the Office of Substance Abuse Prevention) to develop the Asian Youth Substance Abuse Project, a five-year demonstration prevention program that became an award-winning, nationally recognized program providing culturally competent outreach, drug education, research and counseling. The Consortium has since expanded its focus to include substance abuse prevention, delinquency prevention and advocacy around the unmet needs of Asian youth. In 1996, the Consortium formally adopted the name Services and Advocacy for Asian Youth. Members of the SAAY Consortium (Japanese Community Youth Council, Bill Pone Memorial Center of the Haight Ashbury Free Clinics, Community Youth Center [formerly Chinatown Youth Center], Korean Center, Inc, Vietnamese Youth Development Center, and the Westbay Pilipino Multi-Service Center) provide direct services to Asian and Pacific Islander (API) youth in San Francisco.

The consortium is acutely aware that API youth face significant delinquency, health and education issues that currently carry a stigma in the community and are not being addressed; for example, a profile of SAAY clients showed that 43% used alcohol; 33% used marijuana; 30% used cocaine/crack; 10% used Quaaludes; 5% hallucinogens; 3% tranquilizers; 2% amphetamines; 1% codeine; and 2% other drugs (Zane, 1998). In addition, a recent NCCD report (Le et al., 2001) on API youth in San Francisco indicates that Asian youth are disproportionately affected by some decision points in the juvenile justice system. For example, in comparison to other groups, Asian youth have the highest rate of being taken out of their home after adjudication (see Juvenile Justice section).

To begin the process of addressing many of the factors contributing to the disparity in services within many Asian communities, the SAAY Consortium initiated the preparation of a data-driven Community Response Plan for Asian youth in San Francisco. Members of the SAAY Consortium and other interested agencies partnered on this planning effort for 12 months to identify gaps in services for Asian youth in San Francisco and recommend strategies to ameliorate those gaps. The SAAY Community Response Plan focused on the areas of behavioral health (substance abuse and mental health) and juvenile justice/delinquency prevention; a survey of 331 youth was also conducted.

This report describes the findings of data collected from a wide variety of sources; in addition, it contains recommendations to address the needs of Asian youth in San Francisco in the areas of behavioral health and juvenile justice. Some topics emerged in both work groups: violence, substances, and mental health. Although findings are reported in two sections, the recommendations are combined.

## **II. Summary of Recommendations**

As we examined how San Francisco's Asian youth were faring in the juvenile justice and behavioral health arenas, two broader themes and subsequent recommendations emerged: disaggregation of data by API ethnicity and language access for parents.

- **City and County agencies should disaggregate the Asian category uniformly across agencies** to allow for comparison of information across agencies and create a greater wealth of information about specific Asian ethnic groups, helping to clarify the issues that they face. When collecting and analyzing data, this

collaboration has disaggregated the data into Asian ethnicities whenever possible. In doing so, important differences were uncovered among the API ethnicities.

- **City and County agencies should provide language access for parents.** The high proportion of Asian youth whose parents are immigrants indicates a need for outreach, information, and communication in appropriate languages; 74% of respondents to the SAAY Consortium youth survey indicated that they translated for their parents some or all of the time. A key to language accessibility for parents of Asian youth is to provide a *context* for instructions and notices so they will understand the implications of the information they are receiving.

**A. Mental Health**

- **Members of the SAAY Consortium as well as other Asian youth service providers should engage in planning with the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and Community Mental Health Services (CMHS) to increase awareness of mental health issues affecting Asian youth, with a focus on the prevalence of depression and suicide.** This collaboration should focus upon how to increase the capacity of school personnel, youth providers, and other community organizations to better assess mental health issues. The San Francisco Unified School District as well as other institutions and community service providers in San Francisco need to be aware of the prevalence of depression among Asian youth, and have the tools and resources necessary to properly identify and assess the symptoms. A seamless system to connect youth to a network of available services in comfortable environments for Asian youth needs to be developed and educational workshops on coping strategies for youth and parents about depression and suicide ideation need to be provided.

- **Provide culturally competent clinical and case management support for Asian youth and outreach to their families.** The likelihood of Asian youth accepting and actively participating in mental health services will significantly increase if it is provided in environments where youth feel safe and comfortable. Members of the SAAY Consortium as well as other Asian youth service providers should work with CMHS to create a pool of on-call, culturally competent clinicians who are available to work with youth in settings such as non-profit organizations, school sites, spiritual and faith-based communities, and other community institutions. Additionally, in court-mandated counseling, a process by which youth can receive these services in their home community needs to be implemented as well as a network of support in other areas such as employment, college readiness, mentoring, or tutoring.

**B. Substance Abuse**

- **Create the capacity to continually collect data on drug trends and the prevalence of specific drug use amongst the various ethnic groups in the Asian community.** The use and abuse of drugs among Asian youth continues to evolve and change over time. Members of the SAAY Consortium as well as other Asian youth service providers should engage in a planning effort with Community Substance Abuse Services (CSAS) to create the tools and identify the resources necessary to conduct annual assessments of drug trends among Asian youth.
- **Create community awareness of parents and communities about the prevalence of drug use and substance abuse in their neighborhoods.** Work with the Department of Public Health and CSAS to identify the resources

necessary to develop an on-going campaign to disseminate translated information on drug trends and availability through the media, schools, spiritual and religious institutions, and community centers.

- **Collaborate with law enforcement agencies about options for ridding the neighborhoods of drug dealers.** Members of the SAAY Consortium as well as other Asian youth service providers should work collaboratively with district police stations to develop strategies to effectively and safely alert the police to drug traffic activity in specific neighborhoods.

### **C. Juvenile Justice**

- **Increase the capacity of the Juvenile Probation Department to work effectively with Asian youth by:**
  1. Diversifying the staff of the probation department to include more Asian probation officers to increase understanding of Asian youth and family dynamics.
  2. Mandating cultural competency training for all probation officers to increase sensitivity to cultural nuances of Asian youth and their families. This could affect the investigation reports and recommendations that probation officers provide to the court at dispositional hearings.
- **Reduce the number of Asian youth entering the Juvenile Justice System by increasing sensitivity and cultural competence of court personnel by:**
  1. Providing court advocates that can translate into the appropriate languages for both youth and parents, and can advocate for youth being processed through the system.

2. Providing language access as needed for youth and parents (the youth survey indicated that 21% of youth translated for their parents “all the time;” and 53% “some of the time”).

#### **D. Violence**

- **Reduce victimization and school-based violence experienced by Asian youth.**

Work with the San Francisco Unified School District, Gang Free Task Force, Police, Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice and other City Departments to:

1. Raise awareness among school staff, police, and community-based organizations about the nature and frequency of victimization of Asian youth.
2. Create a process for reporting victimization of youth that is taken seriously.
3. Develop a neutral word for “victim” to reduce the stigma of victimization.
4. Create and implement services for victims and families of interpersonal and race related violence, particularly in association with schools.
5. Increase capacity of schools to mitigate racial tension and violence in school.

- **Reduce the incidence of domestic violence experienced by Asian youth.** Work with appropriate City Departments and domestic violence providers to expand educational workshops and programs on dating violence, develop a multi-lingual campaign for parents about domestic violence and how it affects their children, and increase the capacity of youth service providers to offer specific coping strategies (anger management, conflict resolution) for victims, perpetrators and their families (network and support systems).

**E. Special Populations**

- **Reduce the involvement of Samoan youth in the juvenile justice system.** A planning effort should be initiated by City officials to develop a comprehensive plan for how to mitigate the issues contributing to youth involvement in crime and delinquency
- **Reduce the increasing arrests, institutional placements, and recidivism of Cambodian youth.**
  1. Seek funding to examine the arrest and adjudication patterns of Cambodian youth as well as their neighborhood of residence and service infrastructure (from toddler to parent) to determine what is needed to address the issue.
  2. Provide programming for Cambodian male youth as determined by the examination, such as counseling, anger management, and violence prevention.
  3. Provide translation and advocacy services to Cambodian youth and their families as they proceed through the adjudication process.
- **Address the increasing arrests, institutional placements, and recidivism of Asian girls within the Juvenile Justice System:**
  1. Increase the awareness in the community of the issues related to girls and the services available to address those issues.
  2. Conduct research to determine the specific needs of all Asian girls, immigrant and non-immigrant.
  3. Provide gender specific programming for API girls to intercede in the increasing arrest rates; this could include collaborating with the girls program at YGC to develop an API component that is culturally competent for girls already in the system.

4. Develop gender-specific programming within community-based organizations.
5. Address the relatively high rate of dating violence among API girls that may contribute to delinquent acts.

### **III. Data Collection**

This report focuses on Asian youth in San Francisco, California. An obstacle to data collection was the lack of data disaggregated by specific Asian ethnic groups, both in published reports and in the way data is collected. This information is important because of major differences in language, education, and income that exist between various Asian ethnic groups.

Sources used in the data collection process included:

- American Legacy Foundation, “National Youth Tobacco Survey,” 2000
- California Department of Education- Educational Demographics Office (CBEDS), Language Census Dept, School Fiscal Services Division, School Improvement Division, School & District Accountability Division
- California Health Interview Survey, 2001
- California Healthy Kids Survey, Fall 2000 and Spring 2001
- Census 2000
- Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, Prevention Activities, County Report, 7/1/2001-6/30/2002
- Martinez, Stephen “Needs Assessment of Asian Adolescents,” Prepared for Asian Health Services, October 31,1996
- National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), 1998
- Report on Girls in San Francisco Benchmarks for the Future

- SAAY Consortium Youth Survey 2003
- SAMHSA, Office of Applied Studies, National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, 2000
- SAMHSA, Office of Applied Studies, Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), 1999, 1995 & 2000
- San Francisco Board of Supervisors' SRO Health and Safety Task Force & the Families in SROs Workgroup Subcommittee, "Report on Families With Children Living in Single Room Occupancy Hotels in San Francisco," May 15, 2001
- San Francisco County Juvenile Probation Department data, 1990-2000
- San Francisco Department Human Services, Annual Report, 2000-2001
- San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Families, San Francisco Gang-Free Communities Initiative: Results from Focus Groups, Key Information Interviews, and Youth Surveys August 2002.
- "SNAPSHOT: San Francisco's Children and Youth Today; A Community's Needs Assessment from the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families"
- San Francisco Department of Human Services, Planning Unit Family & Children's Services, Quarterly Report, November 2002
- San Francisco Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, September 2002
- San Francisco Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, data extract, August 2003
- San Francisco Unified School District Assessment & Accountability Department
- San Francisco Unified School District Public Housing, 1999-2000
- San Francisco Unified School District, School Health Programs Department
- San Francisco Unified School District, Youth Risk and Behavior Survey 2001
- SF Youth, "Perspectives on Mental Health," July 2002
- World Health Organization, Health Behavior in School-Aged Children, 1996

A literature review and survey supplemented the quantitative data noted above. Because the information currently collected about Asian and Pacific Islander communities in San Francisco is both scarce and often not disaggregated by ethnicity, members of the SAAY Consortium and other community organizations developed and administered a survey to capture the undocumented needs of Asian youth in the city. A survey was circulated to nine youth service providers (five of the SAAY Consortium members, A&PI Wellness Center, Chinatown Beacon Center, Indo-Chinese Housing Development Corporation, and API Legal Outreach) located throughout San Francisco who primarily serve Asian youth. Each of these organizations administered a 6-page survey to youth, resulting in 331 completed surveys. This survey is referenced throughout this report as “SAAY Consortium Youth Survey.”

The 331 respondents to the survey included 198 males and 133 females, ranged in age from 10 to 20 years old although about 75% were between the ages of 13 and 18 years old. One hundred and seventy-seven (177) youth were born in the U.S. and 143 were born elsewhere, with 11 not responding to the question. With regard to English fluency, 143 identified themselves as native speakers, 125 “understand a lot,” 51 “understand a little,” four “don’t speak English,” and six with no response to the question.

#### **IV. Literature Review**

##### *Behavioral Health*

Behavioral health is an important consideration in youth development and well being. For this study, behavioral health is comprised of two areas: 1) mental health and 2) substance abuse.

Mental health refers to the successful use of mental functions to help humans be productive, maintain good relationships with others, and help us cope with and adjust to adversity (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). The lack of data on the mental health needs of Asian and Pacific Islander youth has been noted by researchers for a number of years (Bui & Takeuchi, 1992; Chun & Sue, 1998). The sparseness of research continues to this day, as indicated by its minimal coverage in a supplement to the Surgeon General's recent report on mental health (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001).

Despite the shortage of information, it is clear that depression and suicide are important issues for API youth. In 2000, suicide was a leading cause of death among API youth, second only to unintentional injuries (Centers for Disease Control, 2000). Additionally, it has recently been reported that Asian American girls have the highest rate of depressive symptoms of all racial groups and the highest suicide rate among all women between the ages of 15 and 24 years (American Psychological Association, 2003).

Mental health is of further significance when considering delinquent youth. In a review of the mental health needs of youth in the juvenile justice system, Coccozza and Skowrya (2000) estimate that at least 20% of youth in the system have a serious mental health problem.

The misconception that Asian and Pacific Islander youth do not engage in behaviors such as substance abuse is undermined in the light of data. Three key points become clear from the data collected through this process. The first is that API youth are not immune to the dangers of substance abuse; the second is that the correlates of substance use (e.g., delinquency) impact API youth as much as they do non-API youth. The third is that a concerted effort to collect data regarding why Asian youth are using

certain types of substances at higher rates than their counterparts of other ethnic groups is needed.

### *Juvenile Justice*

Juvenile justice numbers and trends are important in that they affect the entire community. Delinquency is related to behavioral health, and other key aspects of community health and wellness. Research (Legislative Analyst's Office, 1995) has identified several characteristics that are often displayed by "at-risk juveniles," including:

1. *Failure in School* includes poor academic performance, poor attendance, and/or expulsion or dropping out of school. Because the youth has left school earlier than peers, the youth misses chances to learn how to meet deadlines, follow instructions, and constructively interact with peers.
2. *Family Problems* includes a past history of criminal activity by members of the family. It also refers to juveniles who have been victimized by abuse (sexual, physical, and emotional), neglect, or abandonment. This can also be manifested as a lack of parental control over the child.
3. *Substance Abuse* includes arrests for drug or alcohol possession or sale, as well as the alteration of behavior by substance abuse. An example is that using alcohol or drugs can lower inhibitions and increase the likelihood that a youth will commit a criminal offense. Drug abusers may also commit property offenses to support their habit.
4. *Pattern Behaviors and "Conduct" Problems* includes chronic stealing or running away, as well as conduct and behavioral problems that are detailed in the Behavioral Health chapter.

5. *Gang Membership and Gun Possession*: Gang membership is strongly associated with future criminal activity and the possession of a gun by a juvenile increases the severity of juvenile crime by making offenses more likely to result in injury or death.

## **V. Behavioral Health Workgroup Report**

### *Background*

The behavioral health of Asian Americans, the cumulative moniker used to describe mental health and substance abuse, has traditionally been an area that has been ignored in social and behavioral sciences research. Various researchers have indicated that Asian Americans typically do not use mental health services as much as would be expected given their population (Hatanaka et al. 1970; Kitano, 1969; Leong, 1986; Sue, 1977; Sue & McKinny, 1975; Sue & Sue 1974). These researchers have found that nationally, Asian Americans have low utilization rates of mental health services largely because they are reluctant to seek out services, rather than for a lack of need in their communities. An indicator of the need for mental health services is that in 1997 suicide was the leading cause of death among South Asians in the U.S., ages 15-24, and Asian American women ages 15-24 have a higher rate of suicide than Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics in that age group (CDC, 1997). High suicide rates among these children have been attributed to pervasive racism, pressures to live up to stereotypes and expectations of high academic achievement, and for immigrant children, the strain of acculturation (Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, 1992). However, the increasingly apparent mental health needs of children of Asian descent are not matched by equal accessibility and usage of services. For example, Asian youth report higher

rates of depression than other racial groups, but this is not widely recognized or addressed as a specific need among Asian populations.

Many Asian Americans believe that having psychological problems is shameful and disgraceful (Duff & Arthur, 1967; Kitano, 1970; E. Lee, 1982; T-J. Lin & Lin, 1978; Mass, 1976; Tung, 1985.) According to Atkinson et al. (1990), less acculturated Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Korean Americans feel more stigmatized than their more acculturated counterparts when seeking mental health services. A 2000 report issued by the U.S. Surgeon General found that grave disparities in health care for Asian Americans, with much of that difference due to a variety of cultural misconceptions and inappropriate outreach to the diverse population identified as “Asian Americans.” Some theorists suggest that the process of acculturation to American culture has a negative effect on the overall mental health of Asian Americans. Similar studies have correlated the abuse of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol with the bumpy road of acculturation into American mainstream culture (Atkinson & Gim, 1989).

Throughout the state of California, Asian American access and usage of mental health and substance treatment has reflected national trends in that Asian American youth are relatively underrepresented among populations being served. Recently, however, the highest percentage of youth admitted to California treatment facilities for stimulant use (methamphetamines, ecstasy, etc.) were Asian.

As a result of the tireless work of Asian youth-service agencies in the city, a growing awareness has continued to spread regarding the behavioral health needs of Asian American youth. Among newcomer populations in San Francisco, girls are somewhat more likely than boys to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. In the area of mental health, newcomer girls are more resilient than the general female population,

which is consistent with national literature that report an increase in mental health disorders with length of residence in the United States (SF Department of Children, Youth and Families, 2002).

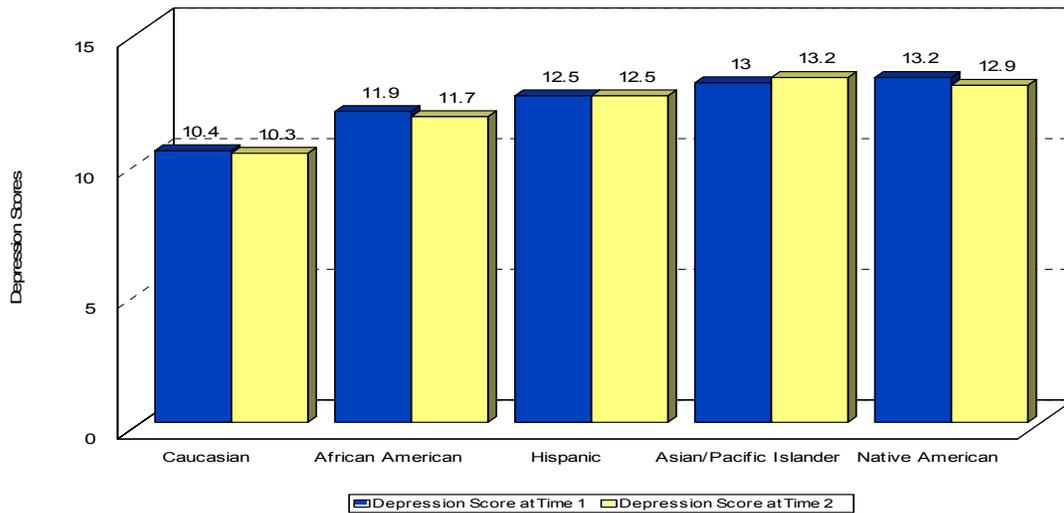
### Summary of Findings

The behavioral health findings are presented below in three categories: depression, substance use, and environmental substance abuse influences.

#### 1. Depression

- At the national and local levels, there are high levels of depression reported among Asian youth as indicated by Figure 1.

**Figure 1**  
**Depression Scores in U.S. Youth**  
**(Based on average scores from the Feelings Scale)**

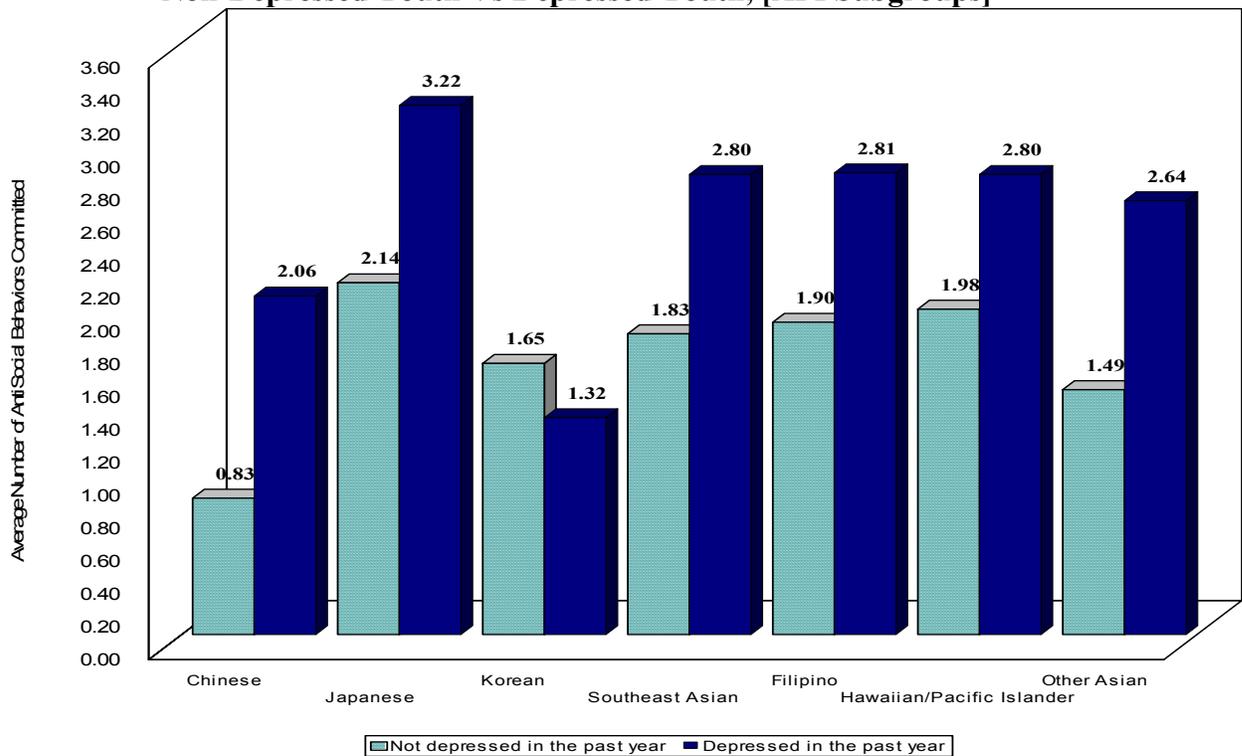


Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), 1998.

NOTE: The period between Time 1 and Time 2 equals 1 year. Higher scores reflect greater depression.

- Data disaggregated by API ethnicity from the World Health Organization revealed that among Asian and Pacific Islander communities, Japanese youth who were depressed committed the highest number of anti-social behaviors (theft, substance abuse, hurting animals or people, destroying property, etc.), followed by Southeast Asian, Filipino, and Pacific Islander youth.

**Figure 2**  
**Average Number of Anti-Social Behaviors Committed:**  
**Non-Depressed Youth Vs Depressed Youth, [API Subgroups]**



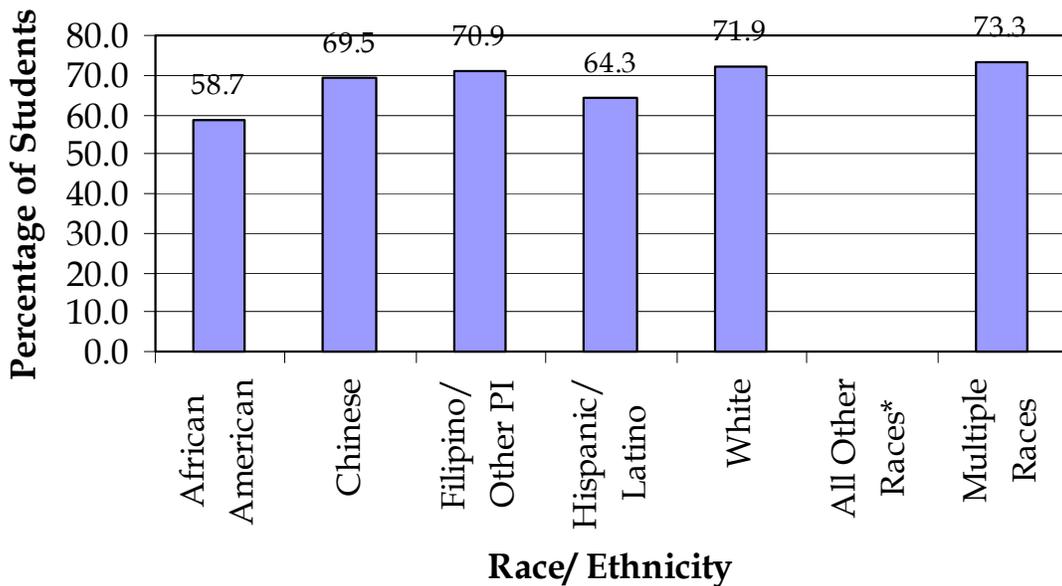
Source: World Health Organization, Health Behavior in School-Aged Children, 1996 (These youth were not admitted youth; depression is based on self-report.). N=9,938.

- Depression is also prevalent among API youth in San Francisco. Filipino and “Other Pacific Islander” youth are among the highest percentage of youth in middle school (70.9%) who report having been depressed during the past 12 months, or ever felt bad or hopeless almost everyday for two weeks or more (see

Figure 3). The data is obtained from the Youth Risk and Behavior Survey that is administered by the San Francisco Unified School District every two years.

**Figure 3**  
**Depression among San Francisco Unified School District**  
**Middle School Students**  
**Youth Risk and Behavior Survey 2001**

Depression is categorized as: The percentage of students who have felt sad and depressed on one or more of the past 30 days.

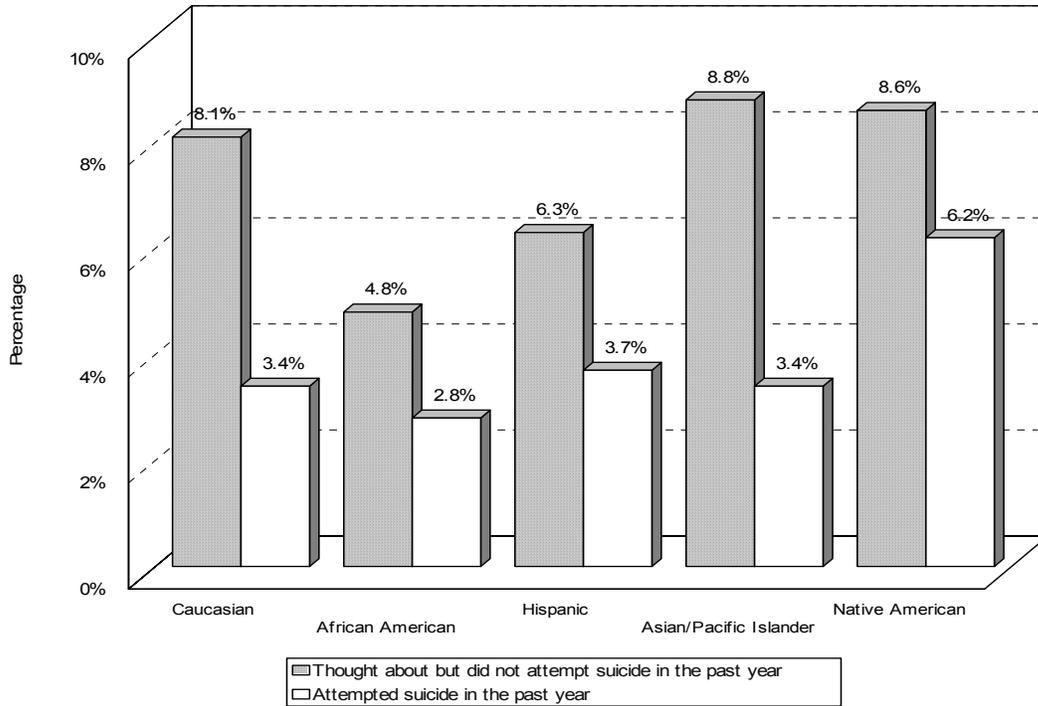


Note: \* = Fewer than 100 observations

N= Number of Unweighted Observations: African American-147, Chinese-622, Filipino/Other PI- 252, Hispanic/Latino-201, White-114, All Other Races-63, Multiple Races-105.

- Asian youth, in particular, report higher rates than other ethnicities, of having “thoughts of suicide” as displayed in Figure 4. The data in the chart comes from the Adolescent Health Survey, 1998.

**Figure 4**  
**Percentage of U.S. Youth Who Have Thought About**  
**And/Or Attempted Suicide**

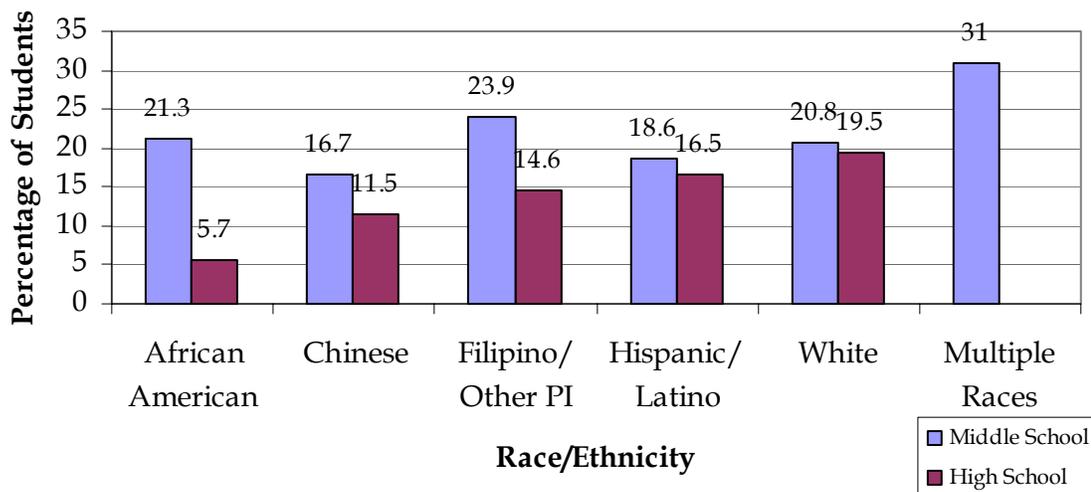


Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), 1998

- In San Francisco, Filipino and Other Pacific Islander youth in middle school report the second highest percentage (nearly 24%) of youth who have had thoughts of committing suicide on the Youth Risk and Behavior Survey is administered by the school.

**Figure 5**  
**Thoughts of Suicide among San Francisco**  
**Unified School District Middle and High School Students**  
**Youth Risk and Behavior Survey 2001**

Thoughts of Suicide is regarded as: The percentage of students who seriously thought about killing themselves.



Note: \* = Fewer than 100 observations

N= Number of Unweighted Observations: African American-145, Chinese-617, Filipino/Other PI- 251, Hispanic/Latino-199, White-113, All Other Races-62, Multiple Races-106 for middle school students. N= Number of Unweighted Observations: African American-102, Chinese-591, Filipino/Other PI- 235, Hispanic/Latino-238, White-115, All Other Races-42, Multiple Races-83 for high school students.

- On the SAAY Consortium survey, 71% of the respondents stated that they felt depressed at least once a week. Females report experiencing more depression than their male counterparts. Nearly 82% of females surveyed are depressed at least once a week, compared to 63% of males (not shown, SAAY Consortium Youth Survey, 2003).
- More non-US born youth state that they are depressed than Asian youth born in the U.S. Both groups state that they talk with friends when feeling sad or keep it to themselves. However, non-US born youth talk to friends at a higher rate than youth born in the U.S. and indicate more positive coping strategies to deal with depression. For example, non-US born youth are more likely than their US born

counterparts to participate in a program, use art, or go to church when they are sad or depressed. By contrast, US born youth are more likely to get high or keep it to themselves when they are sad or depressed

**Table 1**  
**What do you do when you are sad or depressed?**  
**US born youth compared to Non-US born youth**

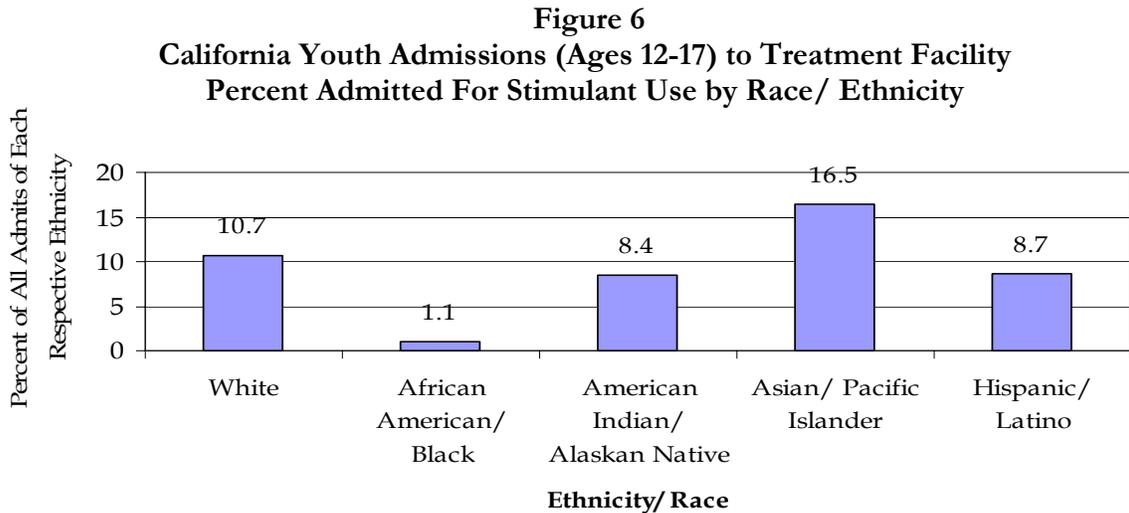
	Get high	Drink	Keep it to yourself	Participate in a program	Art	Church	Lay in bed	Talk to friends	Talk to parent	Talk to counselor or other adult	Journal or diary	Other
US Born Youth	26 16.6%	23 14.6%	72 45.9%	6 3.8%	14 8.9%	9 5.7%	57 36.3%	73 46.5%	14 8.9%	12 7.6%	12 7.6%	43 27.4%
Non-US Born Youth	12 9.1%	17 12.9%	49 37.1%	10 7.6%	15 11.4%	12 9.1%	46 34.8%	73 55.3%	14 10.6%	11 8.3%	15 11.4%	28 21.2%

Source: SAAY Youth Consortium Survey, 2003

- Additional issues that may contribute to depression are high levels of reported dating violence among youth and a limited network and support system in place for depressed youth of Asian descent.
- Youth also report being publicly degraded by non-Asians (29%), parents (28%), acquaintances (23%), strangers (23%), and Asian friends (19%). In response, youth state they feel angry (47%), and 50% say they fight back and 38% call friends for back-up. Additional sources of stress identified by youth are school work (68%), parents (48%), a boyfriend or girlfriend (29%).
- Almost one-third of youth have considered running away and 55% know someone who has left home. Twenty-seven percent (27%) state that parents were too strict and 26% indicate that the youth was kicked out of the home.

## 2. Substance Use

- At a national level, according to SAMHSA, the substances used the most by Asian youth are (in descending order): alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana (SAMHSA, 2000). This trend is echoed in San Francisco, where 50% of Asian male youth surveyed reported that at least one of four close Asian friends smoked cigarettes in the past week, and 44.3% of Asian male youth and 33.9% of Asian female youth surveyed reported that at least one of four close Asian friends drank alcohol in the past week (SAAY Consortium Youth Survey, 2003).
- Stimulant use (including ecstasy, methamphetamines, etc.) has increased for Asian youth. According to the Office of Applied Studies at SAMHSA, nearly 17% of Asian youth admitted to a California treatment facility used stimulants, compared to 11% of white youth, 9% of Latino youth and 8% of American Indian youth admitted to the facility.



Source: SAMHSA, Office of Applied Studies, Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), 1999.

- Mirroring national trends of increased marijuana use among juveniles, nearly 38% of Asian males surveyed and 23% of Asian females report at least one of four

close Asian friends used marijuana in the past week. In addition, 44% of males and 34% of females had friends who had tried beer, wine, or hard liquor in the past week, and 25% of males and 16% of females had close friends who had sold illegal drugs in the previous week. Although not a direct self-report of drug involvement, the association with peers who use or sell substances increases the likelihood of use or sales of substance among youth.

**Table 2**  
**Substance Use**

Have your 4 closest Asian friends:	Percent of Males:	Percent of Females:
Smoked cigarettes in the past week?	50.0	36.3
Tried beer, wine or hard liquor in the past week?	44.3	33.9
Used marijuana in the past week?	37.5	23.4
Used ecstasy in the past week?	17.0	15.3
Used cocaine or crack in the past week?	8.5	5.6
Used “shabu” or “danz” in the past week?	10.2	10.5
Used crank or ice in the past week?	9.1	7.3
Used other illegal drugs in the past week?	13.6	7.3
Been suspended from school for drugs in the past week?	19.3	5.6
Sold illegal drugs in the past week?	25.0	16.1
Stolen or tried to steal a car/motorcycle in the past week b/c of drugs?	11.9	7.3
Been arrested b/c of drugs in the past week?	14.2	7.3
Dropped out of school b/c of drugs in the past week?	11.4	7.3

Source: SAAY Consortium Youth Survey, 2003

- A 1998 study conducted by the Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention at the USC School of Medicine found that acculturation, particularly as measured by English language proficiency, was correlated with increased consumption of tobacco. Specifically, the study found that the use of English at home and high English proficiency were associated with higher smoking prevalence rates (Chen et al, 1999). Mirroring this trend, the responses to the

SAAY Consortium Survey indicate that US born youth have higher percentages of substance use among their close friends in comparison to non-US born youth. US-born male youth, in particular, report higher rates of substance abuse among their close friends.

**Table 3**  
**Birth Place and Substance Use**

	Smoked cigarettes	Tried alcohol	Used marijuana	Used ecstasy	Used cocaine or crack	Used shabu or danz	Used crank or ice	Used other illegal drugs
US Born Youth	78 49.7%	66 42.0%	65 41.4%	31 19.7%	13 8.3%	19 12.1%	13 8.3%	21 13.4%
Non-US Born Youth	51 38.6%	50 37.9%	27 20.5%	16 12.1%	8 6.1%	12 9.1%	10 7.6%	12 9.1%

Source: SAAY Youth Consortium Youth Survey, 2003

- Cambodian youth have higher percentages of substance use than other Asian ethnicities. Fifty eight percent of Cambodians surveyed have had at least one of four close Asian friends who have smoked cigarettes and marijuana in the past week. Fifty percent of Cambodian youth have friends who have tried alcohol, 33% used ecstasy, 21% used cocaine or crack and crank or ice, 17% used shabu or danz (both legal party drugs), and 25% used other illegal drugs in the past week (SAAY Youth Consortium Youth Survey, 2003).
- Substances may become involved when youth become angry; 16% state that, when angry, they get high and 19% indicate they drink.

### 3. Environmental influences on substance use

- A high percentage of respondents to the SAAY Consortium survey report knowing an adult who uses alcohol, tobacco (cigarettes) and marijuana regularly. In particular, 55% of males and 46% of females report knowing an adult who drinks alcohol regularly. Approximately 60% of youth report they know an adult who smokes cigarettes, and 27% of males know an adult who uses marijuana.

**Table 4**  
**Adult substance use as reported by youth**

Do you know any adults personally who:	Percent of Males responding:		Percent of Females responding:	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Drank alcohol regularly in the past week?	55.1	40.9	46.0	53.2
Smoked cigarettes in the past week?	59.7	34.7	61.3	38.7
Tried beer, wine or hard liquor in the past week?	49.4	43.2	40.3	58.1
Used marijuana in the past week?	27.3	65.9	16.1	83.1
Used ecstasy in the past week?	14.2	79.0	8.9	90.3
Used cocaine or crack in the past week?	11.9	80.7	4.8	94.4
Used shabu or danz in the past week?	8.5	85.2	8.1	90.3
Used crank or ice in the past week?	11.9	81.8	5.6	93.5
Used other illegal drugs in the past week?	11.9	81.3	7.3	91.9

Source: SAAY Youth Consortium Youth Survey, 2003

- Higher percentages of males than females report knowing an adult who uses crank, cocaine and ecstasy. A slightly higher percentage of female youth than male youth know an adult who smokes cigarettes (Table 4).
- More than a third of the youth think “most adults think it’s okay for someone of (my) age to drink alcohol regularly” or to smoke cigarettes. Sixteen percent (16%) report that adults think it would be okay for someone of their age to use marijuana, and 9% to 11% think adults would think it would be okay to use ecstasy, cocaine, crack, shabu, danz, crank, or ice.

- Forty one of 54 (75.9%) youth who live in the Tenderloin district, report seeing a drug dealer at least once a week. A similar percentage of youth living in SOMA (16 of 21 youth) report seeing drug leaders in their neighborhood on a weekly basis (SAAY Consortium Youth Survey, 2003).

## **VI. Juvenile Justice Workgroup Report**

### *Background*

Le (2002) indicates that socioeconomic status and class, immigration status, politics and culture of country of origin, place of settlement, entrenchment in US society, among others, are factors that may affect the delinquency or propensity to commit crime for Asian youth. For example, Japanese Americans have had consistently lower crime rates than Chinese Americans due to variant social structures, assimilation patterns, and experiences. Arrest rates for Southeast Asians, who more recently arrived in the U.S., tend to be the highest within Asian populations on the mainland. Factors such as history of victimization, exposure to violence, acculturation, strength of the family and peer groups, and other social, economic, educational, and political dynamics influence the degree to which Asian and Pacific Islander youth have engaged in delinquent or criminal behavior. While specific data regarding the causes and correlates of API involvement in the juvenile justice system is relatively sparse, a growing body of research—particularly that which is conducted through the Asian and Pacific Youth Violence Prevention Center—is disaggregating data in order to make the experiences of API youth in the justice system more visible.

National trends over the last twenty years show a decrease in the number of arrests for African American, Native American and Caucasian youth. Only Asian and

Pacific Islander youth have shown an increase in arrests of 11.4% (Uniform Crime Reports, 1990-2000). API youth are also the fastest growing population with a 181.1% increase from 1980-2000 (US Census, 2000). National trends also show female involvement in the juvenile justice system is increasing tremendously.

In California, the Department of Justice places Asian or Pacific Islander youth into the “Other” category. In 1998, “Other” comprised 8.9%, or 6773, of 76,104 felony arrests of youth in California. When the “Other” category was disaggregated by ethnicity, Vietnamese constituted 18.1%, Filipinos, 14.7%, Chinese, 8%, and Pacific Islanders 7.7%. The largest percentage, 30.3% of “Other” arrested for felonies were “Other Asians”, i.e., not disaggregated by ethnicity (State of California, Department of Justice, 1998). About 6,367 API were arrested for felonies throughout the state in 1998.

Juvenile justice trends in this report examine Asian and Pacific Islander youth populations ages 10-17 in San Francisco. Several clarifications must be made regarding the manner in which ethnicity is presented in this report. The terms API and Asian are not used interchangeably. API is used to refer to Asians and Pacific Islanders together. The term Asian *will not* encompass the Pacific Islander community. When these groups are separated from one another, Pacific Islanders will either be their own category or will be included in the “Other” category (the datasets sometimes do not allow for disaggregation).

### **Summary of Findings**

1. For every API youth booked into the Youth Guidance Center, 2.5 API youth were stopped by the police. This means many more API youth had contact with law enforcement officers than the 1,015 who were taken to Juvenile Hall. They have the

lowest number of youth contacts with police (3,539) from 1998-2001 as well as the lowest percentage of cases actually booked after a contact with police (1,015 or 28.7%)

**Table 5**  
**Youth Contacts with Police in San Francisco**  
**By Ethnicity**  
**1998-2001**

	Actually Booked		Actually Not Booked		Total # of Youth Contacts w/PD
	Number of Cases	% of Cases	Number of Cases	% of Cases	
African American	6,984	44.5%	8,713	55.5%	15,697
Asian/ Pacific Islander	1,015	28.7%	2,524	71.3%	3,539
Latino	2,273	43.2%	2,989	56.8%	5,262
White	2,067	35.6%	3,734	64.4%	5,801
Total	12,339	40.7%	17,960	59.3%	30,299

Source: San Francisco Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, September 2002

2. API youth have the lowest arrest rate in San Francisco, and Table 6 below indicates that the rate has decreased between 1990 and 2000 as have the arrest rates for all groups except Hispanic youth. Black youth have the largest decrease, a difference of 45.3 youths per 1,000 between 1990 and 2000. Even with the decrease, Black youth have a rate more than three times that of the next highest rate (Hispanic youth).

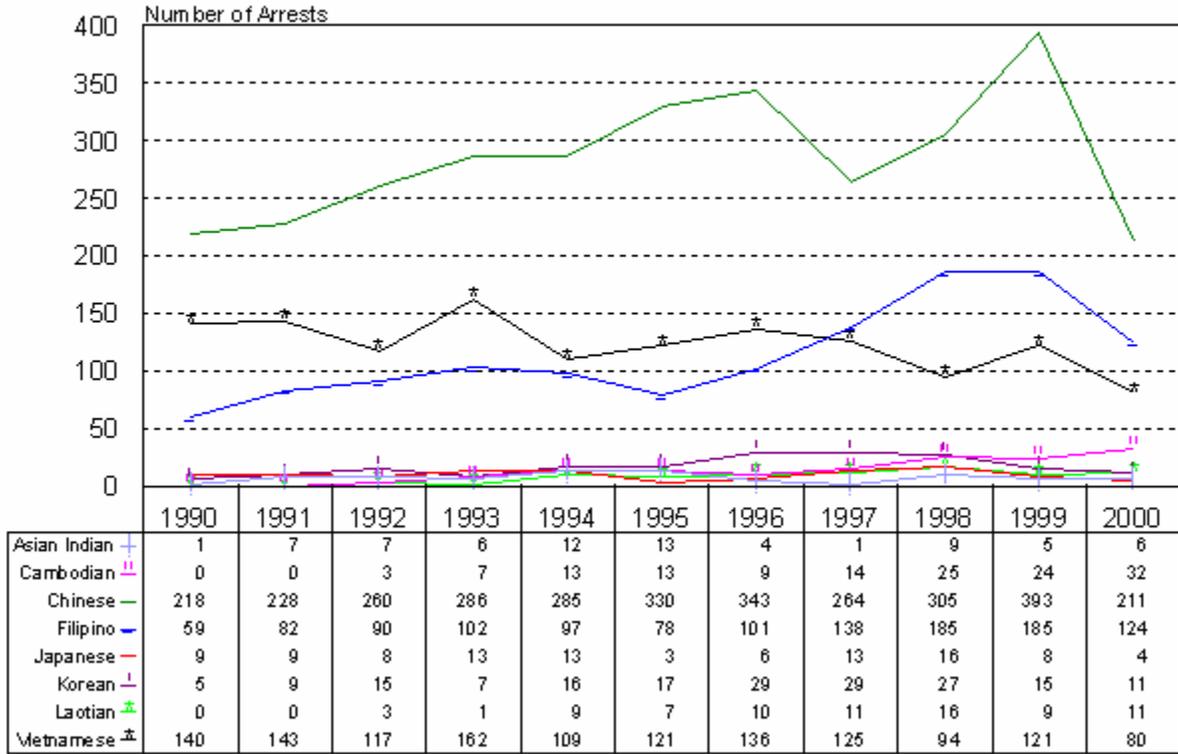
**Table 6**  
**San Francisco County**  
**Total Arrests and Corresponding Rates by Racial Group**  
**1990 and 2000**

Ethnicity	1990			2000		
	# Arrests	Youths 10-17	Rate (per 1000)	# Arrests	Youths 10-17	Rate (per 1,000)
American Indian & Alaskan Native	19	266	71.4	33	660	50
<b>API</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>21,030</b>	<b>31.6</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>22,333</b>	<b>27.4</b>
Black	2,806	8,345	336.2	2,093	7,195	290.9
Hispanic	581	10,288	56.5	758	10,231	74.1
White	555	15,195	36.5	543	16,676	32.6
Total	4,650	57,523	80.8	4,140	49,605	83.5

Source: San Francisco County Juvenile Probation Department, U.S. Census Bureau,  
<http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsServlet>

3. When disaggregated by ethnicity, there are wide disparities in the arrest patterns for API youth that are masked by aggregating the many Asian ethnicities in one category.
  - a. Chinese, Vietnamese, and Filipino youth have the highest arrest rates over the decade, whereas Asian Indians, Cambodians, Japanese and Laotian youth contribute the least to the total arrests of API youth.

**Table 7**  
**San Francisco County**  
**Juvenile Arrests by Asian Ethnic Groups**  
**1990-2000**



**Source:** San Francisco County Juvenile Probation Department

4. Although Asians constitute the largest percentage of youth aged 10-17 years in San Francisco (43.4%), at some stages of processing through the juvenile justice system, they are disproportionately overrepresented. For example, Table 7 shows that in 1999, API youth were ordered by the court to be taken out of the family home and placed in an institutional setting at a higher rate than other groups.

**Table 7**  
**San Francisco County**  
**Juveniles by Ethnicity, Population, Arrests, Petitions,**  
**Adjudications, Placements, and Detention**  
**1999**

Ethnicity	Juvenile Population (2000)*		Arrests		Petitions		Adjudications		Institutional Placements	
	No.	% of Total	No.	% of Those in Population	No.	% of those Arrested	No.	% of those Petitioned	No.	% of those Adjudicated
American Indian & Alaskan Native	660	1	37	5.6	15	40.5	12	80.0	4	33.3
API	22,333	45	907	4.1	271	29.9	212	78.2	94	44.3
Black	7,195	15	2394	33.3	798	33.3	645	80.8	146	22.6
Hispanic	10,231	21	775	7.6	289	37.3	267	92.4	80	30.0
White	16,676	34	651	3.9	175	26.9	133	76.0	28	21.1
Other	6,638	13	103	1.6	32	31.1	25	78.1	7	28.0
<b>Total</b>	49,605	100	4867	9.8	1,580	32.5	1,294	81.9	359	27.7

Source: San Francisco County Juvenile Probation Department data; U.S. Census, 2000.

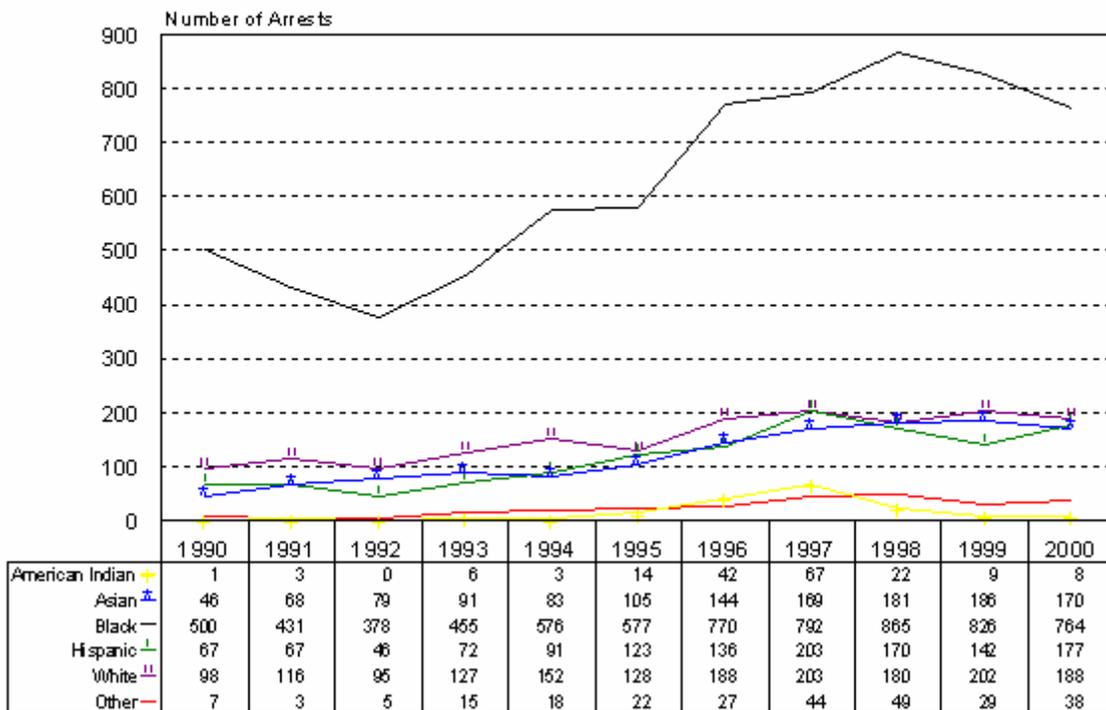
\*Total numbers may add to more than 100 percent since numbers used represent ethnicity/race “alone or in any combination.”

- Of the 212 Asian youth adjudicated in San Francisco in 1999, 44.3% were institutionally placed. Forty percent (40%) of the group placed out of home had felony person crimes and 29%, felony property crimes. In comparison, for Black youth placed out of the home, 30% of their offenses were for felony person offenses and 28% for felony drug offenses.
- Cambodian youth had the highest percentage at 71.4% placement out of the home after adjudication. Their offenses were robbery, burglary, and drug offenses, all at the felony level, and one for a misdemeanor theft.
- Chinese, Samoan, and Filipino youths constituted the largest numbers (38, 20, and 20 youths, respectively) among API groups receiving institutional placements.

5. Asian females are increasingly a part of the juvenile justice statistics.

- The number of Asian females referred to probation between 1990 and 2000 increased by 169%. Vietnamese, Chinese, and Filipino females had the largest number of referrals (Le et al., 2001).

**Figure 8**  
**San Francisco County**  
**Female Juvenile Arrests by Ethnicity**  
**1990-2000**



Source: San Francisco County Juvenile Probation Department

- Over the decade, 21 API females have been arrested who received child protective services, accounting for 2.9% of API female arrests (21 females accounted for a total of 56 arrests) (SF Juvenile Probation Data analyzed by NCCD, 2003).
- Asian girls who have been arrested and have been involved with child protective services are more likely to be repeat offenders (SF Juvenile Probation Data analyzed by NCCD, 2003).

- Asian girls involved with child protective services enter the juvenile justice system earlier than those without such a history (SF Juvenile Probation Data analyzed by NCCD, 2003).
  - Asian girls involved with child protective services are arrested for more serious crimes than girls without such a history (SF Juvenile Probation Data analyzed by NCCD, 2003).
6. Cambodian youth are disproportionately arrested, adjudicated, and re-arrested (Le et al., 2001).
- The number of Cambodian youth arrested has steadily increased from 1990 to 2000 (see Figure 7).
  - As previously noted, Cambodian youth receive institutional placements as a disposition in 71% of the cases that are adjudicated.
  - Cambodian youth had the highest six-month recidivism rate for felonies of any racial group in San Francisco in 1998. Among Asian ethnicities, Cambodians have the highest recidivism rate at 6 and 12 months; Vietnamese had the highest recidivism rate at 24 months (see Table 8).
7. The prominence of Samoan youth in the crime statistics is striking:
- Samoan youth have the second highest arrest rate in the City of San Francisco (Le, et al. 2001).
  - 57% are arrested again within two years after the initial arrest (See Table 8).

- In data obtained from the JDAI (Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative) office, Samoans constituted 23% of the 129 API youth appearing before the juvenile court between February 15 and August 8, 2003.
- For this cohort, 15 of 27 robbery (or 55.6%) cases involved Samoan youth.

**Table 8**  
**San Francisco County**  
**6-Month, 12-Month, and 24-Month Recidivism**  
**Asian and Pacific Islander Juvenile Arrest Population**  
**1998**

	<b>6 Months % Reoffended</b>	<b>12 Months % Reoffended</b>	<b>24 Months % Reoffended</b>
Cambodian	38	44	50
Chinese	25	36	40
Filipino	29	40	45
Japanese	23	31	31
Korean	14	24	29
Laotian	18	36	37
Other API	10	20	30
Pacific Islander	50	50	50
Samoan	32	45	57
Vietnamese	32	42	47
<b>Total API Ethnicity</b>	26	37	42

Source: Le et al, 2001

Recidivism for other groups is shown in the following table:

**Table 9**  
**San Francisco County**  
**6-Month, 12-Month, and 24-Month Recidivism**  
**Juvenile Arrest Population**  
**1998**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>6-Month % Reoffended</b>	<b>12-Month % Reoffended</b>	<b>24-Month % Reoffended</b>
All Youth	31%	40%	47%
American Indian	17%	20%	26%
Asian	26%	37%	42%
Black	36%	48%	56%
Hispanic	31%	40%	48%
White	21%	28%	33%
Other	15%	21%	22%

8. Asian youth have relatively high rates of victimization in the form of interpersonal violence (survey -39% reported having been hit by boyfriend/girlfriend/partner; 37% by a non-Asian; 33% by non-friend; 33% by parent; 27% by Asian friend; 24% by stranger, 23% by sibling, and 14% by police) (SAAY Consortium Youth Survey, 2003).
- Victimization may be related to youth perceptions of why Asian youth join gangs - 14% of survey respondents say Asians join gangs for protection, and 16% say friends are in a gang whereas Asian gang members and associates of gang members who are Asian state the primary reason is for money (SF Gang-Free Initiative, 2002).
  - 41% of girls surveyed stated they had been hit by their boyfriend or partner. This is three times higher than the 12% found in a telephone survey of 336 Asian American women between the ages of 18 and 34 in San Francisco and Los Angeles (National Asian Women's Health Organization, 2002).
  - There are very few services for victimized youth.
  - Youth who live in the Tenderloin had a high percentage of responses for having been hit by the police (20.4%), as did those who live in the North Beach area (22.2%), and the Richmond area (16.3%). (SAAY Consortium Youth Survey, 2003.)
  - Although Asian youth who state their favorite hangout is the Downtown/Tenderloin/South of Market area have the largest number who indicate their friends have been hit by the police (18 of 159 responses or 11.3%), those who hang out in the Richmond/Golden Gate Park area have the highest percentage who have been hit by the police (15.4% or 8 out of 52 responses) (SAAY Consortium Youth Survey).

9. Drugs are readily available to Asian youth

- 54% of Asian youth surveyed state that that they see drug dealers in their neighborhood at least once a week. A high percentage of Cambodians (88%) see a drug dealer at least once a week (Table 10).
- 60.7% of youth see people on drugs in their neighborhood.

**Table 10**  
**How many times a week do you see drug dealers in your neighborhood?**

Ethnicity	Never		At least once a week	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Asian	11	73.3	4	26.7
Cambodian	3	12.5	21	87.5
Chinese	67	56.3	52	43.7
Chinese/ Japanese	3	42.9	4	57.1
Chinese/ Vietnamese	4	28.6	10	71.4
Filipino	10	23.3	33	76.7
Japanese	2	66.7	1	33.3
Korean	13	76.5	4	23.5
Mixed	3	50.0	3	50.0
Samoan	0	0	3	100.0
Vietnamese	16	37.2	27	62.8
Total	132		162	

Source: SAAY Consortium Youth Survey, 2003

10. The friends and associates of Asian youth have been involved with the juvenile justice system.

- Friends of Asian youth surveyed have been arrested (SAAY Consortium Youth survey indicated that 50% know more than three youth who have been arrested).
- 45% say they know what happens to young people who are arrested and go through the court process.
- These two responses suggest that the youth responding to the survey are also involved with risky behavior.

11. Asian youth are experiencing and observing violence at school and traveling to school (SAAY Consortium Youth Survey, 2003).

- In the survey, every youth reported usually seeing at least one fight on their way to school and at least one fight at school. Fistfights are reported by 62% of the respondents, although 17% report the involvement of weapons.
- Fifty-one percent (51%) of the youth believe that fights occur because of the need for youth to prove their toughness; 39% thought gangs were at the root of the problem, 36% cited racial tension, and 30% identified the need for protection.
- 11% of youth report staying home from school because they were afraid for their safety.

## VII. Recommendations

As we examined how San Francisco's Asian youth were faring in the juvenile justice and behavioral health arenas, two broader themes and subsequent recommendations emerged: disaggregation of API groups, and language access for parents.

- **City and County agencies should disaggregate the Asian category uniformly across agencies** to allow for comparison of information across agencies and create a greater wealth of information about specific Asian ethnic groups, helping to clarify the issues that they face. When collecting and analyzing data, this collaboration has disaggregated the data into Asian ethnicities whenever possible. In doing so, important differences were uncovered among the API ethnicities.
- **City and County agencies should provide language access for parents.** The high proportion of Asian youth whose parents are immigrants indicates a need for outreach, information, and communication in appropriate languages; 74% of survey respondents state that they translate for their parents some or all of the time. A key to language accessibility for parents of Asian youth is to provide a *context* for instructions and notices so they will understand the implications of the information they are receiving.

### A. Mental Health

- **Members of the SAAY Consortium as well as other Asian youth service providers should engage in planning with the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and the Community Mental Health Services (CMHS) to increase awareness of mental health issues affecting Asian youth, with a focus on the prevalence of depression and suicide.** This collaboration should focus upon how to increase the capacity of school personnel, youth providers, and other

community organizations to better assess mental health issues. The San Francisco Unified School District as well as other institutions and community service providers in San Francisco need to be educated on the prevalence of depression among Asian youth and have the tools and resources necessary to properly identify and assess the symptoms. A seamless system to connect youth to a network of available services in comfortable environments for Asian youth needs to be developed and educational workshops on coping strategies for youth and parents about depression and suicide ideation need to be provided.

- **Provide culturally competent clinical and case management support for Asian youth and outreach to their families.** The likelihood of Asian youth accepting and actively participating in mental health services will significantly increase if it is provided in environments where youth feel safe and comfortable. Members of the SAAY Consortium as well as other Asian youth service providers should work with CMHS to create a pool of on-call, culturally competent clinicians who are available to work with youth in settings such as non-profit organizations, school sites, spiritual and faith-based communities, and other community institutions. Additionally, in court-mandated counseling, a process by which youth can receive these services in their home community needs to be implemented as well as a network of support in other areas such as employment, college readiness, mentoring, or tutoring.

## **B. Substance Abuse**

- **Create the capacity to continually collect data on drug trends and the prevalence of specific drug use amongst the various ethnic groups in the**

**Asian community.** The use and abuse of drugs among Asian youth continues to evolve and change over time. Members of the SAAY Consortium as well as other Asian youth service providers should engage in a planning effort with Community Substance Abuse Services (CSAS) to create the tools and identify the resources necessary to conduct annual assessments of drug trends among Asian youth.

- **Create community awareness of parents and communities about the prevalence of drug use and substance abuse in their neighborhoods.** Work with the Department of Public Health and CSAS to identify the resources necessary to develop an on-going campaign to disseminate translated information on drug trends and availability through the media, schools, spiritual and religious institutions, and community centers.
- **Collaborate with law enforcement agencies about options for ridding the neighborhoods of drug dealers.** Members of the SAAY Consortium as well as other Asian youth service providers should work collaboratively with district police stations to develop strategies to effectively and safely alert the police to drug traffic activity in specific neighborhoods.

### **C. Juvenile Justice**

- **Increase the capacity of the Juvenile Probation Department to work effectively with Asian youth by:**
  1. Diversifying the staff of the probation department to include more Asian probation officers to increase understanding of Asian youth and family dynamics.
  2. Mandating cultural competency training for all probation officers to increase sensitivity to cultural nuances of Asian youth and their families.

This could affect the investigation reports and recommendations that probation officers provide to the court at dispositional hearings.

- **Reduce the number of Asian youth entering the Juvenile Justice System by increasing sensitivity and cultural competence of court personnel by:**
  1. Providing court advocates that can translate into the appropriate languages for both youth and parents, and can advocate for youth being processed through the system.
  2. Providing language access as needed for youth and parents (youth survey indicated that 21% of youth translated for their parents “all the time;” and 53% “some of the time)

#### **D. Violence**

- **Reduce victimization and school-based violence experienced by Asian youth.**

Work with the San Francisco Unified School District, Gang Free Task Force, Police, Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice and other City Departments to:

  1. Raise awareness among school staff, police, and community-based organizations about the nature and frequency of victimization of Asian youth.
  3. Create a process for reporting victimization of youth that is taken seriously
  4. Develop a neutral word for “victim” to reduce the stigma of victimization
  3. Create and implement services for victims and families of interpersonal and race related violence, particularly in association with schools
  6. Increase capacity of schools to mitigate racial tension and violence in school.
- **Reduce incidences of domestic violence experienced by Asian youth.** Work with appropriate City Departments and domestic violence providers to expand

educational workshops and programs on dating violence, develop a multi-lingual campaign for parents about domestic violence and how it affects their children, and increase the capacity of youth service providers to offer specific coping strategies (anger management, conflict resolution) for victims, perpetrators and their families (network and support systems).

#### **E. Special Populations**

- **Reduce the involvement of Samoan youth in the juvenile justice system.** A. planning effort should be initiated by the task force and city officials to work with the Samoan community to develop a comprehensive plan to mitigate the issues contributing to youth involvement in crime and delinquency
- **Reduce the increasing arrests, institutional placements and recidivism of Cambodian youth.**
  1. Seek funding to examine the infrastructure of the Cambodian community to examine the arrest and adjudication patterns of Cambodian youth as well as their neighborhood of residence and service infrastructure (from toddler to parent) to determine what is needed to address the issue.
  2. Provide programming for Cambodian male youth as determined by the examination such as counseling, anger management, and violence prevention.
  3. Provide translation and advocacy services to Cambodian youth and their families as they proceed through the adjudication process.
- **Address the increasing arrests, institutional placements and recidivism of Asian girls within the Juvenile Justice System:**
  1. Increase the awareness in the community of the issues related to girls and the services available to address those issues.

2. Conduct research to determine the specific needs of all Asian girls, immigrant and non-immigrant
3. Provide gender specific programming for API girls to intercede in the increasing arrest rates; this shall include collaborating with the girls program at YGC to develop an API component that is culturally competent for girls already in the system.
4. Develop gender-specific programming within community-based organizations
5. Address the relatively high rate of dating violence among API girls.

### **VIII. Action Agenda**

- A. The SAAY Consortium will convene and organize a planning/advocacy body (Asian Youth Advocacy Network [AYAN]) to ensure representation and inclusion in discussions and decisions involving youth in San Francisco, and specifically to:
  - Form a strong executive committee to advocate, monitor the recommendations of this report, and seek resources for the continuation of the task force
  - Appoint representatives to several initiatives currently underway in the City of San Francisco that are relevant to the findings and recommendations of this report, and specifically to the JDAI workgroup on cultural competence and language access.
  - Organize a press conference to launch the effort of the Asian Youth Advocacy Network to ensure representation at planning efforts of city and county agencies and ensure accountability.

- Specific activities to be undertaken include: drafting goals and principles for the planning body and to recruit a network of persons to provide support and representation at meetings and work groups

B. AYAN will initiate collaboration with the Juvenile Probation Department, District Attorney, Public Defender, the courts, and community-based organizations to address the needs of Asian youth, specifically:

- Cultural competence training for probation officers and court personnel to ensure sensitivity to issues within Asian families
- Special presentations with judicial officers and probation officers on relevant cultural issues that may impede justice and fairness in the court processing of Asian youth

C. The advocacy group will work with the SFUSD to coordinate and refocus the series of meetings with the Superintendent to address the issues affecting Asian youth in the schools, specifically to improve the capacity of schools to address peer violence and victimization in schools as well as substance abuse:

- Implement an accountability system with individual school administrators to ensure that complaints of sexual harassment and abuse are thoroughly investigated; complete confidentiality must be guaranteed to the plaintiff or whistle blower.
- Conduct family/parent trainings about acceptable and non-acceptable school behavior.
- Conduct educational workshops to students illustrating
  - Acceptable/non-acceptable school behavior

- Legal and disciplinary repercussions for sexual harassment and abuse
  - Anger management
  - Gender roles and definitions
  - Provide options for victims of violence that do not involve confronting his/her harassers directly, (i.e., counseling, meeting with parents, administration handling discipline and questioning)
  - Provide legal training for students about their options when in an abusive relationship or being harassed (restraining orders, student's rights)
  - Encourage schools to host former drug addicts to talk about how drugs negatively affect their lives (legal problems, social isolation, physical health, etc.).
  - Examine the differences in youth who do drugs alone vs. youth who do drugs with friends/peer pressure and how it relates to depression.
  - Provide healthy alternatives for youth after school and at night (youth programs, substance-free shelters)
  - The advocacy group will work with the SFUSD to intervene in suspension and expulsion hearings to review cases, advocate for Asian youth, and discuss alternatives.
- D. The advocacy group will help to draw attention to the specific needs of youth within the Cambodian community and support collaboration and capacity building among agencies serving Cambodian youth
- E. The advocacy group will help to draw attention to the specific needs of youth within the Samoan community.
- F. The advocacy group will help to draw attention to the specific needs of Asian girls and support collaboration and capacity building to increase gender-specific services.

G. The advocacy group as well as other Asian youth service providers will engage in planning with the SFUSD and the Community Mental Health Services to increase awareness of mental health issues affecting Asian youth, with a focus on the prevalence of depression and suicide, specifically:

- How to increase the capacity of school personnel, youth providers, and other community organizations to better assess mental health issues.
- Develop a seamless system to connect youth to a network of available services in comfortable environments for Asian youth and educational workshops on coping strategies for youth and parents about depression and suicide ideation need to be provided.
- Provide culturally competent clinical and case management support for Asian youth and outreach to their families.
- Create a pool of on-call, culturally competent clinicians who are available to work with youth in settings such as non-profit organizations, school sites, spiritual and faith-based communities, and other community institutions.
- In court-mandated counseling, implement a process by which youth can receive these services in their home community as well as a network of support in other areas such as employment, college readiness, mentoring, or tutoring.

H. The advocacy group should work with Community Substance Abuse Services, the Department of Public Health, law enforcement agencies, specifically to:

- Create the capacity to continually collect data on drug trends and the prevalence of specific drug use amongst the various ethnic groups in the Asian community.

The advocacy group should engage in a planning effort with Community

- Substance Abuse Services to create the tools and identify the resources necessary to conduct annual assessments of drug trends among Asian youth.
- Create community awareness of parents and communities about the prevalence of drug use and substance abuse in their neighborhoods by working with the Department of Public Health and CSAS to identify the resources necessary to develop an on-going campaign to disseminate translated information on drug trends and availability through the media, schools, spiritual and religious institutions, and community centers.
  - Collaborate with law enforcement agencies about options for ridding the neighborhoods of drug dealers, for example, working collaboratively with district police stations to develop strategies to effectively and safely alert the police to drug traffic activity in specific neighborhoods.

## **IX. Concluding Statement from the SAAY Consortium**

On behalf of the Services and Advocacy for Asian Youth (SAAY) Consortium, we are pleased to be able to share the findings and recommendations from this report. We would like to sincerely thank the National Council on Crime and Delinquency for their invaluable guidance and assistance through this process. We'd also like to express our gratitude to all of the many representatives of community-based organizations, city departments and other institutions who provided critical input into this plan. In particular, we'd like to acknowledge the contributions of the co-chairs of our work groups, Patricia Lee from the San Francisco Public Defender's Office and Iman Nazeeri-Simmons from the San Francisco Department of Public Health.

As a body of Asian youth service providers, we have found that the need which initially brought our organizations together over 20 years ago is still very relevant today. Despite experiencing the greatest population growth of any ethnic group in the San Francisco Bay Area over the past decade, Asians continue to be ignored as a community with high needs.

The title for this report "Moving Beyond Exclusion" was chosen because of our society's continued inability and unwillingness to properly acknowledge the issues affecting the Asian community. This lack of attention has consistently resulted in exclusion from

major policy decisions and gross discrepancies in resource allocations. According to a report published by the Northern California Regional Chapter of Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, during the 1990's, Bay Area nonprofits serving APIs received less than 1% of the total funding granted from U.S. foundations.

This Community Response Plan process was initiated because it cannot continue to be acceptable for Asian youth to be overlooked as a population with significant needs. As service providers we have been told over and over again that existing data and research do not support the need for special attention to be directed toward the Asian community. To respond, we have utilized this process to conduct our own analysis of existing data as well as collect our own data directly from young people.

What we found was no surprise to those of us who have been working with these populations for many years. Asian youth struggle to navigate adolescence much the same and, in some cases, to a greater degree, than other ethnic groups. We urge policy makers, funders, and other key leadership to use this report to initiate further dialogue and analysis of the complexities and issues within the Asian community. It will be critical for key decision makers to look beyond the monolithic category of "Asian" and commit to obtaining a full understanding of distinctive differences and needs of particular Asian sub-populations.

While we do not advocate for Asians at the exclusion of others, there clearly needs to be more attention given to the issues affecting our communities. It is our hope that through this process we can not only promote a greater understanding of Asian youth, but also ensure that their needs are considered along with all young people in San Francisco.

Sincerely,

Jon Osaki  
Executive Director  
Japanese Community Youth Council  
Chair  
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