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### Final Project Write-Up

For my cultural project, I created and facilitated a workshop on mental health using a cultural specific lens at Westmoor High School for Filipino American students at the school. Because one of the goals of the FMHI is to increase outreach and support to youth in the community, I decided that working with a local high school would be a good way to provide services. Furthermore, the FMHI can continue to utilize the presentation and materials at additional workshops at schools or other venues in the community.

My presentation consisted of three parts. The first part was a discussion and psychoeducation around overall health and wellness information such as what mental health and wellness actually mean, defining terms like mentally ill and mentally healthy, the difference between everyday problems and mental disorders and information on stress, depression and anxiety. I also discussed what treatment can look like and gave the students resource information. I used some short TED talk videos and cartoons to supplement this conversation.

The second part of the presentation consisted of information around the Filipino community in San Mateo County and cultural values and other possible reasons that the Filipino community accesses mental health services at a lower rate than other communities—Filipinos make up about 10% of the population in San Mateo County but make up less than 4% of clients receiving mental health services from the county. I brought in a speaker from FMHI to conduct this part of the

presentation, as I am not Filipina and therefore felt it would not be appropriate to lead this part of the discussion. The speaker discussed some of the main cultural values in Filipino culture and how they influence overall perceptions of mental health. She discussed shame and stigma through a culturally specific lens and also other issues such as the prevalence of religion in the community, discouragement of discussing personal issues outside the family, and the lack of Filipino or Filipino American mental health providers.

The third part of the presentation was a Photovoice activity. A previous CSIP intern did a project where she asked participants to take a photo they felt represented what mental health looks like in the Filipino community. She framed the photos and displayed a written summary of why they had picked that photo underneath. We put the students into pairs, gave each pair one of the photos, and had them discuss how they related to the photo and whether they or someone they know have struggled with a similar issue (alcoholism, depression etc.). After a few minutes, we had a group discussion where each pair shared what they had discussed.

Overall, I felt the project went very well. The students were engaged, participatory and responded positively to the presentation. At the end I gave them a survey with three questions:

1. How useful did you find this presentation? (5= Very Useful 3 = Useful 1= Not useful) The students' ratings averaged 4.38.
2. How likely would you be to recommend this presentation to a friend? (5= Very Likely 3 = Likely 1= Not Likely) The students' ratings averaged 4.13
3. Please rate this presentation overall (5= Great 3 = Good 1= Not my favorite) The students' ratings averaged 5.

They also included comments such as:

"It helped me better understand mental health"

"Its a very little known topic that will impact the community"

"The photo activity helped with the full understanding and relation with personal experiences"

"Thank you for coming and expanding our awareness about mental health"

"I really like the photo activity, it brought the whole group together. No one is alone."

Another positive impact of the project, was that the speaker from FMHI used the presentation as a jumping off point to begin a six week group for students to continue the conversation around Filipino culture, identity development and mental health. Six out of the eight attendees signed up for the continued group.

The main challenge of the project was coordinating with the teacher leader who offered to help organize the presentation. While he initially stated that he would be able to support and promote the presentation from the school end, he was slow to respond and difficult to organize with. The options he gave me for presenting were all on a Friday, which I felt, impacted attendance and additionally, a fire alarm interrupted my original presentation and we had to finish on another day. In the future, I would try and work with someone who I or another member of FMHI had a more developed relationship with in order to give myself more advocating and organizing agency.

Another initial challenge was figuring out how to work as an ally to the Filipino community and being asked to figure out what kind of project would be of service while not being part of Filipino community and therefore, having no cultural knowledge or experience. A recommendation I have for BHRS would be to talk more about what allyship is and looks like in initial trainings and orientations for the CSIP program.