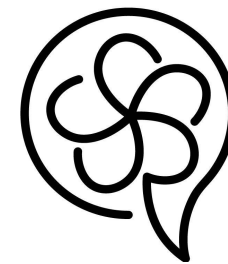


For BACHAC *Wellness Where You Are* Online Series

# **NHPI and Mental Health:**

Riding the Waves of a  
Global Pandemic

Dr. Kamalei Hamas, PsyD, LMFT



LetsTalkAloha.com

@letstalkaloha

# Impact of Pandemic on Mental Health

## *We Exist in Connection*

### **Social Distancing**

- Decreased access to family, friends, and community
  - Feelings of isolation
  - Increased virtual gatherings/"Zoom exhaustion"
  - Missing physical connection
- May affect one's ability to tend to various needs
  - Examples: exercise, spiritual connection, medical appointments, childcare, educational supports, and more.



# Impact of Pandemic on Mental Health

## **Change to Routine**

- At home more
  - Effects of working and/or schooling from home
  - Juggling the demands of work/school/family
    - Unable to take breaks from roles, privacy issues, burnout
- Essential workers
  - Effects of working/exposing self during pandemic
    - Fear, guilt, burnout from coming into contact with community at a heightened state of stress

# Impact of Pandemic on Mental Health

## **Compounding Issues**

- Job loss/economic hardship
  - Housing, food, and medical care insecurity
- Traditional -> Distance-learning and the impact on the family
  - Decreased educational and social support for the child
  - Strain of added responsibility for caregivers
- Severe illness/death
  - Covid-related or otherwise
  - Feelings of isolation, guilt, bereavement



# Impact of Pandemic on Mental Health

## **Negative Outcomes**

- Increases in:
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Substance Abuse
  - Domestic violence
  - Suicide
- Mental health system is overwhelmed
  - Long wait times to secure treatment
  - Telehealth services are not always an adequate replacement for in-person services
  - Increased rate of burnout for mental health

# Impact of Pandemic on NHPI Mental Health

## **Cultural Considerations**

- Value of prioritizing family and community
  - Desire to gather may put loved ones at risk
  - Feelings of isolation, guilt, anger
- Access to cultural resources
  - Faith communities, community organizations, etc.
  - Feeling cutoff from support
- Substance use an acceptable social activity
  - Becomes a coping mechanism in the absence of other supports



# Impact of Pandemic on NHPI Mental Health

## **Cultural Considerations**

- Issues of identity
  - Differences between on-island, 1<sup>st</sup> gen, 2<sup>nd</sup> gen continental US experiences
    - Level of acculturation
- Intersectionality
  - Identification with other minority groups may compound risk factors
- Systemic racism in the US is another layer of stress for many this past year especially

# How to Ride the Waves

## **Coping Skills**

- Healthy habits:
  - Eat with nutrition in mind
  - Strive for adequate exercise
  - Take breaks from screens/news/social media
  - Avoid/limit substances
- Connect with others in safe, creative ways
- Connect with nature
- Engage in enjoyable activities/hobbies



# How to Ride the Waves

## Coping Skills

- Connect with oneself
  - Breathe/slow down/meditate
  - Pay attention to changes in your body/feelings
  - Reflect on the connection between your feelings and values
    - Ask: “What is bothering me? What do I care about?”
  - Take action according to your values
    - Example: If you value FAMILY, call a loved one to see how they are doing.
- Shift perspectives
  - Example: Change focus from being overwhelmed by things outside of your control (ending the pandemic) to what you can

# How to Ride the Waves

## **Coping Skills**

- Ask for help
  - Talk with family or friends
  - If church affiliated, seek guidance from church leaders
  - Look into community resources
  - Consider professional mental health services
    - For tips on how to find a therapist who works well with our NHPI community, go to @letstalkaloha on Instagram.



# Riding the Waves Together

*It's OK not to be OK. You're not alone.*

## **Break the Stigma Around Mental Health**

- Ask your loved ones about how they are coping
- Listen without judgement
- Offer support or help finding support
- Share about your own struggles and how you cope
- Be mindful of how you talk about mental health issues
  - Strive for understanding and compassion
- Support efforts to improve mental health in your family and community