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.
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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
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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
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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 professionals
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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
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Cultural Considerations

- Issues of identity
  - Differences between on-island, 1\textsuperscript{st} gen, 2\textsuperscript{nd} 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 control (making safe choices for yourself and your family).
  • Be honest with yourself about how you’re doing.
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