Engaging Men to Reduce Domestic and Sexual Violence in Asian & Asian American Communities

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Background: Domestic and Sexual Violence as Public Health Issues

Big picture:
- Domestic Violence is a widespread issue, impacting millions.
- Physical violence: the hands of an intimate partner occurs at a rate of approximately 20 people per minute.
- Approximately 50% of women and 20% of men will experience sexual violence other than rape over the course of their lifetime.

Asian Communities:
- 83% of domestic violence-related homicides were perpetrated by men.
- 41-61% of Asian women report experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner during their lifetimes. 1, 2, 6, others estimate 12.8. 5
- Wide range of statistical results may be complicated by cultural factors, language barriers, fear of consequences linked to immigrant status, etc.

Men’s Attitudes:
- Men who more overtly accept hegemonic masculinity are more likely to be sexually violent, practice relationship violence, refuse to use condoms, use dietary supplements, and many other unhealthy and dangerous behaviors.
- Peer relationships have much to do with reinforcing unhealthy behavior, as attachment to male peers who encourage abuse is a significant predictor of sexual, physical, and psychological abuse by men in dating relationships.

Outcomes
- Supported ATASK youth to create their first workshop on healthy masculinities and leadership (workshop designed to target youth).
- Helped prepare ATASK youth to facilitate workshops in unruly audiences by taking on the characters of disruptive hegemonic men during a trial workshop.

Future Direction
- Continue to work with Phallacies to support the youth of ATASK.
- Create 2 more workshops, and a non-youth variant of the aforementioned first workshop.

Methods
- ATASK conducted a community needs assessment of the Boston Metro Area regarding gender and masculinity by means of several focus groups to help identify what kind of gendered messages were prevalent in the community.
- The results of the focus group were categorized into broad themes to better visualize messages of masculinity and what it means to be a man (figure 1).
- Aforementioned categorical themes were used to generate possible workshop ideas.
- Over the course of 6 weeks, Phallacies Inc. provided technical assistance and supported the youth in developing the first of these workshops.
- Phallacies provided tailored activities to enhance the toolbox of the youth leaders. These activities were able to be replicated and modified for small and large groups to prompt a conversation on masculinity and relationship violence (more below).

Selected Toolbox Activities

*Where Do We Draw the Line?* / Spectrum of Violence
- Setup a chalkboard/wall with “least violent” on the left and “most violent” on the right.
- Participants rank a pack of papers ranking behaviors found in abusive relationships, using tape to put the least violent behaviors on the left, and most violent on the right.
- Activity creates a discussion on different forms of relationship violence, educates participants on behaviors that may not typically be seen as relationship violence (such as sexual violence, psychological abuse by men in dating relationships).

Agencies
- This project is a collaboration between two agencies: Phallacies Inc. and the Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence (ATASK).
- Phallacies Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that aims to challenge unhealthy aspects of hegemonic masculinity, and encourage healthy masculinities through dialogue and theatre.
- ATASK primarily serves Asian & Asian American families and individuals in Massachusetts and New England who are at risk or suffer from domestic violence. Clients include a range of Asian ethnic populations. ATASK embraces and represents all ages, cultures, abilities, and sexual preferences.

Objectives
- Work with Phallacies Inc. as a consultant to ATASK to support ATASK’s youth leaders to develop workshops that can reduce and prevent domestic and sexual violence by engaging men, challenging hegemonic masculinity, and promoting healthy masculinities.
- Enhance the “toolbox” (techniques and methods to engage an audience and start dialogue) of skills and group activities of ATASK’s youth leaders to effective engage men.
- Workshops developed will be two versions: one youth version for one young adults (high school and college-aged), and the other will be for non-youth (such as parents, service providers, and professionals).
- Increase the knowledge, skills, and comfort level of the youth leaders of ATASK to facilitate the workshops collaboratively developed.

References

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