

Awaken Webinar: Challenging Anti-Asian Racism & Xenophobia during Covid-19
Transcribed by CF
Thursday, May 21, 2020

Liz Van Lente: You can make me an attendee and start the recording whenever you want.

Christine: Do you want to send out the transcription link to everyone again?

Liz Van Lente: I can do that once I'm an attendee.

Christine: Thank you.

Michelle Kim: Welcome folks! I think more people are trickling in.

Christine: For some reason I can't change it, Liz. I think it's because Michelle is host.

Michelle Kim: Right.

Christine: Welcome, welcome.

Michelle Kim: Welcome folks!

Are you playing music, Christine?

Christine: I'm working on it. Spotify is not happy with me.

Michelle Kim: It's okay.

Christine: Let's see.

[Music]

Christine: That's very loud.

There we go.

[Music]

Michelle Kim: Welcome everyone, we'll get started in just a second. Hi Cassy, good to have you here.

[Music]

We will take one more minute and then get started.

[Music]

Michelle Kim: I hope folks are dancing on their screen. I just can't see you. Feel free to chat.

Felicity, "of course! Always dancing." It's good to hear that. How can you not to this song?

Okay, it's 3:05. We're going to get started. Doug, I'm going to pass it to you.

Douglas Haynes: Thank you. Welcome to this special day at UCI. I'm delighted to welcome you to this special presentation of Awaken's Challenging Anti-Asian Racism in Xenophobia during COVID-19.

I can't stress how important this event is. COVID-19 has laid bare some percolating evidence of bias, bigotry, etc. We want to focus today on Asian xenophobia and racism, as it has spiked and continued to grow as part of the context of COVID-19.

I am particularly delighted to welcome our two co-facilitators today. They include Michelle and Christine. I want to hand this back to Michelle.

Michelle Kim: We are delighted to be here. Christine, take it away.

Christine: Today we will spend some time introducing ourselves and grounding ourselves in this space. We will address xenophobia and Asian racism in COVID-19 and also add some context. We will have some Q&A and time to answer questions at the end.

In terms of technology, we are using Zoom today. In the chat, we ask you to send in your reactions, engagement around different questions that might come up, different conversations we have, etc. Be sure to change it to all participates and attendees so everyone can see your thoughts and wisdom.

There is also a Q&A function. We will use those when we take breaks for Q&A. We will use these to interact today.

Here's a bit about myself. I am Christine Waning. I use she and her pronouns. I'm a coach and facilitator. I work with organizations to align their every processes and actions to align with their core beliefs and how they want to be in the world.

Today's workshop is dear to my heart. As a Chinese women in the world today, seeing how the pandemic has affected a number of people, and the Asian American community, it seems important for us to reflect and see the ways we can show up for one another in this moment.

In that spirit, when we're talking about solidarity along the lines of power and privilege, I think it's important to acknowledge what is happening in the Black community right now and has been happening. Speaking the names of Ahmaud Arbery and others into this space is important for today. I will pass it to you, Michelle.

Michelle Kim: Thank you, Christine. I appreciate that acknowledgment. I know we're

grieving in different ways and it's important to recognize the impact that the pandemic has had on other marginalized communities.

I'm Michelle Kim. I use she/her pronouns. I like to call myself the queen of Awaken. I graduated from UC Berkeley. I'm excited to be in conversation and community with you all.

I would love to get a sense of who is in the room and excited about this conversation. I would love to see you all type in "hello" or introduce yourself in the chat. Be sure you changed the chat to all panelists and attendees so everyone can see your responses. If you don't mind, chat away.

[Greeting people in chat]

Christine: To answer a question that popped up, this session is being recorded and will be available to you afterwards if you're concerned about revisiting.

Michelle Kim: I want to shout out the person who made this possible, Samantha Anderson. Thank you for making space with this important dialogue. She is doing important work at UCI. Give her props and thanks.

Part of the identities I will show up with in this space are being an East Asian and Korean American person. I moved to the US when I was 13. I'm an immigrant and identify as a queer woman of color. I have a multitude of identities I will bring into this and I will work to make this as intersection as possible.

I'm seeing there is an audio issue. Can folks confirm if that is the case? You can chat to me and I'll help figure it out. It sounds like most people can hear me, which is great.

Next slide please.

Land acknowledgement might be something you are familiar with. I find this isn't widely normalized and practiced in other spaces. At Awaken, we have had multiple instances of acknowledging the land we're on in order to show allyship with the Native communities. We continue to do this to raise awareness that we occupy land that belonged to different Indigenous tribes.

I want to share this resource with you. You can type in any address in the world. It can show you who the Indigenous land belonged to. As we are sheltering in place, I think we need to take a moment to think about what that means and to think about who is still fighting the battle to protect the lands in so many different places.

Today, I learned that the Navajo Nation has become the highest infected area in the US. It surpassed New York and New York City. They have a lack of equities they are experiencing, and that all Indigenous peoples have been facing.

There are different organizations supporting different Indigenous communities. You can look to

see where you can donate and support the work that Indigenous communities are carrying on today, and to learn about the disparate impact of COVID on those communities as well.

We have a pretty tight agenda. That's what we're known for. We try to pack in as much as we can. We want to share some learning outcomes that we hope you will take away.

One is to understand the current state of anti-Asian racism. We will bring in stories. I want to hear from you all. Based on the names, I'm seeing a fair amount of representation of Asian folks on this call. We'd love to make space for you to share via chat or verbally.

We can't forget the importance and relevance of historical context. We will also talk about some concrete ways to talk about how to show up for each other to practice allyship.

We have some communities we want to lead with. One is speaking from "I." I will certainly be doing this. Even though I identify as Asian, I don't speak for the entire Asian community. We encourage you to actively participate.

I know we're not physically together. The online interaction can be a safe and comfortable experience where you don't have to engage a ton. We'd love to get your stories, perspectives, thoughts and feedback. If something is resonating with you, let us know so we of feed off your energy.

We are often asked to assume positive intent. We also want to acknowledge impact. If something is said that doesn't land well, [Audio cutting out]

We will start off with a quick pulse check. I'm going to launch a poll. The question here is "what types of anti-Asian or xenophobic behaviors have you experienced or observed in the last couple of months?"

There are some options here. You can choose "racist news in the media," "use of kung flu," "insensitive jokes," etc. [Reading poll options]

We're about halfway. About 60% of you have voted. We're going to wait a few more seconds.

What types of anti-Asian or xenophobic behaviors have you observed in the last few months? About 80% of you have voted. I'm going to give folks a few more seconds to vote. Then, we'll share the results.

You can actually submit your response directly by clicking the poll, not necessarily in the chat.

I'm going to end the poll. It looks like most of you have voted. Here are the results.

It looks like 77% of you have heard the use of kung flu or Chinese virus. 75% of heard racist narratives in the media. The racist narratives have been more expansive than just the name of the virus. 76% of you heard assumptions about Asian people having COVID. [Reading percentages from poll]

So, just in this room and this session, we are witnessing and holding a lot of different types of experiences. I want to honor and acknowledge that. Thank you for sharing this experience with us.

As a quick unpacking of the term, "xenophobia," how many of you have heard of the word xenophobia? Let's see it in chat. I'm assuming many of you. Yes, the term "xenophobia" comes from the Greek words xeno and phobia. Xeno translates to strange or foreign. It directly translates to "fear of something strange" or "fear of something foreign."

I think there is a subtle difference between xenophobia and racism. Xenophobia has to do with the perception that you are foreign or strange. For Asian people, the idea is that of a perceptual foreigner and that we can never be seen as fully belonging to this country of America. We will touch on that and talk about it more throughout the session.

Thank you for engaging in the poll.

Christine: Today we are focusing our conversation around what we have been observing and seeing here in the United States. We are naming and acknowledging anti-Asian racism. Xenophobia has shown up around the world connected to the pandemic in different ways. In China, we have seen a rise in anti-Black racism. It is connected to the idea that these folks caused this disease.

In South Korea, we saw some backlash against the LGBTQ community. We are rooting our conversation in the US because UC Irvine is here. Secondly, racism and xenophobia don't happen in a vacuum. There is context and history that informs how people respond to different crises and events. Focusing on the US will help us unpack events now.

What have we seen in the last few months? Many of you have seen racism and xenophobia in media narratives. These are some examples of the subtle and blatant ways that the media perpetuates this story about Asian people being the source of COVID-19.

The *New York Times* article is about someone who contracted the virus in Iran. The first photo is of Chinatown in Queens. When informed of the subtle racism, they changed the photo.

There is also the use of the term "China coronavirus" and the president using the term "Chinese virus." This is not just related to Chinese people, but anyone perceived to be of Asian descent.

Two social justice majors started a website. Early on, they received 673 reports of discrimination. At this point, there are over 1700 reports. This includes stories that we have seen in the media, including a woman being attacked with acid in New York. There was a whole family attacked in Texas, including small children.

Recently, I read about Native folks being attacked because they were perceived as being of Asian descent. This isn't in the US.

More than 60% of the folks reporting these things are not Chinese.

The last piece we touched on is workplace discrimination. This is subtle and day to day things that people experience. There is one story of someone being asked to go home because of unsubstantiated rumors that they had COVID. There are other insensitive jokes that are insidious when laid on and not challenged in the moment.

We would like to open this up to the chat. "What emotions or reactions come up to you as you witness anti-Asian racism and xenophobia?"

[Reading from the chat]

There's anger, shock, fear for safety, sadness, grief, sad but not surprised, fear, sympathy, etc.

Michelle Kim: Someone said frustration and not feeling like they can do anything. I have felt the helplessness as things unfold in our community and other marginalized groups. I think that feeling of helplessness is common right now. I want to remind you that there are things you can do, even in the smallest ways. We can continually come back to that. We'll come back to that today but thank you for sharing some of these emotions.

Some of these are great comments. Anti-Asian racism has been around for a long time and it never went away. That's true. I know Christine will talk about this.

We will talk about allyship. I'm sure you have heard the term "allyship." When you hear the word, what comes to mind? Some people have no idea. That's great. You will walk around with a definition.

[Reading from chat]

There's solidarity, collaborative, advocacy, active empathy and humanity, partnership, standing up for other marginalized groups, etc. Thank you all for sharing that. We do have a very intentionally written definition that we like to share. It's this.

[Reading definition]

I know that's a mouthful. Let's break it down one by one. Maybe you've heard this term during Pride Month, where you show up as allies to the trans and queer community. Maybe you've heard that terminology before.

Allyship is this consistent practice. I think that's important to remember. Being an ally is not an identity we wear. We actively engage in this practice, consistently, time after time. People like to think of allyship as a verb and not a noun.

It's rooted in us understanding our power and privilege. We have to understand what kinds of power and privilege we, or I, hold. How can we use it to achieve equity and inclusion for people who don't have that?

As a non-Black person of color, I don't have to worry about being stopped by the police or going grocery shopping when my mask on. Since those are my privileges, what can I do about that? How can I achieve equity and inclusion for those folks without that?

We need to hold ourselves accountable to the marginalized people's needs. We have a 3-hour workshop where we unpack this definition. We can't do that here, but it's important to highlight this because it's not about us. We don't decide when we are an ally or not. Other people let us know that our actions have benefited us in certain ways. They deem our actions to be an act of allyship.

We need to always hold ourselves accountable to the marginalized people's needs instead of our need to be seen as doing good. The marginalized people's needs are an essential part of this definition.

Based on this definition, we have made a modification for allyship in different spheres of influence. Number 1, we can start our allyship with our own self-awareness. By understanding our own identities, privileges, and the power we hold, we can begin to understand the way we will show up and practice allyship.

Then, we can practice allyship at the interpersonal level. We can stop harm, educate others, etc. At the organizational level, we can do more at the policy level to embed some of these equitable practices, educate people, etc.

If enough of these organizations take these changes, we can make systemic changes. We need to engage on all these levels continuously in order to achieve systemic change at large.

That's a quick and dirty version of allyship. Hopefully those who have not heard the term before can have a better understanding of what we mean when we say allyship throughout this conversation.

Christine: We will start at this personal level. Often, we jump to the organizational level or the big changes, without spending the required time at the personal and interpersonal level, which impact our day to day and our own understanding of ourselves in relation to other people.

At the personal level, we do will do another poll. Off the top of my head, without furrowing your brow too much, I can name at least 5 permanent Asian leaders, entrepreneurs, activists, etc. throughout Asian history.

Michelle Kim: About 40-50% of you have voted. The key here is to not think too long.
[Laughing]

Christine: [Laughing]

Michelle Kim: Maybe some of you benefited from the recent documentary launched by PBS. That was a fabulous program that just launched. 80% of you have voted.

Christine: Maybe a few more seconds.

Michelle Kim: 10 more seconds.

Christine: Okay, I think we're done.

74% of you said no. 26% said yes. Michelle and I, when we first talked about this, our brows were furrowed. My eyes rolled to the back of my head trying to name 5 prominent leaders. It didn't come easy.

I didn't grow up hearing about Fred Korematsu or other folks. Folks who are activists really changed the landscape of how the US treats immigrants, minorities, and workers. This is a big part of personal allyship. We are creating that awareness in ourselves.

A common experience for Asian Americans is that they have not been an important part of US history even though they have been here for centuries. It highlights the experience of historical eraser and outside-ness.

There is an amazing PBS documentary that came out. It's on my list to watch. That's one way. The Zinn Educational Project is an amazing resource for marginalized communities, not just Asian Americans. These are a few ways you can start digging into some of the historical elements of Asians and Asian Americans in the United States.

By no means is this a comprehensive list of people. This is a sample of some really important activists that have created a lot of change. Learning this history includes, as someone named earlier, learning the history of anti-Asian sentiment in the United States.

Starting in the 1800s, there was this concept of Yellow Peril. It was used in the United States. It was around the idea that Asian immigrants were unassimilable, brought disease and immorality, etc. This rose from a confluence of events. The US was looking for cheaper labor. A treaty was signed to have thousands of Chinese people work on the transcontinental railroad and in other businesses. It promised a new life.

Around the same time, the US entered into an economic depression. Quickly, the blame was based on those Chinese immigrants. Laws were created to vilify and limit the rights of Chinese immigrants.

That was really cast off with the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. This was the first Asian immigration ban based solely on race. This meant that Chinese people, skilled or unskilled, were not allowed into the US. Chinese people in the US, who had been born here or naturalized, were not allowed to become citizens.

In the following years, even more laws came into effect that limited the ability of Asian Americans to own land. It effectively banned all immigration from Asian until the 60s.

One thing to note is that in the 40s, during World War II, there was the experience of the Japanese and Japanese Americans after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. People of Japanese descent were rounded up and incarcerated.

This is an example of a whole group of people. Japanese Americans, who were born and raised in the US, were treated as an enemy and vilified based on their ethnicity. This has been a theme, in a lot of ways, that mirror global politics.

In 1933, the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed mostly because the Chinese supported the United States in World War II. Then we had McCarthyism and the Red Scare.

In 1865, due to the Civil Rights movement, the 1885 Anti-Immigration Act was passed. A whole lot of immigration started happening from Asia. People arrived for a lot of reasons like humanitarian efforts, family reunifications, etc. There were a lot of differences in the ethnicities and backgrounds of Asian people.

After that happened, a lot of those nuances were replaced by model minority-ness. This was used to pit minority groups against each other. It said there was such a thing as good and bad minorities. Asian Americans were hard working, politically silent, etc.

This was opposed to Black and Latinx communities who were active and rallying about racism during the Civil Rights movement. There was a strategic narrative that came into play, almost immediately, that replaced the distinctions and pitted these minorities against each other.

With that, I'm going to ask this question. "Can there be 'good' stereotypes?" Please feel free to respond in the chat.

Michelle Kim: I'm sure many of you have heard stereotypes about things like Asians being good at math. Can that ever be good? There's a lot of people saying no. There are a couple of people saying, "I think so." I'd love to hear how they can sometimes be good.

[Reading chat]

They can be about positive traits but are used to generalize and assume. Sorry, I cut you off Christine.

Christine: I hear people saying that the stereotype can be good, but the impact can be bad.

Michelle Kim: I love this comment, "I am good at math."

Christine: There's the potential for them to be framed as harmful, there is no one size fits all since every group is different, when a group is praised a stereotype insists on 100% representation. [Reading from chat]

It's good that a positive stereotype keeps people from being seen as a threat. Someone asks for a definition of "good." I think we're seeing a lot of nuances in how people might define things as

good. Someone said stereotypes take away individualism. There are different timelines for immigration, cultural differences, etc.

Michelle Kim: I think it's important to note that even though there may be positive stereotypes, the stereotype could be associated with some kind of positive image. It could be something like Asians being good at math. People may ask why that is bad. I think some of you have contributed to the conversation.

Even though the stereotypes are "positive," it acts as a way to erase the differences and uniqueness among the people being stereotyped. In that sense, it may not be a beneficial impact. We can also understand that stereotype being played out at a systemic level.

At the Asian workplace, Asians are least likely to be promoted into leadership positions. A common bias we see and hear during performance reviews and performance evaluation time is the stereotype of Asians being good at analysis and data, but that they don't have the leadership potential.

There are different ways that seemingly innocuous stereotypes have an impact, and hold a minority people back, while painting a monolithic view of people. I think we need to continue to ask if there can be a positive impact from stereotyping.

Christine: Another piece of this is how the model minority myth reinforces anti-Blackness in Asian communities and communities at large. The idea is that Asians are successful and good immigrants. Therefore, Black people are dangerous and cause issues. In my community and myself, I have seen this internalized anti-Black dialogue. It involves some sitting with that discomfort to realize that is there.

Then, we need to see how it presents opportunities if we are able to confront this within ourselves. We can create solidarity across communities. We can combat the divide these narratives have created in our communities. This picture is of a group of Asian activists. They are showing up in the Black Lives Matter movement.

We are acknowledging that the ideas of being quiet, hardworking, politically silent, etc. don't have to be true even though that is the prevailing narrative.

Michelle Kim: I think this goes back to the history and us questioning when we think about Asians being seen as apolitical. There is the model minority myth and the specific type of erasure we experience. That is very much linked to this idea of anti-Blackness, like Christine said. We can't have a discussion about dispelling the model minority myth without also talking about combating Black racism

Some people have asked us why Asians are being targeted now. We know that racism has always been the case. Why is there the insurgence today? We have studied the psychology of blame and scapegoating throughout history.

Historically, we see patterns wherever there is a crisis, global scale economic downturn, national

crisis, etc. Examples of this are 9/11, what is happening now, etc. We see these patterns of trying to see who is to blame and who to scapegoat throughout history.

When we're in crisis and survival mode, we tend to go into our flight or fight mode of thinking. I'm sure there are academics who know this better than I do. According to the Nobel laureate, whose name escapes me, Daniel Kahneman, there are two systems in our brain. One keeps us safe by making instinctive decisions about what is happening right now. [Snapping]

One is more logical and deliberate. We have to think about how to problem solve more logically. When we're in crisis mode, we like to default to system one thinking. It physically takes less calories. It takes advantage of our deep-rooted biases, subconscious or conscious.

It helps if there is a clear distinction between in group and out group. With that, think back to the Oklahoma City Bombing. The perpetrator was a White man. As a country, we didn't see a ton of people scapegoating straight, cis, White men for perpetuating that harm. In the case of 9/11, when there is clear differentiation we can make in terms of people wearing hijabs, or who look like they reflect the images in the media, people wearing turbans, etc. there are clear groups of people we can categorize against. There is a small group of people who may committed the crime. Then the impact blankets an entire group of people.

With scapegoating and blaming, it is easy to create this "us versus them." Our instinct is to categorize and use our biases to keep ourselves safe. It is aided by there being a clear group that look different than the people holding power, who control that narrative. There are all these components that make this the perfect condition for all the events and violence happening now. We created this perfect condition for making sense of what is happening today.

In terms of historical scapegoating, we saw this with the AIDS crisis in the 80s. The LGBTQ and Black communities were impacted. There was 9/11, SARS, H1N1, etc. I think it's important to realize scapegoating is happening at all levels, even outside of this country and different countries, for different groups.

I've been hearing and reading about Muslim folks being attacked and scapegoated for the virus in India. Black African people in China are targeted. Many groups are seen as the reason for the virus and harm because of the biases. We need to pay attention to the historical matters and realize this is much deeper than what we're seeing today. So many of us have faced similar struggles. This gives us the opportunity to create solidarity and coalition.

Speaking of so many groups being impacted by this pandemic, it's important to understand how our social indignities have a huge impact on how the virus is being experienced. This is just some of the identities that we hold. These are social identities that our society is organized around. There are certain policies and laws to impact the categorization and subjugation of people holding or not holding these identities.

We keep iterating the fact that there are such high and urgent needs to address the Black and Brown communities who are so effected. Folks may lack access to resources because of the shutdown. This especially impacts folks with disabilities, who may be immunocompromised,

etc. They may be more at risk. A lot of people are struggling with mental health.

There are so many types of concerns being brought to the surface. Not a lot of the conversation is addressing the disparate impact for these different identity groups. Christine, do you want to add anything?

Christine: The fact is that these disparate impacts aren't saying that one thing is more important than the other. We need to recognize the nuance and multiplicity of identities we might be holding. These are coming to light now. When resources feel scarce, when we feel scared, when things are up in the air, etc. this highlights the systemic inequities.

Whether they're on the outside, or perceivable by others, there are a lot of different experiences happening and overlapping.

Michelle Kim: Absolutely. We already touched on so many differences in the disparate impacts faced by different marginalized groups. I think it's important to not just focus on our needs right now. We're all being impacted in one way or another. I have to keep reminding people that we are in a global pandemic. It is absolutely understandable and common to all feel exhausted, scared, and the weight of this crisis on our shoulders. I think it's important to look out for the people most at risk and to learn more about the ways people experience the pandemic differently because of the social inequities and systemic impact. I think we can do more there to channel some of our resources.

We talked about a lot of different things. We gave a ton of information. One thing we started with was educating ourselves on the historical impacts on the Asian community. This education was not part of my upbringing and education, even in higher ed.

As educators and students, however you are a part of this institution, I think we should be thinking of ways to integrate more of the rich history and dialogue that are missing. That goes beyond your personal education. You can reflect on your own biases and assumptions about Asian people. I think that's a great start from a personal lens.

Even as an Asian person myself, I have had to really reflect on how I have internalized the model minority myth. I have tried throughout my career to be seen as belonging. I worked hard to lose my accent when I got here. It takes me time to unpack the things I have internalized about myself.

Number 3 is to learn how other communities have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. We can make our discussion as intersectional as possible.

Then, you can take it upon yourself to challenge any racism and racist rhetoric. This includes anti-Blackness. How can we encourage ourselves and others to challenge this rhetoric? We went over that just now.

Now, I'll turn it over to Christine to go over the interpersonal aspect.

Christine: We got a note that there wasn't much in the PBS documentary on Indian immigrants. We see this repeatedly. There are narratives around Asians and Asian Americans. It primarily focuses on east Asians, not necessarily south or southeast Asians. Thank you for naming that as something also at play, even in these incredible documentaries. There are ways different communities may be overlooked in the conversations.

When talking about challenging anti-Asian racism and xenophobia, you wonder how you can even start. One simple thing is to check in. Especially in a time when we are physically isolated and feeling emotionally isolated, checking in can make such a huge difference. It doesn't have to be a long conversation or open-ended question.

You can also give a statement. You can say, "I'm thinking about you," or "I'm personally bothered by this and want to check in." You can really open up space to let the person impacted share with you. You could be supportive to them in these ways without putting additional burdens on them to show up if they're not ready or don't have the capacity to engage in that conversation.

We've collected some strategies to intervene in the moment. We put them up in an order. Really, these are different tools you can use to have in your back pocket to pull out at any given moment. Too often, I have had the experience of someone saying something offensive or that made me uncomfortable. In the moment, when I was thinking, "that feels bad," I was so internal that the moment passed.

Two months afterwards, I kicked myself about not saying something in that moment. These are a few tools you could use to create that space to intervene in the moment. You can really interrupt what is happening.

First, create a moment of pause. One of our favorite tactics is to have a go to reaction. Michelle makes a good "hmm" sound. I tend to do a more annoying high-pitched "hmm." It's easy to interrupt someone's thought. It's a way to create pause and make a moment so you can collect your thoughts. That way the person knows something is happening and indicates to the people around you that something is happening.

The next strategy is to ask clarifying questions. Sometimes just asking the questions allows someone to think for themselves. "What is it I just said and why did I say that?" It allows for some self-reflection and dialogue. You can understand where they are coming from a little more and have that exchange.

You can describe the impact of what they said or did and offer a counter narrative. One really effective thing is to share your own learning. When you are able to display that vulnerability, you can say, "I used to think that now, but I learned something, and now I think this." That's a beautiful model to demonstrate your learning.

You can request behavior changes. You can suggest an alternative. You can say, "in this space, we don't use those words." You can also model desired behavior.

Even by intervening, you send a message to everyone around you that this is the way that you show up. They might have the courage to also show up. There is strength the numbers. You have a peer, colleague, or friend who has your back in that moment. That can create coalition and strength. It can create that culture of being able to interrupt and speak up when you are seeing bias, racism, or any other problematic behaviors.

Again, you don't have to use all of these. Some of these are things that you can hold on to and experiment with yourself to see what feels okay. You can try them out.

We're going to invite you to think about these strategies and others in a few scenarios. We're going to show you a statement. Then, we will unpack it a bit. We're going to talk about the core issues, who is impacted, and then what you would do.

Let's start with this one. [Reading scenario]

In the chat, we ask you to respond. What are the core issues here? What is potentially problematic in this statement?

Michelle Kim: If you agree, that's okay too. We can unpack that as well. What do you think is happening here? What are some of the core issues?

We have a comment that asks why we didn't call the H1N1 the American virus. [Reading chat responses]

We fall into a scapegoating blame, the generalization is problematic, it is not clear that it actually started in China, a virus effects everyone, looking for a justification for using a racism term, zoonotic transmissions happen very day, etc.

Christine: Someone named the Spanish flu. Someone else said the Spanish flu started in the US. I want to share the fact that in 2015, the World Health Organization changed their naming protocol for pandemics because of the things ya'll are naming. Naming viruses based on regions, territories, or livestock has increased racism, xenophobia, and acts of violence.

In a conscious effort to decrease that, the World Health Organization said we encourage people to call it by the symptoms or the scientific name of the virus itself.

Michelle Kim: We have a few folks asking to unpack this. They've been asked this question before. Are there any ideas in the chat? Looking back at the techniques Christine shared, how would you intervene in the moment? What would you say so folks can learn from the response you have?

What do you think the intent is behind calling it a Chinese virus? What are the consequences? I love that you are taking the questioning strategy to ask the utility of calling it a Chinese virus and what the impact might be.

We should not generalize using the word "Chinese virus," yes.

Christine: Someone said to simply ask what happens when label like this. Another person said to let them know immediately that it's not cool.

Michelle Kim: We find that it's useful to engage in these types of unpacking and understanding about why this is harmful. We find there is a challenge in actually intervening when this happens in the moment. It's one thing to intellectualize and understand the harm. It's another thing to be able to call that person in with compassion and criticality.

It's probably not a useful strategy for us to call this person ignorant in moment, especially if they are someone you work with, a teammate, classmate, etc. If we want to preserve the relationship we have with each other, there are different responses we can take. This person may be coming from a place of real curiosity. They may also be ignorant to this having harmful impacts.

You can question why they say that. You can ask what they think the impact is. You can model your own learning. "Based on the impact that we're seeing on the Chinese people, I don't think that is the best way to describe this virus." There are so many ways we can intervene.

It changes based on your context. It depends on your relationship with that person. It depends on how the person is asking the question and whether you feel safe enough to intervene in the moment. These are the things we won't get to right now. I want us to think about this and practice them.

Let's go to the second scenario.

Christine: Alright, scenario number 2 is when someone says, [reading prompt]

Michelle Kim: I've been hearing this quite a bit. It's been interesting for us to impact this, too. We have, "what do you mean by that?" That's a great response.

"Just because they don't protest as often doesn't mean they don't care."

"Sounds like a stereotype." [Reading chat]

Based on the historical context that we weren't exposed to, there is a clear eraser of Asian activism and history in the United States, especially. This comment could even come from people of color. I've gotten this comment from people in the Black community. I think that's because there has been so much political trauma and need for more people to do that. It's easy for us to not be exposed to activism in different groups.

I have had to work hard to get Asian activism in my twitter feed. I know there are people working on anti-oppression work. I know there are Asian folks doing abolition work. They are working on Asian issues. There's this mutual ignorance that needs to be addressed with statements like this.

"Now all of a sudden people care about racism because it effects them. Where were they for

Black Lives Matter?" I think there are certain things people can say.

There are lots of suggestions. "That's interesting that you're noticing it now. There's actually a huge history of Asian activism. Do you want to watch this documentary with me?" I love the invitation to watch the documentary!

"I'm sure many Asians have cared about racism just like many Latinos and whites care about racism." I hear a lot of people saying they've heard this a lot. "Because it's never publicized in the media." "Coalition building is imperative." "You're the one paying more attention to them now." [Reading comments]

So, there's people highlighting some of the invisibility. "There is a south Asian group helping asylum seekers." There's a lot of education we can do to show there are folks doing this work. Of course, there is the acknowledgment that there is more work to be done in the Asian community on intersectionality issues, including anti-Blackness.

We understand why people may not be exposed to Asian activism. This is a moment to intervene and interrupt that harm that erases the good work that our ancestors and communities continue to do.

Christine: Right. Just to recap some of these interpersonal allyship actions, there are the challenges to the model minority myth. There's the movement to action. This is consistent in active practice that we were talking about earlier.

It can look like checking in with your Asian American colleagues and friends. You can ask what support looks like for them. You can look at Asian businesses impacted by COVID-19. This is a starting place so you can have food for thought on what this looks like in terms of your interpersonal relationships showing up in different places.

We've talked about the rich and long history of Asian people in the US. Anti-Asian and xenophobia is not new. Scapegoating often happens in a crisis. It looks different in different areas of the world. We are focusing on the US today. We can practice allyship at different levels. Today we focused on the personal and interpersonal levels to make those organizational and systemic changes.

These are the allyship actions that we have covered. With this in mind, we really invite you to take a minute to think about what you would like to commit to doing in the next week, based on what you have learned today. Take a minute to write that down for yourself.

Michelle Kim: Now would also be a great time for you to submit any questions you have. That way we can spend the remaining few minutes focusing on any questions that have occurred to you. Use Zoom's Q&A feature to ask any questions.

What is one thing you would like to commit to doing in the next week?

[Reading comments]

"Reading more of the suggested books and educating myself." "Watch a video." "Check in with my Asian friends." "Learn more about Asian American History." "Speak out if I hear negative comments."

There's lots of education and doing more digging on the history. That's great. That's awesome

Studies have shown that if you share your commitment out loud and into the world, you are more likely to achieve your commitments. You have more accountability and want to follow through. We're seeing more questions coming in.

Please, keep the questions coming in the Q&A. We will try to get to as many as possible.

Okay, we'll give one more minute. Awesome, "sharing the recording with other folks." That's awesome. Thank you for sharing.

Christine, I'm checking out some of the Q&A questions. "What was the name of the documentary?" It is called *Asian Americans*. It's on PBS. I think they are free for people to view on their website. I've been using my streaming thing. It's been free. It's a five hour long, three part series. Is it three or two part? I watched it in one, very long sitting. [Laughing]

It's called *Asian Americans*. You can check it out. Okay, it's three part. Thank you, Celia.

"Who do you see as our modern day Asian American activist?" This is a good one. I'll share some of my favorite people that I follow. There are many. I will share three. One is Mia Mingus. She is a disability and racial justice activist. She has lots of great writing and talks that are recorded aniline.

The other is Ai-jen Poo. She is a leader of the domestic workers alliance, and CEO of that organization. That organization was able to pass the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights. It has made lots of great progress in protecting workers rights for people who are caregivers and doing domestic work.

Liz Kleinrock, her handle is teachandtransform, is on Instagram. I love following her work. She has a lot of educational material that folks can use to educate young folks and adults. I find her power powerful and transformational.

I think we're talking about the same Helen. She spells her last name with a Z. She as a journalist, writer, etc. She talks about how Asian Americans are views as gangsters, gooks, geishas, or geeks. We were on a panel together. She was profound. Her work is incredible. She appears on the PBS documentary.

Christine, do you have any favorite folks you follow? You're on mute. I can't hear you.

Christine: I think you covered a lot of incredible people. I think those folks are in my feed.

Michelle Kim: Awesome

Christine: We have a bunch of folks adding to the list. There are more people to check out.

Michelle Kim: I've heard the term Asian Pacific Islanders, API, is offensive and that the term Asian Pacific Americans is preferred. I've heard a lot of acronyms these days. I've been learning about identifying Native Hawaii and Pacific Island Natives differently. I don't know if there is a clear consensus.

Often, Native Hawaiian experiences are erased. I'm of the mindset that when we can be specific about disaggregating the data, rhetoric, and narratives about Asian Americans, we can be specific about issues that different groups are thinking. I think we can raise our awareness that way and avoid being part of the erasure activities that we've seen so far. I think that would be a worthwhile reflection of us to continue to ponder.

Christine: There's a question around how we talk to children and young people about what is happening now and this education piece in general. In an education project, there is a lot that is geared towards school aged children. It's a way to educate ourselves and learn how to talk to children about what is happening not just in the US but elsewhere. I know Michelle has done a lot of thinking about how we start bringing some of our programming to high school age and college age people. I don't know if you have anything to add there, Michelle.

Michelle Kim: I love some of the things you echoed. In terms of how to talk to children, I think a lot of conversations already happen among children. There is a lot of harm being witnessed on the part of children today. I have heard lots of stories about young Asian people in kindergarten or childcare being made fun of for their food or corona virus.

I think we need to start that conversation early. If we have children who are not Asian, how can we intervene when those things happen? We need to educate kids to not repeat what they see on television or from other children who are talking about certain things with a biased lens.

Liz Kleinrock is the person to go to in order to get resources on how to educate children. How can they be aware, and use accessible language and materials, to educate young people?

I love this comment. Our 4th graders learned about the Chinese Exclusion Act. What school is that? That's awesome. I will spell the name of the person in the chat. I will also share the Instagram handle.

Christine: There is a question about whether we have encountered any anti-Asian racism, and if so, how did we respond to it?

Early on in the pandemic, when I was going out for groceries, I had someone where it wasn't quite verbal. They coughed at me, derisively. They intently coughed at me. I have to say, all my defenses went up. I put my head down, and I walked as quickly as I could.

I think that is the experience of many people when they face racism, actual acts of racism against

them. Our instinct in the moment is to take care of our safety. It's our natural instinct. I think it's rarer for someone to get angry, yell, confront, etc. in that situation.

In that moment, if someone had seen what was happening, I wish they would have said something or intervened. I wouldn't have felt so jarred and alone in the moment. I think that's a lot of what we're talking about today. How do we show up for each other? How do we witness when harm is happening and intervene in a way that is respectful, caring, and centering the experience of a person who might be experiencing harm?

Michelle Kim: Thank you for sharing that story. I think there's also something to be said about even if you are not experiencing a direct threat now, we are seeing this in the media and worrying about our families. My parents have experienced verbal harassment. I know folks who have experienced physical attacks. Those stories add up to the burden we carry.

Vicarious trauma is real. I think the Black community knows this from the senseless murders. There's also checking in with your colleagues and caring for each other.

We're at time. We didn't get to the questions. We will try to filter them out to see if we can respond in writing after this. Feel free to reach out to Samantha if you have additional questions. We will try to get them from her and do our best to address them. Are there any parting words from you, Christine?

Christine: No, thank you for being here, engaging with us, and showing up. I am about to enter the feedback form into chat. We take your feedback to heart in terms of how your community can serve you in these times and afterwards. Any feedback is welcome.

Thank you for taking this time to learn more with us.

Michelle Kim: Thank you.

You're muted, Doug.

Douglas Haynes: I wanted to share that I appreciate your session, insight, and the knowledge you brought to bear on this question. I think we're growing a bit more with each of these. We need it more than ever. Thank you all for participating.

Michelle Kim: Thank you. Thank you for participating everyone. Doug, thank you for being here.

Douglas Haynes: Sure, bye.

Michelle Kim: Bye, everyone!

I'll play my outro music.

[Music]

Christine: I stopped the recording.

Michelle Kim: Yay!

[Music]

Michelle Kim: Alright. Samantha, I'm going to end the session. I'll send a new Zoom so we can come together separately.

[End meeting]

***This is a meaning-for-meaning transcript designed to facilitate communication access and is not intended to be a verbatim record of the proceedings. Thank you.*