

SOLIDARITY RESOURCE LIBRARY + ACTION GUIDE

SUPPORTING, AND ADVOCATING, ALONGSIDE ASIAN-AMERICAN/AAPI AND ASIAN COMMUNITIES



Illustration of Japanese-American Civil Rights icon, activist and leader Yuri Kochiyama | Image by Alyssa Winans

BEING AN ALLY + HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

People across the Asian-American/AAPI diaspora have been targets of systemic violence, discrimination and disenfranchisement for centuries in the United States — from the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), Japanese Internment (1942-1946) to the struggle for Civil Rights and Ethnic Studies (1960's-90's). The historical reality of racism and discrimination faced by Asian-American/AAPI people has collided with an increase in Anti-Asian violence brought on over the last 12-months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a July report by several Asian Civil Rights organizations there have been more than 800 reported hate crime incidents in California directed toward Asian-Americans since March of 2020.

In order for companies to create an inclusive environment for all, they must address the historical, and current lived experiences of Asian-American people. The following resource guide is an introductory tool to help you do just that—with historical context, key language, action steps to take to be an ally, self-care resources, and best practices for people managers to support Asian-American/AAPI and Asian identified staff.

DEFINING XENOPHOBIA

Xenophobia is defined as: *Any attitude, behavior, practice, or policy that explicitly or implicitly reflects the belief that immigrants are inferior to the dominant group of people. Xenophobia is reflected in **interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels oppression** and is a function of **White supremacy**.* (Source: [Center for the Study of Social Policy](#)).

DECONSTRUCTING THE "MODEL MINORITY" MYTH

Model Minority: A term created by sociologist William Peterson to originally describe the Japanese community, whom he saw as being able to overcome oppression because of their cultural values. The **model minority myth** is harmful to Asian-American and AAPI communities, as well to people who identify as Black for several reasons:

- 1) **Making Assumptions:** It assumes that all Asian-American and AAPI people have had the same experiences, making the group a **monolith** and ignoring the **expansive lived experiences of Asian-American/AAPI people**.
- 2) **Rooting in Anti-Blackness:** The "model minority" ideology perpetuates the myth that Asian-American/AAPI people are able to overcome **systemic oppression** through hard work and "pulling themselves up by their bootstraps." This falsehood is rooted in the belief that Asian-American/AAPI people inherently value hard work more so than other racial groups—particularly people who are Black. This results in pitting the AAPI/Asian community against the Black community, and ignores the many overlapping experiences and examples of **cross-cultural organizing** between the two groups.
- 3) **Erasing Minority Communities Within the Asian-American/AAPI Diaspora:** The model minority myth erases the experiences of working class Asian-American/AAPI people, mixed race AAPI/Asian-American people, religious and ethnic minority communities, along with other identity-based minority communities within the Asian-American/AAPI diaspora.

ALLY TO ACCOMPLICE

Initial Action Steps For Change

- **MAKE SPACE:** Make space for yourself, and others, to hold a wide range of feelings related to the recent Asian-American hate crimes. This includes making space to prioritize your self-care.
- **COMMIT TO PERSONAL GROWTH:** Commit to your personal growth by reflecting on your responsibility to play an active role in ending racially motivated bias and violence. What can you be doing better to ensure equity for all? **Bonus: Write down a personal plan for growth around racial equity to hold yourself accountable.**
- **SELF EDUCATION:** Study and explore the provided resources, and continue finding additional opportunities to expand your knowledge on Asian-American identities, cultures and history.
- **LISTEN TO IMPACTED COMMUNITIES:** Listen, believe, trust and *follow* the lead of people from across the Asian-American diaspora. Listen to people from impacted communities, especially when they express what they need to be supported during a heightened moment of crisis.
- **DONATE TO MUTUAL AID, COMMUNITY FUNDS + GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS:** Redistribute funds to community focused, grassroots organizations and fundraisers going directly to impacted people:
 - For a list of organizations to donate to [click here](#)

SELF-CARE STRATEGIES

AND RESOURCES

Putting you first

Swarm Strategy encourages workplaces, managers and HR leaders to provide space for their employee to lean into developing a self-care plan and practice. Collective healing, community care and rest has to be prioritized in this work.

- **UTILIZE YOUR COMPANY EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PLAN (EAP) + ADDITIONAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS/RESOURCES**
- **PHONE A FRIEND – REACH OUT TO YOUR SUPPORT GROUP**
- **GROW TOGETHER WITH A SELF-CARE ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER:** Pick a friend or trusted colleague to have weekly check-ins about mental health, self-care, and current events
- **ENGAGE IN GUIDED MEDIATION AND/OR INTENTIONAL BREATH WORK**
- **DEVELOP A JOURNALING/WRITING PRACTICE**
- **GET ACTIVE AND GROUNDED WITH YOGA + BODY MOVEMENT**
- **DEDICATE TIME TO GETTING OUTSIDE**
- **READ FOR AN HOUR**

BE LOUDLY
ANTI-RACIST
NOT QUIETLY
NON-RACIST



BEST PRACTICES FOR PEOPLE MANAGERS

Leading + Managing in Times of Crisis

Lean Into:

- 1) Asking what people need and providing options:** What people need can change from day to day and person to person. That's why you should ask regularly in multiple channels, such as via check-in, email, or survey.
- 2) Reprioritizing Time and Tasks:** Talk to all of your team members about what's on their plate. Do it for yourself, too. True reprioritization will require redistribution of work, so ask yourself:
 - What can you adjust to lighten the load for your Asian colleagues or yourself, if you are a Asian manager?
- 3) Allowing for time off, no questions asked:** While some people may turn to work as a coping mechanism, most people would probably benefit from more space. That's why you might consider making time off the norm—something that your Asian staff members don't need to opt into or request as an accommodation.

Move Away From:

- 1) Expecting Impacted Staff to Educate You:** Do not ask Asian, and Asian-American staff to educate non-Asian staff on allyship.
- 2) Keeping Business As Usual:** Do not keep operating as if nothing is happening. Being an inclusive leader means acknowledging the historical, and current, impact of racial injustice and taking action steps towards change.
- 3) Speaking for People Who Are Asian and Asian-American:** Do not speak for people from a historically marginalized community that you are not a part of. When talking about the current situation with colleagues, use "I" statements to root your feelings in your own identity + experience.
- 4) Getting Defensive:** Listen and lead with humility, especially when your Asian and Asian-American colleagues are expressing their needs or sharing their lived experiences.

Partially adapted from: [The Management Center - How to Manage When Things Are Not Okay \(and Haven't Been for Centuries\)](#)

Build Your Cultural Intelligence and Practice Curiosity

- **The White House:** [Memorandum Condemning and Combating Racism, Xenophobia, and Intolerance Against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States](#)
- **Oakland Asian Cultural Center**
 - [Oakland Chinatown Safety Resource List](#)
- **Stop AAPI Hate**
- **SHRM:** [Xenophobia on the Rise During COVID-19](#)
- **Harvard Business Review:** [U.S. Businesses Must Take Meaningful Action Against Racism](#)
- **Asian Americans Advancing Justice**
- **NPR:** [As Coronavirus Spreads, Racism and Xenophobia Are Too](#)
- **Yes!:** [How I Found Racial Healing During the Pandemic](#)
- **PBS News Hour:** ['We have been through this before.' Why anti-Asian hate crimes are rising amid coronavirus](#)
- **Seattle Public Library (SPL):** [Yellow Peril Supports Black Power - A Reflection on Asian-Black Solidarity \(Resource List\)](#)
- **Fast Company -** [How to combat racism and prejudice at work during the COVID-19 crisis](#)
- **Asian American Racial Justice Toolkit**