

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration (SM63157)  
Dr. Tooru Nemoto, PhD



# Engaging Asian Youth in Challenging the Stigma: A Model for Youth-Led Program

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# Improving the Wellness of Asian Youth



**ASIAN HEALTH SERVICES**



# Activity

Think of a few youth that stand out to you

What assets/attributes/qualities/skills about them stick out to you?

[www.menti.com](https://www.menti.com) code: 17 32 31

# Addressing the need

- Asian youth overlooked in mental health services
- Mental health issues not immediately seen
- Disconnect/denial of culture
  - Connection to ethnic identity - protective factor



# Stats

Compared to other U.S. populations, Asian Americans are **3 times** less likely to seek mental health services

## You are not alone



Among this,

**19%**

Asian American high school students considered suicide



# Trauma among Asian youth

- Intergenerational
- Immigration
- War
- Separation
- Isolation
- Language barrier
- Culture differences
- Academic stress
- Parental pressure
- Expectations
- Shame



# What is Trauma-Informed Care?





# 6 Guiding Principles to a Trauma-Informed Approach





# What is Healing Centered Engagement?



What is wrong with you?



What happened to you?


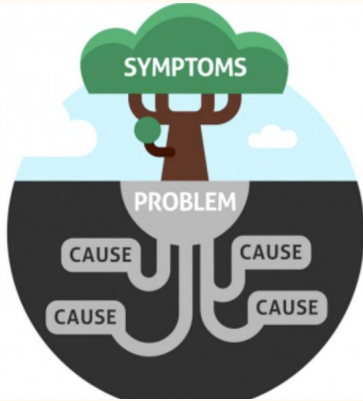


What is right with you?



# Healing centered engagement focuses on:

1. Healing by addressing the root causes
2. Being grounded in culture and identity
3. Strength-based and asset driven



**CULTURAL Identity**  
is the holistic combination of **national, political, cultural, religious, and family factors** which shape up one's identity.

Buzzle.com



# IWAY Programs

- One-on-one counseling
- Healing centered Youth Program
- Mental health presentations to youth and parents
- To address the barriers:
  - FREE
  - No parental consent needed
  - Incentivized (can earn up to \$90 in gift cards)
  - Offer programs at schools
  - Bus and BART passes provided
  - Food
  - No insurance






# Counseling - Common Themes

- Self-esteem / identity
- Body image
- Social anxiety
- Family pressure and expectations
- Navigating relationship (family, friends, peers, etc)
- Coping with childhood trauma
- Unmotivation
- Worrying about the future and the unknown

# Importance of supporting parents when working with youth

- Generation gap
  - Cultural difference (1st gen vs 2nd gen)
  - Intergenerational trauma
- 
- Fostering empathy
  - Understanding
  - Connecting to family heritage
  - Strengthen support network



# Youth Group Programs

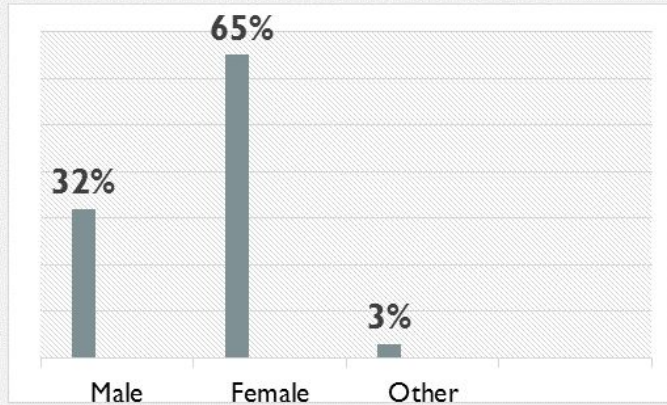
- Ethnic pride and building cultural identity
- Self-confidence and -awareness
- Focused on emotional wellness & ties to the community
- Strength and asset based
- Through media, food, art, exploration field trips



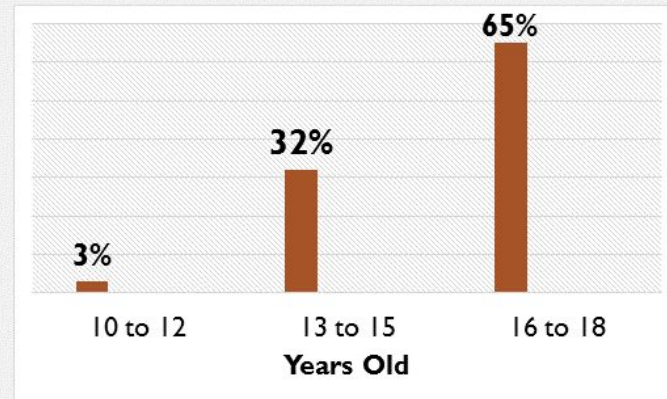


## DEMOGRAPHICS OF CURRENT IWAY CLIENTS

**GENDER** (n=107)

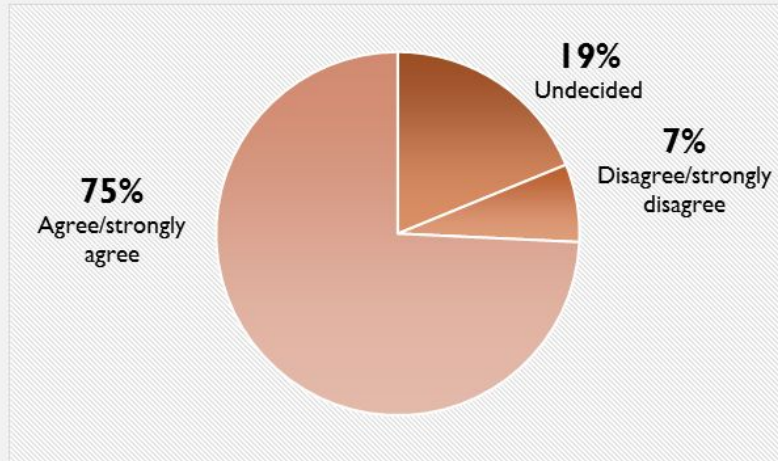


**AGE GROUP** (n=105)

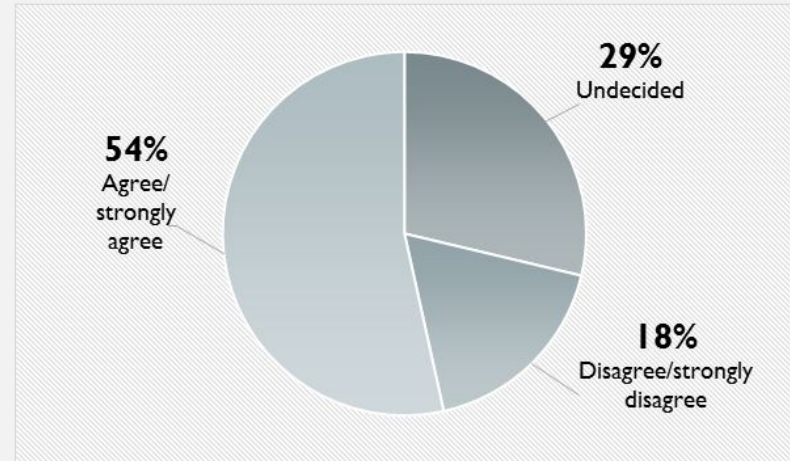


## Handling everyday life in the past 30 days

I am handling daily life (n=107)

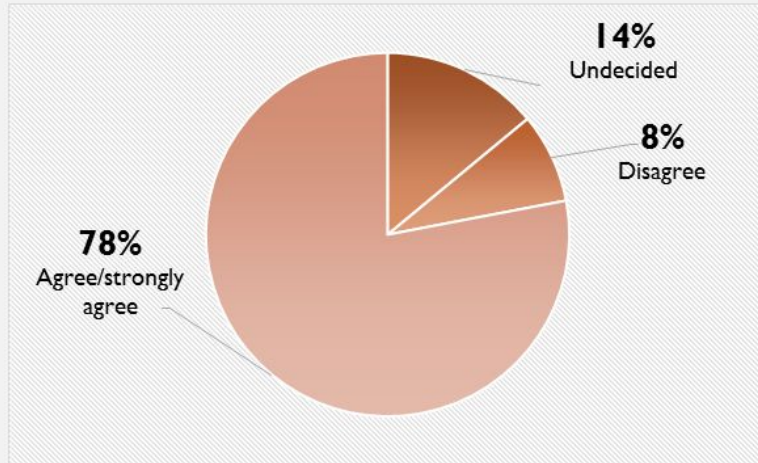


I am able to cope when things go wrong (n=107)

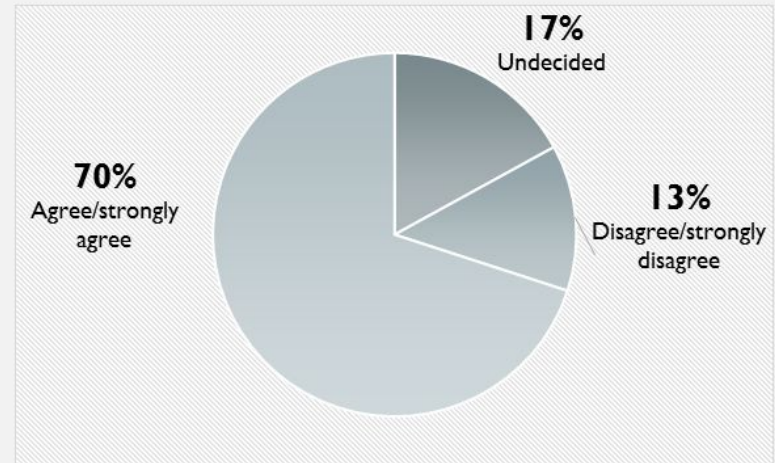


## Handling everyday life in the past 30 days

I get along with family members (n=106)

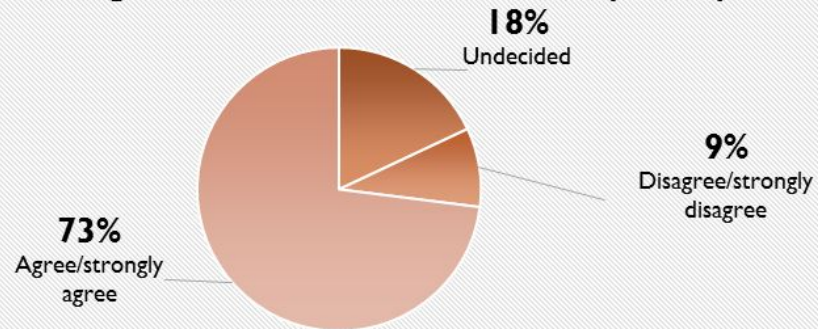


I am satisfied with our family life right now (n=106)



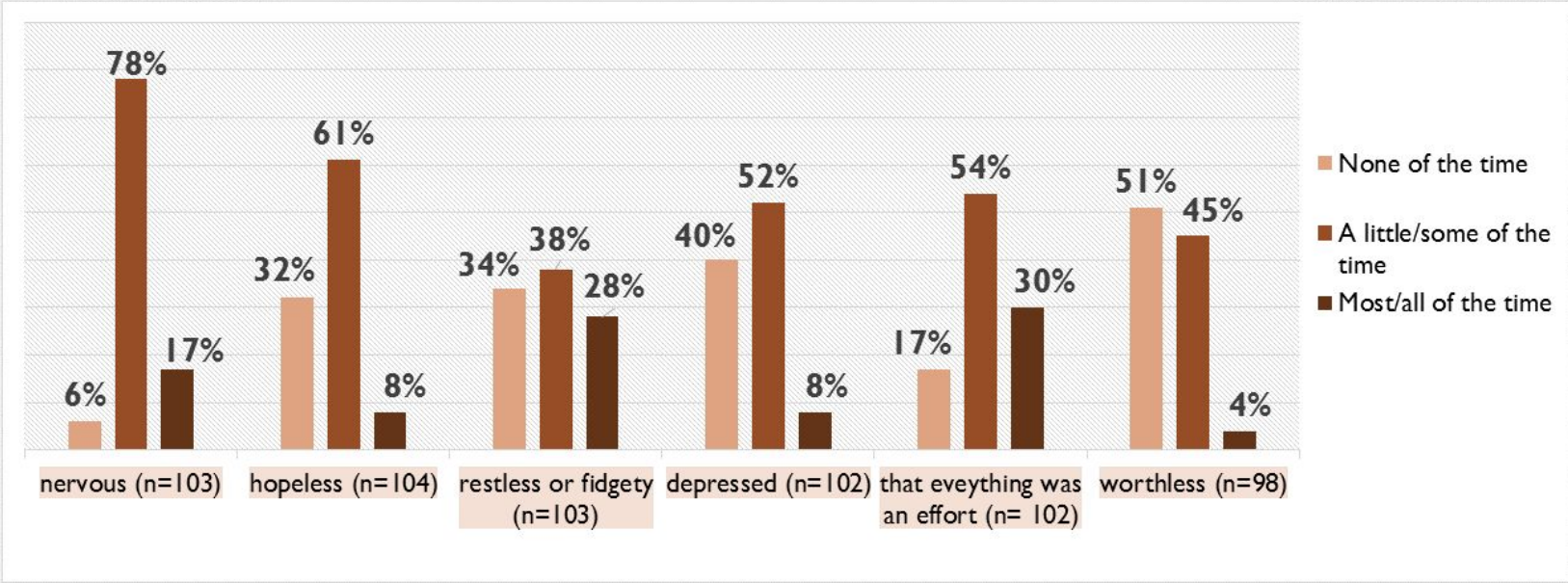
## Handling everyday life in the past 30 days

**I am doing well in school and/or work (n=107)**



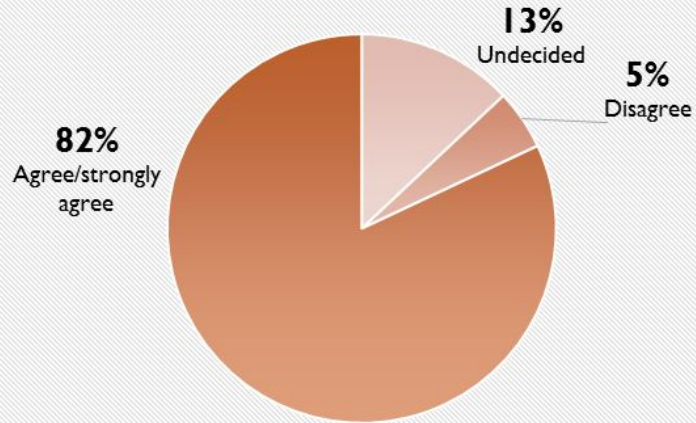


During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel...

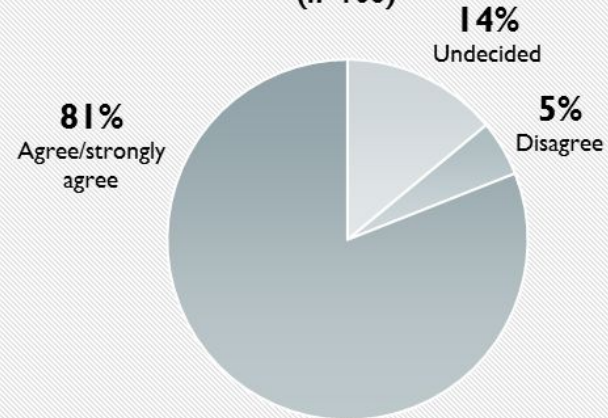


## SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

**I know people who will understand me when I need to talk (n=105)**

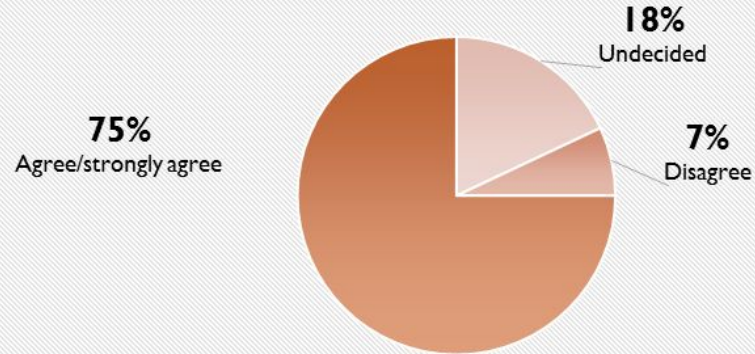


**I have people that I am comfortable talking with about my problems (n=106)**



## SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

**In a crisis, I would have the support I need from family or friends (n=105)**





# How does youth leadership challenge the stigma?

- Their voices have impact!
- Creating opportunities for youth to impact their own community
- Empowerment
- Self-agency
- Asset-based (focused on strengths)
- Break traditional adult/authority power dynamics

# Creating Youth Centered Programs

- **Community Advisory Board (CAB)**
- **API Talent Show**
- **Community Engagement Internship - Challenging the Stigma**



# Youth Voices of Emotional Wellness



"I haven't really talked about it with my family because I feel like it's really weird to them. Because I feel like I might have problems with mental health but I don't feel comfortable enough to talk to them about it. Like for example, my mom would just be like "you're just sad, let's go and get something to eat". She doesn't actually understand the mentality of having depression or really bad anxiety."



# Stop and Think

Thinking back to the youth from the beginning of the presentation...

How would you utilize those qualities to develop them as a youth leader in your community

Please share: [www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com)

code: 17 32 31

# Adapting To Virtual Programming



March



Present

March

Shelter in  
Place

How we finish the rest of the program?

- Disseminated program material virtually

# Video



Summer

Fully  
Virtual

## Two Programs

Middle School

High School

Cameras OFF

Mics OFF

Cameras OFF

Mics ON  
occasionally

## Focus Coping

I learned about the 3 types of focus coping. Which one I use the most, different ways I can address the problem and the name for it

## BEFORE IWAY:

I wasn't necessarily "proud" to be asian. People know the stereotypes and would tease me about it. I wasn't the type to embrace my asian-ness.  
I was born and raised in the US, so I'm not very knowledgeable on my culture. I don't know any specific holidays, how to speak tagalog.

## AFTER IWAY:

Although I still not be knowledgeable about my culture, I know there are others that can relate. I way made me feel better about me being asian-american. It's great to know the people I know that participated in IWAY that are asian-american also feel the same way as me. The fun games we played to learn about nutrition. knowing instead of pulling all neighbors to study I can get a good night's sleep. speaking of sleep also learning about REM sleep cuz that's crazy.

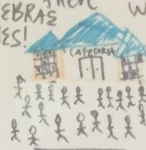
1D



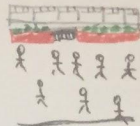
## getting comfortable:

my transition from elementary school to middle school, I noticed there were less asians.

STONEBRAS HUSKIES!



big asian community



smaller asian community.

Being in IWAY made me feel more comfortable taking about me as an asian-american. expectations, being proud of my culture, ect.

IWAY has given me something to look forward to every week! It was so fun and I am so grateful to have been apart of it! THANK YOU SM!

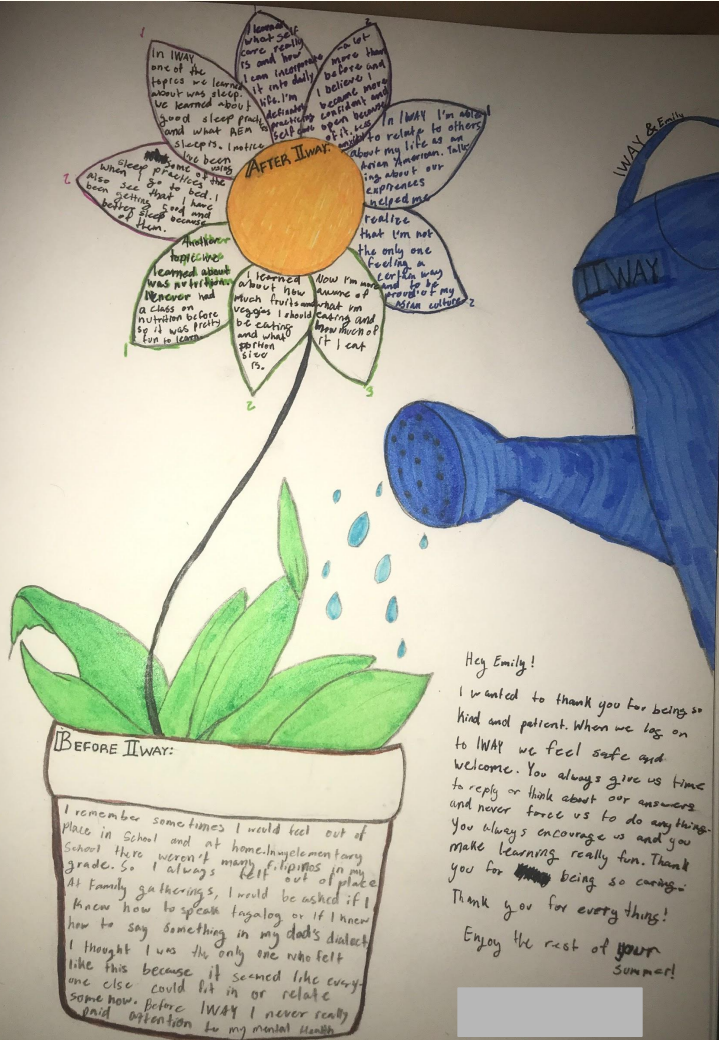
-Lynelle Legados

A-Z stress

IWAY

more content of sleep

teacher tea



**BEFORE IWAY:**

I remember sometimes I would feel out of place in school and at home. In elementary school there weren't many Filipinos in my grade. So I always felt out of place. At family gatherings, I would be asked if I knew how to speak Tagalog or if I knew how to say something in my dad's dialect. I thought I was the only one who felt like this because it seemed like everyone else could fit in or relate some how. Before IWAY I never really paid attention to my mental health.

**AFTER IWAY:**

1. I learned what self-care really is and how I can incorporate it into daily life. I'm becoming more confident and I believe more than before. I believe I can relate to others about my life as an Asian American. Talking about our experiences helped me realize that I'm not the only one feeling a certain way and to be proud of my Asian culture.

2. I've been sleeping peacefully when I go to bed. I have better sleep hygiene. Another tip I've learned about was that I never had a class on nutrition before but it was pretty fun to learn about how much fruits and veggies I should eat and what portion sizes are.

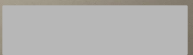
3. Now I'm proud of my body and I eat what I want.

Hey Emily!

I wanted to thank you for being so kind and patient. When we log on to IWAY we feel safe and welcome. You always give us time to reply or think about our answers and never force us to do anything. You always encourage us and you make learning really fun. Thank you for ~~being~~ being so caring.

Thank you for everything!

Enjoy the rest of your summer!



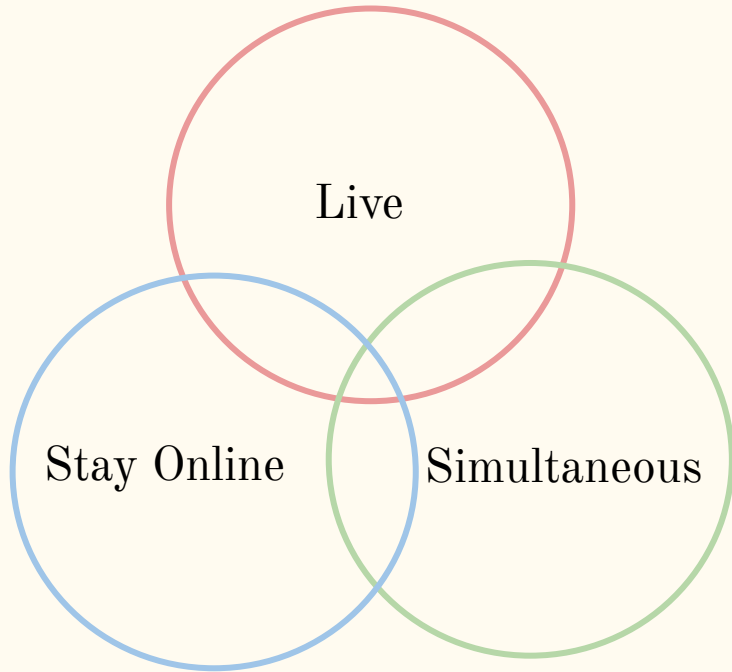
# Challenges

- Sensing how engaged people are
- Getting youth to interact with each other
- Doing creative and reflective projects

## Lesson

Don't relocate your program online, create an online program.

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## Platforms

Zoom → Break out rooms, White board

Google Drive → Docs, Slides, Jamboard

## Activities

Do activities **TOGETHER** as much as possible

1 Dear Me...

2 I don't think I am special. I know I am not! My only advantage is that I am not! They say that I will never find the love I deserve!

3 ... am perfectly fine the way I am. No matter what you think of me, I am who I am.

4 I am doing great! I am beautiful. I am grateful to be alive, still breathing and functioning amazing. I am enough for me.

5 I don't see my reflection in the mirror. I don't see my reflection in the mirror. I don't see my reflection in the mirror. I don't see my reflection in the mirror.

6 I am doing great! I am beautiful. I am grateful to be alive, still breathing and functioning amazing. I am enough for me. I am doing great! I am beautiful. I am grateful to be alive, still breathing and functioning amazing. I am enough for me. I am doing great! I am beautiful. I am grateful to be alive, still breathing and functioning amazing. I am enough for me.



5:16 PM Sep 23 ✓

i love this & i agree with everything !!

5:13 PM Sep 23 ✓

you are more than enough<333

5:17 PM Sep 23 ✓

and that is the TRUTH!! <3

5:30 PM Sep 23 ✓

yes! you are enough for yourself and you are AMAZING!



- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11

**I...** Am not a virus

Am a Chinese Women Am not an object for your yellow fever

Do not eat dogs

Am an artist

Care about mental health **But I...** Deserve the same respect

Am not good at math

Was in orchestra Do not want to be a CS major

Do not listen to K-Pop Am addicted to boba

Can be into the same things guys are

Click to add speaker notes





# Questions?





# Contact us!

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