

Our Movement.
Our Moment.

 **2019 NAMI**
National
Convention
JUNE 19–22 • SEATTLE

Welcome to 2019 NAMI National Convention

**Desi and Depressed:
Mental Illness in the South Asian-American
Community**

Our Movement. Our Moment.

#NAMICON19



2019 **NAMI**
National
Convention

JUNE 19-22 • SEATTLE



Asian American Mental Health Statistics

- 13.9% of adults report living with a mental health condition*
- Use mental health services at 1/3 the rate of White Non-Hispanic Americans
- Suicide is the 5th leading cause of death
 - 9th leading cause of death among non-Hispanic White Americans
- In women age 15-24, Asian Americans have the highest suicide rate among all racial and ethnic groups

Statistics from NAMI, WHO, NIMH and CDC Data

Why is that?

- There are many challenges that face the South Asian-American community when dealing with mental health issues
- These challenges are **UNIQUE** to the community, and need to be understood as such

Challenge: Mixed attitudes towards doctors and medication

- Many South Asians tend to avoid doctors and medications whenever possible
 - Not helpful
 - Can just get advice/treatment from their friends
- Only go to the doctor when things get very serious
- Not a lot of faith in psychiatrists and psychiatric medication
 - Big “fix it” mentality

Challenge: Social perception is important

- We are a very social culture, and are very clustered in the US
 - New Jersey, San Francisco, Dallas, Raleigh-Durham
- Gossip is very common
- People care a lot about what other people think of them
 - Log Kya Kahenge?
- There is no sense of privacy when asking for help with mental health
 - Fear of it becoming a topic of gossip
 - Fear of it reflecting poorly on people's opinions of you and your family

Challenge: Mental Illness isn't "real"

- Because the symptoms are usually emotions and behaviors, the thought is that you should be able to control these and "get over it"
- People who ~~don't~~ can't are not trying hard enough, are doing it for attention, or are just trying to cause drama
 - People, especially children, are held to an incredibly high bar for success
 - These attitudes can leech into other perceptions of the person
- Yoga and Prayer can make the "bad thoughts" go away

Challenge: Mental Illness is a “Privilege” or “a White Person’s Disease”

- Most of us are first generation, and our parents left everything back in their home country to come to America
- “You have it way better than we did, how can you be so sad/upset/angry/etc.”
- “In India we just worked hard and got over it, so you can too”

How to better reach the South Asian-American Community

- Understand that these are just some of the challenges facing the community
 - And always be ready to learn more
- Reach out to people who have already spoken up within the community and work with them
 - Dil to Dil and Mann Mukti
 - South Asian Mental Health Initiative and Network
 - Asha International
- Accept that the family will be heavily involved in the conversation
- Be proactive



Please take a few minutes to give us your feedback about this session

There are **two ways** you can give us your feedback:

1. Download the NAMI Convention App and rate the session in real time:

App Download Instructions

Visit your App Store and search for the “Aventri Events” app. Download the app and enter Access Code: 778151 or scan the following QR Code:



2. You can also evaluate the session on your computer. Go to: www.nami.org/sessioneval, select the session and click “Rate This Session.”