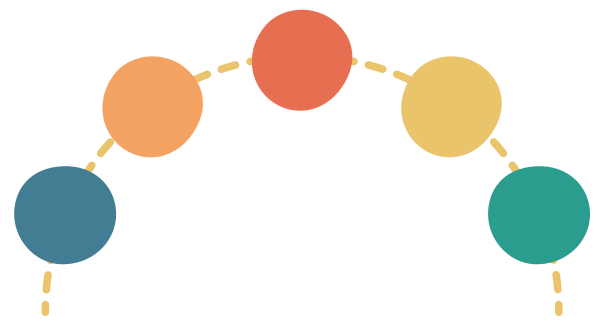


WHAT DO ASIAN YOUTH THINK ABOUT AAR?

SUMMARY

36 youth participated in focus groups. We conducted 8 focus groups in total, 7 in English, and 1 in Mandarin. Participants ranged from 14-23 years old.



QUESTIONS

We asked four main questions:

1. What does Anti-Asian Racism (AAR) mean to youth?
2. What was the experience of AAR like if they have experienced it?
3. How does it affect youth?
4. What can we do about it?

HOW IS AAR EXPERIENCED?

Youth described many types of racism. Many described incidents of "casual racism" and microaggressions, such as being alienated, stereotyped, or subject to comments about their eyes, food they bring to school, and their accents. Many youth also experienced more overt forms of racism, specifically related to COVID-19.



HOW IS AAR FORMED?

We also asked youth about their perceived causes of AAR. Their responses included:

- White supremacy
- Proximity to whiteness
- Model minority myth
- Immigrant mentality
- Dismissive attitudes
- Ignorance
- COVID-19

WHAT ENABLED YOUTH TO RECOGNIZE AAR?

School curriculums, changes in surrounding social environments, conversations with family and friends about their experiences, and spaces to talk both in-person and online were crucial factors to youth recognizing AAR.



HOW DOES AAR IMPACT ASIAN YOUTH?

INVALIDATION

When there are no resources to help youth make sense of AAR, self-invalidation and external dismissal of experiences with AAR may occur.

1

SELF-DOUBT

Similarly, a lack of resources can lead to confusion about what constitutes AAR. Youth may think, "is this *really* racism?"

2

INTERNALIZATION

Casual racism and microaggressions usually lead to a more internalized response. This can lead to self-blame, keeping quiet, or efforts to assimilate.

3

IMMEDIATE REACTION

Different participants report their immediate reactions to overt racism as feeling shocked or scared, fawning, freezing, or taking action.

4

SENSE OF SELF

AAR affects youth's sense of self, leading to poor self-esteem, feeling voiceless, and a reduced sense of agency and power.

5

IDENTITY FORMATION

Participants also shared that AAR caused them to distance themselves from their own identity, feel ashamed of being Asian, and have poor social relationships.

6

LONG-TERM MENTAL HEALTH

In the long term, AAR causes paranoia, anxiety, confusion, and hypervigilance. As one youth puts it, this impact on youth mental health is "tiring and takes a toll"

7

It's clear through participant testimonies that even though many of those experiences of casual racism happened in elementary school/middle school, incidents of AAR leave a lasting impact on youth, their self-esteem, and their mental health.