DIVISION ON SOUTH ASIAN AMERICANS

THE ASIAN AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

NEWSBYTE

APRIL, 2025- ISSUE

Photo By:
DAIGA ELLABY

This is the official Newsbyte of the Division on South Asian Americans (DoSAA).
The Newsbyte serves to share perspectives of members and inform the DoSAA community of relevant news and events.
For submissions and questions, please email dosaa.studentrep@aapaonline.org.

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Member Spotlight

By Meena Statz

Meet **Abisha Ebenezer!** She is DoSAA's Student Representative and I had the pleasure of interviewing her for our Member Spotlight. Abisha is a 1st year PhD student in Counseling Psychology at Seton Hall and is an international student. Originally from UAE, Abisha has lived in India and Bermuda. She proudly identifies herself as an "island girl at heart".

Abisha first connected with members of DoSAA at an AAPA conference in Atlanta. She applied and then gained the position of Student Representative for DoSAA. Abisha's main area of interest are the mental health needs of South Asian and South Asian American college students. Abisha has been enjoying her time working with the DoSAA Executive Committee, as it has given her the opportunity to find people who are able to give her tailored guidance and feedback on her projects. She loves the open nature of the EC and that all perspectives and voices are welcome. Her goal is to integrate more students into committee positions within DoSAA and to have created more opportunities for students to grow and thrive professionally and academically.

When Abisha isn't in class, you can find her exploring New York City and New Jersey towns. She loves thrifting on the weekends and she prioritizes travel as well as time in the gym.

Social Justice

By Vaibhavi Venkataramanan

Social Justice/Advocacy are becoming increasingly important in light of actions of the current administration. Getting involved at local, national, and international levels is key in making your voice heard. Below, you will find some resources and links that can guide you. If you have additional resources, please feel free to share them with our community!

- **South Asian Mental Health Initiative & Network:** The South Asian Mental Health Initiative & Network organizes a variety of programs, maintains a list of providers, and provides volunteer opportunities. It is a great way to get more involved within the South Asian community and advocate for the health and well-being of our community. Please see this link for more information: South Asian Mental Health Initiative & Network.

Social Justice

- **APA Advocacy**: The president has signed a variety of executive orders impacting NIH funding, mental health funding, healthcare funding and education funding. These actions will cut critical funding to programs aiding the health, wellbeing, and education of people across the country. The connection between behavioral health, physical health, and education has been well-established, and as current and future psychologists, we must take action to protect current and future generations through their access to valuable health and educational resources. Please see the link below to draft a letter to your senators and representatives regarding these timely and urgent issues: APA Advocacy.

- **Everyone Belongs Here**: A resource collective that provides toolkits and additional information on ways to foster a more welcoming environment for immigrants, refugees, and underserved populations. Please see their website for advocacy, information, and collaboration opportunities: Everyone Belongs Here.

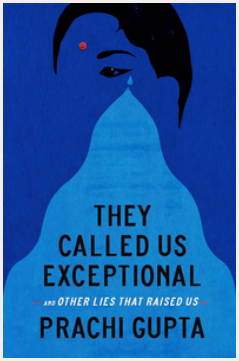
Social Justice

- **Give an Hour:** Join this national network to provide services to veterans, service, members, and their families. For those who are earlier in their careers, there are other ways to get involved such as by becoming a wellness ambassador. Use your training to give back to underserved communities! You can find more information here: Give an Hour.

- **Refugee Mental Health Resource Network:** A database of volunteer psychologists and mental health professionals willing to provide pro bono services to organizations working with refugee populations worldwide. Please see this link to register if you would like to add your name to the volunteer database: Refugee Mental Health Resource Network.

Books Recommendation

By Sripriya Chari

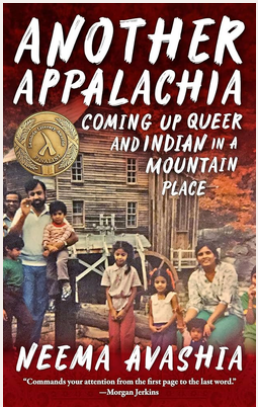


They Called Us Exceptional: And Other Lies That Raised Us: By Prachi Gupta

A personal story of a family torn apart by mental health challenges, communication gaps, and acculturation issues among other things. Prachi highlights the push to not talk about mental health or interpersonal difficulties with the fear of “log kya kahenge?” (“what will people say?”), and a push towards achieving societal expectations of excellence, even if that comes at a very high cost to the individuals.

Another Appalachia: Coming Up Queer and Indian in a Mountain Place : By Neema Avashia

Neema Avashia's poignant memoir tells her story as a queer, desi woman from West Virginia and complicates the narrative of what it means to be Appalachian. She weaves together essays and stories from her childhood and adult life to explore the intersections of her identities, specifically in the context of how they've informed her present day outlook and values.



Podcast Recommendation

By Sripriya Chari

Mindful, Beautiful, and Thriving

A Youth Mental Health Series by Taarika Foundation

Can be found on podcast apps like Spotify, Apple, YouTube Music.

Currently has over 130 episodes, some focused on youth, and others focused on parents. The podcast series is produced by Taarika Foundation, which is working towards raising awareness and reducing stigma related to mental health challenges, focused on the South Asian community in the San Francisco Bay Area. They have a robust youth ambassador team, members of which help put together events in the community as well as the podcast. Some recent episodes include:

Youth Series:

- Nurturing our skills to maximize results
- Building an emotional toolkit
- Managing social anxiety

Parent's Series:

- Valentine's Special: Self-Care
- Parenting in the digital age
- Suicide prevention month special

They also have a video library at:
https://www.youtube.com/@supportingthewholechild5247/videos

Research Spotlight

By Yashvi Aware

Internalized model minority myth, distress, and anti-Black attitudes among low-income Asian Americans.

Thomas P. Le[1], Eunmyoung A. Lee[2], Priya Bansal[2], and Richard Q. Shin[2]

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[2]Department of Counseling, Higher Education, and Special Education, The University of Maryland, College Park

Abstract: The unique health and psychosocial experiences of low-income Asian Americans have often been ignored in the research literature, in part, because of the model minority myth. The internalization of the model minority myth has been associated both with negative mental health outcomes and anti-Black attitudes. The present study thus extends the literature by examining the extent to which two facets of the internalized model minority myth, Unrestricted Mobility and Achievement Orientation, are associated with low-income Asian Americans' psychological distress as well as their anti-Black attitudes. We also examined the potential moderating effect of subjective social status. Three hundred sixty-five low-income Asian Americans completed an online survey. Results showed that Unrestricted Mobility and Achievement Orientation were both associated with greater anti-Black attitudes. Unrestricted Mobility was associated with lesser psychological distress, and Achievement Orientation was not associated with distress. Subjective social status was not found to be a significant moderator. These results highlight how the model minority myth and its internalization may contribute to anti-Blackness among Asian Americans and increased divisiveness among racially marginalized groups in the United States. Furthermore, believing in the myth of Unrestricted Mobility may reduce distress among low-income Asian Americans, which may sustain the presence of this element of the model minority myth overall.

Citation: Le, T. P., Lee, E. A., Bansal, P., & Shin, R. Q. (2024). Internalized model minority myth, distress, and anti-Black attitudes among low-income Asian Americans. Asian American Journal of Psychology, 15(2), 107–117. https://doi.org/10.1037/aap0000332

Research Spotlight

By Yashvi Aware

Changing identity patterns among women in South Asian diaspora in the UK: construction, negotiation and assimilation of identities.

Monika Gupta[1,2,3]
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[3]School of History, Religions and Philosophies, SOAS, University of London, UK.

Abstract: Diaspora studies have gained unprecedented prominence in academia. However, gender discourses within the diaspora studies remain largely unexplored. One such case is of South Asian diasporic women who are mostly 'victimised' in existing academic literature. This article provides a nuanced understanding of the lives of South Asian women in the United Kingdom (UK) by studying their evolving identity patterns over the years, which now seems to be less rooted in 'patriarchal victimisation' and more in the creation of strong, bold and independent identities for women. This qualitative study uses Feminist Epistemology to understand the changing reality of women, from women themselves. In doing so, the article aptly recognises the 'women and development' framework by analysing women's empowerment within the larger context of diaspora. Through the comparative and tabular analysis, the article brings a fresh perspective on the changing identities of South Asian women in the UK.

Citation: Gupta, M. (2025). Changing identity patterns among women in South Asian diaspora in the UK: construction, negotiation and assimilation of identities. South Asian Diaspora, 1–16.
https://doi.org/10.1080/19438192.2025.2482305

Funding Opportunities

By Noor Ali

Opportunity	Deadline	Amount	Sponsor	Link
Direct Action Visionary Grants	April 30, 2025	Up to $60,000	The American Psychological Foundation	Link
Division 18 Research Grant	May 29, 2025	$2,250	The American Psychological Foundation, Division 18	Link
The Eng and Han Essay Prize	October 1, 2025	$1,000	The Asian American Center for Psychoanalysis (TAACP)	Link
DoSAA Regional Social Gatherings - Funds for Reimbursement	Ongoing	Up to $200	Division on South Asian Americans | Asian American Psychological Association	Link

Current Perspectives

By Anjali Badrinath

As the tragedy of Sudiksha Konanki's disappearance is highlighted on various news platforms and forums, I notice that the comment sections are full of individuals trying to make sense of the situation. While this is to be expected in the wake of such a concerning event, many of the commenters have begun to engage in discourse surrounding Sudiksha's family and the cultural implications of being an Indian woman on vacation. POC have almost always had to be more conscious of their racial and ethnic backgrounds, especially in the news and media, where our experiences are rarely represented as individual, rather than representative.

The unfortunate reality here is that Sudiksha's family is grieving, not as Indian or South Asian parents upholding certain cultural standards or stereotypes, but as just parents and siblings. And yet, their tragedy has become a discussion on whether brown young adults should be allowed to go on spring break trips or if drinking and dating are appropriate for brown college students. The accountability falls on both the South Asian and non-South Asian communities involved in the conversation, to truly assess why major tragedies in POC lives are to be picked apart on such a microscopic level.

I acknowledge that the comments on toxic brown friend groups or victim-blaming of South Asian women from their own communities may be made with curious intentions, in maintaining a critical lens in addressing the underlying intersection of culture and society. However, it is worth exploring why this type of cross-sectional investigation of South Asian culture is necessary in the aftermath where Sudiksha's family hopes to grieve and gain closure.

I think about the similarities of Sudiksha's case to that of Natalie Holloway, a white high school graduate who went missing on vacation as well. The discussion following news coverage had little to do with her race and ethnicity, nor did the breakdown require an extensive examination of the implications of her "whiteness" in relation to her disappearance, her presence on vacation, nor her family's grieving process.

I see comments about the similarities of the cases as well, noting that Natalie's mother never gave up hope in trying to find her daughter, while Sudiksha's parents requested to have her case deemed officially deceased. This decision has been deconstructed as well, in theorizing ways in which the brown community have instilled shame regarding the released information about Sudiksha's potential involvement with a man on vacation.

The truth is our responsibility as viewers and consumers of media and news is to recognize the implications of representation and avoid the curse of “good representation”. Sudiksha’s family should not be thrust into the roles of spokespeople for South Asian families experiencing tragedy on public display, nor should her friends and Sudiksha herself represent brown individuals going on vacation. The pressure to constantly engage in identity politics is heavy, especially when we fight to be heard on an individual level. Representation is absolutely important, but we must remain conscious of maintaining our presence as humans with identity.

Disclaimer:

The views and opinions expressed in this column are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of DoSAA.

Events Calendar

Chai & Chat

When: *Apr 26, 2025*
10 a.m. PST | 11 a.m. MST | 12 p.m. CST | 1 p.m. EST

DoSAA's first Chai & Chat of the year will be discussing the rise in South Asian hate online and how we are navigating it. Please see below to register! Register in advance for this meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/3dncibSQJy1HwuWqiaicw

DoSAA's Clinical Case Consultation Group

When: *Saturday, May 17, 2025*
10 a.m. PST | 11 a.m. MST | 12 p.m. CST | 1 p.m. EST

Since mid-2022, DoSAA's Clinical Case Consultation Group has convened every other month for dedicated clinical case consultation and discussions on community considerations in South Asian and South Asian American mental health. We warmly welcome all licensed South Asian diaspora therapists working with South Asian diaspora clients to join this supportive space for case consultation and community-building. Register here: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/y9gvzQf7S--uhqbhH-LSiQ

Summer Fellowship Program 2025

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM TIMELINE

April 30, 2025 - Mentor Application Deadline
May 16th, 2025 - Fellow Application Deadline
June - Fellowship Program Begins
October - Fellowship Program Ends

The Fellowship is geared towards graduate student members involved in mental health in any capacity (Ph.D., Psy.D., M.S., M.Ed., MFT, LSW, etc.) who have a passion and interest for South Asian/South Asian American mental health, including research among South Asian populations, leadership, as well as community building. Fellows will be paired with a mentor from the DoSAA community and will complete a small project related to South Asian American mental health. This project will culminate in a final presentation via webinar during early Fall 2025.

Apply to be a fellow:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfg6QAqoXWoqtFLpjMdu4QYf1xmhCABDB5oNwv9BjWuR4oD3g/viewform?usp=dialog

Apply to be a mentor:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScOCIGU5-aecVuLOyVSmbX0dmlqY2vuFc4o-CjdNayYVBmXAw/viewform?usp=dialog

Interested in Sharing?

Help us continue to build our DoSAA community by sharing about yourself, your experiences, columns, resources, recommendations and reflections. Submit to be featured in our next Newsbyte using the link or QR code below:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSezKbKkszHrjRiQluR9by9kw4nxoIiD1huUBfiDaO_VqK6NOg/viewform?usp=header

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