



# COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER (API) COMMUNITIES

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To effectively address sexual violence among Asians and Pacific Islanders (API), NAPIESV conducted a study, engaging in community listening sessions and interviews with API-led organizations across different states. Twenty sessions included focus groups and several individual interviews. These were conducted in person from January 2023 to August 2023 to assess the strengths and needs of the API communities related to sexual violence.

## PURPOSE

The Community Listening Session Report highlights the critical need for culturally specific services and advocacy to help API communities in the US heal from the generational silence on sexual violence.





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## KEY FINDINGS

### THE ROOT OF VIOLENCE AS OPPRESSION ORIGINATING FROM COLONIZATION, WESTERNIZATION, AND RACISM

#### Challenges Faced by Immigrants:

- Exploitation as cheap labor
- Deportations stemming from inadequate legal support
- Homelessness and drug dependency
- Physical and mental health struggles
- Inter-generational trauma, including war-related sexual violence
- The suppression of sexual violence cases within the U.S. military remains a pressing concern.

Additionally, the U.S. military's presence has led to significant environmental, health, and economic repercussions in its island territories, exemplified by Guam, and the enduring impact of U.S. nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands continues to deeply affect the community.

### SEXUAL ASSAULT IN API CULTURES

API is an incredibly diverse group with many cultures and languages, including perceptions of sexual violence. Although examples of sexual violence were nuanced and influenced by historical factors, the golden thread defining sexual violence was any unwanted sexual contact associated with violence and a lack of consent. It is important to note that "sexual contact" was not limited to direct and physical touch, such as penetrative rape, but also indirect, non-physical contact, such as sexual harassment.



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## KEY FINDINGS

### **THE CRITICAL NEED FOR CULTURALLY SPECIFIC, QUEER INCLUSIVE SERVICES, ADVOCACY, AND MORE**

There is a need to integrate intersectional, anti-oppression work to unravel and heal from generational silence on sexual violence in API communities. Survivors of sexual violence, including sex trafficking, require mental health support, domestic and sexual violence resources, and access to housing. Communities also face financial insecurity, limited resources for substance abuse, lack of healthcare for elders and families during the COVID-19 pandemic, people with disabilities, and increased anti-Asian hate/violence in the United States.

### **RECONNECTING TO ANCESTRAL WELLNESS PRACTICES AND INDIGENOUS TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE IS HEALING WORK.**

As a young Elder Jeanette Acosta reminds us: “As API Peoples, our culture weaves us together in the same cloth that provides us with a wealth of many healing traditions that are readily available to each of us. We just need to have a guide to help us remember; we just need to take the time and remember to practice our many ways of being well.”

### **IMPORTANCE OF MATRIARCHS AS PROTECTIVE FACTOR.**

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**“TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE TAKES TIME.”**

## **NAPIESV NEXT STEPS**

To ensure that ALL survivors receive the necessary support, it is crucial to provide culturally specific services and resources tailored to the API community. NAPIESV advocates for social change through prevention efforts, recognizing that the pathways to achieving this goal may vary. The full report offers recommendations for API organizations and advocates to adopt an anti-oppressive framework in their efforts to combat sexual assault. These recommendations aim to foster inclusivity, cultural sensitivity, and empowerment within the API community as part of the broader mission to end sexual violence.



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