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## ENGAGE Newsletter April 2021

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### Violence Against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders



Image with names and ages of the victims.

On March 16th, 2021 a 21year old white man shot 9 people at three spas/massage parlors. 8 of these 9 people were killed by the shooter, and 6 of these 8 were Asian women. We honor and grieve the lives of the victims killed in this attack:

**Soon Chung Park** □□□, **age 74** **Hyun Jung Grant** [□]□□ **age 51** **Sun Cha Kim** □□□  
**age 69**, **YongAe Yue** □□ □ **age 63**, **Delaina Ashley Yaun** **age 33**, **Paul Andre Michels**  
**age 54**, **Xiaojie Tan** □□□ **age 49**, **Daoyou Feng** □□□ **age 44**

Despite the claims of the shooter and some law enforcement officials, as social workers (and future social workers) we have been taught to recognize the effects of structural oppression on interpersonal violence. We understand that these murders were not only beyond devastating to Soon Chung Park □□□, Hyun Jung Grant [□]□□, Sun Cha Kim □□□, YongAe Yue □□ □, Delaina Ashley Yaun, Paul Andre Michels, Xiaojie Tan □□□, Daoyou Feng □□□, and the people who love them, but are symptomatic of the broader issues of hate and violence directed towards AAPI folk and the systemic racism and misogyny that fuel them.

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### Resources

[Pronunciation Guide for Chinese and Korean Victims' Names](#)

[Compilation of Updates/Resources/Actions](#)

[Activist Organizations Responding to Anti-Asian Hate](#)

Tips to consider when engaging in

### CONVERSATIONS & ACTIONS ABOUT ANTI-ASIAN VIOLENCE

for higher education professionals

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#### CONVERSATIONS WITH STUDENTS

- Don't confine Asian students & their experiences with anti-Asian violence. They are more than just victims of racism
- Don't tokenize Asian students and assume they always need support. Create space for them to be able to ask for support if that is what they need
- Collaborate with counseling services to create optional remote or in-person drop-in spaces that encourage Asian students to process recent & historical anti-Asian incidents
- Check-in on your Asian and non-Asian BIPOC students, student organizations, and student staff
- Engaging in culturally competent empathy, active listening, & advocacy during remote or in-person meet-ups; avoid emails or impersonal connections
- Reflect on why you engage in conversations with students. Is it because it will benefit and support them or because it will make you feel better?

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#### CONVERSATIONS WITH COLLEAGUES

- Say no to racial gaslighting. Anti-Asian violence should not be minimized nor belittled
- Forge strong relationships across minoritized racial communities and create systems of support
- Include Asian communities in racial justice conversations and movements to help reshape perceptions and understandings of racism in the U.S.
- Check-in on your Asian colleagues and provide genuine support and care when needed
- Encourage colleagues to acknowledge and address multiple issues, communities, and experiences at once. They don't have to choose between supporting Black or Asian communities. It can be both
- Drive non-Asian colleagues to learn more about the multiple facets of Asian cultures. There are many resources on the internet for self-education

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#### CONVERSATIONS WITH SUPERVISORS

- Request that supervisors acknowledge and denounce anti-Asian violence and provide support
- Demand increased multi-dimensional visibility and awareness of racial climate impacting Asian and non-Asian BIPOC communities
- Request that there is a focus on recruitment, retention, and support resources for Asian staff, especially in upper leadership
- Call on supervisors to continuously be supportive beyond this moment. Anti-racism work is a journey
- For BIPOC communities experiencing violence, allow yourself to ask for flexibility & understanding
- Ask for disaggregated data when collecting information about Asian communities. This will help better understand the multiple experiences within the Asian diaspora

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#### CONVERSATIONS WITH FAMILY MEMBERS

- Ask your family members if they are aware of the rise in anti-Asian violence, especially consider educating family members who are non-native English speakers
- Ask how Asian family members are doing and how they are coping with the rise in anti-Asian violence. Provide resources to process emotions and feelings
- Ask what is being proactively done to ensure safety in case of experiencing anti-Asian violence
- Do not allow conversations around anti-Asian violence to lead to anti-Blackness sentiments. Keep preventing & mitigating anti-Blackness in our conversations and actions
- Consider seeking support outside of traditional family structures if they aren't supportive or responsive to your needs

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#### BEYOND CONVERSATIONS: ACTIONS FOR ASIAN GROUPS

- Check-in on each other, we're all in this together
- Protect elders & preserve cultural traditions
- Educate Asian non-English speakers about what is going on and racial climate in the U.S.
- Learn about active bystander and conflict de-escalation skills. Free training offered through [ihollaback.org](#)
- Report anti-Asian hate incidents through [stopapihate.org](#)
- Take care of yourself; process; heal; do what is best for yourself

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#### BEYOND CONVERSATIONS: ACTIONS FOR NON-ASIAN GROUPS

- Educate yourself on racial climate, in the U.S. and abroad, as it relates to Asian communities
- Check-in on Asian colleagues without assuming they are looking for support
- Safely intervene when witnessing subtle or overt anti-Asian violence. Free training offered by [ihollaback.org](#)
- Donate money and time to grassroots and/or community organizations doing racial justice work, especially in regions with high anti-Asian violence
- Amplify Asian voices, narratives, and experiences, especially in predominantly white spaces
- Learn about the history of Asian discrimination and other challenges faced by these communities

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#### FOLLOW ON INSTAGRAM

@AAPIWomenLead  
@AdvancingJustice\_AAJC  
@AsiansForMentalHealth  
@DearAsianYouth  
@MichelleKimKim & @VisionAwaken  
@RepresentAsianProject  
@UnapologeticallyAsian\_

... and many more!

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## Upcoming Virtual Events

### Anti-Asian Violence & LGBTQ Communities

Tuesday, April 6th | 6:00-7:30 PM EST  
Register at [bit.ly/LGBTQ-UM-Events](https://bit.ly/LGBTQ-UM-Events) (case sensitive)  
as part of the 2021 AA&PI Heritage Month

Featuring:



Arielle Chan, B.A.  
(she/her) | BAAS staff  
Panelist



K. Ian Shin, Ph.D. (he/him)  
A/PIA Studies Core Faculty  
Panelist



Grace Sekulidis, MSW  
(she/her) | Alumna  
Panelist



Aneeshha Gupta  
(she/her) | LSA Student  
Panelist



Mark Chung Kwan Fan, M.A.  
(he/him) | Spectrum Center  
Moderator



## [Anti-Asian Violence and the LGBTQ+ Community](#)

Tuesday, April 6th - 6:00pm to 7:00pm

This panel will consist of Queer Asian individuals who will talk about the more visible increase in anti-Asian violence. It is important for the LGBTQ community to dialogue about and to take actions addressing in-community racism and anti-racism efforts in the broader society. With the rise anti-Asian violence highlighted in the media, this panel will discuss their personal experiences being Asians in the LGBTQ+ community and calls to action supporting Asian communities experiencing harm.

The panelists are:

Arielle Chen, B.A. (she/her) from the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies

K. Ian Shin, PhD. (he/him) from the Asian / Pacific Islander American Studies program

Grace Sekulidis, MSW (she/her), an alumna from UM

Anooshka Gupta (she/her), an LSA student

The moderator will be Mark Chung Kwan Fan, M.A. (he/him), from the Spectrum Center.

Spectrum Center Event Accessibility Statement:

The Spectrum Center is dedicated to working towards offering equitable access to all of the events we organize. If you have an accessibility need you feel may not be automatically met at this event, fill out our Event Accessibility Form, found at <http://bit.ly/SCaccess>. You do not need to have a registered disability with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) or identify as disabled to submit. Advance notice is necessary for some accommodations to be fully implemented, and we will always attempt to dismantle barriers as they are brought up to us. Any questions about accessibility at Spectrum Center events can be directed to [spectrumcenter@umich.edu](mailto:spectrumcenter@umich.edu).

[RSVP here >>](#)



Image of the author with title and date of event.

## **Shaping Creative Lineage: A Poetry Reading + Writing Workshop w/ Carlina Duan**

Wednesday, April 7th - 6:00pm to 7:00pm

Join us as we hear from Asian-American poet and educator Carlina Duan! This poetry workshop will include a discussion about AA&PI writing & education, a space to draft your own poetry, and readings from her books *I Wore My Blackest Hair* and *Alien Miss*. Carlina Duan is a writer-educator from Michigan, and the author of the poetry collections *I Wore My Blackest Hair* (Little A, 2017) and *Alien Miss* (Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2021). She currently teaches and studies as a doctoral student in the Joint Program in English & Education at the University of Michigan. She believes in gardens.

[RSVP here >>](#)



Image with title, date and time of the event.

### **ENGAGE: Storytelling for Social Justice**

April 8, 2021 - 12:00pm to 1:30pm

**Event Description:** Storytelling, or listening to the stories of others and sharing your own stories, builds the foundation of human interaction. Telling others how we got here and why we care about an issue builds connection, allows us to share our values, and create meaning. The art of public narrative is used in all aspects of social work practice - from helping our clients rewrite the stories they tell themselves, to helping communities and groups galvanize social change, to helping policy makers and politicians tell a “story of self” while creating a “story of us.” Join us for a special discussion featuring the former Chief Storyteller for the City of Detroit and current NYU Journalism Professor, Aaron Foley; current Chief Storyteller for the City of Detroit, Eric Thomas; and Detroit poet, activist, and author, Jessica Care Moore.

[RSVP here >>](#)



Image of brand logo and graphics with title and date of event.

### **Dewy Apricot Designs: Desi Digital Art Q&A and Logo Tutorial**

Friday, April 9th - 5:00pm to 6:00pm

Join AA&PI HM and Dewy Apricot Digital Art, a pandemic-project turned successful art shop that designs Desi American and Asian American-themed pop culture items, for a Q&A and logo tutorial. With products and collaborations ranging from Desi tarot cards to makeup packaging, co-founders and college seniors Rishi and Ash will discuss how they actively incorporate their culture and issues of South Asian representation to create a meaningful and cohesive brand.

[RSVP here >>](#)

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## SSW and Community Statements

### University of Michigan School of Social Work

Once again, America has been devastated by another mass shooting. Yesterday in Colorado, ten people were killed — it is the second mass shooting in less than a week.

We extend our deepest condolences to the victims and their families, and to the communities in and around Boulder, Colorado. Senseless violence not only robs us of loved ones but also our sense of security.

We encourage our Michigan Social Work community to seek the support or counseling they need to address their own trauma. Check in with your networks, come together and remind each other of the power of human connection in terrible times.

Social workers are fed up with the pervasiveness and normalization of gun violence. We must act on behalf of our communities to denounce acts of hatred and violence, and to demand meaningful reform to end this epidemic of gun violence plaguing our nation.

### Asian Pacific Islander Coalition (Statements from Town Halls)

2/18/21:

Thank you all for coming to our town hall tonight and helping us create a space to discuss anti-Asian racism and support one another. Recently, there has been a lot of media attention regarding the increase in hate crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. We want to acknowledge this while also recognizing the rising anti-Asian sentiment since the beginning of the pandemic as well as the ongoing xenophobia and Islamophobia experienced in our community. We also want to express our solidarity with the Black and Latinx communities who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

We'll be looking at anti-Asian sentiment on campus and in our community, and our wonderful guests, Ayesha Ghazi Edwin and Stephanie Chang, will be talking about what's happening at the state level. We have some other members of the API executive board here moderating the chat and taking notes, and we all really appreciate you being in attendance. We encourage you to ask questions and share your thoughts, feelings, experiences, and ideas. We really hope that we leave with a better understanding of what's going on in our community and ideas for what we can do or call on our institution to do to support the API community.

3/19/21:

We are distraught and horrified by the recent murders in Georgia, 6 of the 8 being Asian American women. We recognize and condemn this as an act of racial violence occurring in the context of increasing anti-Asian hate.

#### MOMENT OF SILENCE

This is the second town hall we have held in one month to address rising racism and violence towards our community. Consciousness of this issue seems to come and go with the news cycle, but, as many of us know, social justice is not something we should pick up and put down based on convenience.

I want to acknowledge the exhaustion myself and many API individuals feel. We are grieving the attacks on our community while simultaneously working to demand representation and inclusion. It is not lost on us that when BIPOC communities are harmed, we become responsible for not only our own healing but for educating others. We are burnt out from needing to prove our humanity time and time again, if not for ourselves then for our families and loved ones. I am proud of our resilience and resistance against white supremacy. This systemic terrorism demands systemic responses, including within the School of Social Work.

### School of Social Work Student Union

Hello SSW Community,

We are saddened by the recent deaths of 8 people in Atlanta, 6 of whom were Asian American women. We are disgusted by the lack of accountability and the vast amount of empathy shown to the perpetrator of this violence. The racist hate crimes towards Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have increased significantly during the pandemic due in part to the xenophobic and racist rhetoric put forth by high-profile officials. According to a recent Stop AAPI Hate report, there have been 3,795 anti-Asian hate incidents reported from March 2020 to February 2021. However, much of the public reports during the pandemic have not treated them as hate crimes.

Asian American and Pacific Islander Lives Matter - This is a fact - not a moment, movement, or political stance.

We as social workers must be committed to educating ourselves on anti-racist practices and ideologies. A core value of the NASW Code of Ethics is Social Justice. Regardless of what kind of social work practice we engage with, we all have the power to impact the organizations and communities that we are a part of. It is our responsibility to use that power to promote social justice.

In solidarity,

The School of Social Work Student Union

## Association of Black Social Work Students

Greetings Social Work Family/Community

The Association of Black Social Work Students is saddened by the events against Asian and Pacific Islanders in Georgia. As allies of our fellow Social Work Students, Faculty, and Professionals, we recognize that Tuesday's events were acts of hate that continues to be inflicted against Asian and Pacific Islanders due to beliefs that we do not support nor will tolerate here within our physical nor virtual communities at the University of Michigan School of Social Work. We recognize that social workers are universal advocates for all. We express our support to our fellow students and professionals of the SSW because we uphold anti-racist beliefs, we refuse to ignore social injustice. We know that we all matter no matter where we are in this world.

To our Asian and Pacific Islander family: We recognize your resilience. We uplift your voices to our ancestors. May your power be restored, Ase.

In Solidarity, Right, Truth, Justice, Order, Reciprocity, Balance, and Harmony

The Association of Black Social Work Students- University of Michigan Chapter

### Showing Up for Racial Justice

Hello School of Social Work,

We, as members of SURJ UMich, want to name that the horrific murder of 8 people, 6 of whom were Asian women, in Atlanta on Wednesday was an act of white supremacist terrorism. As white people we need to work to understand how the killer's actions were not an isolated act of violence, but rather a hate crime perpetrated on the basis of race and gender. His behavior is not an aberration, but rather an expression of the hatred, brutality, and sense of entitlement that are at the root of white supremacy. We need to listen to the Asian and Pacific Islander members of our community about how to best support them, learn about the long and virulent history of misogyny and racism that have targeted AAPI folks, and take action to support and uplift anti-racist change efforts (see some links below for places to start).

We honor and respect the names and lives of those who were taken.

Daoyou Feng, 44

Delaina Ashley Yaun Gonzalez, 33

Paul Andre Michels, 54

Soon Park, 74

Hyun Grant, 51

Suncha Kim, 69

Yong Yue, 63

In Solidarity,

SURJ UMich

### Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission (MAPAAC)

MAPAAC is disheartened by the recent shootings of Asian American women in Atlanta, Georgia, where six of the eight victims were Korean American. Whether explicit or implicit bias, the shooter was motivated by his fetishization and sexualization of Asian American women - a long standing issue in this country. His racism and misogyny was fueled by the xenophobic rhetoric of politicians that spurred his murderous and horrific actions.

We cannot ignore that once again, in a time of national crisis, working class immigrants are targeted. We've seen this over and over again where a pattern of white supremacy operates - racial minorities and immigrants are often scapegoated for societal and individual problems.

Many are now asking themselves - am I safe in my own community and my country? MAPAAC urges elected officials, law enforcement and community leaders to recognize this crime by calling it what it is - a racially motivated hate crime. We hope that our leaders will stand with us as we mobilize our own communities and work in solidarity with others striving to move forward to a place of healing.

Dear Community,

We are appalled by the shooting deaths in Atlanta at three different locations where 6 of the 8 dead were Asian American women. Given the country is in the midst of an epidemic of rising anti-Asian sentiment and hate crimes, we urge authorities to investigate whether these killings are racially motivated hate crimes.

Irrespective of motive, the outcome remains the same, and we are here to offer our support and solidarity with you during this time. Violence against some of us, harms us all, and we know this incident will have a significant impact on our students, faculty, staff, and community.

Our community is grieving and hurting, which is why it is important for us to take time to address our trauma, grief, erasure, and most importantly, HEALING. This is complex, difficult, and necessary work. We urge you to seek self-care and support (resources below), and to report hate if you or someone you know experiences it (see below).

Please reach out to us or the resources below with any support you need during this time.

Sincerely,

Ayesha Ghazi Edwin, Lecturer and ENGAGE Program Manager, Chair of the Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission, [ayeshag@umich.edu](mailto:ayeshag@umich.edu)

Lorraine Gutierrez, Associate Dean for Educational Programs, [lorraing@umich.edu](mailto:lorraing@umich.edu)

Lynn Videka, Dean

Katie, Lopez, Director of Office of Global Activities

Dear school of social work community,  
I am sure administration will be sending something out as well, but I just wanted to draw everyone's attention to the ongoing anti-Asian hate crimes that continue across the US in response to many politicians and our former presidents racist and xenophobic comments and actions against these communities.  
I also wanted to share information regarding this women and gender studies panel that will be hosted on Friday, in case anyone might be interested.  
I am available for students, staff, and faculty to chat with about these topics, and of course, always can recommend CAPS to our students for deeper support.  
In solidarity,  
Shanna Kattari they-them

Dear SSW students, staff, and faculty,  
The Latinx faculty and staff of the School of Social Work (SSW) wish to condemn the recent racially-motivated murders in Atlanta, GA, and to express in the strongest terms our support to our students, staff and faculty of Asian-descent and solidarity to all individuals who identify with Asian heritage and cultures. The recent murders come in addition to centuries-long and ongoing racist violence towards Asian-Pacific Islander (API) people in the USA. We stand in solidarity with our API community in their fight for dignity and justice and call on all of us in our SSW community to take action against white supremacy and anti-API prejudice. The Latinx faculty and staff demand change and demand respect for API communities. We commit to educating ourselves to identify racist policies/practices and to use our spheres of power and influence to address these within the School of Social Work including the curriculum, field practice, research, admissions, recruitment, and student support. We also lend our support and energy to the anti-racism and justice work impacting API and other BIPOC communities. We would like you to join us in this work.  
Cristina Bares, Associate Professor  
David Cordova, Associate Professor  
Fernanda Cross, Assistant Professor  
Lorraine Gutiérrez, Associate Dean for Educational Programs and Arthur F. Thurnau Professor  
Robert Ortega, Associate Professor  
Rosalba Osório, LEO Lecturer III and Field Faculty  
Rogério M. Pinto, Associate Dean for Research and Innovation, Professor  
Erin Zimmer, Director of Student Services

### The ENGAGE Team



**Dr. Trina Shanks**, Director,  
Harold R. Johnson Collegiate  
Professor of Social Work

**Sonia Harb**, Strategist

**Ayesha Ghazi-Edwin**, Program  
Manager

**Fatima Salman**, Program  
Manager

**Blake Newman**, Student Intern

**clio**, Student Intern

ENGAGE team members

**ENGAGE is a strategic effort connecting the school to community issues, partners, and movements for greater equity and social change.**

The goals of the ENGAGE strategic efforts are:

1. Uplift current community engagement in the school and facilitate more and intentional engagement
2. Coordinate community engagement efforts across units, centers and courses within the SSW, and across the University
3. Facilitate community impact (signature projects; new sustained initiatives involving faculty and students, connecting the school to social justice movements)

Our activities include, but are not limited to:

- Signature projects with community partners
- Grants focused on community development, empowerment, and equity
- Uplifting and showcasing student work in communities
- Supporting and facilitating collaboration between faculty research and projects in communities
- Ongoing virtual discussion series featuring prominent activists and their involvement in current social movements
- Host of the Employment Equity Learning Community, comprised of over 50 community based organizations and stakeholders in Detroit working to improve employment opportunities in the City.

**Visit Our  
Website**

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*To find out more about ENGAGE and our virtual discussions, please visit [our website](#).*

*You have any questions, please reach out to  
ENGAGE at [sswcommunityengagement@umich.edu](mailto:sswcommunityengagement@umich.edu)*

*The ENGAGE Team*