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Rose Wong

CSUEB professor Rose Wong leads research to help Chinese-American community

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Rose Wong, Cal State East Bay assistant professor of social work, led a team of professionals, community members and researchers that has released innovative culture-based Chinese and English language materials designed specifically for educating Chinese immigrants about depression. The materials, intended for use in health clinics, schools, social services, and community organizations, address a need for culturally tailored approaches to preventing and treating mental illness.

According to Wong, who was lead investigator among the academic researchers, cultural tailoring is the key to addressing the low utilization of mental health services by ethnic minorities. She noted that few bottom-up, community-based research efforts have been undertaken even though closing disparities in mental health care between ethnic and racial minority groups and White Americans has long been a public health concern.

The materials her team produced, to Wong's knowledge, are a first of their kind, and she expects them to become the "go to" tools for professionals working with Chinese immigrants across the U.S. To develop these materials, the CSUEB faculty member and her research collaborators recruited clinical social workers, primary care clinicians, mental health specialists, and community members to serve as project experts. As an ad hoc university-community team, they designed three products for three target audiences: brief videos with actors portraying immigrants experiencing depression in Cantonese, Mandarin and English, posters, and brochures containing symptom checklists for teen, adult and older adult age groups.

The development of the materials was made possible by funding from CSUEB's Department of Social Work and the Okura Mental Health Leadership Foundation. Team members represented numerous non-profit and public organizations: Urban Services of the YMCA of San Francisco, Chinese Hospital, Chinatown Child Development Center, Central City Older Adult Program, Sunset Mental Health Services, Chinatown Public Health Center, SteppingStone Adult Day Health Center, and Citywide Focus of the University of California, San Francisco. Sponsors were the Chinatown Child Development Center and the Asian and Pacific Islander Social Work Educators Association.

Professionals and organizations wishing to obtain videos, posters or brochures should contact Wong through the San Francisco Chinese Community Depression Education Project, at BayAreaChinese@csueastbay.edu or by calling (510) 885-4059.

-- Barry Zepel

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