

PULSE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR NAPAFASA

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A RACE TO SUSTAINABILITY: HOW TO BEAT FAST FASHION

BY VINCENT BASOBAS

As a kid growing up in the “Swagapino” and “hypebeast” era, looking good and following the latest trends were very important in my adolescence. Even now, I like to keep an eye on some of the

latest styles. I will say though, being into fashion can really burn a hole in your wallet. With trends moving faster than the speed of light, garments from luxury stores costing a mortgage, and sneakers being 2-5x more expensive due to resellers, fashion can feel like it is exclusive to the affluent. That is why stores like H&M, Cotton-On, and Forever 21 were my go-to stores growing up. They always had the latest trends for an affordable price. Unfortunately, these stores and online stores like Fashion Nova and Shein are negatively impacting our environment. Known as “Fast Fashion,” companies use this method to rapidly produce clothing with low quality materials in order to follow the trends and meet the demands of the consumer. Fast Fashion has many detriments to the environment, including, the excessive usage of water to produce cotton and synthetic fibers, microplastic found in the synthetic fibers affecting marine life and the use of toxic chemicals from the dying of textiles¹. This is especially evident in continents such as Asia, where these brands produce their garments, and workers there are exposed to carcinogens without proper safety measures in place.

This has many people, including me, put in between a rock and a hard place. Keeping up with the latest trends may feel daunting when you want to minimize your environmental impact and don't want to spend a fortune. Luckily, through my experience I have learned some tips and tricks to keep both myself and the environment looking fresh.

1. You don't need to follow every fashion trend

I am guilty of this due to my consumption of social media. I see some influencer in a piece of clothing and I instantly think about wanting to buy it. There are people that don't buy clothes because they actually think it looks nice to wear but because of the fact that it is a trend. These clothing pieces are trends for a reason because they are not sustainable and are only hot and cool for that split moment. INow if someone really likes a piece of clothing because they think it looks nice by all means consider buying it. But I wouldn't recommend for your wallet's sake and the environment's sake to buy a piece of clothing just because it is trendy.



2. Find timeless pieces

This is a follow up to the previous tip. A piece of clothing that can stand the test of time and never feel outdated is so valuable in a person's closet. For me, these are my basic black and gray hoodies, flannels, straight leg pants, and Jordan 1's. Now this is subject to each individual person. What I consider timeless is different from another person. As long as the clothes are something you can see yourself wearing for years, you'll be helping the environment for years to come.

3. Go Thrifting to buy and donate

Going to the thrift store or buying from secondhand websites like Mercari and Depop, are some things I have been doing for a long time. What I like about thrift stores is that I am buying clothes that are at times name brand but for an affordable price. I am also making sure that clothes that will be floating in our water, are being reused. When I have clothes that I don't want anymore, I donate back for another person to buy and be worn again.

There is so much we can do to help our environment and I hope with these tips, you can look good doing it.

HOW RACISM AFFECTS MENTAL HEALTH

BY PIA VASQUEZ

Racism is a deeply ingrained social issue with effects that last throughout generations. For People of Color, racism can have a profound impact on their mental health. Racism can lead to feelings of inferiority, worthlessness, and hopelessness, all of which can contribute to mental health problems. Discrimination, internalized racism, and a need for hypervigilance add to a Person of Color's mental load and leave lasting impacts on their mental health.

Racial discrimination is the behavioral manifestation of racism. It is the social structures that deny People of Color opportunities for growth, and the individual behaviors exhibited against People of Color to oppress them¹. Discrimination can be overt, such as hate crimes or racial slurs, or it can be more subtle, such as being passed over for a job promotion or not receiving proper medical treatment. Racial discrimination is a stressor that is correlated with increased risk of negative mental health effects. Regardless of the form it takes, discrimination can lead to feelings of anger, frustration, and sadness, which can eventually lead to depression and anxiety. Without a solution, feelings of worthlessness can affect self-esteem and become internalized racism.

Internalized racism is the belief that one's own race is inferior to others. Internalized racism manifests itself as internalizing stereotypes, mistrusting the self and other members of one's ethnic community, and narrowing one's view of authentic culture². Internalized racism can also lead to a sense of loneliness and alienation from one's own culture and community. This is seen in how many first- and second-generation immigrant children identify as "third-culture kids," meaning they were raised with influences from their parents' culture and the ones they currently live in.

For example, many Asian-Americans feel alienated from both the Asian culture and customs that their parents experienced in their homeland, but also do not completely belong in White culture that dominates in the United States. This can lead to feelings of shame, low self-esteem, social isolation, and self-hatred, all of which can contribute to mental health problems such as depression and anxiety.

Racism also forces People of Color to develop a sense of hypervigilance. People of Color may feel like they are constantly being watched, judged, or scrutinized because of their race. This can lead to feelings of paranoia, mistrust, and a constant fear for their safety⁴. For example, Black men grow up to learn that law enforcement is more likely to hurt them than help them, and therefore fear for their lives when they encounter police officers. They must put on an alternate persona or risk becoming a victim of police brutality. The vigilance required from People of Color to mask their authentic selves involves physical, behavioral, cognitive, and emotional attentiveness to the environment in anticipation of experiencing racism. Being in a constant fight-or-flight state exhausts one's mental resources and contributes to chronic stress and anxiety that can worsen mental health issues.

The trauma and stress of having to endure racism has lasting effects on one's mental health. Discrimination, internalized racism, and constant vigilance can all contribute to mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem and chronic stress. It is important for society to acknowledge the damaging effects of racism and work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society that values and respects all individuals, regardless of skin color.

“WHAT’S YOUR STORY?”

BY MARIELLE REATAZA

There is no question that the internet has enabled a rapid shift in how we access information and how fast we get it. Gone are the days of the dial-up 56k modem, which was revolutionary in the 1990s but tragic if anyone at home picked up the phone when your hour-long download for a 4-minute song to your 1-Gigabyte hard drive was at 98% complete. (If you know, you know.) If you had the Britannica Encyclopedia pre-installed in your computer, you were living in the next era.

Today, information from the other side of the world is readily available in the palm of your hand. Now, anyone can go viral and create online content that could be consumed by literally millions of people in a short period of time. Information can be shared globally in a matter of seconds. There is no need to wait for the evening or morning news or newspaper delivery to get your news fix. The rapid availability and diversity of information sharing and storytelling has enabled a cultural shift in how we validate what information is relevant. However, there is so much data out there that it can be challenging to sift through what is helpful versus harmful. In 2017, I completed my Master’s capstone project on how social media and “Dr. Google” has impacted how people engage with their healthcare providers, how it has changed their expectations of their providers, and how it impacts trust-building with their providers. In theory, this is a good thing. We want people to be involved with their health and behavioral health care plans because buy-in is critical to sustainability of healthier habits. However, these kinds of conversations require a lot of time and relationship-building, which has become harder to accommodate due to an ongoing shortage of providers, i



and behavioral health services in the first place.

ncluding multilingual and community-guided providers; the pressure to book more patients to support the growing overhead costs of running clinics; the frustrations involving coverage and costs of insurance and the high costs of healthcare in the US; and increasingly sicker communities as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing mental health crisis, houselessness, unemployment or underemployment, provider burnout, and environmental crises. Of course, all of this is assuming that folks have affordable access to quality insurance, healthcare,

What does any of this have to do with storytelling? It has everything to do with storytelling. There is no doubt that we have made tremendous advances in healthcare and behavioral health in the last century, further accelerated in the last couple of decades due to advancing technology and the ability to rapidly share large amounts of information across the globe. Additionally, the Information--Technology Age has heralded a global consciousness on Big Data and an emphasis on quantitative data, impacting every industry, including education and health. In education, we saw a pivot towards increased standardized testing, further encouraged by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. In health, our buzzword is “evidence-based.” Big Data, which more often refers to quantitative data, is incredibly valuable and gives us a lot of insight about a large group of people that can readily be actionable. However, we must use data judiciously and look further into what the data leave out, especially when this data can lead to wide-sweeping policies that impact millions of people. This is where storytelling comes in.

We are in an era when more than ever, people from all walks of life can document and share their stories. Access to these stories has allowed many of us to build momentum into movements calling for disaggregating data, more equitable practices in data collection, prioritizing cultural sensitivity and responsiveness, and critiquing data that might be outdated or obsolete, especially if evidence was collected and utilized in unethical ways. Broadly, storytelling reminds us to connect deeper than what presents on the surface and calls upon us to critically think about what we think we know. Storytelling is data.

Let's tie it back to data in education and health. Increased standards-based curriculum and standardized testing has allowed us to gauge where deficits in educational achievement lie. In the late 2000s, we began a national discussion on whether teachers should receive increased compensation if their students score highly on standardized tests, or at least achieve great gains when compared to the previous year. However, this would invariably lead to another kind of inequity—schools that often performed poorly on standardized tests often serve already marginalized, poorer communities. Not to mention, standardized testing only assesses certain forms of knowledge and skills, which can be especially inaccurate for students with limited English proficiency or those who have not yet acquired the necessary test-taking skills that may not have anything to do with the subject matter in question. No matter how excellent the teacher, there is only so much that can be done in the classroom, before class, during lunch, or after school. We saw this play out in real-time during the pandemic, particularly when schools of all levels across the nation held class remotely for months.

In health, storytelling has pushed us to further investigate the validity of what it truly means to be “evidence-based.” During these last three years, the anti-vax movement picked up incredible speed, fueled by the damaging and xenophobic rhetoric of the previous Administration, mistrust and lack of confidence in clinical providers (despite lauding their sacrifice and commitment to patient health early on in the pandemic), and the broadening wealth gap between the 99- and one-percent. On the flip side, storytelling with regards to health has allowed us to better grasp the kinds of barriers people face when seeking services or information. More importantly, it has allowed us to better grasp the diversity of communities we regularly engage with, even when it is our own. Storytelling has allowed us to go back in time and point out inhumane and disgusting practices in both healthcare and behavioral health—from the lack of dermatologic training on identifying skin conditions on darker skin, to the abhorrent Tuskegee Study from 1932 to 1972, the history of gynecology in the US, to the American Psychological Association admitting its role in promoting, perpetuating, and failing to challenge racism, discrimination, and human hierarchy. Storytelling reminds us that recognizing the humanity in each other is how we correct the wrongs of the past.

Storytelling involves risk-taking. When we tell our stories, we cannot control how others will receive them, what they will do with them, or whether they even have the context to understand them. Unlike working with numbers, stories often lead to more questions, rather than a final, tangible conclusion. In an age where both “The Media” and social media celebrate click-bait, trendy sound bites, and information with max character lengths, storytelling seems like the antithesis of today's information sharing. Yet, it is precisely thanks to social media that we are able to experience storytelling from so many communities.

Storytelling is not the panacea to racism, bigotry, hate, and violence. However, our capacity and desire to share our stories gives us a chance to learn things about each other that would have been impossible to grasp just decades ago. Furthermore, how we engage with, share, and validate stories unfamiliar to us is indicative of what lies ahead. So what's your story?

VEGILICIOUS: A MODERN TAKE ON VEGAN JAPANESE CUISINE

BY GABRIELLA GUERRIERI

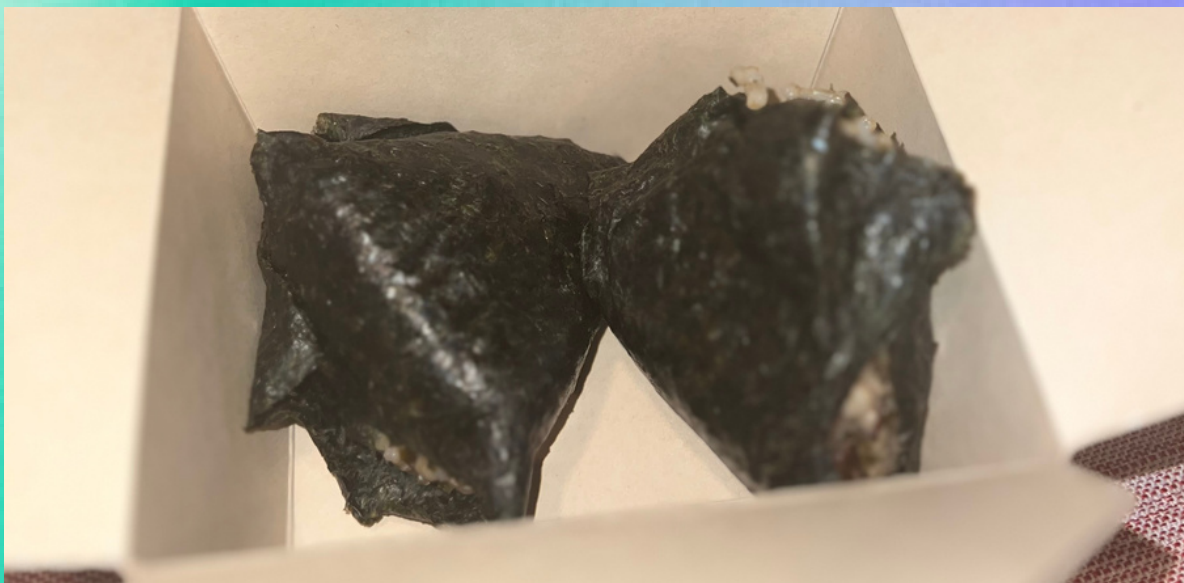
Nestled away in a shopping mall in Huntington Beach situates a mom-pop restaurant that prides itself on their vegan Japanese cuisine. The vegan lifestyle and diet has always been widely contested due to the absence of meat protein and other supplements that the diet lacks. However, when thinking about sustainability and what is good for the environment and the planet, the vegan diet supposedly reigns supreme. Dairy and meat production notoriously utilize more land, energy, and water in addition to deforestation, species extinction, and billions of tonnes, greenhouse gasses that are released into the atmosphere from the consumption of animals (Sanderson, 2022). That's why owners Akira and Ana state that the mission of Vegilicious is "to help people improve their health, help the planet better the environment and save animals" through their all-organic produce and all-premium level seasoning. I have been wanting to try out their food since I saw it almost three years ago from the owner's daughter's Tiktok video that went viral. Since then, it has always been on my mind to try out.



Unfortunately, we could not dine in due to some serious third degree burns owner Ana sustained last December. Since then, they have been soft-launching their reopening by only doing take-out and creating a calendar of specific menu items for different days. On the day I went, the item of the day was the Spicy Ramen Set that came with two brown rice onigiri

filled with sea kelp. Their spicy ramen set was artfully decorated with corn, bean sprouts, wakame seaweed, green onions, and seasoned meat(less) crumbles with the noodles underneath the toppings and the spicy ramen broth on the side in true takeout fashion. After an hour drive back to the Inland Empire from Huntington Beach, I was beyond prepared to eat my delicious vegan food. I drowned the noodles and topping in the spicy soup broth and took the first bites of my onigiri. Normally, I'm not that big of a fan of brown rice due to the texture but the seasoning of the rice combined with the savory flavor of the sea kelp made my taste buds salivate. As for the spicy ramen, I was not the biggest fan of the noodles themselves. I found them to be a bit harder to my liking but everyone's preferences are different. The hardness of their noodles might also be because it is takeout and might taste and feel different if it were fresh—another reason to come back and try this place again! I was also pleasantly surprised with the broth. To me, the standout star of the show was the broth. It was spiced in a way that you could tell the owners only use the best of ingredients. There was nothing artificial about their broth—no harmful chemicals that have been completely banned in other countries! The fragrance and kick can only be attributed to the freshness of their ingredients and care of their peppers. I also was taken aback by the deliciousness of the meat(less) crumbles. While I knew it was not real meat, I couldn't help but wonder, "if not meat, what is it?" I feel like if I gave this to a meat-eating friend, I could trick them into thinking it was actual meat. That's how delectable these crumbles were.

Add a little bit of body text



Veganism might have its drawbacks—not as sustainable as people make it out to be, damaging farming factory systems, crazy fanbase—but there are only benefits to adding more vegetables and plant-based proteins to your diet. Especially in an age where colon cancer is on the rise and more young people than ever are having trouble moving their bowels. It is also important to note our problem with overconsumption of meat and how the need to have foods on demand contributes to this as well. Our Indigenous predecessors learned to live in harmony with the land and still ate meat. They practiced sustainability by using every part of the animals, including bones, tendons, and fur. So, the next time you want to participate in a Meatless Monday, consider going to Vegilicious, located at 16821 Algonquin ST., #103, Huntington Beach, CA 9264, and get ready to be greeted with big smiles and open arms by Akira and Ana.

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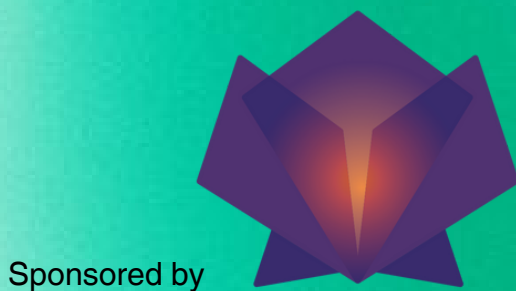
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REDEFINING MENTAL HEALTH: CENTERING VOICES OF AANHPI YOUTH AND PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE



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MEET THE STAFF



GABRIELLA A. GUERRIERI
NEWSLETTER EDITOR AND STAFF WRITER

Gabriella Guerrieri is optimistic of the future.. She is a graduate from George Mason University and the Community Engagement Coordinator for NAPAFAASA. She enjoys reading and writing about intersectional feminism, stories of fraternal disconnect, and anything and everything pop culture.



MARIELLE A. REATAZA, MD, MS
STAFF WRITER

Marielle serves as the Executive Director at NAPAFAASA. She is passionate about public health and improving access to health and behavioral health resources. Marielle is an avid reader, and her favorite genres are magical realism, satire, philosophy, and poetry. In her free time, you can find her crafting, gardening, or practicing movement arts and therapy.



PIA ANTOINETTE VASQUEZ
STAFF WRITER

Pia is the Youth Coordinator at NAPAFAASA. She strives to make health data and resources accessible to everyone in order to empower her community. Pia loves to explore by trying new restaurants and finding different activities throughout SoCal. She also enjoys spending quality time with her friends and her cat by watching movies together at home.



VINCENT C. BASOBAS, MPH, CHES
STAFF WRITER

Vincent Basobas is the Project Coordinator at NAPAFAASA. He finds his passion in community health because he believes that with a strong foundation in the community, Public Health can flourish organically. Vincent loves listening to Kpop and R&B. If he is not working, you can find him at the gym, playing basketball, or thrifting.

WELCOME OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS, MAILEEN AND PRINCESS!



**MAILEEN MAMARADLO
BOARD MEMBER**

At PEERS, a mental health nonprofit in Alameda County, Maileen Mamaradlo integrates H.O.P.E (Healing from Our Past and Expectations) to identify the root causes of Asian American stigma towards mental health. Her lived mental health experiences as a child of Asian immigrants shaped her into the person she is today. Before working at PEERS, Maileen was highly involved at San Jose State University, where she obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Public Health and a Minor in Atypical Child Studies. Her favorite jobs and leadership experiences as a student were in nonprofits like Braven, San Jose State Associated Students In Solidarity Network, and Asian Pacific American Leadership Institute (APALI). Her exceptional involvement in college during the pandemic sparked her passions in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), social justice, behavioral health, and mental health outreach for underrepresented populations. Those values and previous work experiences led her to NAPAFASA. As a Board Member, Maileen Mamaradlo hopes to use her values and experiences as meaningful guides to improving mental health disparities that our communities face. As a relatively young Board Member, she also wishes to grow as a leader in the nonprofit industry. Outside of work, you can find Maileen going to concerts and making playlists on Spotify: she listens to thousands of different artists every year. She likes going to small business markets and collecting earrings from women of color businesses. If anyone asks her to get boba, she will usually say yes!



**PRINCESS MAE VISCONDE, MPH
BOARD MEMBER**

Princess Mae Visconde manages a network of over 170 community-based organizations, manages health-related programs, and advocates for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities. Born and raised in Ewa Beach, Hawai'i, she earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology with a minor in chemistry from Saint Mary's College, and Master of Public Health, Health Policy, and Management, and a Certificate in Public Administration, Nonprofit Management from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Princess Mae has extensive experience working for nonprofit and government organizations including the Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) as a Public Health Research Fellow, the Lili'uokalani Trust (LT) as a Community Change Initiatives intern, and the Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) as a disease investigator. Most recently, she was a project coordinator for the DOH-UH Contact Tracing Training Program and a Public Health Advisor contracted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Her education and experiences developed her passion for service, diversity, and healthcare justice leading her to a career in serving others. Princess Mae is committed to leading with empathy, dedication, integrity, and humility while creating space for diverse communities to feel connected, supported, and heard. During her time as a NAPAFASA board member, she hopes to be an ambassador for the organization and think innovatively and strategically about the impact NAPAFASA can have on AA & NH/PI communities.