



QUEER & API: ENGAGING WITH API COMMUNITIES

ACCEPTANCE IN THE CHINESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY

CHINESE AMERICAN SUB-GROUPS

This fact sheet discusses findings on Chinese American attitudes toward LGBT people in three sub-groups:

Chinese-speaking Chinese Americans of all ages are U.S. citizens and residents who prefer to communicate in a Chinese dialect, including those who are bilingual in Chinese and English. With few exceptions, most people in this group are immigrants.

English-speaking Chinese Americans under 35 are U.S. citizens and residents who prefer to communicate in English, including those who are bilingual in Chinese and English. The majority of people in this group are U.S.-born people of Chinese descent.

English-speaking Chinese Americans 35 and over are U.S. citizens and residents who prefer to communicate in English, including those who are bilingual in Chinese and English.

OUR PURPOSE

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

API Equality-LA and API Equality-Northern California partnered with Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy to collect research on **Asian Pacific Islander (API) views on same-sex marriage and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people.**

These fact sheets highlight key findings from a combination of one-on-one in-depth interviews and focus groups among voters and individuals in California's Chinese, Filipino, and Korean communities. Interviews and focus groups were conducted in each ethnic community in English and participants' primary languages: Mandarin, Korean, or Tagalog. Participants were of varying genders, age, and education levels. This research was designed to explore views on same-sex marriage as well as values, attitudes, and feelings related to LGBT people.

Factsheets are for community members and LGBT advocates looking to gain a better understanding of these communities, so they can reach out and build better understanding across difference between and among our communities.

ATTITUDES ON A SPECTRUM

On one end, the vast majority of **Chinese-speaking Chinese Americans** studied seldom think about LGBT people and issues and most lack basic understanding of what being LGBT means. In fact, many people in this category confuse gender for sexual orientation, believing that gay and lesbian people are also gender-nonconforming. This acute lack of knowledge and exposure lends this community to adopting negative perceptions of LGBT people: many see LGBT people as unnatural, have concerns that LGBT people harm children, contribute to social decline, and go against tradition. Some view being LGBT as an unnatural condition that is transmittable.

Meanwhile, the vast majority of **English-speaking Chinese Americans under 35** studied are accepting of LGBT people and supportive of same-sex marriage. Many participants described having one or more substantive relationships with LGBT people. While a solid majority demonstrated a strong understanding of being LGBT as a real, lived experience, some expressed lingering concerns about LGBT people's impact on children.

English-speaking Chinese Americans 35 and over are variable, ranging from strongly anti-LGBT to strongly pro-LGBT, exhibiting attitudes prevalent in the other two sub-groups. **Most notably, people in this group are the most willing to change their attitudes toward LGBT people.**



Source: API Equality-LA Facebook

KEY FACTORS FOR MOVEMENT TO ACCEPTANCE

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LGBT PEOPLE

For many people, negative perceptions and fear of LGBT people stems from lack of understanding about them. Offering basic explanations about LGBT people and how their relationships work that is readily available and accessible is a crucial step for moving people to acceptance, especially for Chinese-speaking Chinese Americans.

It is important to note that in major metropolitan areas with a significant Chinese American population, Chinese-speaking Chinese Americans constitute a solid majority. This particular group receives its news and information from Chinese-language media, which is the most effective way to reach this audience.

RELATIONSHIPS

There are two important kinds of relationships that create movement to acceptance: sustained and meaningful personal relationships with LGBT people, and relationships with people who share their journey story—a story about moving from opposition or intolerance to acceptance.

IDENTIFICATION OF INJUSTICE

For some, identifying and acknowledging the injustice and discrimination that LGBT people face is a motivator for acceptance. This is particularly true for people who value equality and fairness or who have personally experienced discrimination or oppression.

COMMUNICATING WITH CHINESE AMERICANS

DO	DON'T
Show examples of LGBT relationships that demonstrate that LGBT people have love and commitment to each other	Make direct comparisons between race-based and sexuality-based discrimination
Provide clear examples of ways that LGBT people suffer from inequality	Use the word “same,” which will trigger an automatic response in people to search for and focus on differences
Tell stories and present positive, well-respected role models of Chinese or Asian LGBT people*	Assume that people recognize the similarities between LGBT and straight relationships
Appeal to the value of family and the need for everyone to be included*	Assume that the language of rights and legal issues resonates with everyone.*

*especially true for Chinese-speaking Chinese Americans

A NOTE ON MESSENGERS

A Chinese-speaking Chinese American mother describing her journey of accepting her LGBT child is the most effective at moving people to become supportive of LGBT people, across all groups.

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API EQUALITY-LA
Asians and Pacific Islanders for LGBT Equality

API Equality-LA advocates in the Greater Los Angeles Asian and Pacific Islander communities for the fair treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and marriage equality for same-sex couples. API Equality-LA's vision is to create a society that celebrates the loves and lives of all people - free from discrimination and injustice.



API EQUALITY
Northern California

API Equality-Northern California works at the intersections of the Asian and Pacific Islander and LGBTQ communities to transform people, practices, and policies to make the world an equitable and safe place for everyone. API Equality-Northern California envisions a world where LGBTQ Asians and Pacific Islanders are empowered to practice self-determination, cultivate intergenerational connections, and live truthfully.