



QUEER & API: ENGAGING WITH API COMMUNITIES

ACCEPTANCE IN THE FILIPINO AMERICAN COMMUNITY



FILIPINO VALUE OF FAMILY

Family is an important foundation for Filipino Americans. And for Filipino Americans, family includes the extended family of grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles. Unlike the prototypical nuclear family of predominant American culture, Filipino American families are broader and more inclusive. Discussions of LGBT issues should be had with this value in mind, in combination with attention to respect for elders, another strong value among Filipino Americans.

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.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIALOGUE

Filipino Americans widely support the idea that people should be treated fairly and should not be hurt by discrimination. Changes in public opinion on equality for LGBT people have opened up greater opportunities to build understanding in the community

Views about the LGBT community vary widely. Many of the Filipino Americans studied express the belief that all people deserve respect and happiness, and have a favorable and sympathetic view of this community. Others express discomfort, along with opinions that LGBT people are too demanding of their rights, confused or simply wrong-headed. These conflicting community views inform the dialogue to build acceptance over time for LGBT equality.

One challenge that may hinder full support for equality is an underlying sense of conflict between a desire for fairness and a reverence for tradition. To address this tension, it is better to engage in a dialogue that allows room for doubt and open discussion. Value and concern for the collective and community connection make overt and contentious demands for acceptance less effective than invitations to have conversations and share ideas.

The concern for the preservation of tradition makes it imperative that discussions of LGBT issues are couched in a shared value for Filipino American culture and tradition. Impressions that LGBT equality is a rejection of Filipino American culture, or that Filipino American LGBT people and supporters are not embracing of Filipino American culture are rocky starting places for dialogue. Filipino Americans are the best initiators of efforts to talk about these issues, especially when they share their experience as a part of their ethnic identity.

REACHING OUT TO FILIPINO AMERICANS

Below are effective ways to engage in constructive conversations about LGBT issues in the Filipino American community:

- **Tell stories!** Storytelling is a powerful way to connect people to the concerns of LGBT people. Filipino Americans value fairness and related well with stories that create human connection. Some Filipino Americans may not know an LGBT person, and sharing stories about real people can be an effective way to build understanding.
- **Share examples** of how people have resolved underlying conflicts in the way they feel about LGBT issues. People can relate to the internal conflict, feel relieved to hear it spoken, and appreciate seeing a path from ambivalence to resolution.
- **Emphasize** the ways that LGBT people **value tradition**. Filipino Americans value their culture and often may perceive questions of LGBT equality as a divergence from traditional Filipino American values and a prioritization of American-only values. Showing that LGBT equality is not a rejection of tradition is an important way to connect.

It is important to have an appropriate messenger. It can be an unexpected person, like a clergy member, or an elder, but this person must clearly convey value for Filipino American culture, as well as openness to dialogue rather than demand for acceptance.



RELIGION IS NOT A BARRIER

The Filipino American community is overwhelmingly Christian, and Catholic. Constructive conversations about equality are important. People's faith does not make them automatically reject LGBT equality; in fact, the idea that "we are all human," and appeals to Christian values of love, family, "thou shalt not judge," and "all God's children" provide reasons to support LGBT people. On the other hand, attempts to refer to Bible verses and to suggest alternative interpretations are ineffective and unwelcome.

Recognizing the important role that religion plays in Filipino American individuals' lives or in the culture in general can help ensure that LGBT equality is not presented in conflict with these values, but rather, in keeping with them.

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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.