

Adjective Collections: Exploring Biases and Increasing Awareness of
Asian American Parenting and Parent-Child Relationships

A Workshop

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Abstract

This is a workshop, accompanied with research a presentation, on Asian American parenting and relationships between Asian American parents and their children. The experiential activity, called, Adjective Collections, will help participants become aware of their biases regarding parenting. It will also inform them about viewpoints that many Asian Americans hold on parenting and their relationships with their children. The book, *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* (Chua, 2011), will be referenced as a starting point for the potential differences between Asian American and typical American parenting.

Description

Adjective Collections will consist of three parts: (1) a small group discussion, (2) a large group adjective collection activity, and (3) large group discussion of the activity with excerpts from Amy Chua's *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, research explanations, and clinical recommendations.

Objectives of the Workshop

Through engagement in the experiential activity "Adjective Collections," participants will become aware of their own biases regarding parenting and parent-child

relationships. Furthermore, participants will become aware of Asian American parenting and the relationships that Asian Americans have with their children. Clinical recommendations will include psychoeducation for immigrant families and their therapists; empathy and understanding surrounding the immigrant generation; responsibility taken by children and parents; acquiring skills via role playing and solution focused exercises; clients and therapists making informed decisions about the effects of acculturative family distancing (AFD); adapting psychotherapy to include culturally relevant information and interventions; and being aware of stereotypes. Research recommendations will include research on the prevalence of child–parent acculturation problems in Asian American families, AFD research using longitudinal research methodology, and intervention studies relating to treatment and its efficacy.

Procedures

Small Group Discussion. The workshop will begin with the larger group breaking into smaller groups. In these smaller groups, participants will be given the following questions for discussion: (1) what adjectives describe a good parent? (2) What adjectives describe a bad parent? (3) What are your experiences with good parents/parenting? (4) What are your experiences with bad parents/parenting? Each group will be asked to choose three adjectives that constitute a good parent and three that constitute a bad parent to share with the larger group. After the small groups have had time to discuss the topic of good parents and bad parents, the groups will come together into a larger group for the Adjective Collections.

Adjective Collections. During the Adjective Collections, the smaller groups will share with the larger group the three adjectives that describe a good parent and three

adjectives that describe a bad parent. Workshop leaders will record these adjectives on a visible surface for the whole group to see, such as poster board, white board, or overhead projector. After all groups have given their adjectives, the workshop leaders will reveal a second list of adjectives. This list of adjectives will consist of Asian American parents' and children's description of what comprises good and bad parents. These adjectives will be taken from a literature review of articles on Asian American parenting and Asian American parent-child relationships, as well as from *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*.

Large Group Discussion. The large group discussion will focus on the participants' reactions to the adjectives/descriptors used by researchers of Asian American psychology and by Chua's (2011). The workshop leaders will discuss the literature from which they selected their adjective list. The group will then discuss the activity and its meaning for them, both as a group and as individuals. Special attention will be paid to points where participants agreed and disagreed in their descriptors of good parents. Participants will be asked to discuss what they believe accounts for these differences and similarities. During this time, key excerpts from Amy Chua's book will be played via audiotape and then discussed as a large group. Participants will also be asked to think about their personal biases regarding parenting and talk within the group about how these biases may or may not be impacting their relationships with people from different cultures and/or ethnicities.

Conclusion

Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother (Chua, 2011) presents a viewpoint on parenting that is outside of the norm for most Americans. Through participation in this workshop, group members will become more aware of why they may or may not be biased not only

toward the type of parenting in Chua's (2011) book, but why they may need to expand their multicultural understanding of what constitutes good and bad parenting/parent-child relationships.

References

- Chua, A. (2011). *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*. NYC, NY: Penguin.
- Hwang, W. C. (2006). Acculturative family distancing: Theory, research, and clinical practice. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Training*, 43(4), 397–409. doi: 10.1037/0033-3204.43.4.380
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