



"I Don't Know Why I Feel So Bad Being Asian": A Qualitative Inquiry of Anti-Asian Racism from a Racial Trauma Perspective

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the incorporation of multiculturalism into Canadian federal policies since the 1970s, whiteness continues to dominate societal norms, perpetuating the racialization of people of color. For Asian-Canadians, incidents of bias, discrimination and racism are furthermore underreported and not explicitly discussed, masked by myths of the "model minority" while simultaneously perpetuated by social metaphors such as "yellow peril" that continue to stoke anti-Asian sentiment in the twenty-first century, particularly through the SARS and COVID pandemics.^{1,2}

From a developmental perspective, evidence has shown that children are shaped by the social environments where they are raised, and the impact of race and racism on children often emerges during adolescence.³ Living within the *white racial frame* – the dominant racial perspective that has historically justified and perpetuated racial oppression and inequality while shaping how both white and racialized individuals interpret and navigate daily social interactions – racialized youth often struggle to cultivate a positive sense of self and belonging, jeopardizing their mental health.^{4,5} Focusing on Asian Canadian youth, this study adopts a racial trauma perspective to explore their **experiences growing up in Canada and the impacts of racism**.

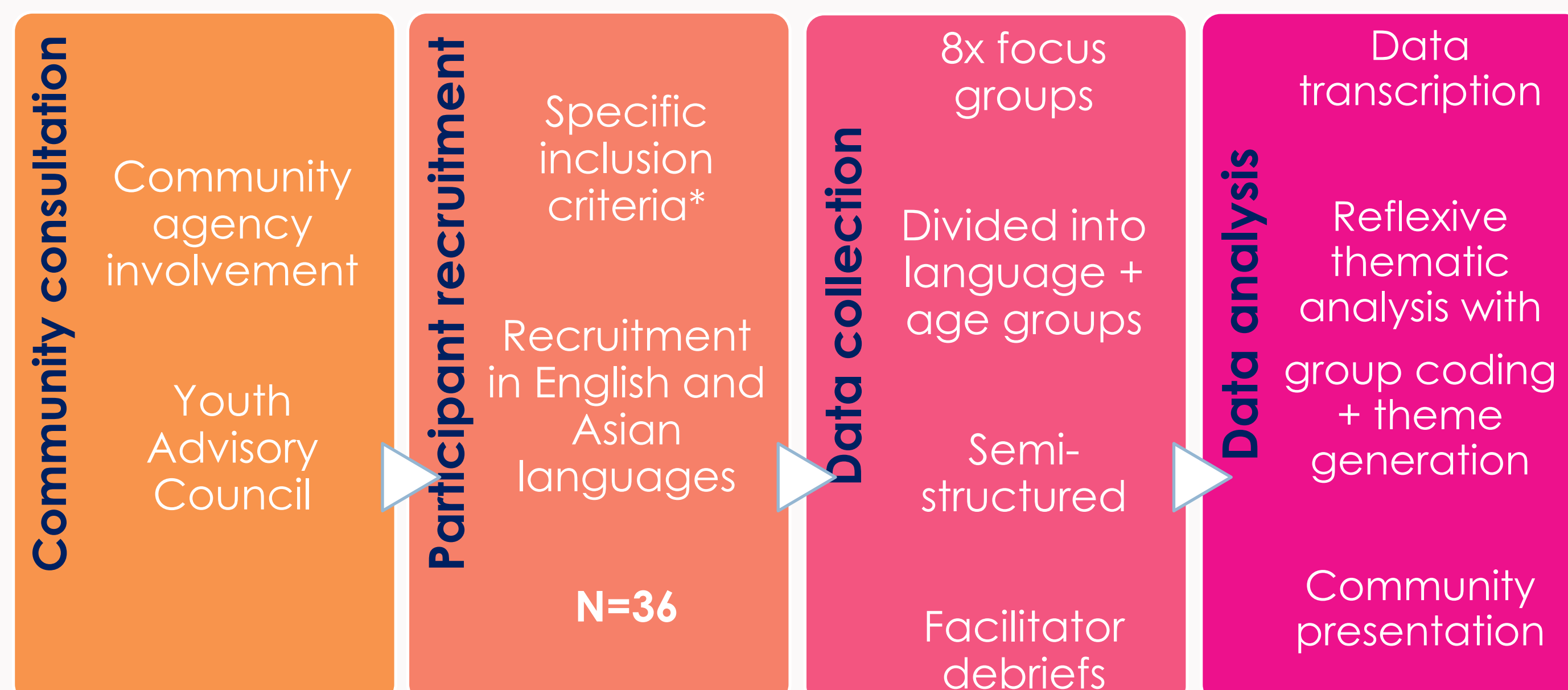
OBJECTIVES

Given the dearth of investigation into Asian Canadian youth's specific experience with racism in Canada's "multicultural context", this **qualitative study explores**:

1. Youth's experiences growing up in Canada as Asian; and
2. Their experiences with racism and the **impact of these experiences** on their wellbeing and sense of self.

This study posits **racism and racial discrimination as forms of trauma** that impact mental and emotional well being. Racial trauma was defined broadly within this study to include specific incidents of racial discrimination as well as chronic stresses of living and growing up within the white racial frame.

METHODS

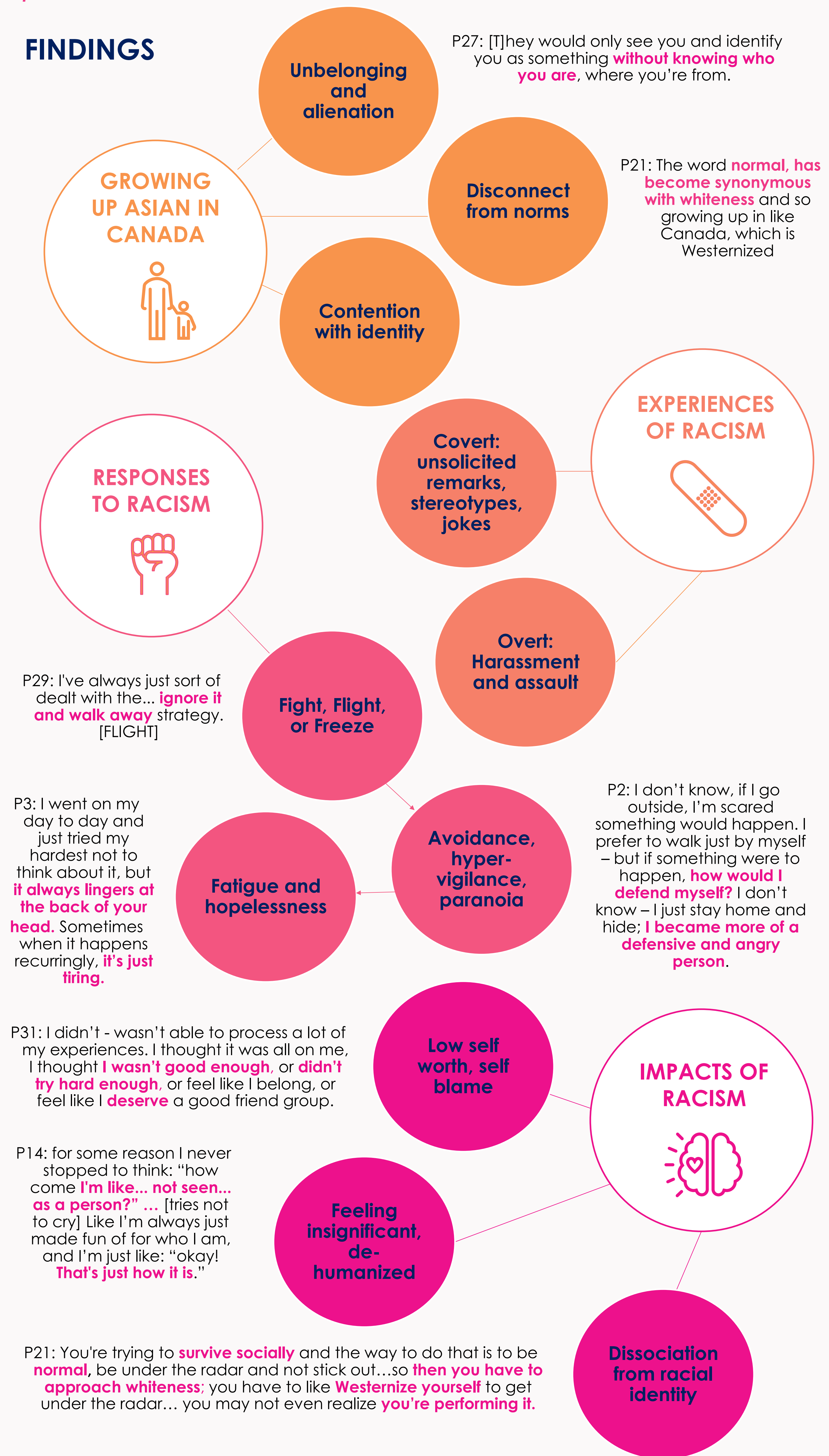


***Inclusion criteria:** (1) self-identification as Asian, living in Greater Toronto Area, and (2) aged between 12-25 years

REFERENCES:

(1) Keil, R., & Ali, S. H. (2006). The avian flu: some lessons learned from the 2003 SARS outbreak in Toronto. *Area*, 38(1), 107-109. (2) Leung, C. (2008). The yellow peril revisited: The impact of SARS on Chinese and Southeast Asian communities. *Resources for Feminist Research*, 33(1/2), 135. (3) Reny, T. T., & Barreto, M. A. (2022). Xenophobia in the time of pandemic: othering, anti-Asian attitudes, and COVID-19. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 10(2), 209-232. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2020.1769693>. (4) Feagin, J. R. (2020). *The white racial frame: Centuries of racial framing and counter-framing*. Routledge. (5) Viruell-Fuentes, E. A. (2011). "IT'S A LOT OF WORK": Racialization Processes, Ethnic Identity Formations, and Their Health Implications. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 8(1), 37-52.

FINDINGS



CONCLUSIONS

- Anti-Asian Racism in Canada is entrenched in **covert and overt forms** and affect Asian youth in diverse ways
- Racial trauma results in acute, subacute, and chronic post-traumatic stress reactions that **extend beyond clinical definitions** to impact youth identity and self-development
- Internalization of racism, denial of identity, and alignment with whiteness, while a "survival response", results in **upholding and perpetuation** of oppressive structures and systems
- Trauma-informed practices must **recognize the unique ways** racial trauma manifest among Asian-Canadian youth

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