Changing Tides Announces Expansion of CT Stream,  
Making Therapy More Accessible for AAPI Young Adults

Changing Tides, a program of Little Tokyo Service Center, will be opening up additional slots for its CT Stream initiative. CT Stream is a therapy stipend initiative intended for AAPI young adults ages 16-25, who are first-time, non-acute therapy seekers or unable to afford the cost of therapy. The stipend will provide 6-10 free therapy sessions per participant, and slots are available on a first come, first serve basis for California residents that submit an application.

Changing Tides' newest initiative, CT Stream, responds to the current mental health crisis impacting AAPI young adults. Suicide is now the leading cause of death for AAPI young adults—this statistic does not hold true for young adults of other racial groups.

“There’s a big shame factor in the AAPI community and problems are encouraged to be kept within the family. Especially in families where the parents are immigrants, they really have no concept of therapy and counseling. It can go directly against their family’s values of keeping their family name spotless and not sharing their fears and weaknesses with others. So some of these young people don’t have their family’s support when it comes to getting help,” explained Marian Sunabe, intake coordinator for CT Stream.

CT Stream strives to alleviate common obstacles to seeking therapy like stigma, financial burden, and finding a well-matched therapist. An intake coordinator guides participants to choose a licensed or pre-licensed therapist from a pre-screened directory, most of who are of Asian descent. Because the cultural needs of the AAPI community are unique, all therapists in the CT Stream directory are either AAPI themselves or are trained in cultural sensitivity.

“Some of our participants reported that they’ve tried therapy before at their schools, but they had a hard time connecting with the therapist. It really does help for Asian American young people to be able to speak with someone who shares their life experience to some degree. Although all therapists are trained in cultural competency, I think when the therapists themselves come from that background, it really helps that relationship be therapeutic right away,” said Marian.

Most CT Stream participants reported being ‘very satisfied’ with the program overall and were ‘satisfied’ with the culturally sensitive mental health services provided. Other findings included identifying financial need and lack of insurance as the primary barriers to continuing therapy, and that ethnicity, gender, and cost are the primary factors when seeking therapy.

After CT Stream’s stipend concludes, participants are connected to peer support groups, subscriptions to wellness apps, referrals for ongoing therapy, and supplementary programming offered by Changing Tides.
“As far as receiving completely subsidized sessions for culturally sensitive therapy and follow up services that are built into the program, I don’t think there’s anything else like CT Stream. Providing someone to come alongside you and help you through this difficult period in your life, I feel like we’re saving lives,” Marian told us.

For more information about CT Stream, please visit the CT Stream website at https://thechangingtides.org/ct-stream or reach out to Matthew Yonemura, Changing Tides Outreach Coordinator, at myonemura@ltsc.org.

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ABOUT CHANGING TIDES
Changing Tides (CT) is a program of Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) and aims to normalize mental health in the AAPI community through events, outreach and education, and open conversations. What started in 2018 as an idea by a group of college friends has grown to become a program that reaches 5,000 AAPI young adults and families through various workshops, forums, activities and events. thechangingtides.org

ABOUT LTSC
For over 40 years, Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) has provided a safety net of social welfare and community development services to empower people and communities in need. Starting with its home in Little Tokyo, LTSC preserves and strengthens the unique ethnic communities of the Southern California region where people, culture and collective future matter. www.ltsc.org