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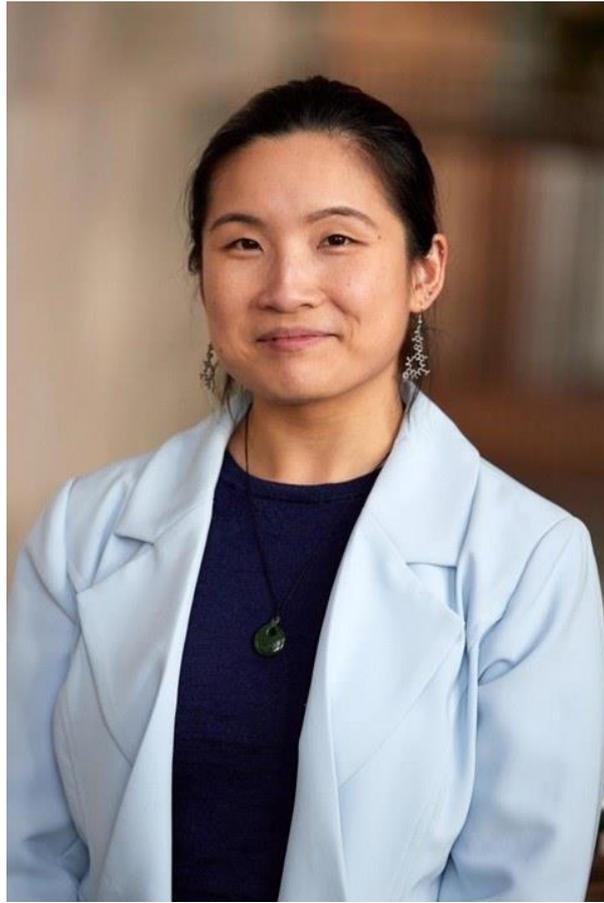


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Asian Psychology Collective Aotearoa



4 - Valerie Tan



5 - Joanna Chan



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7 - Niha Jalota

Kyle Tan (Malaysian Chinese) arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand as an international student in 2016. He completed his Hons and PhD in community psychology and population health at the University of Waikato (UoW). He is a research fellow at the Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Studies at UoW.

Joanna Chan (New Zealand born-Hong Kong Cantonese) is a clinical psychology trainee, PhD student with the WERO Working to End Racial Oppression project, and has a background in Kaupapa Māori mental health. She is passionate about ensuring that our peoples and communities have equitable access to safe and culturally responsive mental health care.

Niha Jalota has Indian whakapapa and graduated with a Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology from Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka/University of Otago. She currently serves as a

Professional Clinician at Massey University, Palmerston North. Niha is passionate about working with adults with mental health difficulties with a special interest in working with individuals from Asian heritage.

Valerie Tan (Malaysian Chinese) graduated with a PhD from the Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka/University of Otago. She is a clinical psychologist and currently works as a lecturer in the Department of Psychological Medicine at the University of Otago with research interests in mental health and psychology. In general, she is passionate about Asian people in governance and leadership and equitable systems.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, Statistics New Zealand broadly defines Asian communities as including peoples with whakapapa or genealogy from East Asia (e.g., Japan, Taiwan, and China), Southeast Asia (e.g., the Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand), and South Asia (e.g., Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan). This definition excludes people from the Middle East, central Asia and Asian Russia (Yong, 2018). Not everyone from these communities identifies with the monolithic “Asian” identity, and some may have multicultural identities and upbringings (e.g., Māori and Chinese; Indian and Pākehā). The use of the umbrella term “Asian” is strategic here to mobilise solidarity amongst those racialised as Asian to collectively strategise against the issues confronting our communities in psychology.

Although there is a history of at least four decades of scholarly critique of Eurocentric psychology (Abbott & Durie, 1987; Liu, 2019), including a Tribunal claim outlining the discipline’s breaches of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Levy, 2018), there has been little scholarship focused on Asian psychologies or the experiences of Asians in psychology in Aotearoa. Two forthcoming publications on Asian racialisation in psychology (Tan & Tan, forthcoming) and pathways to increase the visibility of Asians (Tasker & D’Silva, forthcoming) in the field aim to address this gap. However, much progress is still needed to improve the discipline’s responsiveness to the diverse sociocultural needs of Asian communities in Aotearoa.

The proposal for initiating the Asian Psychology Collective Aotearoa (APCA) emerged from a hui (meeting) amongst four Asian psychologists and/or researchers in psychology—Kyle Tan (Malaysian Chinese), Joanna Chan (New Zealand-born Hong Kong Cantonese), Niha Jalota (Indian), and Valerie Tan (Malaysian Chinese)— discussing the Working to End Racial Oppression (WERO) findings on racism in psychology. The WERO report (Waitoki et al., 2024) succinctly highlights the operation (e.g., dominance of westernised psychology; microaggressions) and impacts (e.g., the need for additional support; the consideration of ending training) of racism in psychology on minoritised groups, including Asians. While each of us have been involved in different roles in addressing the Eurocentric roots of psychology, we have come to appreciate the value of assembling a rōpū and hearing from diverse Asian perspectives as we work on strategies to challenge and reshape the current status quo in psychology.

3. **Anti-racist Narratives:** There has been little research on the experiences of Asians in psychology, so less is known about how Asians have endured and challenged racialisation at interpersonal and structural levels. Amplifying Asian voices in conversations about Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the racialised nature of our identity is important for illuminating the costs of racism for Asians and for identifying shared racialisation processes with other minoritised groups (e.g., Māori, Pacific, and rainbow) to pave collective paths forward
4. **Safe Spaces:** There is a lack of safe, inclusive spaces in psychology where the validity of our racialised experiences as 'Asian' is acknowledged, largely due to the difficulty of articulating these experiences in the face of the systemic and insidious nature of whiteness as the norm. Participants expressed a desire for spaces that foster aroha, respect, trust, and safety—cultural, physical, and psychological. Such spaces are essential for facilitating open dialogue and authentic sharing of experiences among Asians in psychology across different migration statuses, nationalities, regions, and generational backgrounds. Safe spaces outside mainstream institutions offer opportunities for Asians to connect, seek support, and develop a sense of community.
5. **Engagement with Asian Communities:** *“Nothing about us without us”*—participants expressed a desire for psychology programmes to establish closer ties with community groups. Most existing programmes lack connections with Asian communities, despite the provision of mental health support to underserved Asian service users by organisations such as Asian Family Services and the Asian Network. Students and psychologists who wish to be trained to work confidently with Asian communities often have to pursue additional training outside formal programmes, usually at their own expense.

What is your vision for Asian Psychology Collective Aotearoa?

1. **Mentorship and Peer Support:** Through the APCA, Asians in psychology can benefit from mentorship (e.g., for psychology trainees, early career professionals), cultural supervision, peer support, and access to professional development resources.
2. **Networking Platforms:** Fostering a sense of community and belonging is needed among Asians in psychology. This can be achieved through creating regular networking opportunities for Asians from different demographic backgrounds to meaningfully connect with each other. The platforms for networking can be either online or in person.
3. **Community Engagement and Events:** Organising events that support community engagement and provide opportunities for Asians in psychology to connect, collaborate, and share their work. This includes hosting workshops, conferences, and other initiatives that engage the collective and the broader psychology community, helping to build a stronger, more connected presence.

4. **Advocacy for Change:** APCA can contribute through our members' expertise from diverse psychological backgrounds (e.g., clinical, educational, health, and community psychology) to advocate for structural change by writing policy briefs, submissions, and best practice guidelines. Our prior experience working with Asian communities gives us an advantage in providing a voice in psychology that better reflects the community needs.
5. **Resource and Content Development:** We aim to build a shared repository of group resources and content to support culturally informed practices for working with Asian communities. This includes working collectively within members in APCA (and collaboratively with other Asian groups such as Asian Family Services) to develop toolkits, resources, and curricula in psychology, providing materials that reflect the unique cultural contexts and experiences of Asians in the field.

Many Māori, Pacific, and Pākehā colleagues and peers also participated in the session with the intent of expanding their knowledge of Asian psychologies and seeking ways to build connections with Asians in psychology. This engagement highlights the pressing need for APCA to address these gaps in psychology. "Just start. Start small, and don't worry about the vision" was key advice offered to us. This message underscores our peers' strong anticipation for a network of Asians in psychology while also reassuring us that we need not be overly concerned with having a fully formed structure at the outset. As the collective expands and participation increases, we can leverage the unique strengths and skills of our members to build capacity in the various areas that Asians in psychology are interested in, such as those outlined above. We are grateful to the members of the National Standing Committee on Te Tiriti (NSCTT) and the New Zealand Psychological Society (NZPsS) Executive for their encouragement to develop APCA. The decision on whether the collective will be formed as an interest group is still pending, and we will maintain ongoing dialogues with NSCTT and NZPsS members, along with our Asian peers, as we take the next steps. Meanwhile, Asians in psychology are welcome to sign up to be part of the Asian Psychology Collective Aotearoa through this link: <https://tinyurl.com/AsianPCA>

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9 - Kobus Du Plooy

Kobus Du Plooy | he/him | M.Sc., PHD, MBA

Mobile: +64273624926

E-mail: kobus.duplooy@otago.ac.nz

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kobus-du-plooy-phd-psych/>

Originally from South Africa, Kobus is a clinical psychologist based in Dunedin, New Zealand. With a diverse academic background including a PhD in Psychology and an MBA, Kobus has extensive experience in clinical practice, academia, and sport psychology. His career spans roles in private practice, academic lecturing, and psychological support for elite athletes and corporate clients. Kobus currently serves as a Senior Lecturer at the University of Otago and as an Extraordinary Professor at North-West University, focusing on mental health, well-being, and performance psychology. He has supervised numerous postgraduate students, published extensively in academic journals, and continues to support professional athletes with mental health and performance skills training. Kobus currently also contributes to