

Working Title: *Investigating the intersection between Asian culture and disability: The effect of societal expectations on young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)*

Proposal:

For my senior capstone project, I will investigate Asian American (AA)/Asian immigrant (AI) perspectives on autism and explore the implications of restrictive cultural views on the everyday lives of young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the United States. Using the ecological model as a theoretical framework for my literature review, I will analyze the different ways in which compulsory able-bodiedness dominates as an inherent way of existing in Asian culture and how it poses a threat to AA children with ASD. Cultural beliefs are passed on from generation to generation through the cycle of socialization. Asian cultures thrive on two major forms of socialization – filial piety and maintaining a sense of normalcy – which brings shame to any notion of liberation or independence that may otherwise be encouraged in American culture. For AA children with ASD, it can be extremely disabling to be compared with their neurotypical peers. Some parents may abandon all hopes for their child due to the inability to maintain “a normal life,” whereas others push the limit by setting unrealistic expectations. In terms of decision-making for a young child, parents are often conflicted by socialized ideas from family members, educators, and the media. Currently, there is a knowledge gap in the field of Disability Studies that examines the intersection between socialization efforts at the cultural level and the long-term impact of compulsory able-bodiedness on AA children with ASD. Specifically, there is a lack of personal accounts that describe AA people with ASD who have lived through these socialized experiences as children and into adulthood. Future generations may benefit from this exploration as it addresses prevailing issues in the AA community and provides insight into altering the societal expectations of children with ASD. This study aims to reach a minimally-researched population with hopes that AA people with ASD and/or other disabilities feel empowered to share their stories and break the cycle of socialization.