

Apparently, my father's stress was alleviated twice. The myth about people with mental illness not being able to be helped in any case was dispelled.

If my mother hadn't been there for my father, my father would've probably given up on the family.

I know that myths about mental illnesses, like depression, can be dispelled. With that, I can help myself and other people with mental illness around me. To help other people, I came to the conclusion that people need someone to talk to, need some encouragement, and need some kind of relief. The solutions to relieving a person's mental illness aren't exclusive to these conclusions I've come up with. There are many solutions out there. I also want youth to know that mental health isn't only going to affect the elders. Stress can affect anyone at any age, like how it affected my father at a very young age when he took care of his younger siblings from the dangers of war, but don't be discouraged because anyone at any age can use these solutions from my conclusions to overcome mental illnesses like depression. Mental illnesses and the myths directly for these mental illnesses can be overcome and I hope people will be more aware of the importance of mental health and its effects as the society progress towards a better future.



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**EACH MIND MATTERS**  
California's Mental Health Movement

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE AT ANY AGE

by Koua Vue

My father spoke about his experience of escaping the persecutions of Pathet Lao and having no money and little to no food. He, like many Hmong male his age, experienced the war zone from the secret war in Vietnam. Being the oldest child in his family, he carried the burden of taking care of the younger siblings. He suffered from sadness of losing family members and dignity while in search of refuge. After escaping to Thailand, my father married my mother in hopes of starting out new and fresh with his own family. Unfortunately, my parents' lives weren't any better with the way the Hmong people were living in Thailand. My father was shamed by the fact that he couldn't support his new family, and my mother was upset that my older siblings, who were toddlers

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at the time, were starving. Despite this, my father didn't give up on the family. Even through the long period of stress, my father was not educated enough that his long period of stress and sadness was categorized as depression. My

father never knew that he was in a case depression and since life for the Hmong people in South East Asia after the war was very grim, it would only be natural to feel the way he felt.

Overtime, my father felt as if he wasn't intelligent enough to help support his new family. Even relatives of my father and mother doubt their survival. They thought my parents weren't going to ever overcome the type of living in Thailand. Other people, who were nice, didn't have much to spare to give to my parents. My parents were put into a tight spot, almost giving up because of the ways others excluded them. Other people were resorting to the myths about mental illnesses subconsciously, with or without knowledge. They possibly thought that my parents weren't capable or were mentally ill and couldn't be helped. Like majority, if not all, my parents suffered from the loss of loved ones, peace, and income due to the secret war.

After my father explained this, I asked him, "What was one of the solutions you considered that will help ease the struggles?" My father firmly said, "Coming to the U.S.A." My father decided to come to the U.S.A. to raise the family's standard of



living in order to alleviate the stress. We then talked about how coming to the America would help alleviate these stress. My mother told me that my dad and she didn't know about how the United States of America worked when they first came. They were then put under government aid and our family was given Medi-cal. The government was going to help our family, even if not all the way. My mother said any help is better than no help at all. Coming to the United States of America actually helped quite a lot, according to my parents. With the help of the government, my parents' depression decreased. They were on their way to full recovery. My father was able to support the family after he found a job and my older siblings didn't starve anymore. However, my older siblings did start to get more spoiled as my father worked to help support our family.

My siblings asked for all sorts of things from candy to clothes. My father, once again became stressed due to the desire from them. According to my father, he would've given up if it hadn't been for my mother. She encouraged my father.



My mother took the courage of going out to find a job. She helped out with bills and my father's stress was, again, lowered. If my mother hadn't been there for my father, my father would've probably given up on the family.