

Comedian Kristina Wong Opens Up About Mental Illness and Chinese-Americans



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Kristina Wong is a funny person -- she's a comedian -- but, as [she writes at XO Jane](#), she was unhappy most of the time. Her battle with depression, and the silence surrounding mental illness more generally in the Chinese-American community, inspired her to write a play called "Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" in 2005.

Wong wasn't alone. Asian-American women are more likely than any other ethnic group to contemplate suicide, [according](#) to a 2009 study by researchers at the University of Washington. Wong wrote about touring with her show for seven years and the responses she got:

A curious thing happened when I announced in 2005 that I was "working on a show about depression and suicide." A lot of women came out of nowhere to tell me that they had been depressed and contemplated suicide. These were total strangers who found me by email --

college professors and women I had known as professionals, all telling me things I had not imagined could be shared.

Every time a woman shares her story with me, I think the same: Where were you when I was younger? How would have things been different if we were there for each other?

I've toured "Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" for seven years now. That's way too long to tour a funny show about something so depressing. It's been an amazing ride, but I would never wish for anybody to take on what I did. I was not ready for it and what I had to face to make it. For many years I was known as "Kristina Wong who does that depression show."

[Read more over at XO Jane.](#)