WEBINAR SUMMARY
November 2017

ONE YEAR LATER: Immigrant Trauma and How to Deal with It

Hostile Political and Rhetorical Environment

- Fluctuating immigration laws ranging from travel bans to rescission legal status are creating instability. Immigrants affected include DACA recipients, those with Temporary Protected Status and “unaccompanied minors.”
- Anti-immigrant sentiment and racism are on the rise. This shift in political rhetoric dehumanizes and scapegoats immigrants, while stereotypes about immigrants become more prevalent.

Psychological and Physical Distress

- Immigrants face stress when adjusting to a new culture. Discrimination, financial struggles, language barriers and becoming a racial minority contribute to this stress.
- Immigrants may experience trauma and anxiety because of this stress and discrimination. They may also feel grief because of loss of home, family connections and self-efficacy.
- These changing aspects of identity can affect immigrants’ mental and physical health. These experiences may lead to depression, high blood pressure, premature birth, substance abuse, anxiety and family conflict.

Offering Support

- Teachers are valuable allies because they can create trusting relationships with families. Be a connection to resources but resist reassuring students that everything will be okay.
- Clinicians should work from strength-based perspectives. Looking at individuals’ strengths and building on them can help immigrants regain a sense of control.
- Help friends and neighbors create a “family plan” for who should care for their children in case they are detained. This can help create a sense of preparedness and reduce anxiety.
- Above all, lend an ear. Find time to be an empathetic and nonjudgmental listener.

For more resources and recordings, go to bit.ly/ILCtrauma
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