

# TACKLING THE HIDDEN CRISIS

## Immigrant Anxiety and Trauma

### What's happening?

- **The U.S. is placing further limits on legal immigration**, such as proposed changes to the definition of public charge, which affects families who receive government assistance.
- **Increased deportations** are leaving families fatherless. Research shows Latino men are targeted, resulting in negative economic, psychological and legal hardships on their families.
- **Police cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)** and immigration arrests at former "safe spaces" like courthouses, have created distrust in government agencies. Constant worrying about one's status or safety can lead to chronic stress and anxiety. In addition, even with legal status, immigrants often face stigma and discrimination.
- **This chronic stress is a public health crisis** as family members, community members and workers are unable to contribute to their full potential.

### How can I help?

#### For care providers:

##### Build trust with your clients.

Show respect by explaining what you are doing and why. Schedule more frequent meetings to build trust over time.

**Be a careful listener.** Immigrants often downplay their trauma. They tend to minimize their experiences. Learn from your client and approach them from their own cultural perspective.

**Validate experiences.** Address topics of trauma in a straightforward and nonjudgmental way to normalize overwhelming feelings.

#### For teachers:

##### Practice trauma-informed teaching.

Take the time to know your students and their identities. Look for signs of trauma and build relationships with parents and families.

**Build empathy in the classroom.** Incorporate activities that foster togetherness among students. Share stories of upstanders, people who spoke up for others.

**Offer diverse literature and media.** Include a wide array of experiences and stories in your curriculum so everyone feels seen and heard.

#### For everyone:






##### Create a feeling of safety in your community.

Listen to community members. Post welcoming messages conveying your allyship. Prepare to interact with ICE.

**Educate yourself and get involved.** Know your resources and how you can help. Show up and show compassion. Find local organizations to offer support.

**Direct people to resources.** Use the resources in the toolkit below. Connect immigrant families to helpful services when you can. Leave legal advice to the experts.

### Toolkit

-  [Trauma Informed Care Tips](#)
-  [Pro Bono Legal Help Search Engine](#)
-  [Raids on Immigrant Communities: Facts and What You Can Do](#)
-  [Building Welcoming Classrooms Toolkit](#)
-  [How to Talk About Public Charge with Immigrants and Their Families](#)

DIYA KALLIVAYALIL,  
PhD

Harvard Medical School  
and Cambridge Health  
Alliance



CAITLIN TROMICZAK,  
LICSW-C

Torture Abolition and  
Survivors Support  
Coalition



SARANG SEKHAVAT,  
JD

MA Immigrant and  
Refugee Advocacy  
Coalition



BLANCA RAMIREZ, PhD  
Candidate

Center for the Study of  
Immigrant Integration at  
USC



AVIDEH MOUSSAVIAN,  
JD

National Immigration  
Law Center



CLAIRE TESH, MEd

LMNO Educational  
Consulting



DENZIL MOHAMMED,  
MS

The Immigrant Learning  
Center Public Education  
Institute

