

Creating “Safe Zones” in the Year 2020: A Guide for Educators

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Goals

- ▶ Centering minority and immigrant voices
- ▶ Discussing the cumulative impacts of migration and the events of 2020 including:
 - Changes in immigration policy
 - Nationwide movement in response to the ongoing loss of black lives to police brutality
 - The COVID-19 pandemic
- ▶ Sharing methods and strategies to create “Safe Zones” in educational settings

Immigration

- ▶ Many refugees in Maine are secondary settlers as they have moved from other States.
- ▶ There are influx of asylum seekers in Maine for the last couple years from various part of Africa.
- ▶ Usually, U.S. resettles 70,000 refugees, but with the current administration, in 2020, there only 18,000 have been approved to enter the U.S. and only 6,674 have been admitted.

Black Lives Matter

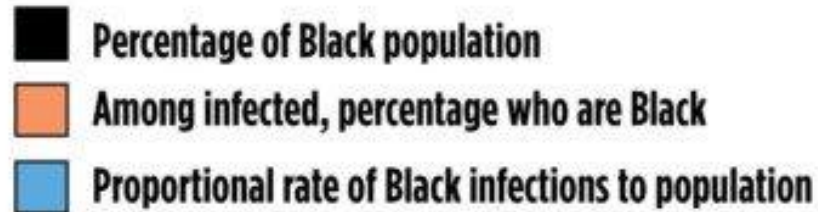
- ▶ In a predominately white community in Maine we have heard many stories of racism
- ▶ We have heard people being called the N-word or to go back home
- ▶ The arrest of black youth(refugees) in Maine is higher than the white youth arrest rate

Maine has the worst COVID-19 disparity in the nation.

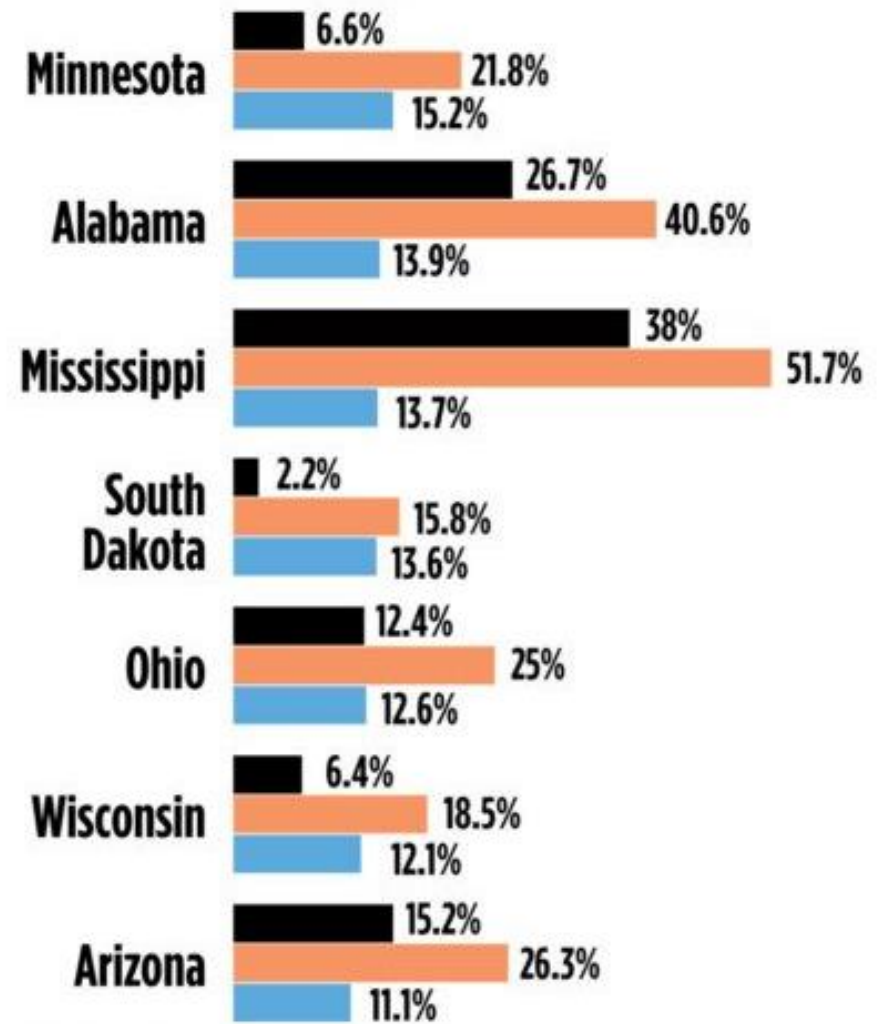
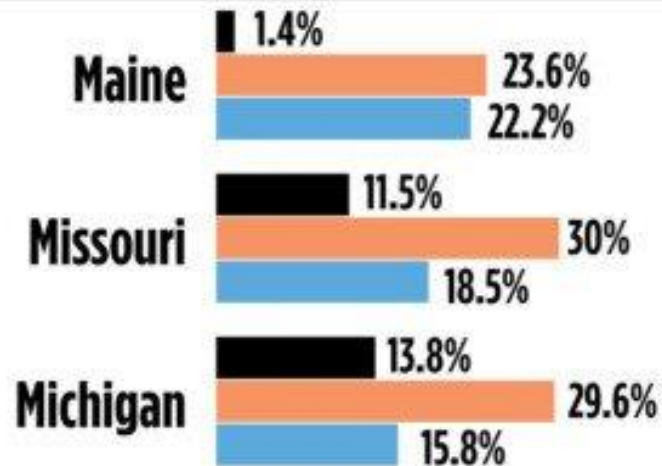
1 out of every 27 Black residents in Maine has tested positive for COVID-19.

COVID-19: The racial disparity

Black Mainers account for 1.4 percent of the state's population but make up 23.6 percent of its COVID-19 cases, the highest racial disparity in the nation.



WORST STATES BY RANK



SOURCE: The COVID Tracking Project

STAFF GRAPHIC | MICHAEL FISHER

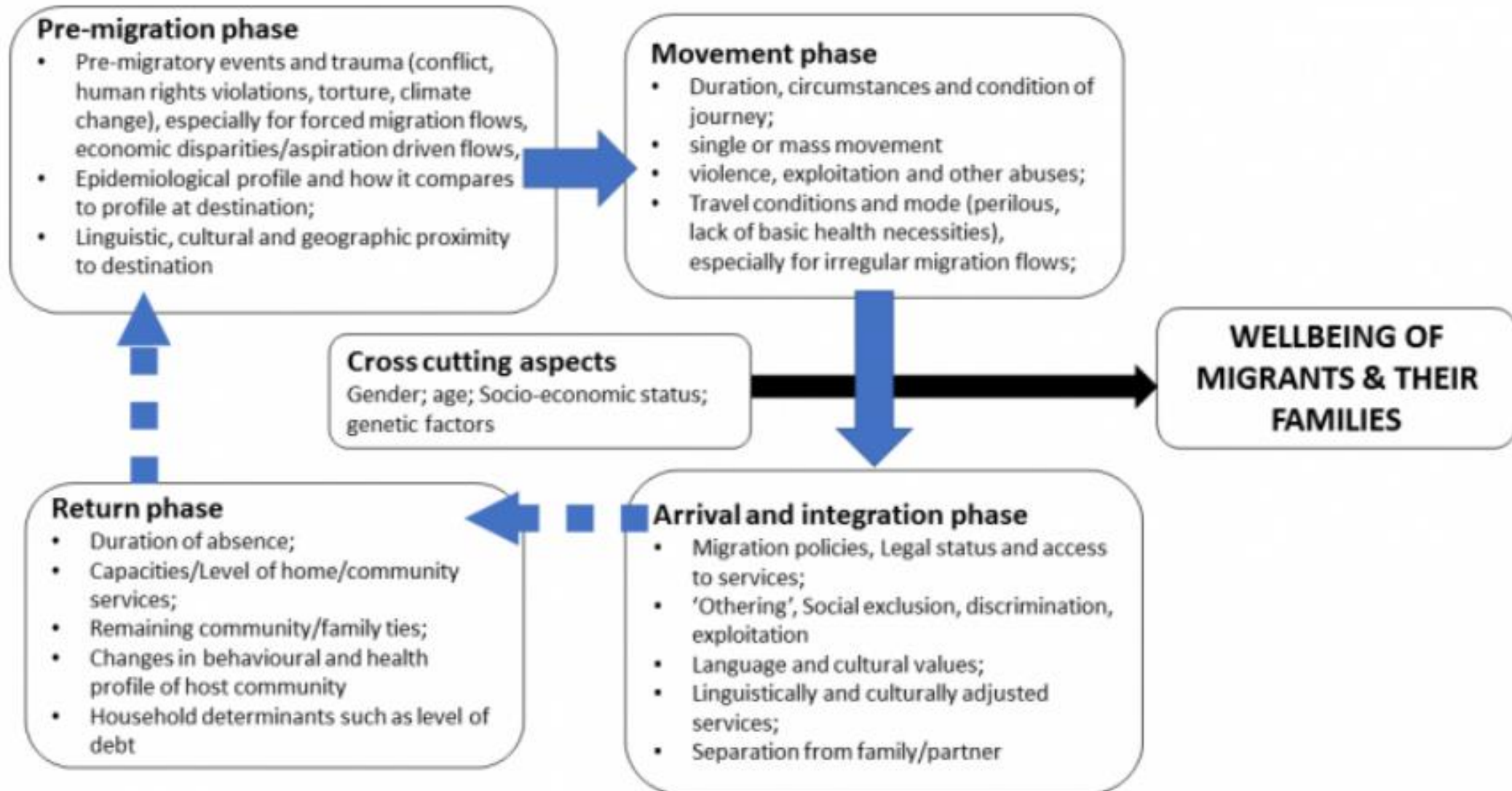
What are we doing?

Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services (MEIRS)

- ▶ MEIRS is part of community taskforce educating community about COVID-19 in various platforms like Whatsapp.
- ▶ Provides essential services such as mental health to families who struggling during COVID-19



Factors influencing the health and well-being of migrants and their families along the phases of migration



Source: Ikechukwu Anthony (2020)

Minority, Immigrant, and Refugee Experiences with the Current Administration

- ▶ Trump administration's stance on immigration
 - Cut legal immigration
 - Reduce refugee admissions
 - Eliminate Temporary Protected Status for 98% of TPS recipients
 - Zero-tolerance policy at U.S./Mexico border
 - End Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
 - Build the wall
 - "Muslim Ban"

- ▶ Effects on Immigrant Communities
 - Bullying
 - Discrimination
 - Segregation
 - Povertization
 - Fear and mistrust
 - Re-traumatization
 - Poorer mental health
 - Reduced engagements with systems and institutions

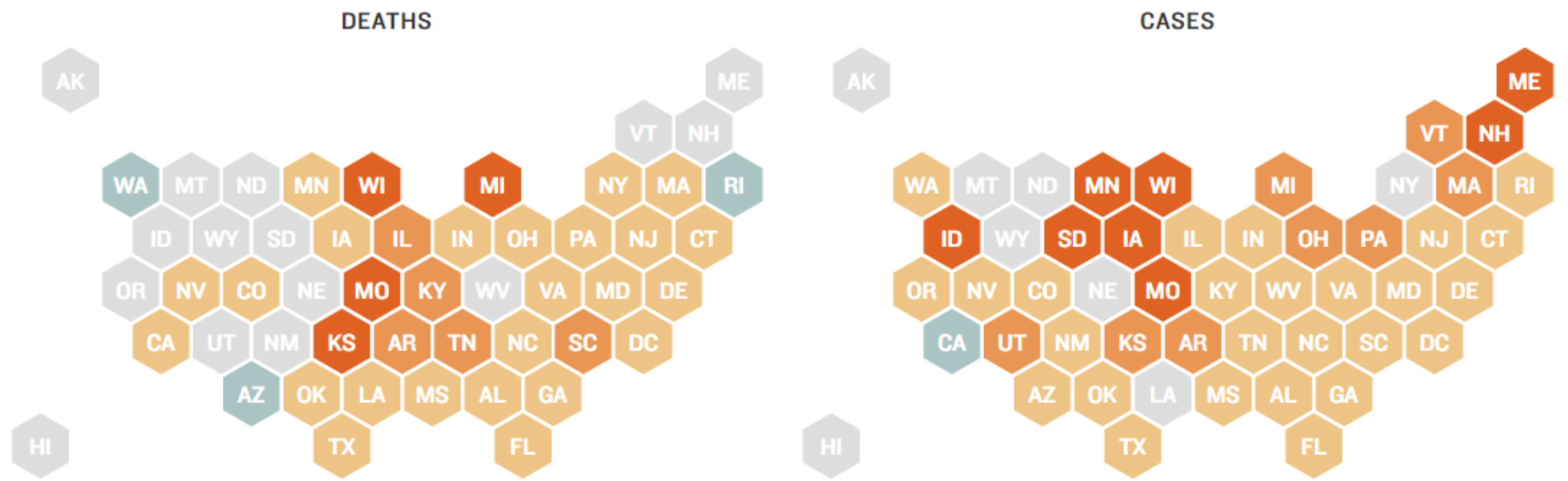
Minority, Immigrant, and Refugee Experiences with Law Enforcement

- ▶ Some refugees perceive harsher and more frequent policing based on marginalized statuses
- ▶ Contact with criminal justice system reduces trust in government
- ▶ Fear of deportation associated with lower confidence in police and courts
- ▶ Exposure to police brutality increases anxiety among refugees
- ▶ Race-based trauma increases depression, anger, hypervigilance

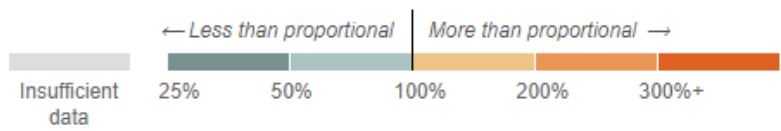
Minority, Immigrant, and Refugee Experiences with COVID-19 Pandemic

- ▶ Risk Factors
 - Employment in low-wage jobs without paid leave
 - Lower rates of health insurance
 - Higher poverty, food insecurity, housing instability
 - Live in multigenerational households
 - Limited English proficiency
 - Increased risk of more severe COVID-19 infections
- ▶ In **February 2020**, Homeland Security implemented broader policy enabling the deportation of **legal** immigrants based on use of public benefits

Minority, Immigrant, and Refugee Experiences with COVID-19 Pandemic



PERCENTAGE DIFFERENCE IN SHARE OF DEATHS/CASES, COMPARED WITH AFRICAN AMERICANS' SHARE OF THE POPULATION



What to do?

Check in with yourself first

- ▶ “Place your own oxygen mask on first”
- ▶ The impact of these compounding events is going to take a marathon, not a sprint, to address
- ▶ Be aware of your own compassion fatigue or secondary trauma
- ▶ Invest in regular self-care



Preparing Safe Zones in Educational Institutions

- ▶ Plan for achievement gaps
- ▶ Require implicit and racial bias training
- ▶ Require de-escalation training for public safety officers
- ▶ Review images, names, and mascots associated with your school and remove those associated with racism
- ▶ Invest in your pipeline to recruit, hire, and retain Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC)
- ▶ Demonstrate how diversity and inclusion is a priority at every level of your school or institution

Preparing Safe Zones in Curricula and the Classroom

- ▶ This should be an ongoing discussion and involve transforming the educational environment
 - Invest time in understanding the history of race and racism in the U.S.
 - Review curriculum, content of classes, assignments, and your teaching style
 - > Who's experiences are centered?
 - > How can they be more inclusive?
 - Take responsibility for your development, but ask for help when you need it

Activate Safe Zones with Students

- ▶ Help students know how and when they can approach you to talk
- ▶ Show that diversity is welcomed and appreciated
- ▶ Consider creative opportunities for students to process their experiences
- ▶ Establish a peer support group that focuses on positive solutions and connections to others

Engage Within Safe Zones

- ▶ Don't ignore current events
- ▶ You don't have to be an expert
- ▶ Focus on listening to experiences of minorities, immigrants, and refugees who are living through this
- ▶ You can ask students to write thoughts and comments privately
- ▶ Be mindful of practices that demand emotional labor from minorities and immigrants

Create Safe Zones Together

INTERRUPT

Speak up against every biased remark—every time, in the moment, without exception. Think about what you'll say ahead of time so you're prepared to act instantly.

TRY SAYING

"I DON'T LIKE WORDS LIKE THAT." OR "THAT PHRASE IS HURTFUL."

QUESTION

Ask simple questions in response to hateful remarks to find out why the speaker made the offensive comment and how you can best address the situation.

TRY ASKING

"WHY DO YOU SAY THAT?" WHAT DO YOU MEAN?" OR "TELL ME MORE."

EDUCATE

Explain why a term or phrase is offensive. Encourage the person to choose a different expression. Hate isn't behind all hateful speech. Sometimes ignorance is at work, or lack of exposure to a diverse population.

TRY SAYING

"DO YOU KNOW THE HISTORY OF THAT WORD?"

ECHO

If someone else speaks up against hate, thank her and reiterate her anti-bias message. One person's voice is a powerful start. Many voices together create change.

TRY SAYING

"THANKS FOR SPEAKING UP, ALLISON. I AGREE THAT WORD IS OFFENSIVE AND WE SHOULDN'T USE IT."

Additional Resources

- ▶ The New York Times: [26 Mini-films For Exploring Race, Bias And Identity With Students](#)
- ▶ Greater Good In Education: [Resources To Support Anti-racist Learning](#)
- ▶ The University Of Denver:
 - [Resources to Support Inclusivity in the Classroom](#)
 - [Pedagogical Strategies to Acknowledge and Discuss Institutional Legacies of Racism](#)
 - [Responding to Trauma in the Classroom](#)
- ▶ Teaching Tolerance:
 - [Responding to Hate and Bias at School](#)
 - [Let's Talk! Facilitating Critical Conversations With Students](#)
 - [Online Teaching Can Be Culturally Responsive](#)