MANAGING IMMIGRANT TRAUMA
AMID THE PANDEMIC

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2020

- Pandemic
- Unemployment
- Civil unrest
- Political Unrest
- Violence
- Hateful rhetoric
- Heightened racism and racial tensions
- Food-related concerns
- Depression, suicide, MH problems on the rise
IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

ESSENTIAL WORKERS
in more vulnerable positions in the labor market (factories, meat processing plants, farm laborers)

DISCRIMINATION/RACISM
chronic & toxic stress!

HEALTHCARE ACCESS AND UTILIZATION
• Uninsured
• Public charge
• Transportation, childcare, “sick time”, language barriers
• Distrust!

EDUCATION, INCOME, AND WEALTH GAPS

HOUSING

(CDC, 2020)
IF WE WANT TO ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH...
MENTAL HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

• Safe relationships are key

• Cultural competency and humility

• Competency in trauma work (PTSD, Grief, Mood disorders)
  • Acute, choric, complex
  • Consideration of developmental stages and LT impact
  • Physiological impact

• Work in contextual-systemic framework
  • Strengths-based perspective
  • Resilience

• Understanding the migration narrative
  • Posture of curiosity
  • Family Story activity
MENTAL HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

• Family Identity
  • Family re-integration: separation/attachment
  • Parent-child relationships

• Negotiating cultural identity
  • Acculturation levels in family
  • Value systems
  • Collectivistic vs. individualistic

• Be attuned to issues of safety
  • Chronic stress, legal status, learning, etc.

• Work to truly understand. Help to feel seen and known – not solely defined by crisis/legal status.

• Self-care & Community Care
WHAT NEXT?

• Addressing barriers to mental health treatment
  • Stigma and lack of education on mental health
  • Creating more accessible services (Cost, insurance)
  • Increasing culturally and linguistically competent mental health professionals.

• MH professionals embedded in community: schools, places of worship, community centers, medical providers.
For the MH professional:

Importance of Self-care & community care

- Trauma work
- Vicarious trauma