

PANDEMIC, POLITICS AND THE FUTURE: Tackling Immigrant Anxiety and Trauma

WEBINAR TOOLKIT
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What contributes to immigrant trauma?

Large-scale shifts in immigration policy have a chilling effect

- Policy changes targeting certain immigrants are prompting many more immigrants to disenroll from vital public programs for which they are eligible, fearing immigration consequences. These policies and their chilling effects are creating **large-scale trauma**.
- Policy changes include increased immigration enforcement, family separation, attempts to remove protections like DACA and TPS, and reduced access to health, nutrition and public benefit programs due to changes like the “public charge” rule.

Inequalities have been compounded by COVID-19

- The pandemic has added to this trauma and **exacerbated existing inequalities** like lower wages, lack of access to social safety nets and discrimination against immigrants.
- Immigrants are overrepresented in essential industries and in industries that were hardest hit by the pandemic. They have been among the most severely impacted in terms of physical/mental health and unemployment and largely left out of the federal stimulus response.

What can we do?

All Americans have a vital role to play

- COVID-19 has magnified existing problems with entire systems of healthcare and assistance access, so we must **look at immigrant mental health with a broad lens**.
- Immigrant- and refugee-serving organizations must build coalitions and work with mental health providers, child care advocates and others at the local and state levels to address these issues.
- Immigrants are part of our communities, so community care (building up community-based support systems to improve overall well-being) is a big part of the solution.

Trauma care is a marathon, not a sprint

- Establish trusting relationships, learn about others’ cultures while examining your own beliefs and identity, and be willing to listen and learn from those in your care. Immigrants are diverse, so work to **understand the individual context**.
- Normalize and make more time to talk about mental health, especially with students and children, so you can identify their needs.
- Self-care and community care are vital for both clients and providers.

Where to go next

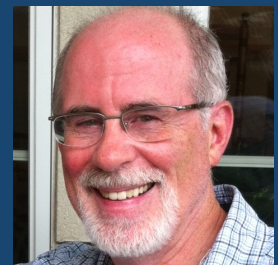
- The Immigrant Learning Center has compiled [COVID-19 resources](#) for immigrants, parents and educators.
- To learn more about children’s emotional and mental health, see this [blog for educators and parents](#).
- Providers and families can access [mental health resources here](#).
- Find free services for immigrants and refugees from local chapters of [Catholic Charities](#) and [Lutheran Services](#) as well as your local libraries and city halls.



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