

Immigration, Mental Health, and Resilience

Why are we discussing Immigration?

There is a profound trauma and grief inflicting harm and loss upon our communities.

Despite experiencing various forms of discrimination, communities can heal, resist, and thrive by tapping into their collective strengths, community resources, and cultural practices.



Trauma and Stressors

Immigrants may face negative experiences before, during, or after their migration that add to the traumatic events that pushed them to leave their native country.

Pre-Migration

Economic problems, lack of success, fleeing from danger, poverty, governmental cruelty, extortions or catastrophes

Migration

Violence, environmental dangers, neglect/separation, observing death

Post-Migration

Limited resources given their status, intra- and interpersonal conflict, stress from adjusting to new environment, exploitation, fear of deportation



Understanding Trauma

Trauma, at its core, is a deeply harmful and potential life-threatening experience that leaves lasting negative effects on a person's well-being.

Factors that Influence the Trauma Experience

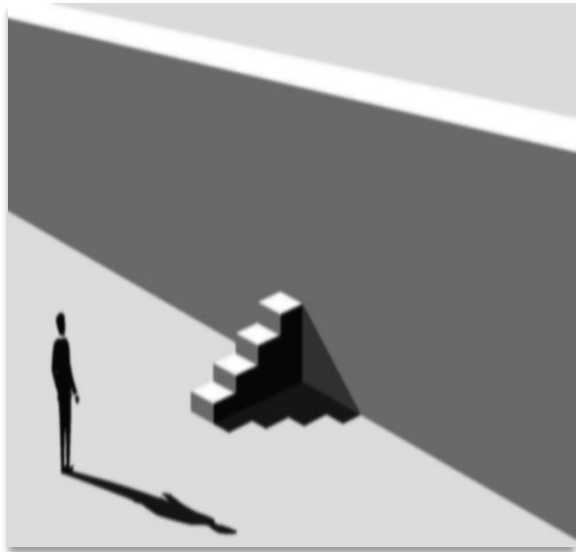
Trauma is experienced differently by each person, influenced by both their **surrounding environment** and their **unique personal characteristics**. These factors determine the individual's specific response and each can affect the individual differently.

Acculturation and Stress

➔ Acculturation refers to how immigrants adopt and retain aspects of the host and heritage cultures.

➔ Immigrants find acculturation stressful due to its many challenges. Key stressors associated with acculturation include:

- ✘ Language barriers
- ✘ Family dynamics
- ✘ Cultural differences



Barriers to Mental Health Services

✓ Cultural Barriers:

- Stigma
- Cultural Beliefs
- Distrust in health systems

✓ Linguistic Barriers:

- Language proficiency
- Availability of interpretation

✓ Structural Barriers:

- Lack of Insurance
- Financial Constraints
- Limited Access to Services
- Legal Status
- Lack of Awareness of Services

Practical Ways to Decrease Stress and Anxiety

► Breathing exercises

Try It! Inhale deep and slowly for 5 seconds; exhale completely for 5 seconds. Repeat 4 times or as many times you need

► Grounding exercises

Try It! Notice 3 things that you see, hear, smell, taste, and feel

► Journaling

Try It! Prompt: How am I feeling right now? What do I need in this moment?

► Healing with nature (Meditation)

Try It! Choose an outdoor place to walk for about 10-20 minutes (your neighborhood/local park). Take deep breaths, and notice nature around.