

Mental Health Stigma and Engaging Students and Families of Color

In order to begin supporting students of color, school staff need to start with recognition that the systems we live in are fundamentally inequitable, but the solution isn't about equity, where all students are educated in the same way. Instead, school staff should leverage **culturally relevant pedagogy**.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Three Pillars of Support

Academic Success

Facilitating intellectual growth among students as a result of their classroom learning experiences.

Cultural Competence

Helping students recognize and celebrate their own culture while gaining knowledge and appreciation for those of others.

Sociopolitical Consciousness

Demonstrating how classroom knowledge and skills can be applied to identify and solve real-life problems.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally Relevant Pedagogy 2.0: a.k.a. the Remix. Harvard Educational Review, 84, 74-84.



Mental Health Stigma (MHS)

Mental Health Stigma (MHS) is a set of **beliefs** or **negative attitudes** about mental illness that can cause the **public to stereotype** or **reject** those living with mental illness.



Impact of Mental Health Stigma in Schools



Lack of Self-Efficacy



Resistance to Seeking Mental Health Support



Bullying & Harassment



Subtle Discrimination

The Role of Schools in Addressing Mental Health

Increasing Mental Health Awareness

Providing SEL Programs for Students & Teachers

Normalizing Talk About Mental Health Issues

Develop Student and Family Resources

Promoting a Healthy School Environment

Providing Teacher Training to Recognize MH Warning Signs

Addressing Mental Health Stigma



School staff can begin by serving as partners and allies of minority families and children. Addressing Mental Health Stigma in minority communities requires intentionally partnering with families and communities.

Partnership Begins With:

Approaching families humbly and removing bias

Actively listening to understand

Developing cultural competency skills

Intentionally Partnering To:

Raise awareness of MH disparities within these communities

Create safe spaces for conversations

Provide access to educational resources & MH providers in the community



Strategies to Engage with Minority Students and Families

Engaging students and families is more than just inviting them to the table for a conversation. Make the commitment to create sustainable ongoing, open door policy, conversations that demonstrate respect and value the voices of the families and children.

Gain a more in-depth understanding of the barriers that prevent minority families from connecting

Take the time to learn about the community, connecting with leaders to bridge the gap

Navigate cultural differences by demonstrating sensitivity

Develop awareness regarding your own bias, beliefs, cultural norms, and values

Why Minority Families May Be Hesitant to Engage with Mental Health Providers and School Staff



Additional Resources

- [What is Children's Mental Health? \(CDC\)](#)
- [Mental Health in Schools \(AAP\)](#)
- [Mental Health of Children and Parents \(CDC\)](#)
- [The National Center for School Mental Health](#)
- [Addressing the Mental Health Needs of Racial and Ethnic Minority Youth](#)
- [Mental Health In Black Communities \(NAMI\)](#)
- [BIPOC Mental Health Fact Sheet](#)
- [Strategies for Outreach and Engaging Communities of Color \(SAMHSA\)](#)
- [School Based Mental Health](#)
- [Impact of Family Engagement](#)