

**“Trauma in Immigrant & Refugee Communities”**  
**Bold Idea Webinar Notes**  
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- Trauma for Immigrants: Immigrants are prone to experience trauma through violence, torture, rape, and threats before, during, and after migration process.
- Legal Trauma:
  - Immigration Laws are Civil not Criminal: Immigrants (in immigration courts) don't have the same rights as they would in criminal cases.
  - Legal Representation: only 37% of all immigrants have legal representation
  - Children: Immigrant children are underrepresented by legal counsel in courts while making life changing decisions.
- Trauma in Children: Many are less likely to seek psychological support because of a lack of resources and a stigma in culture.
  - Damage of Toxic Stress – Toxic stress damages growth hormones, brain development, and immune system development among other negative effects.
- Suggestions for Change:
  - Need for legal Representation, and psychological/condition expert – Physicians for Human Rights
  - Develop a plan in case of deportation and look for signs of psychological symptoms in children. More information can be found in Appleseed Network's Deportation Manual.

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- Pre-migration Context: poverty, education, war, persecution, separation from family and friends are some reasons for migration.
- Post-Migration Context: There's a sense of optimism with some disillusion. Immigration policy change on DACA and travel bans have caused concern among immigrants.
  - Recognized Language Shift of Immigrants – “Criminals,” “Rapists,” “Threatening,” “Domestic Terrorists,” etc.
  - Acculturative Stress – Events, discrimination, and uncertainty of immigration policy are linked to an increase in psychological problems.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> generation immigrants tend to experience less psychological distress than 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrants.
- Recommendations:
  - More safe spaces within and outside of school and work for a safe dialogue.
  - Trainings for educators/clinicians on the impact of stress in immigrant/refugee communities.
  - Increase access for support in schools/work communities.
  - Address barriers and stigmas in communities on mental health.
  - Engage in advocacy and activism