



Psychological First Aid: Supportive Strategies for School Staff on how to Address Immigration Matters

Recent immigration news on deportations has triggered many strong emotions for staff, students, families and community members throughout the District and across the nation. As school personnel, we each play a critical role in promoting a sense of safety and healing the divisiveness that may permeate our schools and communities. For many students and families, the recent news results may provoke feelings of concern, fear, anger, and sadness. There are strategies you can implement on a daily basis to ensure students are heard and feel protected during these uncertain times.



LISTEN to what they say and how they act.

- Ask students how they are feeling in school or in the community about the news of the deportations.
- Provide a designated time for open dialogue with ground rules for listening to one another and being respectful.
- Pay attention to any behavioral changes in students; often students demonstrate their emotions in nonverbal ways.
- Tell students that you want to know if they are ever insulted, put-down, harassed, or bullied at school due to their race, ethnic, sexual orientation, or religious beliefs.



PROTECT by maintaining structure, stability, and consistency.

- Remind students that they are safe in school and they are safe in your classroom.
- Be aware that alternatively, when student's loved ones are also threatened, students may not feel safe. This sense of perceived danger can be alleviated by offering students an environment in the classroom that provides comfort, stability, and predictability.
- Some ways to protect students are to: monitor conversations that may trigger fear or anxiety; encourage parents/caregivers and students to limit use of technology, social media, and television that may incite fears; and provide accurate and age-appropriate information.
- If a student says that they have experienced or witnessed any incident of harassment or bullying, believe them and report the incident immediately.
- Develop a safety plan, if necessary.



CONNECT through interaction, activities, and resources.

- A positive relationship with a healthy adult at home and at school is one of the most important factors that helps build an individual's resilience. Having a sense that students and adults care about each other, individually and collectively, contributes to their social-emotional well-being, as well as their academic success.
- Check-in with students regularly.
- Become familiar with the school and community resources available to support your students.

Mental Health (MH) and Wellness Centers



North

Valley MH Center

6651A Balboa Blvd., Van Nuys 91406
Tel: 818-758-2300

West

Crenshaw MH and Wellness Center

3206 W. 50th St., Los Angeles 90043
Tel: 323-290-7737

Washington MH and Wellness Center

1555 West 110th St., Los Angeles 90043
Tel: 323-241-1909

South

97th Street MH Center

Barrett Elementary School
439 W. 97th St., Los Angeles 90003
Tel: 323-754-2856

San Pedro MH Center

704 West 8th St., San Pedro 90731
Tel: 310-832-7545

Locke MH and Wellness Center

316 111th St., Los Angeles 90061
Tel: 323-418-1055

Carson MH and Wellness Center

270 East 223rd St., Carson 90745
Tel: 310-847-7216

East

Bell/Cudahy MH Center

Ellen Ochoa Learning Center
7326 S. Wilcox, Cudahy 90201
Tel: 323-869-1352

Ramona MH Center

231 S. Alma Ave., Los Angeles 90063
Tel: 323-266-7615

Gage MH and Wellness Center

2880 E. Gage Ave., Huntington Park 90255
Tel: 323-826-1520

Elizabeth LC MH and Wellness Center

4811 Elizabeth St., Cudahy 90201
Tel: 323-271-3650

Central

Belmont MH and Wellness Center

180 Union Place, Los Angeles 90026
Tel: 213-241-4451

Roybal MH Center

1200 West Colton St., Los Angeles 90026
Tel: 213-580-6415

**For clinic referrals visit:
smh.lausd.net**

**School Mental Health
(213) 241-3841**

MODEL calm and optimistic behavior.



- It is important that as school staff we use this as an opportunity to model what it looks like to hear one another's views in a calm, optimistic manner, while respecting differing opinions.
- Pay attention to your thoughts, feelings, and reactions regarding reports of deportations. Students take their cues from the adults they are with; pay attention to adult conversations happening in the presence of students.
- Model healthy behaviors/responses by remaining calm, courteous, and helpful.
- Acknowledge that recent political developments may leave many feeling vulnerable and overwhelmed. The uncertainty may create feelings of desperation and hopelessness for the future. As school staff, it is important that we maintain calm and express optimism for the future. Allowing students to express themselves and feel empowered in their lives and the decisions they make are important, as well as communicating high expectations for their academic success and well-being.
- Practice self-care, which includes getting help when needed, making sure to get enough sleep, eating healthy, and maintaining an exercise regimen.

TEACH about normal changes that can occur when feeling nervous or upset.



- Each student will have a unique reaction to the same situation.
- Teach students that speaking up and asking for help is a source of strength. It is important for students to develop and utilize their skills to overcome difficult situations by engaging in help-seeking behavior.
- It is crucial that students understand that "if something unpredictable happens, I can count on my family and school to support and help me heal."
- Ask students to identify one adult at their school that they can ask for help if they experience harassment or bullying.

