

KAHF post – Caring for racial minority youth

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You are seeing a 17-yr. old Hispanic male adolescent to follow up on his medication. The patient has been diagnosed with a mood disorder and is currently in therapy. The patient reports he is compliant with his medication regimen and expressed concerns about worsening anxiety over the last few weeks. Their landlord gave them an eviction notice because they were unable to pay rent for the last 3 months. His mother lost her job due to the COVID pandemic and his mother has been trying to seek help. The patient states that “no one will help us; it is everywhere that the government doesn’t want us”. “I know that my family will have to figure this out alone. I cannot trust anyone. I don’t have extended family or friend support.” He states that he is struggling with sleep: coping skills don’t work!

How will you respond to his concerns?

- A. Renew his prescription and recommend follow up with his counselor
- B. Provide resources that could help address eviction notice from the landlord
- C. Acknowledge and validate his feelings; engage in non- judgmental conversation to allow him to share his experiences.
- D. All of the above

Answer: D

[Racism](#) exerts a profound impact on the youth’s identity development. Chronic intergenerational stress due to institutional or structural, personal mediated, or internalized racism impacts their health and well-being. Research has linked the [impact of racism](#) on birth disparities and mental health conditions in children and adolescents. Racism is thus considered an [expanded adverse childhood event](#) and a social determinant of health. The youth of color including immigrants continue to face oppression, discrimination, and traumatic experiences in schools and communities. Recently, there has been an increase in nationalism and racially motivated events globally. Adolescents are exposed to various [acts of intolerance online](#) affecting their mental health.

There are demographic shifts and growing diversity in our society. According to the [PEW research center](#), Generation Z (Postmillennial generation) that currently represents children and adolescents aged 6-20year, is the most racially and ethnically diverse generation. Hence, there is a need to provide culturally competent and trauma-sensitive care to our children and adolescents.

When providing care to racial minority adolescent, it is important to recognize one’s [implicit racial bias](#) and self- reflect on one’s view on racism. Providers should also refrain from assumptions around adolescent’s negative life experiences and allow for more open-ended conversations focusing on their strengths, coping strategies, and resilience. When initiating conversation, providers can explore youth’s self-identification, their experience around racial diversity in school, or exposure to current events. Providers can assess adolescents for experiences related to discrimination such as bullying, violence, housing problems, family separation etc. They can also screen them for mental health conditions such as depression, PTSD, grief, anxiety and refer to trauma informed behavioral services.

Racial- ethnic socialization helps adolescents develop a sense of group belonging and pride related to race and heritage. It can mitigate exposure to racial discrimination and help them develop coping

strategies. Providers can help identify strengths and protective factors such as supportive network and utilize “[Raising resisters](#)” approach to counsel and guide adolescents. This approach helps adolescent recognize racism, learn to safely oppose racist messages and behaviors and replace them with positive experiences.

Additional resources: -

- [Addressing Racism with Youth of Color](#)
- [Infographic: Systemic Racism is a Public Health Crisis](#)
- [Talking to Children about Racism: The Time is Now](#)
- [The Influence of Implicit Bias on Treatment Recommendations for 4 Common Pediatric Conditions](#)