

Caring for Minds and Hearts: Supporting Mental Health Amid Violence and Uncertainty

In the wake of the tragic November 26th attack on National Guard members, many forcibly displaced communities are navigating heightened xenophobia, hostile rhetoric, and deep uncertainty. These stressors can profoundly affect mental health. For children, youth, and adults, harmful narratives and sudden policy shifts can amplify feelings of sadness, hopelessness, loneliness, fear, and grief. They may also lead to behavioral changes, such as withdrawal, isolation, difficulty concentrating, or disruptions in daily routines. Over time, these experiences can erode a person's sense of safety, self-worth, and trust in their surroundings.

Recent acts of violence and hate—such as the gun violence at Brown University and antisemitic attacks in Australia—underscore a broader climate of instability and intolerance. While these events may not directly target forcibly displaced people, they contribute to an atmosphere of fear and insecurity that affects all communities, especially those already vulnerable. Exposure to such news can heighten anxiety, retraumatize individuals with past experiences of violence, and deepen feelings of isolation.

During times like these, it is vital to create spaces where communities feel welcomed, supported, and connected. Just as important is offering care that reinforces dignity, autonomy, and agency—even amid instability. Below you will find resources that affirm and celebrate the strengths, histories, and contributions of immigrants, refugees, and others who have experienced forced displacement. These materials also offer practical guidance to help families prepare for and respond to hate-based incidents, navigate difficult conversations, and cope during periods of heightened uncertainty.

As always, we stand in solidarity - with compassion and commitment - so that every child and family can sustain a sense of belonging, safety, and community.

Recommended Children's Books for Various Communities Navigating Xenophobia:

- ❖ [Little Justice Leaders](#); Including this curated booklist [here](#)
- ❖ [Colorín Colorado](#); Curated, bilingual booklists for kids and teens, organized by topics
- ❖ [MaiStoryBook](#)
 - [Picture Book List to Affirm Immigrants/Refugees](#); Full list on [Amazon](#) and [Bookshop](#)
 - [Countering Racist Rants: A Somali Chapter Book Series to Affirm Somali Children](#); Full list on [Amazon](#) and [Bookshop](#)
 - Other notable themed book collections can be found on the:
 - [MaiStoryBook Bookshop](#) with collections such as *"Everyone is Welcome Picture Books," "Honor the Immigrant Experience"*
 - MaiStoryBook Website [Themed Book Collections](#) such as *"Honor ALL Languages and Literacy Skills with these Bilingual Picture Books"*

- [MaiStoryBook Amazon Library](#) with collections such as *[“Diverse & Inclusive Children’s Books Collections”](#)*

Additional Recommended Resources:

- ❖ IRC [Important Updates & Resources](#), including “Managing your Digital Footprint,” “Staying Safe Against Hate,” “Supporting Children and Youth Impacted by Hate”
- ❖ [Talking to Kids About Immigration Enforcement in Their Communities](#)
- ❖ [Talking with your Children about Islamophobia and Hate-Based Violence](#)
- ❖ [Talking to Children about Hate Crimes and Antisemitism](#)
- ❖ [Age-Related Reactions to a Traumatic Event](#); Infographic can be found [here](#)
- ❖ [Talking to Children When Scary Things Happen](#)
- ❖ [Coping After Mass Violence](#)
- ❖ [We Have Rights](#): Watch Videos on How to Safely Defend Your Rights
- ❖ [Know Your Rights](#), Multilingual Card; This card explains that you are exercising your Constitutional rights
- ❖ [Helping Families Navigate Uncertainty: Resources for Planned or Unexpected Departures from the United States](#)
- ❖ [Boston Children's Hospital: Coping During Uncertainty](#)
- ❖ [When Children Are Afraid of a Parent’s Deportation](#)