

Supporting Immigrant Students' Mental Health in Schools and Communities

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Immigrant Youth's Socio-Cultural Experiences in the U.S.

- Varies by English language proficiency, documentation status, community of settlement, S.E.S., familial & social support, etc.
- All report higher levels of discrimination, shift on ethnic identity, acculturative stress, and low sense of belonging (Castro-Olivo et al., 2014).
- Children report:
 - Lower levels of school belonging
 - Higher levels of bullying victimization
 - Lower levels of support from teachers
 - Lower hope for academic attainments
 - Lower rates of mental health service use(Blanco-Vega et al, 2008).
- Children who live with one parent, or in a community with individuals with undocumented status, report:
 - Higher levels of trauma
 - High levels of depression and anxiety. (Cervantes et al., 2018)



Risk Factors

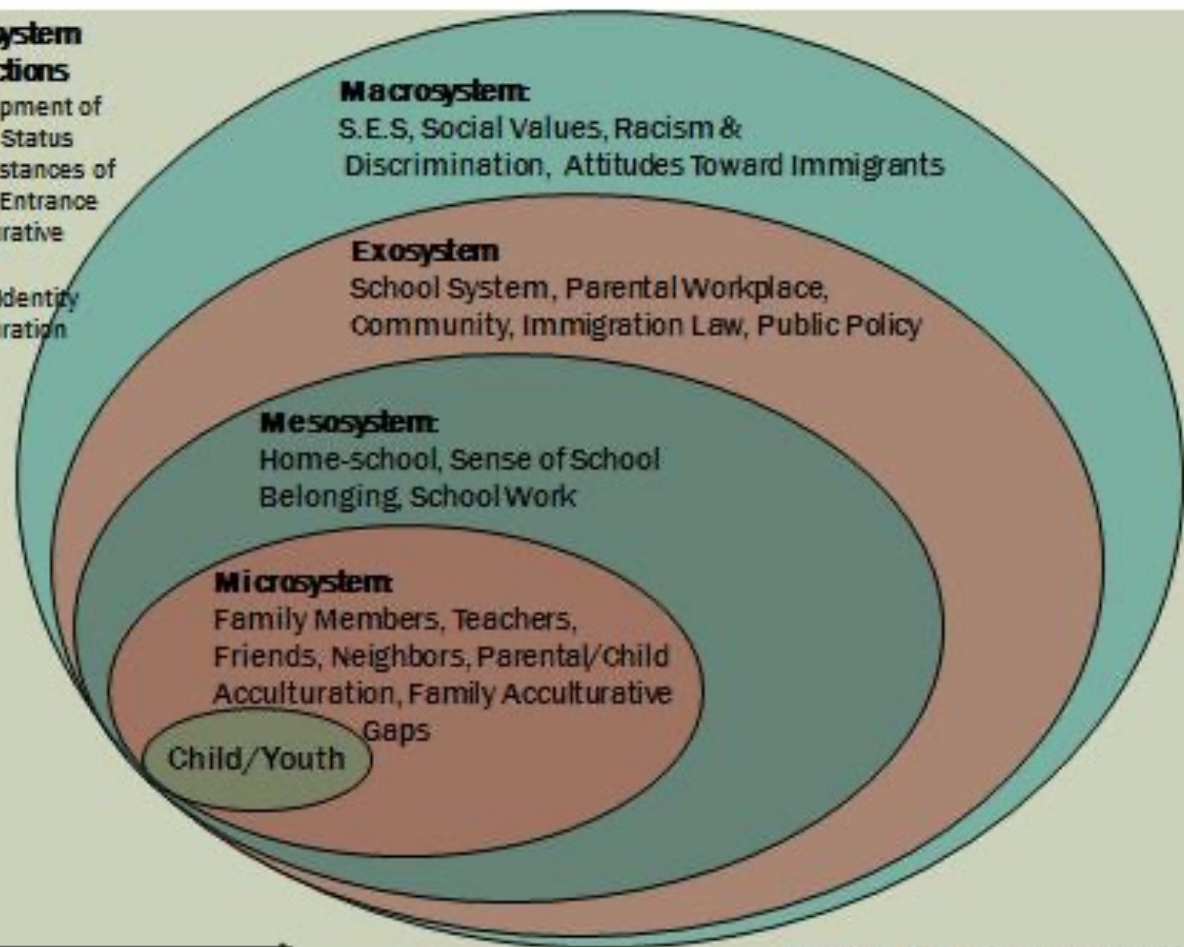
- Low S.E.S.
- Perceived discrimination
- Social victimization and persecution
 - Language Barriers
- Loneliness related to leaving their friends and family
 - Parental economic and social-emotional stress
 - Rarely seek mental health services
 - Higher Levels of Acculturative Stress
 - Low Sense of School Belonging

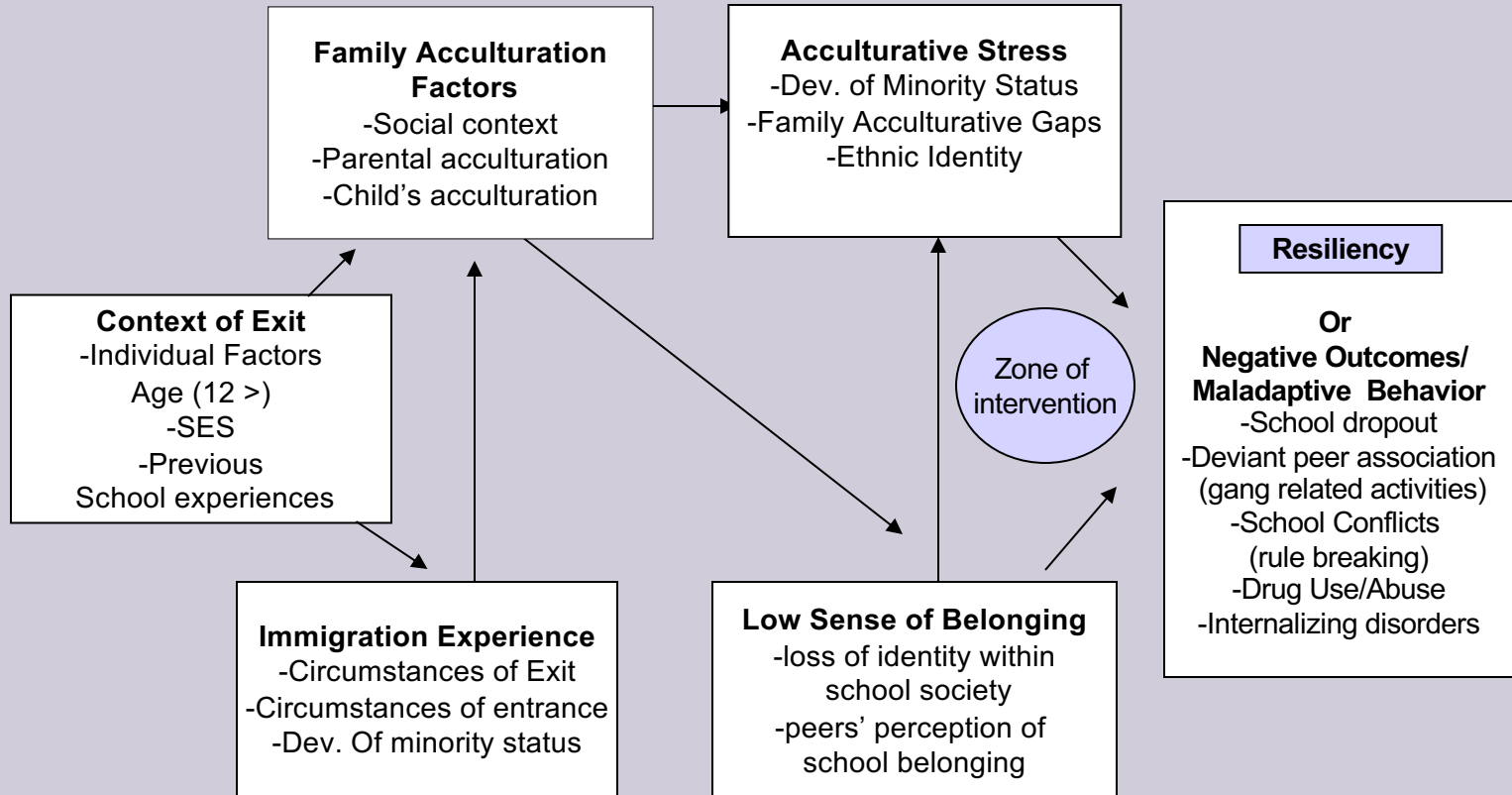
Protective Factors

- Immigrant paradox/**Resiliency**
 - Familismo
 - Respeto- SEL skills
 - Value on Relationships (Collectivism)

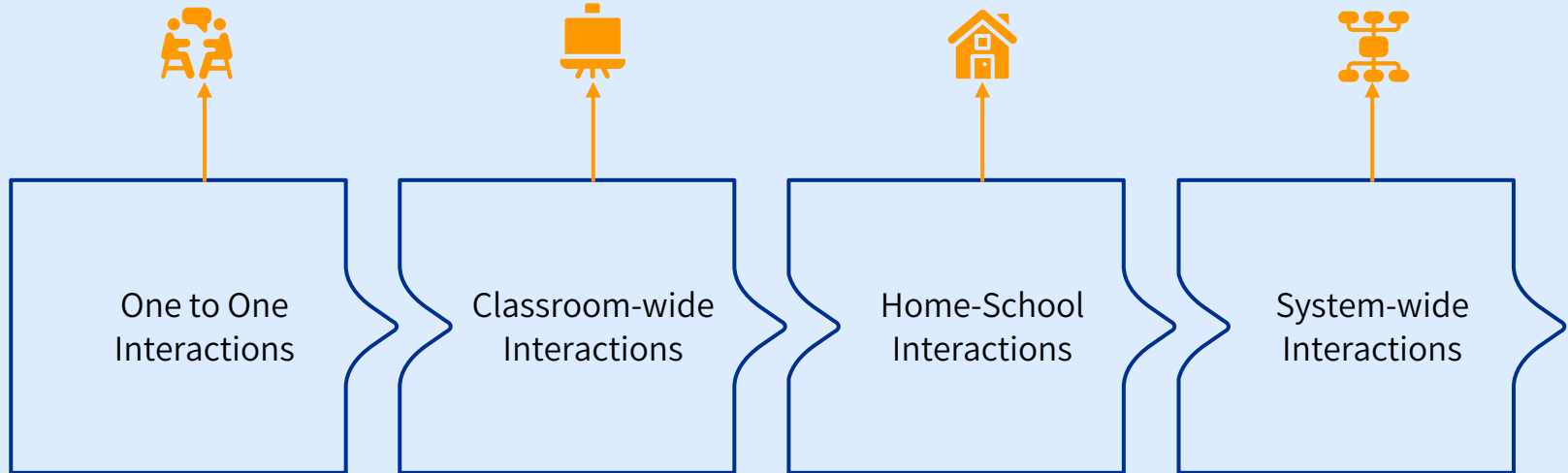
Multi-system Interactions

- Development of Minority Status
- Circumstances of Exit and Entrance
- Acculturative Stress
- Ethnic Identity
- Acculturation





Promoting Resiliency





01

Supports at the
one –to – one
level

We can all do something to support immigrant youth!

- Help students be more aware and accepting of their **own** emotions
- Help students **recognize** thinking errors
- Help students **reframe** thinking errors
- **Normalize** acculturative stress, acculturation gap, and promote tolerance
- Work closely with **parents to help families cope with acculturation gaps**
- **Refer** students to culturally responsive mental health providers
- Educate **other educators** about the challenges immigrant are facing





02

Supports at the classroom level

Jovenes Fuertes Curriculum

Lessons

1. Strong Latino Roots
2. Understanding Your Feelings part I
3. Understanding Your Feelings part II
4. Dealing with Anger
5. Understanding Other people's feelings
6. Clear thinking part I
7. Clear thinking part II
8. Positive Thinking
9. Solving People's Problems
10. Letting go of Stress
11. Goal Setting
12. Wrap up

Skill Focus

1. Program overview & behavior expectations
2. Emotional Literacy
3. Emotional Variability
4. Anger Management
5. Empathy Training
6. Learning to recognize thinking errors
7. Cognitive restructuring/reframing
8. Optimism training
9. Conflict resolution
10. Mindfulness training
11. Learning to achieve goals
12. Program review

Cultural Adaptation

1. Strengthening ethnic Identity
2. Normalize emotions related to immigration stress
3. Dealing with anger triggered by discrimination
4. Learning to cope with familiar acculturation gaps
5. Coping with Immigrant related Stress (ImRS)
6. Examples related to ImRS
7. Examples related to ImRS
8. Examples related to ImRS and letting go of acculturative stress
9. Examples related to ImRS
10. Review how to use skill to cope with ImRS

Common Thinking Errors

Binocular vision: looking at things in a way that makes them seem bigger or smaller than they really are.



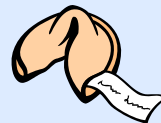
Black-and-white thinking: looking at things in only extreme or opposite ways. For example, thinking of things as being *good or bad, never or always, all or none*.



Dark glasses: thinking about only the negative parts of things.



Fortune-telling: making predictions about what will happen in the future without enough evidence.



Making it personal: blaming yourself for things that are not your fault.



Blame game: blaming others for things you should take responsibility for.





3

Working with Parents

F.U.E.R.S.A.S.

Parent Component

1. Introductions and Overview of the US school system
2. Immigrant Families: Navigating multiple cultures
3. SEL Skills I: Self and social-awareness
4. SEL Skills II: Positive thinking/ Cognitive restructuring
5. SEL Skills II: Problem Solving
6. Establishing academic success from home: Involvement and Supervision



4



Working with Systems

System-Wide Supports

- Secure administrator support
- Create a strong multidisciplinary team
- Identify community resources
- Screen for Mental Health Needs
- Teach SEL vocabulary and competencies
- Promote mental health literacy in youth and parents
- Learn about common signs/behaviors related to mental health challenges
- Remind children of their **resilience** and dreams!
- Remind adults that every child deserve to dream and a future with the “better life” their parents hoped for....



References/Recommended Readings

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THANKS!

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