



You are Not Alone: Mental Health Resources for Marginalized Youth and Families

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 illinois childhood trauma coalition
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 ILLINOIS
BUSINESS
IMMIGRATION
COALITION

**Immigrant Mental
Health Coalition**

Speakers:

Co-Chairs of the IL Childhood Trauma Coalition's Ad-Hoc Committee on Refugee/Immigrant Children & Trauma



Rebecca Ford-Paz, PhD
Clinical Psychologist
Center for Childhood Resilience,
Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of
Chicago



Willis Francis, LCPC
Director of Clinical Services
Heartland Alliance

agenda

- Part I: Presentation of materials developed to help youth cope with distress resulting from political events and rhetoric
- Part II: Open Forum - sharing of resource, ideas, and offering strategic support

Response to the Presidential Election

- Marginalized children and youth are experiencing significant distress
 - There has been a dramatic increase in the number of hotline calls
 - College and community counseling centers are being flooded with calls for support
 - Schools are reporting instances of:
 - Hate speech
 - Racist vandalism
 - Students not returning to school since the election
 - Having to cancel classes due to safety concerns.

Youth from Marginalized Groups

- Refugee and immigrant children
 - Centrality of family
 - Fleeing dangerous circumstances in their countries of origin
 - Threat of separation from family and return to life-threatening environment creates panic, hopelessness, and helplessness
- LGBTQ youth
 - Feared loss of civil rights and recent increased social acceptance
- Children of same-gender couples
 - Fear about dissolution of parents' marriage and subsequent loss of guardianship



Most Vulnerable Children

- Visible minorities
 - Gender non-conforming youth
 - Refugee/immigrant children and adolescents
 - Recipients of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) or “dreamers”
 - Those whose family members also may be undocumented and experiencing the same distress
 - Those exposed to others’ suicidal behavior
- And those with pre-existing risk factors for suicidal behavior, such as:
 - Depression and anxiety disorders
 - Prior suicide attempts or non-suicidal self-injurious behaviors
 - Substance use
 - Impulsive aggressive behavior
 - Socially withdrawn/isolated

IMPORTANT STEPS ADULTS CAN TAKE TO SUPPORT YOUTH



1. Model positive coping and stay calm.
2. Ensure and promote safety.
3. Connect with social support and decrease a sense of isolation
4. Raise awareness of organized support for refugee/immigrant rights.
5. Promote healthy coping
6. Familiarize yourself with signs of distress and potential signs of suicidality
7. Link with available services

Model positive coping and stay calm

- Communicate with your words and your behavior that you will keep them safe.
 - Remind children:



Adults around you
will protect you.

Ensure and promote safety.

- Reach out to authorities and leaders who can help hold individuals accountable for promoting hatred
 - Calling 911
 - Alternatives to calling 911
 - Council on American Islamic Relations
 - Alderman
 - Clergy person
 - Refugee/immigrant serving agency
- Identify safe spaces and safe adults who can speak up on their behalf



Raise awareness of organized support for refugee/immigrant/LGBTQ rights.

- Inform children that there are organizations who will safeguard their rights.
 - Increasing their sense of control and influence over their environment and their future promotes hope.
 - Donate
 - Volunteer
 - Get involved!
- Avoid dismissing or challenging a young person's fears that prejudice will harm them.
 - Reassure them that there are people and organizations who will help.
- Help youth attend groups that are supportive of their identity

Promote Healthy Coping

- Keeping family and school routines
- Limiting media use to avoid repetitive images and messages that remind them of bad events.
- Relaxation practice
- Talking and spending time with family, friends, or faith communities
- Distraction
- Using humor
- Scheduling pleasant activities
- Exercising
- Writing in a journal
- Being creative or artistic
- Avoiding substance use and isolation



Familiarize yourself with signs of distress and signs of potential suicidality

- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Dramatic mood change
- Threatening to kill him/herself
- Talking, thinking, or writing about death or suicide
- Feeling hopeless or helpless
- Unusually reckless behaviors
- Giving away prized possessions





Link with available services

- Resource list to link youth, families, and professionals with crisis intervention information and providers who can offer support
- List of civil and human rights organizations in which people can become involved
- Resource Lists available online:
 - Center for Childhood Resilience <https://www.luriechildrens.org/en-us/care-services/specialties-services/center-childhood-resilience/Pages/media.aspx>
 - Kennedy Forum <https://www.thekennedyforum.org/resources>



Crisis Resources

- CARES Crisis Line, SASS Services – Illinois crisis mental health services program for children and adolescents
 - 1-800-345-9049 (voice), 773-523-4504 (TTY) and <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=64971>
- Crisis/Emergency Mental Health Providers across Illinois
 - <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30893>
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
 - 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

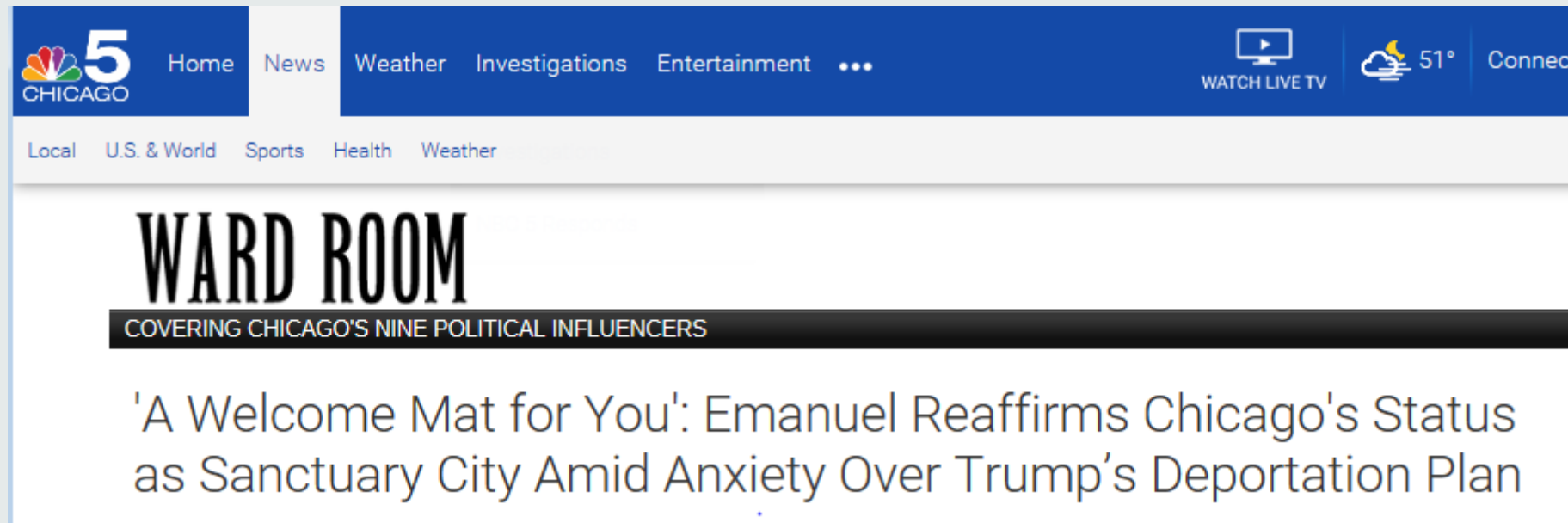
KEY WAYS ADULTS SHOULD COMFORT CHILDREN

- 1. Remind children that 'Adults around you will protect you.'**
- 2. Remind children we have a government system of checks and balances.**
 - There are democratic processes in local, state, and federal governments.
 - Lawmakers can use democratic processes to prevent individuals from making decisions alone.
- 3. Remind them there is still hope, and people will fight for them.**
 - The United States is a country of immigrants.
 - Our country is founded on the principles of freedom of religion.
 - Human and civil rights organizations will fight for individuals' rights and to prevent unlawful decisions.



Reassurance from the Mayor

- Chicago is and will remain a Sanctuary City
- “You are safe, you are secure, you are supported.”
 - Press conference, Nov 11, 2016



The image shows a screenshot of a news website. At the top, there is a blue navigation bar with the NBC 5 CHICAGO logo on the left, followed by menu items: Home, News, Weather, Investigations, and Entertainment. On the right side of the blue bar, there are icons for 'WATCH LIVE TV', a weather icon showing a sun and cloud with '51°', and a 'Connect' link. Below the blue bar is a white sub-navigation bar with links for Local, U.S. & World, Sports, Health, and Weather. The main content area features the title 'WARD ROOM' in large, bold, black letters, with a subtitle 'COVERING CHICAGO'S NINE POLITICAL INFLUENCERS' in smaller black letters on a dark background. Below this, the article title is displayed: "'A Welcome Mat for You': Emanuel Reaffirms Chicago's Status as Sanctuary City Amid Anxiety Over Trump's Deportation Plan".



HOPE AND ACTION



- You are not alone!
- You are part of what makes this country great!
- The fight is not over! *¡La lucha sigue!*
- There is still hope!
- There are ways for you to get involved!

OPEN FORUM: Moving from Ideas to Action

Resource Sharing and Questions & Answers



Panel of Experts

- Rebecca Ford-Paz, PhD & Willis Francis, LCPC – Co-Chairs of the IL Childhood Trauma Coalition’s Ad-hoc Committee of Refugee/Immigrant Children and Trauma
- Jennifer Leininger, MEd, & Claire Coyne, PhD, Lurie Children’s Gender and Sexual Development Program
- Mayra Chacón, MA & Virginia Quiñonez, PsyD from the Center for Latino/a Mental Health, The Chicago School of Professional Psychology
- Basia Ellis, PhD, University of Chicago, Department of Comparative Human Development
- Rebecca Shi, Executive Director from the Illinois Business Immigration Coalition
- Lawrence Benito, CEO/Executive Director from IL Coalition of Immigrant and Refugee Rights
- Maria Ferrera, PhD from DePaul University, Dept. of Social Work



Legal Resources

- Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) “Immigrants’ Rights FAQs” (English and Spanish)
 - http://www.maldef.org/news/releases/2016_11_14_Immigrant_Rights_FAQs_Under_A_Trump_Presidency/
- National Immigrant Justice Center: dedicated to ensuring human rights protections and access to justice for all immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers
 - <http://www.immigrantjustice.org/>
- Lambda Legal: mission is to achieve full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people, and those with HIV through impact litigation, education, and public policy work
 - <http://www.lambdalegal.org/issues/transgender-rights>



For more information:

- Center for Childhood Resilience at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago
 - www.childhoodresilience.org
 - ccr@luriechildrens.org
- IL Childhood Trauma Coalition www.lookthroughtheireyes.org
 - ICTC@luriechildrens.org
- The Center for Latina/o Mental Health at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology: www.thechicagoschool.edu
- IL Business Immigration Coalition
<http://www.illinoisbic.biz/Contact.aspx>