

Caring Across Communities:

*Addressing the Mental Health Needs of
Children of Immigrants and Refugees*

LAUSD – Bienestar Project

Los Angeles Unified School District
Los Angeles, CA



Problem:

Los Angeles is a traditional port of entry for immigrants of Mexican and Central American descent. The immigration experience has resulted in many Latino adolescents enduring loss and separation from family, and victimization of various kinds that result in post-traumatic stress as well as depressive symptoms and high dropout rates. Most young people are unable to obtain mental health care and academic performance in school is impacted.

Solution:

Provide students with access to short term intensive home and school-based services, individual therapy and case management. Also provide group treatment for 9th and 10th grade new immigrant students to reduce trauma-related mental health symptoms.

Program:

By providing culturally sensitive trauma-informed services to new immigrant students in the 9th and 10th grade at the Belmont High School zone, the Bienestar Project is reducing trauma symptoms and improving academic outcomes for new immigrant students. Bienestar also conducts staff training to increase awareness of the effects of trauma and improve referrals for mental health services.

Impact:

Students who have received services through the Bienestar program have shown improvement in attendance, English language and math skills. Students who participated in group treatment for trauma related symptoms reported an improvement in their symptoms.



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