

Caring Across Communities:

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

School-Based Mental Health: Building Cultural Connections and Competence

Minneapolis Public Schools
Minneapolis, MN



Problem:

Minneapolis Public Schools have identified significant untreated mental health problems among their Somali, Oromo, Liberian and Latino students. These problems – depression, anxiety, family conflict, school problems and cultural conflicts – are difficult to treat due to shortages of linguistically and culturally competent, accessible mental health services.

Solution:

Focusing on three elementary schools with large numbers of African and Latino immigrant and refugee students, provide culture-specific, school-based mental health supports including crisis intervention, screening, assessment, treatment, consultation and training of school staff.

Program:

Work with religious leaders to build trust in the community; locate linguistically and culturally accessible services in school and in the community; teach life skills to students, and reach out to families through parent nights, parent groups and home visits.

Impact:

Schools report a reduction in referrals to the office, disruptive school behavior, school suspensions and increase in academic performance and attendance by students who have received services.



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