



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUTH IN MARGINALIZED GROUPS

In addition to the challenges faced during the pandemic, recent racial injustices have emphasized the inequities in our society. In Virginia's schools, we strive for all students to receive an equitable learning experience where students feel safe and supported at school. However, we must recognize that inequities in our society extend to our school communities. Students within marginalized groups may experience school environments in which they do not feel safe or supported. Educators can help facilitate healthy relationships among ethnic minority and majority youth by teaching and modeling tolerance and appreciation for cultural differences.



DID YOU KNOW?

- A marginalized identity is one in which an individual feels or is, "underserved, disregarded, ostracized, harassed, persecuted, or sidelined in the community."
- Students living in marginalized communities may feel targeted or unsafe.
- Experiences of immigrant children may interfere with critical stages of intellectual, social, emotional and physical development.
- Black students are 3.2 times more likely than white students to be suspended or expelled from school.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) youth and those perceived as LGBTQ are at an increased risk of being bullied.
- Students living in poverty or low income, foster care, abusive homes, or are homeless may be lacking safety, connection with others, and food security.
- Implicit biases are the attitudes or stereotypes that affect individual's actions, understanding of events, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Once implicit biases are identified, they can be "unlearned."

Consequences of Educational Inequity

- Students from marginalized groups are particularly vulnerable to stressors and are at higher risk for trauma.
- Even when good intentioned, implicit biases may advantage some people while disadvantaging others.
- Long term consequences associated with racial discrimination include stress and anxiety, exclusion from groups, and low motivation in adulthood.
- There is a strong connection between high rates of suspension and expulsion and higher risk of poor school performance, school dropout, arrest, incarceration, and unemployment.

Educator Focused Strategies to Support Diversity and Equity

- Understand yourself and your own beliefs, biases, privileges, and responses, because this is an essential foundation for facilitating discussions with students.
- Get to know your own social emotional learning strengths and weaknesses and consider building skills in the areas that may need extra attention.
- Be authentic and respectful with your students. It is natural to worry whether you are saying "the right thing."
- Offer empathy and understanding to students who express distrust and distress, as these emotions are key to acknowledging the past hurt. Validate and honor students' experiences and emotions rather than trying to convince them that they no longer have a rational reason to feel that way. Avoid telling them that their past experiences should not affect their current beliefs.
- Educators can promote inclusivity by creating environments where students can openly discuss thoughts and feelings about privilege and structural oppression.
- Create developmentally appropriate and welcoming environments that impart messages of inclusion and diversity to children and their caregivers.

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT THE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELLNESS NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS

- Help students by being aware and informed of the various sub-groups students can represent.
- Focus on individual student strengths, and promote a sense of belonging for all students.
- Host “Get to Know You Sessions.” Similar to show-and-tell, these classroom sessions allow students to get up in front of the class to introduce their classmates to something new, or to simply share what makes them unique or special.
- Engage families as partners to build student and classroom awareness of differences.
- Role-playing activities may be a way to help students gain cultural awareness.
- Teach and model empathy and active listening skills.
- Provide a space for children to discuss how a particular aspect of the instruction made them feel.
- Give children choices. Often traumatic events involve loss of control and/or chaos, so you can help children feel safe by providing them with some choices or control when appropriate.
- Consider that changes in behavior and mood might be the result of exposure to stressors, including instances of racial trauma affecting the child’s family.
- Establish safe and confidential reporting mechanisms for bullying incidents and clear procedures for investigation and response.
- Provide a physical space where children know they can go to feel safe and express emotions.

How can I recognize and address my own implicit biases?

How can I create an inclusive learning environment?

How can I support students that may be in marginalized groups?

How can I connect and build relationships with my students?

What resources or supports are available to cope in challenging times?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS OF YOUTH IN MARGINALIZED GROUPS

How can I promote racial equality in my school/classroom?

IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE



The mental health of students is intimately and inseparably linked to the well-being of their parents, guardians, and teachers. Implementing your own self-care strategies and providing parents/guardians with tools to do the same is a critical component to safeguarding the mental health of all students. Stress is natural and inevitable during crisis situations such as this. Caring for students in distress or with additional needs can take a toll on educators. It is essential that educators practice self-awareness and recognize changes in behavior, work, and life outside of work to prevent compassion fatigue.

YOUTH IN MARGINALIZED GROUPS WELLNESS CONTROL PANEL

UNDERSTANDING IMPLICIT BIAS

- [UNDERSTANDING IMPLICIT BIAS](#)
- [Podcast: Understanding Implicit Bias in Education](#)
- [Implicit Bias: A Foundation for School Psychologists](#)
- [Addressing Race and Racism in Your School Community](#)
- [Supporting Marginalized Students in Stressful Times](#)
- [Project Hope: Supporting Homeless and Foster Care Students](#)

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE EQUITY IN SCHOOLS

- [Re-Imagining Integration: Diverse and Equitable Schools](#)
- [Equality Virginia Hub for Virginia's LGBTQ](#)
- [Addressing Race and Trauma in the Classroom](#)
- [Toolkit for Demystifying the Mind](#)
- [Refugee Children in US Schools: A Toolkit](#)
- [Reflective Teaching Handout](#)

RESOURCES FOR SELF CARE

- [Self-Care for Student Support](#)
- [Self-Care Resources for Days](#)
- [Resources to Help Teachers](#)
- [Provider Self-Care](#)
- [When the World is Terrible](#)
- [Heal, Learn, and Listen](#)