

Resolution on U.S. Treatment of Refugees, Immigrants, and Asylum Seekers

An official statement from the Global Alliance on Behavioral Health and Social Justice (formerly the American Orthopsychiatric Association)

The Global Alliance embeds its work in principles of human rights, with an understanding that the protection of all people's rights is fundamental to behavioral health. In the past several years, a growing confluence of factors have created a mental health crisis among refugee, immigrant, and asylum-seeking populations who are in the United States or who are attempting to seek protection in this country. A rapidly increasing number of people around the world are being forcibly displaced by war, conflict, violence, and persecution (currently estimated at more than 68.5 million), resulting in spikes in migration from Central America, the Middle East, and Africa. At the same time, the United States has become increasingly hostile to newcomer populations, with numerous changes in policies and practices under the Trump administration that have fostered fear, uncertainty, family separation, and mistreatment, and resulted in the dismantling of humanitarian protections.



The Global Alliance is tremendously concerned about the new rule proposed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), seeking to prevent undocumented immigrants from receiving federal housing assistance. According to HUD's own analysis, this would evict more than 55 000 children who are in the U.S. legally. The unnecessary suffering of children, families and communities would be severe and could also result in potential spikes in homelessness, exacerbate housing affordability issues, and have other unintended consequences in cities with significant immigrant populations.

In keeping with our priorities and approach, the Global Alliance seeks to highlight and encourage the important role that individuals, communities, and organizations can play in promoting the mental health and wellbeing of newcomers through local mobilization and efforts to change policies at multiple levels. It is important to note that many local communities have come together to oppose recent detrimental policies and collectively support refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers in multiple ways. Furthermore, and consistent with the *2018 Lancet Commission on Global Mental Health and Sustainable Development*, the Global Alliance calls on United States lawmakers to return to humanitarian policies that positively impact the mental health of everyone including entire populations of refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers.

Relevant Articles in the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*

Buckingham, S.L. & Suarez-Pedraza, M.C. (2018). "It has cost me a lot to adapt to here": The divergence of real acculturation from ideal acculturation impacts Latinx immigrants psychosocial wellbeing. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ort0000329>

Miller, A., Hess, J.M., Bybee, D., & Goodkind, J.R. (2018). Understanding the mental health consequences of family separation for refugees: Implications for policy and practice. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 88(1), 26-37. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ort0000272>

Negi, N. J., Maskell, E., Goodman, M., Hooper, J., & Roberts, J. (2018). Providing social services in a new immigrant settlement city: A qualitative inquiry. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 88(1), 16-25. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ort0000276>

Brabeck, K. M., Lykes, M. B., & Hunter, C. (2014). The psychosocial impact of detention and deportation on U.S. migrant children and families. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 84(5), 496-505. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ort0000011>

Talwar, G., Sianko, N., Baugh, S. A., & Brodsky, A. E. (2012). Talking about immigration: Community voices on service, research, and policy needs. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 82(3), 431-436. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.2012.01172.x>

Additional Resources

National Child Traumatic Stress Network
<https://www.nctsn.org/search?query=immigration>

Refugees <https://www.bhjustice.org/refugees>

Migration Policy Institute
<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<https://www.unhcr.org/>

American Immigration Council:
<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/>

Immigrant Legal Resource Center:
<http://www.ilrc.org>

International Justice Resource Center:
<https://ijrcenter.org/>

Immigrant rights:
<http://wearecasa.org/resources/know-your-rights/>
(available in English and Spanish)

Family preparedness plan:
<https://www.ilrc.org/family-preparedness-plan>
(available in English and Spanish)

Immigrant child health toolkit from the American Academy of Pediatrics: <http://bit.ly/1JQOyyR>

How You Can Help

- Join our Refugee and Immigrant Task Force. Learn more at <http://www.bhjustice.org/refugee-immigrant-mh>
- Contact your government representatives.
- Learn more about your city and state's policies, and work for policy changes such as this example, <https://www.abqjournal.com/1312013/city-council-oks-250000-to-aid-asylum-seekers.html>, and share the news #thinkaboutpolicy.
- Educate yourself on the ways in which forcibly displaced people and a family's right to live together are protected by international human rights and humanitarian law.