

Challenges Immigrants Face in the United States

Samir Khalil

School of Social Work

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to explore and discuss the different challenges and supporting factors that immigrants have when assimilating and moving into American neighborhoods.

With the increase of immigrant populations within the United States, it is important to be able to understand the unique needs of immigrants be able to help them fit into their communities, and neighborhoods.

Psychological Factors

When people are forced to assimilate into new cultures and societies, there is a decrease in mental and physical wellbeing. However, when given the chance to choose the ways that they can integrate into society, immigrants report less stress and more security in their community (Buckingham & Suarez-Pedraza, 2018).

Studies have also shown that due to cultural norms, mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, are generally underreported in immigrant communities. However, the same cultural norms and values help to create resiliency within immigrant families and protect individuals (Roberts, Mann, & Montgomery, 2015).



Health Implications

Good health and proper health care are important to everyone and research on immigrants supports the correlation between physical health and assimilating to a new country.

One study showed that many immigrants are unaware of specific medical treatments that are available, nor do they know the benefits or consequences of these treatments (Nagler, Lueck, & Gray).

Even language barriers can have an effect of physical health of immigrants. In America, one study found that the less English spoken and understood in immigrant homes, the less safe and secure they felt in their neighborhood. Thus, decreasing the frequency of physical activity outside the home; increasing the chances of obesity and weight-related health complications (Lu, Donglan, Meijgaard, MacLeod, & Fielding, 2015).

A great program that has helped increased physical health in immigrants are community gardens which increase vegetable intake and physical exercise. These gardens also help immigrants to socialize with others more and become part of their neighborhood and community (Hartwig & Mason, 2016).



Community Development

Research has found that one of the best ways to help immigrants acculturate into society is by involving them in the larger community which then helps in creating positive connections and stronger bonds (Cuervo, Leopold, & Baron, 2017); (Okazaki, Wong, & Kaplan, 2017).

Even the perceptions that people have towards immigrants can change the way a community functions with immigrant populations (Flores et al., 2018).



Conclusion

As research has shown, immigrants face several challenges in the United States from health complications, to psychosocial factors, to community involvement. With lack of information of American culture, language or access to resources, immigrants are limited in the ways they assimilate into society. As a country, it is our responsibility to educate and provide avenues for immigrants entering the United States to better help them fit into our culture.



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