



CHILDREN & YOUTH REPORT CARD REVIEW BY ALEXANDRIA CITY HIGH SCHOOL

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TOPIC

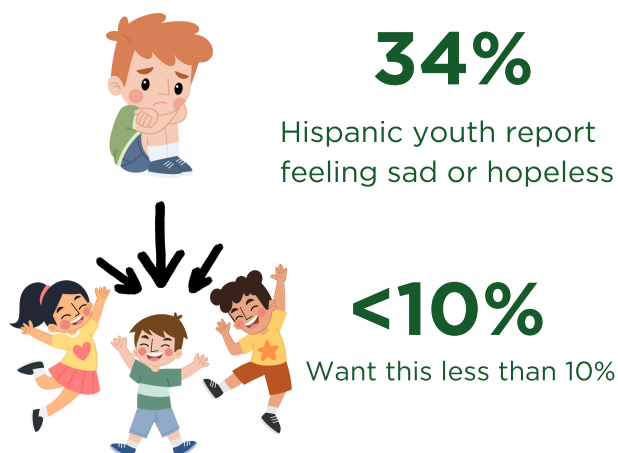
Hispanic youth & there problem with sadness and hopelessness

TOPIC DESCRIPTION

My project focuses on the mental health of Hispanic youth, mainly the high rates of sadness and hopelessness they experience compared to other racial and ethnic groups. This affects Hispanic youth throughout Alexandria which could lead to consequences such as anxiety depression and poor academic performance. According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey shows that Hispanic students consistently report the highest levels of feeling sad and hopeless at around 34%. We want to provide Hispanic youth with the mental health resources that fits their hobbies and interest so they feel comfortable getting help. We will do this buy creating a “mental health hub” and this would be based in rec centers and they will go with friends. However private session would be provided if wanted. We want people to feel safe reporting this and not suffer in silence

RESULT

We want the rates of these feelings to go down among hispanic youth. And make sure they are mentally healthy



CYCP GOAL AND STRATEGIC AREA

Goal 1: **All Children, Youth and Families will be Physically Safe & Healthy:** My project supports youth mental health by creating an emotionally safe, peer-connected, and culturally responsive space, improving access to behavioral health care for immigrant and low-income families.

Goal 3: **Every Young Person and their Family will have Positive Experiences:** My project fosters group support among Hispanic youth, promoting emotional security, reducing isolation, and supporting inclusive emotional development. They will feel welcomed and have an enjoyable time

WHY THIS MATTERS

The 34% of Hispanic youth report feeling sad or hopeless (Youth Risk Behavior Survey) this is not just a percentage, these numbers represent real people lives and struggles. This is a growing mental health crisis in one of the fastest growing youth populations in the country. When over one-third of Hispanic students experience these feelings for weeks at a time, it means that something is wrong with the systems meant to support them, and a change needs to be made. These feelings aren't just temporary this could lead to depression and self-harm. Also your grades tend to reflect this. We want hispanic youth to be exposed to these recourses now while they are in high school before they loose touch with many friends, soon the people you feel comfortable talking to will continue to shrink

Huge problem: Many Hispanic students don't feel comfortable reaching out for help. Whether it's because of language barriers, feeling disconnected from school counselors, or living in poverty (people who live in poverty have a higher risk of mental illness and vice versa many suffer in silence. I know this because I've been there. I'm a Hispanic male who

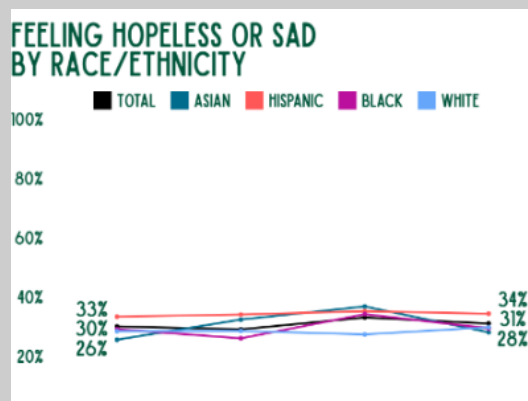
has personally experienced these emotions and felt like there was no one to talk to. The school counselor felt more like a stranger and not someone who understood or cared. That sense of isolation is exactly what we want to change. We don't want any other student feeling this way. Our goal is to lower that 34% to below 10%—and we believe one of the best ways to do that is by creating a community-based mental health resource. This space would look and feel different from a typical counseling office. It would include group sessions where students attend with their friends, surrounded by hobbies, creative outlets, and a welcoming environment that feels more like a hangout space than a therapy room. Teens would have mid intermissions to go play there favorite sports or do their favorite hobbies within the rec center. When teens are with people they trust and in a space that feels familiar, they are more likely to open up, connect, and heal. By building this kind of environment, we're not just treating mental health—we're changing how it's viewed, making it normal and accessible for Hispanic youth to get help in a way that's safe and supportive.



HOW ARE WE DOING?

Right now, we are not doing well when it comes to supporting Hispanic youth mental health. Since 2013 34% of Hispanic high school students reported feeling sad or hopeless for two or more weeks in a row, making it hard for them to do normal activities. This is the highest percentage among all racial and ethnic groups—compared to 31% of Black students and 28% of white students. According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey

This data shows that Hispanic youth are struggling more than others, yet often don't have access to the mental health support they need. Factors such as language barriers, stigma, and the lack of culturally relatable mental health professionals make it even harder for them to speak up or seek help.



POVERTY?

Studies are prove to show that living below the poverty line is deeply connected to developing mental illnesses. According to this survey in 2018 Hispanics are 16% of the population in Alexandria, and 29% live in poverty. So it surely doesn't help with wanting to decrease the numbers in reported feelings of sadness or hopelessness.

Find more in the link below

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IMPLEMENTATION

To reach our goal we are using multiple different strategies

1. Create a Youth Mental Health Resource Hub

- A welcoming, non-clinical space in the community this will be located in a local rec center
- The will include areas for group activities, hobbies, art, music, and comfortable seating, designed to feel more like a creative hangout than a traditional counseling center.
- Open after school and on weekends,

2. Peer Group Sessions

- Small group mental health sessions attended with friends led by trained, culturally competent people (they will also be bilingual).
- Activities jotted into sessions (like journaling, soccer games, random topic sessions) to encourage expression in low-pressure ways. and make them feel like its not only a therapy type feeling

3. Normalize Mental Health in Schools

- Create posters, social media campaigns, and classroom presentations led by ambassadors to reduce stigma and spread awareness.

4. Evaluate and Track Progress

- Pre and post session surveys to see if our strategy is working

PARTNERSHIPS

Who are the partners who are playing a role? Include their logos too!



PERFORMANCE EFFORT

Even though sessions haven't started yet, we plan to track our effort in clear and organized ways. We will measure success by the number of mental health hub sessions we host, how many students attend, and how many return each week. We will give short surveys after sessions to get feedback from students about how they felt, what they liked, and what can be improved. We'll also track how many people we reach through flyers, social media, and school announcements.

To make this possible, we will partner with Casa Chirilagua and the Charles Houston Advisory Council to help with outreach, bilingual support, and trusted community connections. These partnerships will help us reach more families and build trust in the program.

PERFORMANCE EFFECT

Positive Outcomes

- **Improved mental health:** decrease in feeling of sadness and hopelessness. lead to better focus in school and improved realationships
- **Early help:** We adress mental health early to prevent risk of long term depression, and self harm
- **Great Community Engagement:** Having this based in a Rec center helps build trust among students, classmates and there families
- **Normalized seeking help**

Potential Barriers

- **Lack of addressment:** mental health really isn't really talked about in Latin families. Especially males, in general males would rather suffer in silence than admit they are going through something and seek help.
- **Poverty:** 17% of Hispanic people in the U.S. live in poverty (compared to 8.2% of non-Hispanic whites)Individuals who live in poverty have a higher risk of mental illness and vise versa
- **Family not engaged:** Viewed as crazy or "loco" if they express mental anxiety, don't wanna be viewed as "weak
- **Legal status:** Fear of deportation may make Hispanics be scared of leaving the house, yet alone go to group sessions being promoted around the community for them. Even though millions of children of undocumented immigrants are eligible for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act, many families either may not know or be afraid to register due to fear of deportation

RECOMMENDATIONS

TO HELP LOWER THE HIGH RATES OF SADNESS AND HOPELESSNESS AMONG HISPANIC YOUTH, WE SUGGEST CREATING A PROGRAM THAT FEELS SAFE, FUN, AND MADE JUST FOR THEM. RIGHT NOW, 34% OF HISPANIC STUDENTS SAY THEY FEEL THIS WAY. OUR GOAL IS TO DROP THAT NUMBER TO LESS THAN 10%.

Group Mental Health Sessions at Rec Centers

We want to set up weekly group sessions in local rec centers where students can go with friends. The groups would be led by adults who speak Spanish and understand Hispanic culture. This makes it easier for students to open up and feel comfortable.

Work with Schools and Community Leaders

Teachers, coaches, and other trusted adults should help spread the word and tell students about the program. This helps build trust and gets more kids involved.

Teach About Mental Health in a Cultural Way

Hold events and workshops that talk about mental health in a way that makes sense to Hispanic families. These events should be in both English and Spanish and invite parents to learn too.

Check Progress

Ask students and families for feedback and keep track of how many students join and how they're feeling. This helps us make the program better.

No barriers or requirements

We will not require no type ID, No proof of residence, and most imlortantly no insurance required these sessions are completely free thjs is clearly a non profit organization

ONLINE

Therapy for LatinX- helps hispanc youth find culturally competant and bilingual therapist. Free mental health screeings and recources in spanish therapyforlatinx.com

Nami Compartiendo Esperanza- offers a video series that talks about mental health in Hispanic communities nami.org/CompartiendoEsperanza

IN PERSON

1. Neighborhood Health - Behavioral Health Services- This clinic offers bilingual, culturally aware counseling, which helps Hispanic youth feel understood and supported. It gives them a safe space outside of school to talk about their mental health without fear or judgment.
2. ACPs Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Center- hosts group events and workshops that are welcoming and community-based—similar to your project idea. It also helps immigrant families connect with trusted mental health support and feel less alone.

CITATIONS

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