

MAY 15, 2025

# Bullying Prevention and Response When Supporting Refugee Students

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**switchboard**  
connecting resettlement experts





# Today's Speakers



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Training Officer  
Community Integration



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Program Officer,  
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# Switchboard Throwback Thursdays



Did you miss a Switchboard webinar? Catch our top sessions, back by popular demand, now with **Switchboard's Throwback Thursdays!**

Our new **Throwback Thursday series** brings back our most-requested webinars, giving you a second chance to catch the insights you need. While recordings are always available, joining live offers a unique opportunity to ask questions and engage with fellow service providers.

As with all our sessions, this webinar is open to **all refugee service providers** across state agencies, resettlement organizations, and partner groups.



# Learning Objectives



By the end of this session, you will be able to:

1

## EXPLAIN

the link between core stressors that refugee students may face and bullying

2

## DESCRIBE

the roles in bullying and the risk factors specific to refugee students

3

## APPLY

vital strategies and considerations that may help prevent and respond to the bullying of refugee students



**Welcome to our session! How are you feeling at this moment as we begin?**



In what setting are you currently employed?



Rate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree): The bullying that happens among the youth I work with is a serious challenge that I deal with every day.

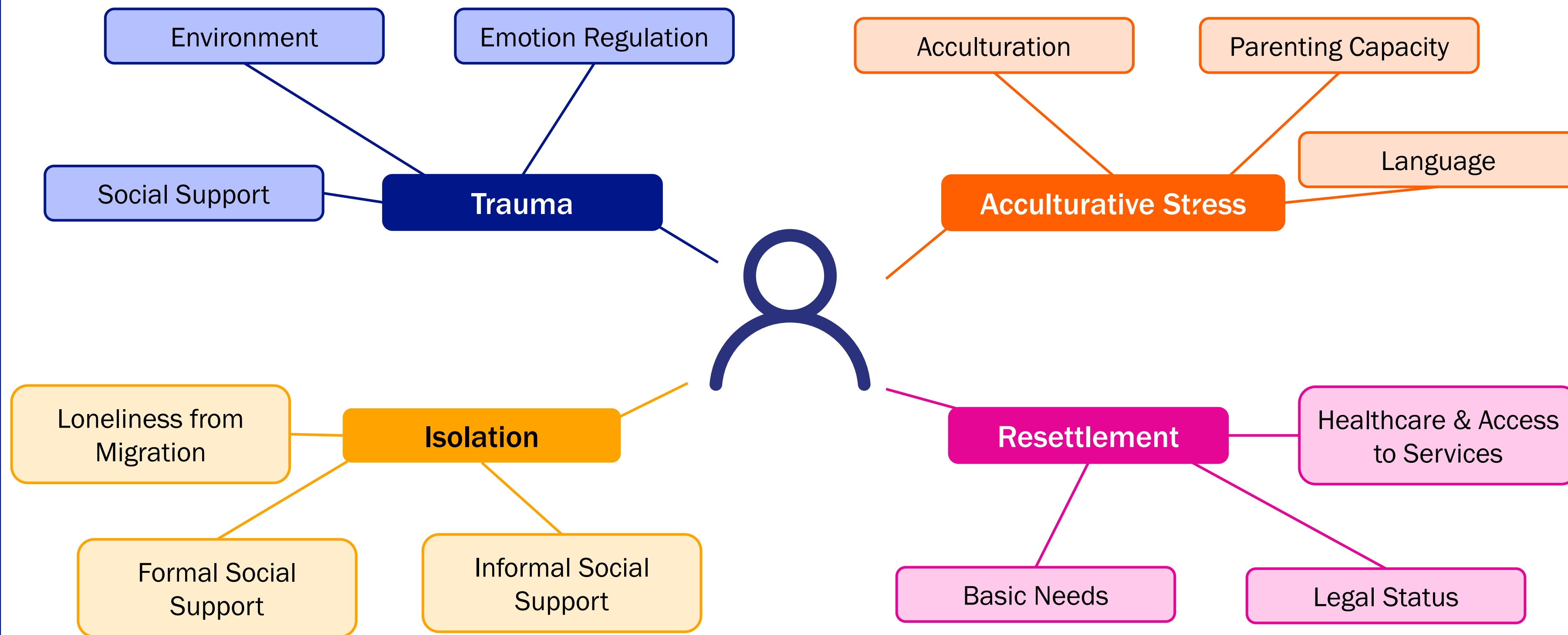


# **Core Stressors for Newcomer Youth**

The Link Between Stressors and Bullying



# Core Stressors



# Link Between Core Stressors & Bullying



## Unfair Treatment

Based on appearance,  
religion, or ethnicity

## Lack of Social & Emotional Support

Trouble making friends

## Unfamiliar Environment

Less shared ethnic  
background in communities



## Language Barriers

Obstacles to communication  
due to language

## Poverty

Lack of basic needs like  
clothing, food, or  
permanent housing

## Cultural Differences

Differences in appearance,  
values, behavior, or attitudes

# Case Scenario: Ameenah



**Ameenah** is a 10-year-old girl from a rural area of Afghanistan who speaks Pashto and has a limited educational background. She was resettled in the U.S. with her family about three months ago and has been a student at your school ever since. Ameenah wears a hijab and appears to be quiet. She plays by herself at recess and sits alone at lunch.



**What might be some potential stressors Ameena could be experiencing?**





2

# **Bullying Nuts and Bolts**

Roles & Risk Factors

# What is bullying?

- Unwanted, aggressive behavior that creates an **imbalance of power**
- Behavior is **repeated** and intentional
- Types of bullying include **verbal** (79%), **social** (50%), and **physical** (29%)
- Cyberbullying involves electronic devices to harass, embarrass, or target someone





# The Roles in Bullying



**Children  
Who Bully**

**Children  
Who  
Assist**

**Children  
Who Are  
Bullied**

**Children  
Who  
Reinforce**

**Children  
Who  
Defend**

**Outsiders**

# Children/Youth at Risk of Being Bullied

- Students who are **perceived as different** from peers either physically, academically, behaviorally, or culturally
- Students who are **perceived as weak** or unable to defend themselves
- Students who may be **depressed, anxious** or have **low self-esteem**
- Students who **have fewer friends** or trouble making friends





# **Children/Youth More Likely to Bully Others**

- Are aggressive or easily frustrated
- Have less parental involvement, or other challenges, at home
- Think negatively of others
- Have difficulty following rules
- Have more exposure to violence and/or trauma
- View violence in a positive way
- Have friends who bully others



# Effects of Bullying



## **Children/Youth Who Are Bullied**

- Depression and anxiety
- Health complaints
- Decreased academic achievement

## **Children/Youth Who Bully**

- Fights, vandalism, and higher dropout rates
- More likely to abuse alcohol and drugs in adolescence

## **Children/Youth Who Are Bystanders**

- Increased mental health problems, including depression or anxiety
- Higher rate of absences



3

# Strategies and Considerations

Response and Prevention Methods



**What has worked in responding to and preventing bullying in your work with newcomer youth?**



# School-Wide Prevention Initiatives

## Safe & Inclusive School Environments



# Culturally Responsive and Trauma-Informed Bullying Prevention Strategies



**1**

**Bullying prevention programs**

**2**

**Policy development and enforcement**

**3**

**Collaboration with school staff and specialists**

**4**

**Parent and community involvement**

**5**

**Bystander intervention training**

**6**

**Cross-cultural training**

# Culturally Responsive and Trauma-Informed Bullying Prevention Strategies (continued)



**7**

**Examining  
attitudes toward  
refugees**

**8**

**Identifying barriers  
to school  
participation**

**9**

**Including ELL staff  
in bullying  
prevention**

**10**

**Providing training  
or PD on crossing  
cultures**

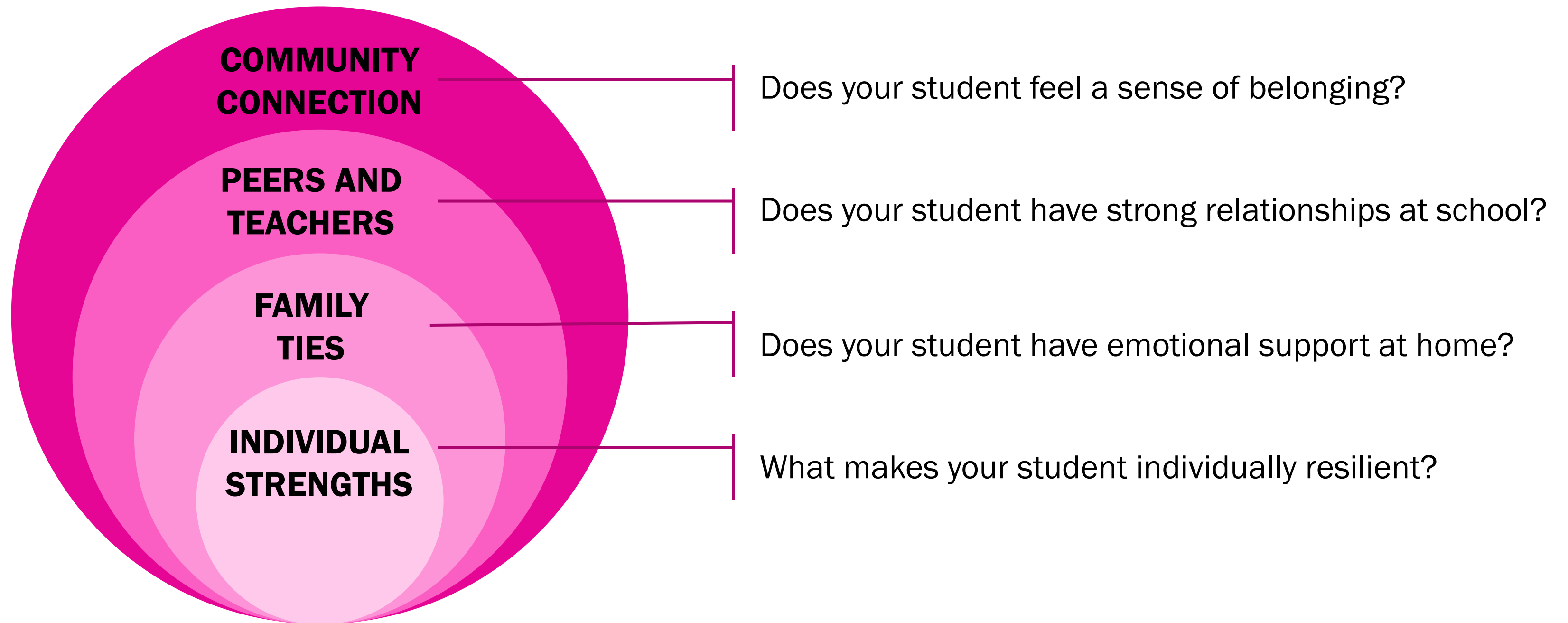
**11**

**Translating surveys  
to gather data**

**12**

**Creating  
opportunities for  
leadership**

# A Strengths-Based Approach Using Protective Factors





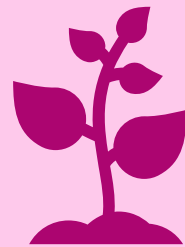


# Bullying Response Strategies



1

**Targeted  
interventions**



2

**Restorative  
practices**



3

**Data  
collection**



4

**Reassessment  
of programs**

# Case Scenario: Ali and Walied

**Walied** is a 15-year-old boy from Afghanistan who has been in your school for a year. He was raised in Kabul in a privileged Pashtun (dominant ethnic group) family because his father held a government position.

Walied has gotten in trouble on several occasions for teasing and name-calling another Afghan student, named **Ali**, who is Hazara (minority group) and fairly new to the school. Other students are also beginning to join in on teasing Ali when they are at lunch.

The school counselor tracks attendance and has noticed that Ali has been absent for more than 10% of the quarter. His parents state that he does not feel safe at the school, and they keep him home when he doesn't want to go.





**What can school personnel do to resolve this problem and ensure Ali feels safe and welcome in his new school?**





**Questions?**



Type your question in the **Q&A**



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# Help us help you!

Scan the QR code or click the link in the chat to access our feedback survey!

- Five questions
- 60 seconds
- Help us improve future training and technical assistance





# Recommended Resources

- Switchboard
  - [Tool: Addressing Bullying: Scripted Conversations](#)
  - [Archived Webinar: Bullying Prevention and Response when Supporting Refugee Students](#)
  - [Blog Post: Fostering Resilience for Refugee Students](#)
  - [Evidence Summary: What Works to Prevent the Bullying of Refugee and Newcomer Children and Youth](#)
- U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)
  - [Guide: Talking About Bullying With Children And Families](#)



## Addressing Bullying: Scripted Conversations

Author: Switchboard

Addressing bullying is a **critical component of ensuring a child's safety and well-being**. It is essential to have ongoing discussions with both the child and their caregiver to reinforce awareness, encourage open communication, and provide guidance on how to handle such situations effectively. Below is a structured script designed to facilitate these conversations, helping caseworkers navigate discussions with both the caregiver and the child. Please note that each case is unique, and the approach should be tailored to fit the specific needs and circumstances of the child and their caregiver.

When addressing serious matters such as bullying—like in any conversation—language barriers can prevent clients from fully understanding their rights and responsibilities, as well as key aspects and processes of service provision. To avoid misunderstandings, caseworkers should ensure that a qualified interpreter is present to facilitate clear communication. Using family members as interpreters can lead to misinformation for both caseworkers and clients. To learn more about working with interpreters, caseworkers can review the following Switchboard resources: [Introduction to Working with Interpreters](#); [Overcoming Challenges in Interpretation](#); [Scripts for Working with Interpreters](#); and [Making Sense of Mobile Apps: A Collection of Interpretation, Translation, and Integration Apps for Newcomers](#). They can also review this tip sheet from the National Accreditation of Educational Translators and Interpreters of Spoken Languages: [What to Expect from an Interpreter: Communicating Effectively with Your Child's School](#).



# Stay Connected



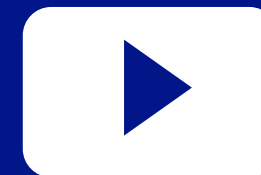
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The IRC received competitive funding through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant #90RB0053. The project is 100% financed by federal funds. The contents of this document are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

