Understanding Youth & Building Good Mental Health

Child & Adolescent Development… Disrupted

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StrongMinds
Areas of Focus

- Typical Child/Adolescent Development
- Disruptors...COVID-19 & Racial Trauma
- Mitigating the Impact
Key Developmental Tasks

Early and Middle Childhood
- Emotional regulation & attachment
- Language development
- Cognitive development
- Motor skills
- Social development

Adolescence
- Social connectedness
- Personal identity
- Strive for independence
Disruptors...
COVID-19 Pandemic

• Pandemic and lockdown have brought a sense of fear and anxiety
• Change in routines
• Break in continuity of care or learning
• Break in continuity of health care
• Missing significant events
• Loss of safety and security
Disruptors...

Systematic Racism & Racial Trauma

• Ongoing stress can have wear-and-tear affect on kids’ developing brains and other biological systems
• Constant coping with systemic racism, everyday discrimination & racial tensions are potent activators for the stress response
• Racism & racial trauma impact the physical environment in which children live & grow
• Racism can feel deeply personal to children
• Racial tensions can make children feel less connected and less valued

“Racism is a socially transmitted disease that is passed down through generations.”

- American Academy of Pediatrics
Mitigate the Impact

• Recognize and acknowledge fear, stress, & unique challenges

• Help children stay socially connected

• Help children develop a strong sense of cultural identity and respect for differences

• Build a strong sense of personal identity and pride, encourage self exploration

• Provide a model for how to cope well with similar disruptions

• Help children become a part of the solution – fosters feelings of empowerment and combats helplessness
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