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Reconstructing Hope and Resilience Among Kenyan Adolescent Immigrants

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**Reconstructing Hope and Resilience Among Kenyan Adolescent Immigrants:
A Community-Led Mentoring Program Utilizing Emotional Intelligence
and Faith Support Tools**

by

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Abstract

The study "Reconstructing Hope and Resilience Among Kenyan Adolescent Immigrants" explores Kenyan immigrant families' challenges in the United States and their impact on their adolescent children. It proposes a community-led mentoring program incorporating emotional intelligence competencies and faith to support adolescents' success. Additionally, the study advocates for a new immigrant parent-mentoring program to help them navigate the complex legal process to accelerate their immigration and successful acculturalization. The research contains selected Bible narratives that identify parental responsibilities towards their children and discourses on their successful utility or lack thereof. The study argues that parents and the community have a responsibility to support adolescents, and the mentoring program can help them navigate the challenges of immigration and acculturation. The study is significant as it provides a framework for understanding the challenges faced by Kenyan immigrant families and suggests practical solutions to support their adolescent children's success. The study may be useful to policymakers, educators, and community leaders in developing programs to support Kenyan immigrant adolescents' well-being and success.

Keywords: adolescents, bullying, depression, emotional intelligence, faith, immigrants, mentoring.

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Introduction

Immigrants face numerous impediments when relocating to their host countries, which can significantly affect their integration into their new society. Language barriers are among the most prominent challenges. The inability to communicate effectively hinders academic and social progress. Additionally, cultural differences and a sense of displacement may lead to feelings of isolation and alienation, exacerbating the difficulty of adapting to a pristine environment. These factors, compounded by the trauma of leaving other close family members behind, can contribute to emotional distress and affect overall mental health. Besides, keeping up with the tradition of not sharing personal struggles exacerbates their lives.

This dissertation centers on the Kenyan people and their struggles related to assimilation when they immigrate to the U.S. It explicitly focuses on Kenyan adolescents who, at a critical developmental stage, suddenly find themselves in a brutal reality of imperfection, face challenges and do not know how to respond. They find themselves singled out and encountering issues they had not experienced before. With few or no friends, they find themselves limited in many ways and see no way for recourse. This study offers theological thinking advocating for adolescents and explores emotional intelligence as a solution to their tribulations.

The study draws theological thoughts on children from the Bible and God's views and desires concerning their care and nurturing. The discourse highlights how humanity's behavior over time leads children to suffer because of the non-involvement of parents or guardians. It introduces the narrative that children need care because they are a blessing from God. It highlights how parents can support, guide, and mentor their children to be competent so that they can, in turn, cultivate theological thoughts and purposes for their future generations.

The study also accentuates that children face daily struggles and persistently need parental intervention to influence them to make rational decisions. Children cannot become who God intended them to be without the support and encouragement of adults in their lives. Moreover, it underscores parents' and guardians' roles in their children's lives, as emphasized in the Bible, defending the claim that, with guidance, all children can lead successful lives.

The study examines emotional intelligence and its contribution to mentoring. The intrinsic value of emotional intelligence lies in its ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions. It discusses how the five emotional intelligence components - self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social awareness, and social skills may influence an individual's emotional wellness. It also identifies other benefits, such as improving mental health by promoting self-awareness and self-regulation in individuals.

It further weighs on mentoring opportunities for immigrant adolescents led by the community using emotional intelligence and theological reflection. It considers the adversity associated with bullying and microaggression when used on migrants because of their language limitation, lack of understanding of the culture, and vulnerability. It highlights limitations on the options adolescents have to alleviate bullying and microaggression and identifies hindrances that lead bullied children to withhold their experiences from their parents. It recognizes the impact these aggressions have on them mentally, physically, and emotionally and on their ability to be successful students. The study also examines how parents can be involved with their children by identifying any changes they observe in their behavior and creating an opportunity to openly discuss challenges they may encounter in school with the children. Additionally, it examines and proposes using community members as mentors for children in the community and offers the community a chance to consider how to respond to the challenges faced by immigrant parents,

such as identifying government resources and how to apply for them, obtaining legal advice, searching for employment, transportation to and from work/school, getting involved in their children's education, and learning how to communicate.

The study concludes with the production of a community-led mentoring model that intertwines emotional intelligence and faith reflections (CEIFS) and highlights how it would benefit adolescents. It also presents a proposed support program for new immigrant parents (NIPPS) that would serve as a hub for information, assistance, and community building, offering practical support and emotional encouragement to help immigrants and their children navigate the challenges of adaptation and assimilation that would enable them to be successful.

Chapter 1

Experiences of the Kenyan Immigrant in the United States of America (U.S.)

Kenyan Social Culture and Community

Like many other developing African countries, Kenya has been struggling with the effects of drought for many years. Kenyans are agriculturists who depend on land production (e.g., maize, beans, wheat, and potatoes) and cash crops (e.g., coffee, tea, and cotton) for local consumption and import. They are also pastoralists who keep cows and goats, which thrive when pastures are green, and there is plenty of water. During drought, farmers struggle as scorched earth becomes unproductive, and animals die as pastures and water sources dry. In addition, food becomes scarce and expensive for the average citizen.

Moreover, not all regions in the country are suitable for farming. Some areas are arid, and residents must depend on other regions for agricultural produce. Scorched grounds are often too dry to soak in rainwater when rain occurs. As a result, soil erosion occurs, washing away the fertile topsoil. During the drought season, communities struggle to find food for themselves and their cattle. As the dry season persists, communities sell their livestock and use the proceeds to purchase food for their families. Fortunately, governments often intervene and import maize, rice, and other staple foods to address crop deficits.

Kenya is moderately industrialized, with economic growth "averaging 4.8% per year" between 2015 and 2019, which "reduced poverty to roughly 34.4%," according to a 2022 World Bank Report on Kenya.[1] The report further discloses that the 2022 Gross Domestic Product projection suggested "the country would hit the 5.5% growth mark, thus reducing poverty."[2] The

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[1] "The World Bank in Kenya." October 23, 2022. https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kenya. (Accessed February 16, 2023).
[2] Ibid.

United States Agency for International Development describes Kenya as having the second largest population in East Africa "and the largest, most diversified economy."[3] As of 2021, Kenya's population was 53 005 614. The sizable population and diversified economy do not recompense well with each other, as population growth consumes the positive economic contribution. In addition, as the economy struggles, greed and corruption intensify in most government sectors, disrupting economic growth and wealth distribution.

Religion is central to Kenyan daily functions. Like other Africans, Kenyans "are notoriously religious,"[4] according to a quote credited to Dr. John Mbiti, a Kenyan theologian, Anglican Priest, and respected father of modern African theology. A 2021 report on international religious freedom pointed out that "as of 2019, approximately 85.5% of Kenya's total population is Christian and 11% (is) Muslim."[5] Religion constructs the foundation of African Christians' daily chores, whether by tilling the land or working in an upscale office. From an African worldview, any physical phenomenon, such as storms, thunder, lightning, and so on, is viewed and interpreted from a religious or spiritual lens. Positive happenings imply that God is happy. Conversely, adverse events denote God's anger. Religion thrives in poverty; thus, when poverty increases, so do religious practices. People struggling with necessities need hope, and religion provides solace by pointing them to God. Accordingly, Africans consider religion a part of their daily lives, irrespective of their religious belief. At the same time, they also adhere to certain African traditions in their day-to-day lives, leading to questions about whether they (traditions) are congruent with Christianity.

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[3] "USAID." https://www.usaid.gov/kenya. (Accessed Feb 11, 2023).

[4] Innocent Ogbonna Nweke, "African Traditional Religion vis-à-vis the Tackle It Suffers," *Journal of Religion and Human Relations* 13 No.1 (2021): 92-109.

[5] "2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: Kenya." June 2, 2022. https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-report-on-international-religious-freedom/kenya. (Accessed February 11, 2023).

Kenyan communities play a significant role in educating families and sustaining cultural values. They are custodians of cultures, whether traditional or religious. When a community fails to practice or observe culture, it reflects poorly on its leadership, and questions arise about its values and direction. In a concession to the adage that "no man is an island," humans need other humans to do life together. Marcella Chiromo's dissertation, "The Acculturation Experience of East African Adolescents in U.S.A High Schools," suggests "human beings need not only other humans for the company but also a social responsibility to individuate adequately and attain full personhood."[6] Community members ensure their leaders know that family events like weddings, graduations, baptisms, and baby dedications are considered "community" events. The community gathers for these events and brings gifts and good wishes to the family, using these opportunities to keep the members abreast of local matters. Kenyans, according to Laura Rudolph, "place a high value on family relationships and the importance of kinship," paying close attention "to ancestry and lineage, particularly along paternal lines." She alludes that an "individual is considered less important than his or her community,"[7] and their success or failure is associated with their family's origin.

Communities play a significant role in society by educating members on traditional practices and ensuring the passing of traditional values from generation to generation. They also unite people by addressing everyday needs that affect individuals and the community. Community leaders who oversee these communities are well-respected individuals often nominated by their respective communities or handed down leadership by retiring leaders. These leaders were people working or living in the community, such as village store owners, school

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[6] Marcella Chiromo, "The Acculturation Experience of East African Adolescent in U.S.A High Schools." Dissertation prepared for the University of Michigan. Ann Arbor: ProQuest, 2019.

[7] Laura Rudolph. "Kenyan Americans." *Gale Encyclopedia of Multicultural America, Vol. 3*. Edited by Thomas Riggs. Gale.com/apps/doc/CX3273300107. (Accessed February 18, 2023).

principals or teachers, local bankers, factory clerks, and local priests. Because of their contiguity to families, it is not unusual for leaders to occasionally redirect wayward adolescents who may fall behind, skip school, or go against their parent's wishes.

School System in Kenya

 The Kenyan education system is structured in an 8-4-4 year pattern - eight years of primary education, four years of secondary education, and four years of university education. Primary education (grades 1-8) is free and mandatory, while secondary education (grades 9-12) is "free"[8] but not mandatory. The government's implementation of a free education program resulted in a cascade of events, increasing secondary education enrollment by 67 percent between 2003 and 2012 and increasing university enrollment between 2012 and 2014."[9] Despite the positive action by the government to increase school enrollment, over one million Kenyan children are not enrolled in schools, ranking ninth in the world according to the World Education News publication on Kenya.

 Universities in Kenya are a combination of public and private universities. The government operates public universities, which are the largest and admit the most qualified secondary school students. Because they are government-funded, they are prone to "political student activism"[10] and sometimes political interference, which results in students taking longer to graduate. This notwithstanding, students prefer government universities that offer broader curricula and are more generous in their scholarships. On the other hand, private universities are

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[8] Although the government promotes that high school education is free, technically, it is not free as the schools charge students for expenses not centrally funded by the government. These costs are not regulated and can be exorbitant and restrictive for children whose parents are unemployed or unable to afford them.

[9] Nick Clark, ed. "Education in Kenya." *WENR-World Education News + Reviews*. (June 2, 2015). https://wenr.wes.org/2015/06/education-kenya. (Accessed February 11, 2023).

[10] Tamara Yakaboski and Matthew Birnbaum. 2013. "The Challenges of Student Affairs at Kenyan Public Universities." *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* 1 (1&2): 33-48. doi:10.14426/jsaa.v1i1-2.34. (Accessed January 5, 2024).

funded by religious organizations. Due to financial constraints, they do not offer comprehensive

degree programs and are often more expensive than government universities, but they experience

fewer academic interruptions, ensuring students graduate on schedule. Accordingly, Kenya

produces more university graduates annually than there are jobs to absorb them. In a report by

Statista, a leading market and consumer data provider, Kenya's unemployment rate increased

steadily from 2.88% in 2009 to 5.74% in 2021. The report added that, "although unemployment

is not anything new in Kenya, the current rate is the highest it has been."[11]

In most developing countries, Higher education does not always guarantee employment,

and some adolescents do not see its value. Adolescents who do not continue with secondary or

university education feel absolved when they see those who go to secondary school or earn

degrees from universities joining them in search of jobs. Consequently, joblessness has

influenced families, specifically those with limited resources, to be disinterested in educating

their children or supporting them up to a level where the community would view them as

"educated."

Why Kenyans Migrate

Most Kenyans migrate to other countries because they view their livelihoods in Kenya as

neither tenable nor conducive to success. The majority opt to migrate voluntarily for improved

economic opportunities and higher education and to offer their families a more secure

environment. Others migrate for specific job opportunities, to join family members, or to escape

political instability and seek asylum.

Kenyans migrate to the US for the same reasons: better economic opportunities, higher

education, and a safer environment. Economic opportunities are a major driver of migration from

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[11] Aaron O'Neill, "Kenya: Unemployment rate from 1999 to 2021." *Statista* (January 25, 2023), https://www.statista.com/statistics/451115/inflation-rate-in-kenya/. (Accessed February 11, 2023).

Kenya to the US, and many Kenyans have migrated to the US to escape poverty. Globally, the US is viewed as a land of opportunity, offering higher salaries and better living standards. Additionally, it has a more robust social welfare system that supports those struggling economically, including immigrants yet to find employment.

Jane Kabuiku contends that many Africans relocating to North America believe that the continent offers a plethora of opportunities that can yield "a substantial improvement in their lives"[12] if pursued and realized. She cites Idemudia and Wyatt's 2013 publication, which posits that economic prospects are a primary motivation for migrants to leave behind their families, friends, and communities. The article also identifies "wars, political instability, and civil unrest as driving forces for migration to other countries."[13] Marcella Chiromo concurs with this viewpoint, emphasizing that individuals "migrate from their native countries to search for safety and better prospects for themselves and their families."[14] During times of conflict, families often relocate to safer places temporarily to return once the situation improves. However, in some cases, the conflicts persist for an extended period, and the destruction of infrastructure hinders their ability to return.

Kenya has had a share of internal political instability and clashes, leading to the displacement of many people. The worst internal clashes in Kenya occurred in 2007-2008 after a disputed presidential election. Over "1,300 deaths were reported, and over 350,000 Kenyans were displaced"[15] by the infighting that erupted, according to a UN report. It has also been involved in several recent wars and conflicts, including the Somali conflict and the fight against

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[12] Jane Kabuiku. "Immigrating to North-East America: The Kenyan Immigrant's Experience." Journal of Social, Behavioral, and Health Sciences 11 (2017): 96-114.
[13] Chiromo. "The Acculturation Experience of East African Adolescent in U.S.A High Schools."
[14] Ibid.
[15] Mary Kimani. East Africa Feels Blows of Kenyan Crisis. April 2008. East Africa feels Blows of Kenyan crisis. https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/april-2008/east-africa-feels-blows-kenyan-crisis. (Accessed January 13, 2024).

terrorism. For example, in 1998, an attack occurred when the Islamist extremist group Al-Qaeda targeted the "United States Embassy in Nairobi,"[16] killing 213 people. Further, in 2015, Al-Shabaab, an Islamist extremist group based in Somalia, conducted multiple attacks in Kenya, with the most devastating occurring in northeastern Kenya, where gunmen stormed "Garissa University College, targeting non-Muslim students,"[17] resulting in the death of 147 people. Additionally, there has been an ongoing "territorial dispute between Kenya and Somalia"[18] concerning a maritime border dispute where both countries claim ownership of an Indian Ocean stretch believed to contain oil and gas reserves. These conflicts have displaced many people, significantly increasing migration to the US and other countries.

Approximately 20 years after Kenya's independence, only a few Kenyans migrated permanently to other countries, with the majority returning because the employment prospectus was guaranteed. Kenyans also temporarily migrate to foreign countries for further education and work but occasionally return to their families. Beginning in the 1980s, Kenya experienced an overflow of refugees from neighboring countries, with the "majority coming from Somalia."[19] The overflow of refugees strained the economy, stretched resources, introduced political interference, and "triggered an economic crush."[20] In addition, some migrated permanently to the US through the Diversity Visa Program to pursue "educational and professional opportunities in pursuit of the proverbial American Dream," and others migrated temporarily to other countries in

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[16] Clinton Digital Library. East African Embassy Bombings. n.d. https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/embassy-bombings. (Accessed December 3, 2023).

[17] Amy Pate, Michael Jensen, and Erin Miller. 2015. "START." Al-Shabaab Attack on Garissa University in Kenya. April. http://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/STARTBackgroundReport_alShabaabGarissaU_April2015.pdf. (Accessed December 3, 2023).

[18] Clive Schofield, Pieter Bekker, and Robert van de Poll. 2021. The World Court Fixes the Somalia-Kenya Maritime Boundary: Technical Considerations and Legal Consequences. Opinion, American Society of International Law. https://www.asil.org/insights/volume/25/issue/25. (Accessed December 3, 2023).

[19] "Integral Human Development" N.d. Kenya. https://migrants-refugees.va/country-profile/kenya/. (Accessed January 6, 2024).

[20] "Integral Human Development."

search of work. Conversely, others unfortunately migrated involuntarily, forced against their will to look for a safer place for themselves and their family.

Although data show Kenyan immigrants among "the fastest growing immigrant groups in the U.S.,"[21] their population percentage in the U.S. remains insignificant. According to Jana R. Onwong'a, "approximately 102,000 Kenyan immigrants and their first or second-generation children resided in the U.S. in 2017."[22] Lars Kamer's report in Statista affirmed this data, asserting that the Kenyan immigrant population increased to 160 000 in 2020.[23] Additionally, a 2022 Pew Research Center report edited by Christine Tamir and Monica Anderson claimed that one in ten black people in the U.S. was an immigrant. According to the report, the number of Kenyans living in the U.S. in 2019 was 130,000, which is fewer than the number of people from other African countries like Nigeria (390,000), Ethiopia (260,000), and Ghana (190,000).[24] While these claims are factual, their accuracy may be questionable, as most documented and undocumented immigrants do not participate in the census for fear of being 'identified' and being put under the immigration radar.

Challenges Kenyan Immigrant Families Face in the U.S.

Kenyan immigrant parents need help to balance their traditional values with the cultural norms of the United States. For example, parents may highly value education but prioritize family and community over individual achievement. Similarly, there may be conflicting

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[21] Onwong'a, Slaten, and McClain. "AmeriKenyan: Lived Acculturation and Ethnic Identification of Kenyan Natives During Their Youth." *Journal of Black Psychology (Sage)* 48, no.5 (2022); 571-603.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Lars Kamer, *Statista*. https://www.statista.com/statistics/1231434/number-of-kenyan-emigrants-by-country. (Accessed February 11, 2023).
[24] Christine Tamir, Monica Anderson. *Pew Research Center*. (January 20. 2022). https://www.pewresearch.org/race-ethnicity/2022/01/20/. (Accessed February 11, 2023).

messages about the importance of education and personal achievement in the United States, which can be difficult for Kenyan immigrant parents to understand.

Parents who immigrated from Kenya to the United States often face challenges adapting to the new cultural environment. These obstacles make it difficult for them to understand local customs, values, and social norms, leading to feelings of isolation and disconnection from their surroundings. This experience can be particularly challenging for parents from a collectivist culture in Kenya, where the extended family and society play a significant role in raising children. In contrast, the United States places greater emphasis on individualism, which is at odds with the cultural norms Kenyan immigrant parents are familiar with. Additionally, many Kenyan-born parents in the United States may speak with accents that can significantly impede their ability to communicate effectively with their children's educators, healthcare providers, potential employers, and other influential figures in their children's lives. This impediment can lead to frustration and a sense of powerlessness, as parents may feel unable to advocate for their children completely.

Kenyan immigrant adolescents' parents may encounter economic difficulties, such as reduced earnings and limited job prospects, compared to non-Kenyan or African parents. These inadequacies can hamper their ability to fulfill their children's fundamental needs, including housing, food, and clothing. Furthermore, they may encounter discrimination in the workplace, exacerbating their economic struggles. Moreover, they may experience social isolation in the United States, particularly if they do not have a strong Kenyan immigrant community network.

Acculturation and Family Conflicts

Acculturation is a process that modifies an individual's culture by adapting it to another culture. However, it is often inevitable and stressful. This is a voluntary process, although the

dominant culture can potentially add pressure on minorities to assimilate. David L. Sam and John W. Berry defined acculturation as an "inevitable psychological experience and sociocultural change" [25] that occurs during an immigrant's settling process. From a migrant's perspective, it is advantageous to assimilate into the host country's culture, as it opens access to opportunities that would otherwise be evasive. This may include learning their language, customs, food, and so on.

Successful acculturation comprises "a positive experience, acceptance, and success in the host culture, and the extent to which the immigrant chooses to live within that ethnic environment." [26] In contrast, Marcella identified "language difficulties or barriers, parent-child conflicts, low school achievement, mental health concerns, challenges navigating between cultures" [27] as hindrances to successful acculturation. Other obstacles include migrants' unwillingness to maintain their own culture or assimilate into the host culture.

Kenyans immigrate to the U.S. with Kenyan cultural appeals but adopt the American culture as dominant while relegating, without abandoning, their traditional one. Cultural adjustments are necessary for successful acculturation. Marcella reveals there are "four types of possibilities for acculturation." [28] The first is integration, which occurs when individuals maintain their culture and regularly interact with other groups. Second, assimilation occurs when individuals do not intend to preserve the identity of their heritage culture, seek to interact with the new culture or adopt cultural values, norms, and traditions. Third, separation occurs when individuals place high importance on their culture and avoid interacting with it. Finally, marginalization occurs when there is little possibility that individual cultures have relationships

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[25] David L. Sam and John W Berry. "Acculturation: When Individuals and Groups of Different Cultural Backgrounds Meet." *Perspectives on Psychological Science* (2010): 472-481. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691610373075. (Accessed 4 2023, March).

[26] Chiromo. *The Acculturation Experience of East African Adolescent in U.S.A High Schools*.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

with or interact with other cultures. Regardless of how well an immigrant family psychologically and mentally prepares for a transition, the outcome is often too complex to envision.

The traditional role of the breadwinner in Kenya is typically ascribed to the male figure who wields authority over all household decisions. Conversely, in the United States, cultural dynamics differ, as women are more likely to secure employment faster than men, reversing roles and placing the burden of financial stability on wives/women. This shift in familial dynamics can engender feelings of embarrassment, inadequacy, and defeat in the husband, potentially causing unnecessary familial discord and exacerbating acculturation.

The shift in family relationships may result in resistance to cultural assimilation and a tendency for the husband to maintain the dominant culture. On the other hand, the wife and children are more inclined to adopt the host culture through acculturation. Cultural disparities and the acculturation process can generate domestic discord and gender-based violence, ultimately leading to divorce or severe family consequences that cannot be undone.

African customs are known for their rigor, and although African immigrants may adapt to a new culture, they often struggle to embrace the host culture fully. Instead, they learn to balance these two cultures. The attempt to reconcile these conflicting cultures can be arduous and even detrimental for immigrants, who must deliberately navigate the receiving culture without causing harm. As a result, immigrant youth often experience a sense of disorientation as they grapple with unfamiliar conditions at home and in public, which can lead to identity tensions and a feeling of not belonging to either culture.

Carola Suárez-Orozco and Desiree Baolian Qin, in their article "Gendered Perspectives in Psychology: Immigrant Origin Youth," contend that children are more likely to thrive when the family unit is harmonious, which is a challenging goal. Immigration "distorts and destabilizes

family relations through changes to family roles." [29] The power shift experienced in the US by immigrants empowers women and contemporaneously disempowers men, resulting in family conflict. As a result of "the man's disempowerment in the work environment, they assert their patriarchal rights and rigidity to their culture" [30] to their spouses, leading to strained marriages and increased chances of dissolution. Because of these tensions, the man becomes aggressive and rigid, favoring the male child over the female. These home conflicts quickly transfer to school settings, negatively impacting adolescents' school performance and mental health as they struggle to cope with changes at home, school, and in their physique.

Immigrant children concurrently address multiple issues. On the one hand, the parents expect them to acculturate to their "new home." However, they also remind them not to forget their identity or culture, which could be confusing, especially when trying to identify with their American counterparts. Second, because the immigrant family may not afford housing in a better neighborhood, their youths are "more likely to attend school in a low-income location where criminal activities, exposure to violence, and racial/ethnic conflicts are prevalent."[31] Living in low-income areas exposes immigrant children to crimes, drugs, and alcohol.

Furthermore, inter-family conflicts manifest differently in immigrant adolescents who fear that their parents may separate in a foreign land and wonder what life would be like for them. If family conflicts persist, they can inadvertently thrust adolescents toward negative behaviors. Suárez-Orozco suggests that children who engage in delinquent behaviors do so because they lack "other outlets for social recognitions."[32] She further asserts that African

[29] Carola Suarez-Orozco, Desiree Baolian Qin. 2006. "Gendered Perspectives in Psychology: Immigrant Origin Youth." *International Migration Review* 40: 168-198. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2006.00007.x (Accessed January 2022).
[30] Ibid.
[31] Suárez-Orozco and Qin. "Gendered Perspectives in Psychology."
[32] Ibid.

American urban culture "influences adolescents who lack positive role models in other domains, emphasizing respect, honor, and competence in activities, such as dancing and sports." [33] Moreover, immigrant youth are more likely to "face discrimination and hostility, which hampers their educational success,"[34] which may be worsened by the family relationship at home, further exacerbating their attitudes and behaviors.

Adolescents and Acculturation

Omwong'a classifies adolescents as children in the 10-17 age group, a group she suggests as being in a metamorphosing stage and experiencing changes "in self-concept, peer relationships, and family relationships dynamics"[35] and a "heightened risk for mood and anxiety disorders and risk-taking behavior."[36] The World Health Organization, however, classifies children between "ten and nineteen years old as adolescents."[37] This stage of life is vital for adolescents, as it sets a foundation for their future through physical, emotional, and psychological development. In her contribution to the book *Calling All Years Good*, Katherine Turpin avers that entering adolescence is a shock to the individual whose "childhood comes to an end with the achievement of independence in many self-care tasks."[38] Turpin avers that during adolescence, "the body begins to take on adult shape as the mind opens to new understandings of what is going on in the world."[39] She observes it as a time for "adolescents to experiment and

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[33] Suárez-Orozco and Qin. "Gendered Perspectives in Psychology."

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] World Health Organization, Adolescent Health. https://www.who.int/health-topics/adolescent-health. (Accessed March 13, 2023).

[38] Kathleen Turpin. "*Adolescence - Vocation in Performance, Passion, and Possibility*." In Calling All Years Good - Christian Vocation throughout Life's Seasons. Kathleen A. Calahan and Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2017). 67-91.

[39] Ibid. 68.

take risks in exploration and engagement in callings"[40] that are not lifelong but a temporary exploratory phase.

The adolescent stage involves numerous changes in their being. At this stage, their body size increases, their skin becomes oily, and they become more sexually aware of themselves. Because of these changes, disruption of "their psychosocial development by the acculturation process puts them at more risk of experiencing a different type and severity of stress than their peers."[41] They also become more vulnerable to health issues because they indulge in a poor diet, low activity levels, heightened sexual activity, and other risky and daring activities. Boys' voices become more profound and distinct as other physical features start showing, such as skin breaking, acne, and facial hair becoming visible. Most adolescent boys struggle to accept their physical changes at this stage and avoid their deep voices being noticed by not talking. Girls begin to menstruate and experience more hair growth as their body shapes and sizes change.

To Kathleen Turpin, adolescents' vocational experiences "are influenced by the extensive bodily, mental, and emotional transitions."[42] She asserts that the new power adolescents acquire makes them more open and more aware of themselves as they begin to have a sense of "being people with a unique and particular life to live out,"[43] and view themselves as noticeable and valuable.

Currently, mature adolescents are no longer as curious as they were before. Most of them start seeking independence from their parent's "control," believing they can manage their affairs. They also develop more individual opinions and set goals or dreams for their future. In relationships, they start pulling away from their family and prefer to be with their friends. With

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[40] Kathleen Turpin, "Adolescence - Vocation in Performance, Passion, and Possibility." 69.
[41] Onwong'a, Slaten, and McClain. 2022. "AmeriKenyan":571-603.
[42] Kathleen Turpin, "Adolescence - Vocation in Performance, Passion, and Possibility," 70.
[43] Ibid.71.

unbiased thinking, "audacity, and eagerness to challenge norms, the adolescents inadvertently facilitate their acculturation as they freely interact with the receiving culture."[44] They avoid house chores and become more opinionated and argumentative with their parents and siblings. On the other hand, parents are slow to acculturate as they contemplate life-changing adjustments divergent from what they had acclimatized to all their lives. They are risk averse and tread on the new culture carefully as they consider the threats of dissonant acculturation, such as "when "children learn English and adopt American ways," [45] often resulting in losing their dominant culture.

A study by Omwong'a, Slaten, and McClain on the acculturation experience of Kenyan Immigrant Adolescents (KIAs) in North America exposed that "their immigration experience, the acculturation process, and ethnic identity contributed to their emotional responses and coping strategies." [46] It also revealed that KIAs "experienced stereotyping and microaggression," [47] causing interpersonal challenges. Further, the adolescents experienced loneliness as they spent "less quality time with family as their parents strived for the 'American Dream,' and had difficulties forming friendships with peers." [48] Adolescents who encounter this experience express inflexibility in connecting with their peers. Omwong'a, however, counterargues that schoolteachers and students give KIAs a "positive sense of school belonging," [49] which insulates them from "risky nonacademic behavior such as "suicidal ideation, pregnancy, and violence." [50]

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[44] Suárez-Orozco and Qin, "Gendered Perspectives in Psychology."176.

[45] Mary C. Waters, Van C. Tran, Philip Kasinitz, and John H. Mollenkopf. (2010). "Segmented Assimilation Revisited: Types of Acculturations and Socioeconomic Mobility in Young Adulthood." Ethnic Racial Stud 1168-1193. doi:10.1080/01419871003624076. (Accessed March 23, 2023).

[46] Onwong'a, Slaten, and McClain. 2022. "AmeriKenyan," 571-603.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

Suárez-Orozco and Qin diverge from Omwong'a, arguing that teachers do not do enough for KIA's in making the "classrooms safe and hospitable," [51] and resulting in their hesitation to "take on any risks or discover new abilities." [52] In addition, the adolescents express that racial and ethnic tension inhibits the acculturation process, leaving them disconnected from African Americans and confused on whether "to assimilate to the American culture, while disconnected from African American," [53] and eventually elect not to lose their Kenyan roots. Younger children appear to acculturate faster but remain the most vulnerable, as they easily experience cultural shock and psychological stress. Children quickly make new friends, acquire new hobbies, and try new adventures as if everything is going fine. Often, and dangerously, parents unintentionally ignore the psychological, mental, and emotional deficits their children face in school, assuming they are coping well.

Adolescents, School, and Emotional Development

Alongside the educational disparities that impact Kenyan immigrant youth, they face difficulties adjusting to the American education system, which differs significantly from the Kenyan one. As such, they are increasingly anxious about what they expect in school. Discrimination and prejudice are unfortunate realities faced by many Kenyan immigrant youths in their new schools. They may encounter racial profiling, stereotyping, or xenophobia based on their ethnicity or immigration status. Such experiences can impair self-esteem, mental health, and overall well-being. Schools, communities, and policymakers must promote inclusivity, cultural understanding, and anti-discrimination measures to create a safe and supportive environment for these youths. It takes the combined effort of parents to help their children

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[51] Suárez-Orozco and Qin. "Gendered Perspectives in Psychology."
[52] Pohl, *Living into Community,* 160.
[53] Suárez-Orozco and Qin. "Gendered Perspectives in Psychology."

understand that their experiences at school will not be as difficult. However, this intervention could create conflict between parents and children, further obfuscating the adolescent's acculturation process. According to Hong, Merrin, Crosby, et al., "immigrant youth are more vulnerable to real and perceived violence as they navigate new environments, relationships, and cultural differences." [54] Hong further points out that immigrant youth not proficient in English are more likely to be ridiculed, bullied, involved in "fights with their classmates and peers, and less likely to receive support from the teachers." [55] Ukpokodu, holding a similar view, adds that African Immigrant Students are marginalized and treated as invisible in school environments. According to Ukpokodu, teachers discriminate against African Immigrant students due to their cultural and linguistic differences by "homogenizing, misidentifying, teasing, ignoring, neglecting, bullying, and stigmatizing them." [56] As a result, immigrant students "experience inappropriate grade placement and poor academic counseling jeopardizing their academic success." [57] Subsequently, immigrant adolescents end up retreating and unwilling to participate in school activities for fear of negatively charged incidents.

Turpin opines that for adolescents, school is essential to their development as they associate their "school performance with possibilities for the future." When the school does not yield to the adolescent's expectations, it may lead the immigrant students to self-doubt, unworthiness, and question "whether they can succeed in life." [58] Furthermore, as their skin color becomes central to their identity, they begin to experience racism before they can understand

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[54] Hong, Merrin, Crosby, Et al, "Individual and Contextual Factors Associated with Immigrant Youth Feeling Unsafe in School." 1003.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Omiunota N. Ukpokodu, "The New Model Minority African Immigrants: Examining the Reality in U.S. K-12 Schools." 2018. *Issues and Ideas in Public Education* 69-96. Doi.org//10.1007/s11256-017-0430-0. (Accessed January 19, 2020).
[57] Ibid.
[58] Turpin. "*Adolescence - Vocation in Performance, Passion, and Possibility."* 80.

what is happening. Eventually, their social skills break down, and their will to fight the many battles dies. If mitigation does not occur quickly, the downward spiral may have long-term negative consequences for adolescents. Turpin claims that "teachers who pay attention to students' abilities, desires, and cultural values can help adolescents navigate what they can offer." [59] She further suggests that the Church and other communities should step in and offer alternatives.

Researchers Jacqueline S. Eccles and Roberts W. Roeser, who had shown interest in identifying the reasons for "poor academic performances from some ethnic groups" among adolescent learners, identified "experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination" [60] as contributors to poor academic performances and submitted that classroom experience was a vital contribution towards adolescent development. They further argued that when schools emphasize educational goals, they create a "school psychological environment that affects students' academic beliefs and behavior," [61] where students focus on their academic achievements. They claimed that schools' emphasis on abilities led to "declines in students' educational value, achievement, and self-esteem" [62] and increased anger, depression, and truancy. They also found that schools, primarily driven by academic performance, alienated low-performing students. When adolescent learners could not compete academically, they tended to give up and engage in destructive behavior. Students also complained more about their teachers when the focus was on their academic goals than their overall learning proficiencies. By contrast, adolescents learning through task orientation ranked their teachers highly as caring, friendly, and respectful. According to Eccles and Roeser, this results from schools practicing inclusivity that gives

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[59] Turpin. *Adolescence*. 81.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Eccles and Roeser. "*Schools as Developmental Contexts.*"131.

learning opportunities to all students and, in turn, "reduces tension, depression, and decreases the frustration and anxiety." [63] Consequently, adolescents in a school environment in which their teachers interact with them are more likely to succeed academically and engage less in insolence.

A report by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) "Secondary School Completion Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2020-21" [64] reported the 2020-21 student population who attended grades 7-12 as totaling 2,517,888. Of that total, "388,517 students (about half the population of Delaware) were in the graduating class of 2021, and 90% graduated within four years, 3.9% continued with school the fall after graduation, and 0.3% received the Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency (TxCHSE)."[65] The analysis also indicated that 22,618 students (about the seating capacity of Madison Square Garden) who attended grades 7-12 dropped out of school over a four-year period.

The TEA report was short in both areas. First, it did not disclose the social classes of students who dropped out of school. Second, it failed to disclose the state's intervention strategy in reducing adolescents dropping out of school without graduating. Immigrant parents with adolescents have more to contend with, considering that their adolescents will join a school with unfamiliar structures, culture, sports, and other concerns. Kabuiku maintains that immigrant youth "are more likely to experience academic struggles and drop out of school" [66] and suggests that school inequities, bullying, and different learning environments may cause increased anxiety and depression among immigrant children.

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[63] Eccles and Roeser. "*Schools as Developmental Contexts.*"131.
[64] Texas Education Agency. August 2022. https://tea.texas.gov/reports-and-data/school-performance/accountability-research/completion-graduation-and-dropout/annual-dropout-data-2020-21. (Accessed January 13, 2023).
[65] Ibid.
[66] Kabuiku, "Immigrating to Northeast America." 100.

For Marcela Chiromo, a "relationship with friends provides a sense of connection and familiarity when immigrant adolescents do not understand the U.S. culture." [67] She further argues that immigrant adolescents create friendships based on "similar cultures and experiences and that friends who have lived longer in North America help adolescents understand the American culture." [68] She also points out that school activities for adolescents undergoing acculturation, including academic, social, and psychological performance, negatively impact them.

Gianine D. Rosenblum and Michael Lewis's presentation on "Emotional Development in Adolescence" aver that the period of adolescence is characterized by substantial biological transformations, as per Rosenblum and Lewis. They suggest that the unpredictable conduct of teenagers could be attributed to the "inconsistent and fluctuating levels of hormones during their developmental phase."[69] They contend that the "hormonal changes impact the adolescent by contributing to emotional proclivities, physical changes, puberty, and other private developments that the adolescent will be experiencing for the first time." [70] While adolescents are simply going through a natural physiological and psychological stage in their lives, these behavioral alterations may seem like acts of defiance.

School transition is not helpful, especially when adolescents are at the height of their bodies, experiencing puberty and other unfamiliar experiences. On immigration, they left their friends who understood them in their mental and physical struggles, but now they must contend with mostly other judgmental students whom they do not even like. Rosenblum and Lewis opine

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[67] Ibid.

[68] Chiromo. The Acculturation Experience of East African Adolescent in U.S.A High Schools. 2019.

[69] Gianine D. Rosenblum and Michael Lewis. "Emotional Development in Adolescence." *Blackwell Handbook of Adolescence*, by Gerald R. Adams and Michael D. Berzonsky, 269-289. (Cornwall: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.:2006). 269-289

[70] Ibid.

that adolescents express their feelings as "alienated, desperate, overwhelmed" [71] as they describe their inner emotions. The separation from friends to attend a different school can be stressful because of the physical and emotional changes they are going through.

Furthermore, according to Rosenblum and Lewis's research, adolescents experience more negative emotions than adults and are more sensitive to smaller events than young children. They appeared to have a "heightened emotion on romance, romantic relationship, which they also identified as a contributor to their mood swings." [72] They also reported experiencing increased depressed symptoms "associated with a cognitive style including negative thoughts of hopelessness, helplessness, and a tendency of rumination over problems and worries." [73] Rosenblum and Lewis also observed other changes - both physical and mental - that adolescents were not prepared for that introduced shameful feelings, such as when their physical development stimulated sexual sensations and desires. The study also found that the emotional skills and abilities developing during adolescence and persisting "to adulthood and serving as building blocks for adult emotional functioning" [74] were confined to the developmental period.

Adolescence can be a challenging period in life, but it is equally crucial as the lessons learned during this time have a significant impact on their future lives. Adolescents who struggle to cope with the increased emotional demands of this stage of life may experience negative consequences, such as an increased risk of depression, feelings of shame, anxiety, emotional instability, and even drug use, which can lead to the loss of supportive relationships.

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[71] Ibid.
[72] Rosenblum and Lewis. *"Emotional Development in Adolescence."* 284.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.

Acculturation "influences different aspects of mental health such as anxiety and depression." [75] Further evidence also revealed that "challenges associated with acculturation have shown to influence depression." [76] If untreated, depression can lead to more complications in mental illness. Mental illness is complex, and talking about it creates concern that no one understands the challenges facing families with mentally ill adolescents. As such, many families consider it an anathema to talk about mental illness. While society may be skeptical of adolescents experiencing severe bouts of depression, more are now struggling with mental illnesses than previously.

Kabuiku, referring to Selcuk R. Sirin and others in their article, The Role of Acculturative Stress on Mental Health Symptoms for Immigrant Adolescents, maintains that those adolescents "living in impoverished homesteads and attending school with limited resources" [77] experience increased acculturation stress. Adolescents experiencing acculturation stress demonstrate mental health symptoms, such as "elevated levels of anger, depression, and alienation." [78] Some adolescents create "conflict with others, aggression, and delinquent behavior" [79] to conceal the stress by holding it back, while others externalize it through openly defiant behaviors.

Immigrants have recently been under attack as injustices have escalated, contributing to acculturative stress. To Selcuk R. Sirin, Patrice Ryce, Taveeshi Gupta, Lauren Rogers-Sirin, et al., "Rephrased sentence: "Acculturative stress occurs when a person experiences difficulty in coping with cultural differences, discrimination, and prejudice based on their cultural

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[75] Annabelle Starck, Jana Gutermann, Meryam Schouler-Ocak, Jenny Jesuthasan, Stephan Bongard, Ulrich Stangler. "The Relationship of Acculturation, Traumatic Events and Depression in Female Refugees." https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00906/full. (Accessed February 2023).

[76] Starck, Gutermann, Schouler-Ocak, Jesuthasan, et.al. "The Relationship of Acculturation, Traumatic Events and Depression in Female Refugees."

[77] Kabuiku. "Immigrating to Northeast America: The Kenyan Immigrant Experience."

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

background or country of origin, resulting in a high level of intensity." [80] In addition to the internal and external problems immigrant adolescents face, their "identity development is also acculturating or undergoing cultural negotiation with more than one culture" [81] leaving them divided.

Adolescents struggling with mental health can sometimes be aggressive. Their behavior can, without warning, turn violent to the detriment of other siblings living in that home. Because of the complexity of treating adolescents with mental health problems, options are scarce when they get into a crisis, such as calling the police for intervention or taking the child for mental evaluation and treatment. Nevertheless, there is often little to no help "from the police or the mobile crisis team." [82] Individuals struggling with mental health issues are often encouraged to check themselves in psychiatric facilities for treatment. However, this can also be traumatic, as some facilities hold them longer than necessary, sometimes with limited visitations. Although this practice is known to lawmakers, they fail "to deliver on their promise of change"[83] despite the mental crises persisting.

The mental health crisis is distressing, leaving parents and siblings desperate and helpless. Moreover, depending on the parent's insurance, adolescents struggling with mental illness may not have access to the needed services. As a result, the adolescent may inadvertently terrorize the family unabated. Unfortunately, intervention only kicks in if the adolescent is a risk to self and or others "with a weapon and a plan."[84] Additionally, the intervention is just

[80] Selcuk R. Sirin, Patrice Ryce, Taveeshi Gupta, Lauren Rogers-Sirin. 2013. "The Role of Acculturative Stress on Mental Health Symptoms for Immigrant Adolescents: A Longitudinal Investigation." *Developmental Psychology* (American Psychological Association) 49 (4): 736-748.737.
[81] Sirin, Ryce, Gupta, and Rogers-Sirin. "The Role of Acculturative Stress on Mental Health Symptoms for Immigrant Adolescents."
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Huffman and Smith. WFAA. "Texas Psych Hospitals Hold Voluntary Patients Mental Health Against-Their Will Complaints Show."

intervention, "such as another hospitalization, a residential treatment program, or even time spent in jail." [85] Unfortunately, mentally ill inmates fill prisons as the system is ill-equipped to treat them.

The American health system, specifically the branch specializing in mental health, is broken and takes advantage of the ill and the vulnerable. Despite providing state-of-the-art accommodations and services, private facilities are cost-prohibitive, yet their goal is to provide mental health care. By contrast, public facilities are few and far apart. Texas, for example, has three campuses in Wichita Falls and Vernon under the North Texas State Hospital, which, according to its website, "provides inpatient psychiatric services to adults and adolescents."[86] An individual in a mental crisis is more likely to seek treatment from a private institution than from state hospitals because of their geolocation.

Undoubtedly, immigration is a complex and challenging experience for parents and adolescents. For parents, the process entails leaving behind familiar environments, support networks, and often stable employment in search of a better life for their families. The emotional toll of leaving their homeland, extended family, and cultural roots can be profound, leading to loneliness and homesickness.

Besides, adolescents face unique challenges during immigration. They must adapt to a different education system, adjust to how they speak English, and, most importantly, struggle with social norms as they navigate the complexities of adolescence. It takes time to adjust when immigrants lose their familiar social structure and support systems, such as friends and extended families. Furthermore, being in a transitional stage, they may struggle with feelings of

[85] Huffman and Smith. WFAA. "Texas Psych Hospitals Hold Voluntary Patients Mental Health Against-Their Will Complaints Show."

[86] https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/mental-health-substance-use/state-hospitals/north-texas-state-hospital. (Accessed December 12, 2023).

displacement and cultural identity, encounter bullying, or be marginalized because of their immigrant status, which can exacerbate the already complex process of assimilation and lead to feelings of alienation and loneliness.

Moreover, adolescents may feel unsupported and misunderstood. From their perspective, parents are too busy to listen to their plights, and as a result, they may feel lost in their identity and sense of belonging, locked inside and outside with no place to turn. Isolation, if not addressed, may result in feelings of loneliness and worthlessness, leading some to become adventurously vulnerable and attempt risky behaviors.

Parents and adolescents must rely on resilience, faith, and community support to cope with these changes. They may seek cultural or religious groups that can offer them support and a sense of belonging, draw strength from their faith traditions, and, in turn, work to build novel support networks in their host country. Additionally, seeking counseling can provide the necessary support for navigating the emotional and psychological impacts of immigration and the complexities associated with it.

The church, according to Craig Hill, "is meant to be the place where the reign of God is experienced and not just talked about; where living relationships demonstrate love, and where Godly character is learned and practiced."[87] Hill's passion is ensuring people are pulled towards the center where God is and supports "creating a positive relationship in the church where people can relate with one another."[88] Where there is a relationship, he says, there is community. When people connect with a church community, they connect with prophetic voices and encounter holy friends. Adolescents need these prophetic voices and "Holy Friends" who will understand and

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[87] Craig C. Hill, *Servant of All: Status, Ambition, and the Way of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company: 2016), 178.
[88] Ibid., 179.

affirm their tribulation by constructing an alternative positive and trusting connection with them and helping them manage their perceived blockades.

The Kenyan church community in America has the potential and capacity to take the lead in addressing the challenges immigrant adolescents face, such as assimilation and bullying from peers and teachers. By extending unconditional love, as demonstrated by Christ, and welcoming new immigrants into the community, the church can foster a sense of belonging and value for these individuals. Additionally, the church can provide practical support, such as mentoring, tutoring, and connecting immigrant families with community resources to help them overcome their challenges. The church community ought to respond with a steadfast dedication to upholding justice, promoting the rights of the marginalized, and embodying the love and grace of God as exemplified by Christ in both their words and actions.

Chapter 2

Theological and Scriptural Reflection on Children and Their Suffering

All Children are a Blessing.

Children originate from God and are a miracle and a blessing from Him to humanity. Humanity often takes the miracle of a child far too lightly and fails to see that even the sperm and ovum fusing to form a child do so through the glorious power of God. It fails to see God's blessing in the embryo's biological formation and development and falsely assumes that the decision to have children is reliant on humanity and not the Creator.

According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, a blessing is "the act or words of one that blesses."[89] The Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology defines blessing as "a public declaration of a favored status with God."[90] Following these definitions, when God "spoke" in Genesis 1:28 and told the man and woman to procreate, it was a public declaration assuring the two humans of the potential to bring forth children. Procreation follows God's Pre-Creation declaration (blessing) to humanity to "be fruitful and multiply." Therefore, every child is the result of the blessing God declared in the beginning.

Children bring joy to their parents and indirectly bring families and communities together. As human offspring and the result of God's original plan for creation, they exhibit the fruitfulness and multiplicity that God spoke to Adam. In chapter 127:3-5, the Psalmist portrays children as a heritage from the Lord and calls them "a reward from him."[91] A heritage is an acquisition that passes from one generation to another through bequeathing in a family framework and usually does not require a quid pro quo transaction.

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[89] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/blessing
[90] https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/blessing.html
[91] Psalms 127:3. NIV.

The Psalmist symbolically speaks of children as arrows in skillful sharpshooters' hands who hold their weapons closely. The Psalmist, in describing children as arrows, supposes they have a predisposition to follow instructions and respond to perceived threats to eliminate them. He concludes by hinting that the more children one has, the more outstanding and robust his family's defense will be. Analogously, the Psalmist intimates that children are gifts bequeathed to parents and juxtaposes "children born in one's youth"[92] with arrows in a warrior's hand. When released from a bow, an arrow moves in the direction it is pointed. Similarly, when trained, children are faithful, loyal, and obedient. In the third part of the text, the man with his full quiver is considered blessed, and his children undefeated against "their opponents in court."[93] The passage depicts children returning to the family and community that has trained, trusted, and released them to reach their potential. It views children through the lens of the family as an added value, ready to protect their community from perceived danger.

Because God values children, he bequeaths his people with what they require and expects the parents to teach them His laws. Deuteronomy 6:8 speaks to the children of Israel, telling them to meditate on the words, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." It further commands parents to recite scriptures to their children and talk about their meanings at home and away from home. The text also requires teaching God's laws to young children, allowing them to experience God and how they work within and around them.

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[92] Psalms 127:4. NIV.
[93] Psalms 127:3-5. NIV.

Anne Richards says in her book *Children in the Bible: A Fresh Approach*, "Children are worthy of God's special attention."[94] Referencing Jeremiah 1:4-5, she contends that "God's relationship with the young prophet began before conception,"[95] implying "that the prophetic vocation is part of a divine calling that begins from conception."[96] Richard claims every child encounters a prophetic voice speaking to their purpose and God as "intimately involved in a child's becoming."[97] She avows that as parents contribute to their children's physical, psychological, and emotional nourishment, they prognosticate "God's vocation"[98] in that child's life, essentially inaugurating humanity's cooperation with God's plan.

In Genesis 12, God also promises Sarai a son, assuring her that she would "be the mother of many nations; the kings of many people shall spring from her."[99] God continues to heap the promises of a child on Sarai and her husband Abram, but there is a delay as God has paused Sarai's womb, and the child does not come as fast as they wanted. Graciela N. Gestoso Singer's article "Notes about Children in the Pentateuch" [100] addresses this long wait. She describes Abram and Sarai as tolerating the gratitude of holding on to God's promise as they tumultuously contend with the frustrations of being childless.

Many communities consider childlessness an anathema and are unforgiving to women without children, who are treated contemptuously and denunciated for their barrenness. Abram

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[94] Anne Richards. *Children in the Bible: A fresh approach.* SPCK. 2013. ProQuest eBook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bridwell/detail.action?docID=1159102. Created from Bridwell on 2023-04-22.19

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Genesis 17:15. NCV.

[100] Graciela N. Gestoso Singer. 2006. "Notes About Children in the Pentateuch." DavarLogos 5 (1): 67-73. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/28163857_Notes_About_Children_in_the_Pentateuch/citation/download. (Accessed July 23, 2023).

and Sarai faced the same quandary "and were completely at a loss without children."[101] When the "child of the promise"[102] took too long to arrive, they, out of desperation, incorporated Hagar, Sarai's maidservant, in their plan to bypass God's "prophesy,"[103] which they believed was taking too long. Conversely, "when Hagar knew she was pregnant, she despised her mistress."[104] She had conceived where Sarai had not been successful, resulting in disdain as a barren woman.

Childlessness can frustrate a "not-yet-parent" who does not fit in the community's "family circles." Singer argues that couples without children appear confused, pondering whether "God is displeased with them"[105] or deliberately delaying their child's arrival. To Carl Amerding, being childless is "shameful and considered a punishment from God"[106] and was translated as a sign of God forgetting or cursing the parents. Through modern science, however, Richards observed that humanity established how children develop in the womb. As such, humanity can now cure barrenness through technologies that treat infertility with frozen embryos, allowing women to control when to conceive or terminate pregnancies. Richards holds that God calls children into being regardless of "where or at what point the child is conceived,"[107] despite the reality that conceiving from equipment may not be as conventional.

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[101] Singer. 2006. "Notes About Children in the Pentateuch." 68.

[102] Genesis 12:2, NIV, implies that in making Abram "a great Nation," he would have offspring. The promise repeats in Genesis 17 when Abram is 99 years old.

[103] God had promised Abram a son when he was 75 years old and asked him to leave the city for a land that God would show him (Genesis 12). God fulfilled his promise, and Abraham expanded "as far as Moreh at Shechem (v.6), and to "the hills east of Bethel" v.8, and to the Negev (v.9). In Genesis 17:17, Abraham is downcast and almost giving up. He is already one hundred years old and does not see how to father a child. He negotiates with God to change the plan and instead has Ishmael as the "child of the promise," but God sticks to the original plan that they will have a son.

[104] Genesis 16:4-5, NIV

[105] Singer. "Notes About Children in the Pentateuch,"

[106] Carl E. Amerding, 1997. "The Child at Risk: A Biblical View." Transformation 14 (2): 25-27, 30-31. https://www.jstor.org/stable/43070445. (Accessed May 19, 2023).

[107] Richards. *Children in the Bible: A fresh approach*. SPCK. 2013.

Singer maintains that Old Testament families valued children because they were "the only means by which a father could enjoy an extension of himself beyond the grave."[108] Having children was a blessing and a sign that God remembered his people, as evidenced by the recognition advanced to families where children were born.

As much as children are a blessing from God, not all families look forward to having children, a disposition accentuated by psychological and financial preparedness, physical well-being, and the ability to care for newborns. Additionally, children born to those "not yet ready" end up neglected, exposed to risks, or having the pregnancy terminated. It may also reveal differences in a family, mainly if the family is struggling emotionally or financially and is unprepared for it. Equally, a newborn with health complications or who frequently falls ill may be rejected by their parents if they are not receiving the needed help or support.

Teli Heiman, in her article, "Parents of Children with Disabilities: Resilience, Coping, and Future Expectations," claims that parents envision a life of happiness and bliss on the arrival of their newborns. This visualization suddenly curtails as the parent's attention shifts to the child's health and ultimate survival. Heiman further bids that such parents experience negative emotions "including depression, anger, shock, denial, fear, self-blame, guilt, sorrow, grief, confusion, despair, hostility, and emotional breakdown."[109] Further, Heiman adds that the negative impact experienced by parents flows beyond the immediate family to other family members and close friends.

Children need parents to nurture them into a good life. The absence of nurturing can push children to desperation and attempt to fend for themselves, exposing them to further vulnerability

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[108] Singer. "Notes About Children in the Pentateuch," 68.
[109] Tali Heiman. 2002. "Parents of children with disabilities: Resilience, coping, and future expectations." *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities* 14 (2): 159-171. Doi://doi.org/10.1023/A:1015219514621. (Accessed May 20, 2023).

and increased risks. This may lead children to engage in bad companies, drug use, sexual abuse, and missing crucial growth milestones. Further, the absence of a loving parent or the presence of an abusive parent disengages children from the family, resulting in them running away from abuse and neglect and opting to fend for themselves.

In some developed countries, like the U.S., a baby born to a "not yet ready" parent has a better chance of survival through government-initiated programs that provide a safe and quick way of allowing them to give up their newborns for adoption. According to a New York Times report, [110] safe havens provide anonymous ways to surrender newborns, thereby shielding them from potential harm. Most parents giving up newborns are poor, young, naïve, or psycho-socially conflicted to support them dexterously. Giving up newborns for adoption can be emotionally invigorating for the new parents, depending on the circumstances of the adoption process.

In the Pentateuch, both God and man regarded children highly. God acted through them, "giving them a listening heart, strength and power, and the ability to rule as well."[111] For the patriarch, being surrounded by his offspring gave him much joy, while according to Singer, an offspring "was regarded as a gift from God and a large family a sign of God's blessing."[112] It was, therefore, a dreadful thing to deny "children, the precious children of Zion, the food they needed."[113] The children grew up learning God's laws and their parents' expectations. Carl Amerding renders those children not exposed to a "hostile environment as intrinsically more trusting and ready to come to the savior."[114] He contends that children not at risk as more willing to follow whomever and go wherever to hear the Good News.

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[110] Dana Goldstein. U.S. Abortion Landscape. August 13, 2022. https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/06/us/roe-safe-haven-laws-newborns.html. (Accessed June 11, 2023).
[111] Singer. "Notes About Children in the Pentateuch." 73.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Amerding. "The Child at Risk: A Biblical View."
[114] Ibid.

Nonetheless, humans demonstrate their feebleness by discriminating against each other based on selfish divisions that have no place in the Kingdom of God. In her sermon "We are all children of God," [115] Rev. Louise Morley posits that if we concentrate on the essence of each other's beings instead of the skin color or if we give honor to the souls we interact with instead of finding faults and differences, we would not find fault in each other if we remembered that the same " God is in me." [116] In addressing this selfish divide, Pope Francis declared, "We are all children of God, and God loves us as we are and for the strength that each of us fights for our dignity." [117] God is the unifier who brings us together as his children regardless of our appearance.

Children are Vulnerable and Often at Risk

According to a report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD),[118] children are vulnerable as they interact with environmental factors. The report contends that the types and degrees of vulnerability evolve synchronically with ecological factors. In addition, vulnerability varies with age and the presence of physical, mental, and intellectual disabilities, communication barriers, immigration status, and other forms of impairment. The report asserted that regardless of age, every child is at risk of some sort or kind. A healthy child risks belonging to a family with less than enough and falling into harm in search of subsistence. Similarly, a child born with health complications may be at risk if its parents or caregivers neglect it because of the frequency and extent of its needs. In his article "Some

[115] Rev Louise Morley Federation of Practical Christianity. "We are all Children of God." *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, Aug 13, 2004. https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/we-are-all-children-god/docview/387728467/se-2. (Accessed July 8, 2023).

[116] Ibid.

[117] Al Jazeera English - Al Jazeera Media Network: 'We are all Children of God': Pope Says Homosexuality Not a Crime. Singer Island: Newstex, 2023. https://www.proquest.com/blogs-podcasts-websites/al-jazeera-english-media-network-we-are-all/docview/2768981788/se-2. (Accessed July 7, 2023).

[118] Changing the Odds for Vulnerable Children: Building Opportunities and Resilience. *Framework for Policy Action on Inclusive Growth*, OECD. 2019. https://doi.org/10.1787/a2e8796c-en. (Accessed July 12, 2023).

Theological Perspective on Children at Risk," Vinay Samuel avers that pregnant and nursing mothers are vulnerable because the babies they bear are vulnerable. He argues that from conception, "the unborn child enters a risky world" [119] and that although they are born into risk, they have little worries as they recognize life beyond the physical.

Paradoxically, at-risk children inadvertently bring salvation or good news to others. Through their suffering and pain, other children find salvation or are rescued from human trafficking, child labor, and other abuses, thus saving other children at risk. In Exodus 2, Moses fits the description of an at-risk child. He was born when Pharaoh, who was apprehensive of the Israelites' rapid increase in numbers and fear that they would overwhelm the Egyptian monarchy, decreed the murder of all Hebrew boys.

Moses' parents, Amram and Jochebed, both Levites, had two sons, Aaron and Moses.[120] When Jochebed saw her son Moses was a fine baby, she hid him for three months." [121] When she could no longer hide him, she got a papyrus basket, prepared it, and placed the child along the riverbanks. When the Pharaoh's daughter went to bathe, she saw the papyrus basket and baby crying. As any mother would, she had compassion for him, hired a mother to nurse him, and gave him the name Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water." After the child grew, the "hired" mother took him to the Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son.

While Pharaoh's daughter had not envisioned having a baby, taking in the "papyrus baby" brought her much joy as a pseudo-adopted mother. She equally took a risk, knowing that her father had decreed the murder of all newborn Hebrew boys and understood the consequences of

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[119] Vinay Samuel. "Some Theological Perspectives on Children at Risk." 1997. *Transformation* 14 (2): 27-28. https://www.jstor.org/stable/43070446. (Accessed May 19, 2023).
[120] Exodus 6:20. NIV.
[121] Exodus 2:2. NIV.

disobeying him. Nevertheless, she functioned as a mother and rescued it from death as the papyrus basket floated hopelessly along the Nile. "The child at risk, whose name and fame strikes dread into the hearts of the Egyptians, becomes the mighty redeemer of Israel." [122] She did not know that she had rescued a child who would save the Israelites from her father's cruelty.

An interrelated story concerning the birth of Jesus appears in Mathew's gospel. When King Herod heard that a child who was to be the King of the Jews had been born, he sought to find out from the three-wise men where he was so he too could go and pay homage, although secretly, he wanted him murdered. The three wise men, however, did not return after being "warned in a dream not to return to King Herod and left for their home country using another route."[123] Joseph, the earthly father of baby Jesus, now a child at risk, also had a dream where an angel of God told him to "Take the child and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you."[124] Joseph and Mary stayed in Egypt until King Herod died. In the meantime, King Herod was enraged when he learned of their escape and ordered the killing of all children aged two years and younger. As prophesied in Isaiah 9:6, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders," the child at risk becomes the expected savior and redeemer of the world.

Haddon Willmer and Bill Prevette, in their article "A Theological Reflection on Children-at-Risk," claim that for "children to be at risk, they have already fallen into an urgent need and risks exposed to them already realized." [125] They further state that needy children are

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[122] Samuel. "Some Theological Perspectives on Children at Risk."
[123] Matthew 2:8,12. NIV.
[124] Matthew 2:13. NIV.
[125] Haddon Willmer and Bill Prevette. 2016. "A Theological Reflection on Children-at-Risk." *Transformation* (sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav) 33 (3): 197-207. doi:10.1177/0265378816636794. (Accessed April 16, 2023). 197

simultaneously "at risk of unrealized evils." [126] As their needs increase, they open their way to others and expose them to more vulnerability. On the other hand, Amerding appropriates risk responsibility to the society or community where the child at risk belongs. He opines that the children at risk "reflect society's sickness or health and determine society's hope for the future."[127] To Amerding, if a community neglects to address the needs of its children, those children will not care about their community when they grow up. In addition, if children are indeed a "gift of God to a family and society or community,"[128] it is exigent for the community to take care of its children. In turn, they protect the community from external attacks.

Wilmer and Prevette claim that the risks exposed to children "take various forms and call for an appropriate response."[129] Amerding theorizes that risks do not necessarily attract singular solutions or responses. He hypothesizes that "falling short of the glory of God"[130] is the ultimate risk exposed to children. Therefore, a child facing hunger or needing medical care may be the same child whose parents are struggling financially.

On the other hand, Samuel asserts that a child is at risk right from its mother's womb and contends that "it is not enough to rescue children from exploitation and sexploitation."[131] Instead, he calls for a more rigorous and extensive rescue plan to keep predators away from their children. For Samuel, the Christian "calling is to rescue the children from those exploitative high-risk situations and offer them the fullness of life in the kingdom."[132] He argues that at-risk children are rescued from the risks exposed to them and provided an alternative that guarantees a physical, spiritual, and economically wholesome life.

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[126] Willmer and Prevette. "A Theological Reflection on Children-at-Risk."
[127] Amerding. "The Child at Risk: A Biblical View."
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Smauel. "Some Theological Perspectives on Children at Risk."
[132] Ibid.

Children at risk do not always know that they are at risk, and because of their predisposition to trust, they unpretentiously trust that no one can harm them. Armerding contends, "The Old Testament celebrates the family structure where children are born and securely nurtured."[133] He suggests that children not yet exposed to the hard facts of a hostile environment are more trusting and ready to come to the Savior.

Children Deserve Direction and Correction

No child is worthless, regardless of intellectual proficiency, emotional intelligence, or physical and psychosocial challenges. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children, every child has a right to "non-discrimination, best interest, life, survival, development, and the right to be heard." [134] Every child possesses complete access to humanness.

Paul's household codes to the Ephesians in chapter six cautions fathers against provoking their children to anger, but instead "to bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines provoke as "intentionally stimulating or inciting, exasperating, or irritating someone."[135] Paul offers that intentionally stimulating children to anger may cause them to rebel or reject parental advice, leading to rebellion, defiance, and waywardness. In its place, Paul advises parents to "bring them up the children according to the training and instruction of the Lord."[136] Discipline is a systematic teaching approach in which compliance attracts rewards and defiance punishments.

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[133] Amerding. "The Child at Risk: A Biblical View."
[134] *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. 1990. UN General Assembly Resolution, London: UNICEF, UK. www.unicef.org.uk. (Accessed July 8, 2023).
[135] *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. 1998. Springfield: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated.
[136] Ephesians 6:4. NIV.

The role of parents is to instruct their offspring to adhere to God's commandments, laws, and regulations. This involves motivating children to be interested in these commandments and demonstrating how to transmit them to future generations. Notably, God has provided instructions on how to accomplish this, which includes engraving the commandments on the children's hearts, discussing them frequently, and wearing them as symbols on the forehead and hands. God has bestowed three responsibilities upon parents. The first obligation is for parents to comprehend and abide by God's commandments, subsequently passing them along to their children. The second responsibility is for parents to maintain an open line of communication with their children, enabling them to always discuss the commandments in all situations. The third responsibility is for the children to be obedient and willingly wear symbols of their dedication to God on their foreheads and hands, making their commitment known to all who see them.

God expects parents to instruct their children in applying His laws and commandments rather than simply discussing them. When children follow God's laws, they lead a virtuous life. If a father fails to tutor his children on the commandments, decrees, laws, and codes of conduct or etiquette, the consequences could be severe, and the parents cannot escape accountability.

The importance of parental involvement in a child's life cannot be overstated in terms of shaping their behavior and prospects. However, despite the guidance and support provided by parents, children may still exhibit unexpected behavior due to external factors or unaddressed emotional issues. While some children grow up to be obedient and responsible, others may become rebellious, noncompliant, and challenging to live with because of their behavior. Regrettably, as children age, their behavior may deteriorate, leading to potentially harmful actions that could have dire consequences.

An atrocious example of parents shaping their children in the Bible is Absalom's perplexing chronicle. It begins with the rape of his sister Tamar by Absalom's half-brother, Amnon. Unknown to David's family, Tamar was an at-risk child. Amnon was King David's oldest son with his second wife, Ahinoam. Absalom was "the most handsome man in Israel - He was flawless from head to foot."[137] The text also describes Tamar as the "beautiful sister"[138] of Absalom, the third-born son of King David and son to Maacah, his third wife. According to Tamar Kadari's article, Maacah was "captured during wartime to become a wife to her Israelite captor"[139] and was a non-Jew.

Amnon became enamored with Tamar, but as a virgin sibling, she was traditionally unavailable to him for marriage. Consumed by his infatuation, he sought guidance from his advisor, who suggested feigning an illness that would allow him to ask his father for Tamar's assistance in preparing food to aid his recovery. Following this plan, Amnon feigned serious illness, and when David visited, he implemented the plan to script. David permitted Tamar to visit Amnon's house and prepare food for him. Tamar complied, but when she offered Amnon the meal, he coerced and raped her. After the rape, Amnon's hatred for her was so intense that he showed no regard for her dignity, and when she begged for help, he not only shamed her but also ordered his attendants to remove her from his chambers.

When David heard of the evil Amnon had done, he was furious but neither spoke in defense of his daughter nor reprimanded Amnon. However, when Absalom heard what had happened to his sister, he comforted her, covered her shame, and took her to his house, where she

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[137] 2 Samuel 14:25. NLT.
[138] 2 Samuel 13:1. NLT.
[139] Tamar Kadari. "Maacah the wife of David: Midrash and Aggadah." Jewish Women Archives. December 31, 1999. https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/maacah-wife-of-david-midrash-and-aggadah. (Accessed May 21, 2023).

lived with him for three years as "a desolate woman."[140] From then on, Absalom despised

Amnon for what he had done to his sister but remained respectful towards him.

After approximately two years, it was the season of sheepshearing accompanied by

feasting and celebrations. Absalom's sheepshearers had set up a camp, and as was customary, he

invited his father to join him in the festivity, but the king declined, citing that the king's

entourage would be too expensive for Absalom. The Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible

Commentary[141] suggests that Absalom limited the invitation to the King's sons and asked his

father whether Amnon could attend. The King hesitated but later agreed, hoping this would quell

tension among the brothers. Unbeknownst to David, that would be the last time he would see

Amnon alive because Absalom had ordered his men to kill Amnon when he got drunk. It was a

vicious revenge that Absalom had sought as retribution for the heinous act Amnon had done to

his sister Tamar.

It is unclear why David failed to act against Amnon, considering the shame he brought to

himself, his daughter, and the family. Critics argue that it may be because "Tamar's mother was

non-Jewish, while Amnon's mother was Jewish."[142] If the King acted against Amnon, it would

appear like he favored the non-Jewish family that bore "a wayward and defiant son."[143] The

narrative does not reveal any interaction between the King, Amnon, or Absalom, attempting to

bring harmony between the two. Nor does it appear as if Amnon's sexual abuse of Tamar, his

half-sister, now living with her brother Absalom, instead of in the designated women's quarters

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[140] 2 Samuel 13:20. NLT.
[141] Robert Jamieson. The Blue Letter Bible. N.d.
https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/jfb/2Sa_013.cfm?a=280021. (Accessed May 3, 2023).
[142] Tamar Kadari. "Maacah, the wife of David: Midrash and Aggadah."
[143] Ibid.

troubled David. Amnon had violated his father's house and showed no remorse, as his father looked on the other side and took no action.

Absalom's resentment towards Amnon and his father was evident when he plotted to avenge the rape of his sister. This anger eventually escalated into a full-scale war, insurgency, and the seizing of his father's throne. By doing so, Absalom showed disrespect towards his father's leadership, which provided him with a temporary respite from his father's failure to address the situation with Tamar. Unfortunately, David's inaction resulted in the premature death of his two sons and numerous soldiers, nearly causing him to lose his kingdom. If David had acted against Amnon and defended or protected Tamar, the story's outcome could have been vastly different.

In her book *Children in the Bible: A Fresh Approach,* Anne Richards cites 2 Kings 2:23-25, where some young men encountered Prophet Elisha and sarcastically began calling him "baldhead" and taunting or jeering him. The Prophet, in turn, cursed "them in the name of the Lord, and suddenly, two female bears came out of the woods, charged at them, and mauled them."[144] The punishment was instant and related to the ridiculing of the Prophet and indirect mocking of the Lord. If these young men were taught the laws of God and meditated on them regularly, they would have understood the role and honor that a Prophet carries and would not have made fun of him. However, if their parents did not teach them, their son's death would lay guilt on them. The young men made a choice that brought them unexpected consequences.

Moreover, Richards suggests that parents play a significant role in their children's lives by "feeding, clothing, and encouraging their children as they develop."[145] She argues that involved parents' guide their children to become independent, dependable, and obedient citizens.

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[144] Anne Richards. *Children in the Bible: A Fresh Approach.*38
[145] Anne Richards. *Children in the Bible: A Fresh Approach.*19.

Nonetheless, family interruptions, such as divorce, absent parents, death, illness, and loss of income, negatively interrupt a child's development, adversely affecting their aspirations.

Children Deserve to be Understood and Supported

According to Norweeta G. Milburn's article "Most runaway teens return home with the help of family ties,"[146] many runaway children portray the teen years as tumultuous, with adolescents flexing their mental muscles on what they can or cannot do. They assess their boundaries with their parents and teachers while leaning on their peers for support. Milburn also discerned that "no matter how brief, family intervention can improve the chances that new runaways will"[147] return home and stay home. Moreover, researchers "found that most homeless young people actually return home soon after they leave"[148] and are often less troubled than before.

Undisciplined offspring are often characterized by their tendency to hold strong, unyielding opinions and their reluctance to adhere to authority. They exhibit an insistent, persistent demeanor akin to the prodigal son's, who demanded his inheritance with great insistence until his father relented under duress. These individuals are commonly known to be headstrong and disinclined to accept instructions or rules that others follow. Due to their unpredictable behavior, parents often find themselves frustrated and uncertain, leading them to acquiesce to their demands to maintain peace. The persistent demands of the prodigal son for his inheritance compelled the father to give in, contrary to his original intentions.

The prodigal son's allegory that appears only in Luke's gospel chapter 15:11-32 is striking and dramatic. The story concerns a father with two sons: a wayward son and a compliant

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[146] University of California - Los Angeles. "Most runaway teens return home with the help of family ties, study finds." ScienceDaily. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/12/091204145705.htm (Accessed July 7, 2023).
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.

and amenable son. The wayward son demanded inheritance from his father, who initially resisted but gave in after much insistence. Immediately after the son received his inheritance, "he left for a far and foreign land,"[149] where he met new friends and wasted his inheritance through a lavish lifestyle. When his resources ran out, so did his friends, and now, in a foreign land, he was jobless, broke, and lonely.

Eventually, he got a job feeding and caring for pigs and reminisced about life at his father's house, where there was always plenty to eat. At his lowest moment, financially, mentally, and emotionally, reality dawned on him. He decided to return home and drafted a mini-speech addressing all the responses and rejections he might receive. Determined, he started the journey home. The parable ends with the father, after seeing his son from far off running towards him, falling on his neck, and kissing him, declaring, "This, my son, was dead and is alive again; he was lost and now is found." This demonstrates a sign of affection for one who is undeserving.

Although the duration of the son's absence from home is not specified, he left after his father had provided him with an inheritance. This act signified his departure from his father's authority and assumption of personal responsibility. Additionally, when his plan fails, the son plans to return home, suggesting he has high trust in his father.

The father had undoubtedly instilled excellent values in his sons. It was not his fault that his son had left and suffered. He would have preferred to continue nurturing his son at home. He set an admirable example for other fathers dealing with wayward children by receiving his son back, broken and repentant.

The son was confident that his father would receive him. He had confidence in his father and did not hesitate to return home. We can speculate that the father had created an environment

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[149] Luke 15:13. KJV.

of trust with his sons. In his narration of the parable, Bob Dodson, in his article, "The Return Home – A Study on the Prodigal Son in Luke 15,"[150] compares the prodigal son's father to God, who takes in all who come to him and gives them rest. Although the son did not know what to expect, he was ready for anything his father would decide on his return home.

It took "coming back to his senses"[151] for the son to return home in a broken state. He was unbothered by the opinions of those he would find on the way and at home and was more concerned about his father's judgment. He returned home because he knew his father would take him back. If his father was disappointed, he did not express it because when he saw his son, he ran towards him, kissed him, and ordered his servants to address him. When the emotionally bruised, physically depressed, poorly dressed, and broke son returned home, the father expressed his forgiveness and demonstrated his love for him. The son on the other hand exemplified humility, reformation, and willingness to receive any discipline his father may find appropriate for the pain he caused the family and community.

Children run away from home because what they are seeking is unavailable at home. They are looking for another experience outside of the protected space. While the father knew that giving his son a portion of his inheritance would not help him, there was no other way because his fixation on the inheritance was an unrealistic dream.

Children Deserve to be Loved.

Love is difficult to define and may mean different things to different people. Love, as an emotion, energy, expression, or what closely describes it, is crucial to human relationships, especially in the lives of children. Robert B. Brooks concurs with this assertion in his book *The*

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[150] Bob Dodson. 2011. Acts 242 Study. https://acts242study.com/the-return-home-part-3-of-a-study-on-the-prodigal-son-in-luke-15/. (Accessed July 15, 2023).
[151] Luke 15:17. KJV.

Power of Parenting, claiming that the parent's role in the life of their child "has a major impact on a child's overall development, effective adjustment, and resilience."[152] T. Joel Wade, Gretchen Auer, and Tanya M. Roth, in their article "What is Love: Further Investigation of Love Acts," defines love as "a very powerful emotion that can be a positive influence in many areas of life."[153] They contend that falling in love may lead to higher self-esteem and self-efficacy.

However, Barbara Solheim introduces a different viewpoint of love in her article "Possibility of a Duty to Love." She questions the role "moral considerations" play when the power involved is illegitimate." Solheim argues that the one holding more authority in a relationship becomes the dispenser of that love; hence, the one the love is dispensed to becomes vulnerable and risks being hurt. For Solheim, that power "over our students, our elderly parents, or our children might frighten us" [154] as it increases the risk of harm, given their vulnerability and defenselessness over our decisions and actions.

Solheim's concerns appear to coincide with what Dinah encounters in a short narrative in Genesis 34:1-6. Dinah is Jacob and Leah's daughter, and her story is difficult to read because it involves two families from Shechem and Israel, who had nothing to do with each other and resulted in the wiping out of an entire community. Although Israel's outrage is justified, the revenge is devastating. In the text, Dinah visits the "women of the region"[155] but ends up abducted, seduced, and raped by Shechem, son of Hamor, the ruler of that region. After the rape, Shechem approaches his father and asks him to negotiate marriage terms with Dinah's father,

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[152] Robert B. Brooks, n.d. *The Power of Parenting.* https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-14728-9_21. (Accessed July 15, 2023).

[153] T. Joel Wade, Gretchen Auer, and Tanya M. Roth. 2009. "What is Love: Further Investigation of Love Acts." *Journal of Social, Evolutionary, and Cultural Psychology* (American Psychological Association) 3 (4): 290-304. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0099315. (Accessed July 15, 2023).

[154] Barbara P. Solheim, 1999. "Possibility of a Duty to Love." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 1-17. Doi: https://doi.org/10.0000/007-2786.t01-1-00001. (Accessed May 20, 2023).

[155] Genesis 34:1. NIB.

Jacob, so that he can marry her. Jacob, however, remains silent and awaits his sons, who are out in the field. Upon returning and hearing what the Shechemites had done to their sister, the brothers become infuriated.

Despite Shechem's plea with Dinah's father and brothers to pay whatever bride price they would ask, Jacob's sons were apathetic, replying that they could not give their sister to one not circumcised because it "would be a disgrace to them."[156] However, they would offer to marry a Shechemite if all their males were circumcised. The Shechemites agreed, and three days after the grand circumcision, Jacob's sons attacked the city and killed all recuperating males, seizing their assets, including their women and children.

While the story does not end there, Dinah remains disregarded and voiceless and does not get a chance to speak or express whether she wants to marry Shechem or if she would rather live in her father's house. The narrative also silences Jacob, who, despite the horrific thing happening to his daughter, remains silent. Instead of taking a stand for his daughter, he waits for his sons to return from the field and oversee the matter.

In her essay, "The Rape of Dinah: Luther's Interpretation of a Biblical Narrative,"[157] Joy A. Schroeder poses that Martin Luther interpreted Dinah's story from the lens of a father. Luther, according to Schroeder, characterizes "Dinah as a carefree child who ventured out, unaware of the possible threats," [158] contrary to biblical interpreters who imply "Dinah brought about her downfall"[159] by leaving "the prescribed boundaries of modesty and safety of her home 'to see women of the region.'"[160] Schroeder conveys Luther's horror over the occurrence of Diana's

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[156] Genesis 34:14. NIB.
[157] Joy A. Schroeder, 1997. "The Rape of Dinah: Luther's Interpretation of a Biblical Narrative." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 28 (3): 775-791. https://doi.org/10.2307/2542991. (Accessed April 27, 2023).
[158] Schroeder. "The Rape of Dinah: Luther's Interpretation of a Biblical Narrative."
[159] Mary N. Ghongkedze, "Why They Are Labeled "At Risk" Children." 2018.Public Policy. Grambling. US Government Dept of Education. https://files.eric.ed.gov. (Accessed May 23, 2023).
[160] Ibid.

rape and vigorously defends her naïveté, suggesting she had gone out "to observe the festivities of the neighboring Shechemites."[161] To Luther, boys could play freely around and do chores outside the house, but this was not the same for girls, implying the "outdoors was dangerous for girls"[162] and required parental permission to venture outside the home.

While the men are negotiating over her affairs, Dinah remains silent, perhaps because she does not get an opportunity to tell her story or because her version is not required. Her silence mirrors Tamar's, who desperately cried but remained unheard. Similarly, Dinah's father, Jacob, remained silent, like David, who said nothing when he heard his first-born son had raped his only daughter. David's silence resulted in Absalom killing Amnon, leading to a coup and causing havoc in Israel. Correspondingly, Jacob's silence resulted in his sons seeking retribution for Dinah's rape and killing all the males in Shechem, including Shechem and Hamor.

Jacob would have minimized the bloodshed if he had guided his sons in overseeing the matter. Furthermore, perhaps because of cultural differences, Jacob and his sons disregarded Dinah's feelings, treating her more like a chattel who needed protection than a human wanting love, comfort, and assurance.

Jacob's family had no emotional connection because even the narrative fails to tell us what happened to Dinah after that. The family members completely ignored Dinah's feelings, and as Solheim points out, parents can provide for their children yet remain emotionally detached from them. She also laments that "whether or not parents love their children" [163] meddles with children's dexterousness in creating loving relationships.

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[161] Ibid.
[162] Schroeder. "The Rape of Dinah: Luther's Interpretation of a Biblical Narrative."
[163] Solheim. "Possibility of a Duty to Love."3.

Children Deserve Compassion

A parent's joy is seeing their child mature and becoming successful, responsible, and self-dependent. The word of God to the Israelites required fathers to learn the Law of the Lord so they and their children and their children's children "may fear the Lord … by keeping all his decrees and commands."[164] For Moses, the law was to trickle down from him to the fathers, children, and their children. In doing so, the children would have a foundation to build their lives and pass down God's laws, decrees, and commands to their children.

Children typically require guidance to navigate life honorably, respect their parents, and assume responsibility for their actions. It is one of the fundamental duties of parents to correct their children when they stray from the path of righteousness. To ensure the effectiveness of this correction, parents must consistently apply the necessary discipline. The absence of a father in a child's life, whether due to divorce, abandonment, or other reasons, can have a detrimental impact on the relationship between parent and child, as well as significant emotional and psychological consequences for the child. Children raised without a father often grapple with issues of self-esteem, trust, relationship-building, and depression. They may question their own worth and struggle to develop a healthy sense of self-worth without the support and guidance of a father figure. Solheim accentuates that "insecure children are reluctant to try out new experiences and are afraid of making mistakes" [165] due to the absence of their parents' love for them. It could also lead an insecure child into unhealthy relationships and the inability to create healthy boundaries. In addition to a sense of instability and uncertainty, trust issues are shared challenges for children with absent fathers.

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[164] Deuteronomy 6:2. NIV.
[165] Solheim. "Possibility of a Duty to Love."

An African proverb goes, "straighten a tree when it is still young"[166] because it will be harder to straighten when it matures. Similarly, the best time to "straighten" or correct children is when they are young and obedient because it will be more challenging when they grow old. In addition, Proverbs 22:6 asserts, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." The writer of Proverbs envisions that children are continuously being trained to and beyond old age.

Fathers also play significant roles in their children's lives as nurturers, mentors, disciplinarians, and moral instructors, according to the article "Blueprint for New Beginnings— A Responsible Budget for America's Priorities,"[167] but their absence could lead to waywardness. Hannah Kent Schoff reminds us that wayward children are an anxiety to parents, a problem in school, and "an object for discipline and punishment by the state when offenses become excessive."[168] She contends that there is little compassion when a wayward child makes a mistake, as it quickly escalates and attracts more severe consequences than a non-wayward child making a similar mistake. Schoff asserts that parents with disobedient children "learn that they possess the same innate possibilities as the more fortunate children"[169] and claims that waywardness, which is remediable and preventable, exists in every community. Parents who

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[166] Alex Temple, John Siyumbu, Professor Cephas Yao Agbemenu. 2003. Afriprov. https://afriprov.tangaza.ac.ke/jan2010africanproverbofthemonth/. (Accessed June 27, 2023).

[167] Executive Office of the President, *"A Blueprint for New Beginnings—A Responsible Budget for America's Priorities."* Administration of President George W. Bush. Washington: The White House. February 2001. https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/usbudget/blueprint/budtoc.html. (Accessed June 27, 2023). chap. 12. p. 75.

[168] Hannah Kent Schoff. 1915. *The Wayward Child; A Study of the Causes of Crime.* Edited by M.V. O'Shea. Indianapolis, Wisconsin: Bobbs & Merrill. https://www.forgottenbooks.com/en/download/TheWaywardChild_10012677.pdf. (Accessed June 20, 2023).

[169] Ibid.

exercise "sympathy and understanding of the childish heart and mind can get to the real causes and touch the inner life"[170] of the child.

Newspaper article, "Mr. T. C. Walker Makes Eloquent Appeal for Reclamation of Destitute and Wayward Children," reported that "neglected children were the most unfortunate of God's loved ones." [171] According to Walker, neglected children should not be seen as depraved or criminals because they become wayward criminals out of neglect and desire for parental care. Walker imputes children's waywardness to inaction and the lack of parental involvement. He argued that children become wayward because their parents neglect to train them, giving them too much freedom. As a result, they inherit criminal behaviors and "other degenerate behaviors displayed by their parents."[172] Walker views children growing up in economically deprived areas as "constantly exposed to threats and preyed upon more widely than those growing up in thriving economies."[173] They are exposed to more severe environment-related issues, such as food insufficiency, inadequate housing, violence, and crime, often leading to poor health, lifestyle, education, and other social ills.

In a report, "Why They Are Labeled 'At Risk' Children," Mary N. Ghongkedze of Grambling State University defines an 'at-risk' child as "one incapable of transitioning successfully into adulthood or unable to fulfill the requirements of certain rights of passage."[174] At-risk children, she suggests, are constantly exposed to peril and danger, such as "homelessness, incarceration, teenage pregnancy, serious health issues, or domestic violence,"[175] hindering them

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[170] Executive Office of the President, *A Blueprint for New Beginnings—A Responsible Budget for America's Priorities.*

[171] "Makes Plea for Children: Mr. T. C. Walker Makes Eloquent Appeal for Reclamation of Destitute and Wayward Children." Afro-American (1893-). November 13, 1915. https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/makes-plea-children/docview/530357794/se-2. (Accessed May 23, 2023).

[172] Ibid.

[173] "Economies" is a relative term and cuts through countries and neighborhoods.

[174] Ghongkedze. "Why They Are Labeled "At Risk" Children."

[175] Ibid.

from completing school. By socializing with those close to the family, "the child learns self-awareness, self-concept, and self-efficacy"[176] and becomes aware of social values and expectations, both positive and negative.

A school environment can serve as both a motivator and a barrier, particularly for migrant students, and can have a profound impact on their mental health. Schools can potentially motivate migrant students by providing a supportive and inclusive atmosphere that celebrates diversity. When schools actively embrace multiculturalism, offer language support, and recognize the unique perspectives of migrant students, they foster a sense of belonging and empower them to excel academically and socially. Moreover, a culturally sensitive curriculum that acknowledges the contributions of various cultures can enhance the self-esteem and motivation of migrants. Conversely, the school environment can become a barrier when it fails to address migrant students' specific needs. Language barriers, discrimination, and a lack of cultural understanding can lead to isolation, feelings of low self-worth, and hinder academic performance.

Likewise, the pressure to assimilate into a new culture while preserving one's identity can create internal conflict and stress, adversely impacting one's mental well-being. If a child is an immigrant student, there is a higher chance of experiencing bullying, racism, and partiality because of how they look and talk. Bullying and racism may be precursors to mental health issues, and if they remain unmanaged, they could escalate to more severe conditions. Schools must promote a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere where migrant students feel valued and supported to ensure their academic and personal success.

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[176] Ibid.

Hannah Kent Schoff claims that troubled or wayward children are an anxiety to parents, a problem in school, and "an object for discipline and punishment by the state when offenses become excessive."[177] She observed that compassion often ceases when a wayward child makes a mistake, and the mistake escalates, thereby attracting more severe consequences than if it were a non-wayward child. Schoff further poses that waywardness in every community is a "remediable and preventable condition."[178] She also views being sympathetic and understanding the child as critical in "inspiring and propelling the child on an upward path"[179] as well as understanding the natural causes of waywardness while touching the child's inner life.

Punishing wayward children does not help the child and only increases adversity. As demonstrated in the PBS show "Childhood Trauma,"[180] produced by Leya Hale, wayward children struggle from within, and what they see or hear may easily trigger their reactions. Wayward children do not need to be punished. Instead, they require intervention, love, compassion, and understanding.

Trauma can cause children to experience emotions that they may not be able to express verbally. They may instead exhibit these feelings through their behavior, which can result in them being labeled as stubborn, rebellious, or wayward by those around them. These children may become withdrawn, angry, and easily irritable, and may have difficulty following instructions or maintaining interest in activities.

Childhood trauma can result from abuse or observing abuse by family members. Gayla Margolin and Katrina A. Vickerman, in their article "Post-traumatic Stress in Children and

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[177] Schoff. 1915. "The Wayward Child; A Study of the Causes of Crime."
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid.
[180] *Whole People: Childhood Trauma.* 2019. Directed by Elizabeth Crippen Allen Sherece Lamke. Produced by Kevin Dragseth, Steve Spencer Leya Hale. https://www.tpt.org/whole-people/video/whole-people-101-childhood-trauma-3swqgb/. (Accessed July 28, 2023).

Adolescents Exposed to Family Violence," claim the exposure of children to violence is a "potential precursor to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)."[181] They hypothesize that trauma stressors, including average experiences, are "capable of causing death, injury, or threatening the child or a loved one's physical integrity."[182] According to Margolin and Vickerman, adolescents who experience domestic violence and abuse are also victims. Unfortunately, because "the violence exposure is not known to anyone outside the family,"[183] society overlooks such abuse.

Margolin and Vickerman further account "a study of youth in foster care that revealed 42% of those physically abused experienced PTSD."[184] Violence at home, physical or emotional aggression, they add, could also be considered a traumatic event because it "leaves the youth in a sense of danger and uncertainty, overwhelmed, fearful and helplessness."[185] As a result, the youths' perceptions of self-worth and self-esteem crack under the weight of trauma.

Children can also experience trauma during their migration. In our context, migration fits the definition of a shift from one geographical location to another. Many factors may influence migration, including economic issues like poverty, education, and political instability. Migration may result from a meticulous plan or may occur suddenly or forcefully. In their article "Migration, Trauma, and Resilience," Antonio Ventriglio and Dinesh Bhugra allude that depending on the individual's coping mechanism, the migration process can be traumatic to the migrants involved, as it involves significant decisions like moving at night, leaving comfortable homes or vehicles, and having to ride in the back of trucks. Children sometimes observe the

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[181] Vickerman, Gayla Margolin and Katrina A. 2010. "Post-traumatic Stress in Children and Adolescents Exposed to Family Violence." National Library of Medicine; National Center for Biotechnology Information (PubMed Central) 38 (6): 613-619. doi:10.1037/0735-7028.38.6.613. 613. (Accessed July 28, 2023).
[182] Ibid. 613.
[183] Ibid. 614.
[184] Ibid.
[185] Ibid.

"forceful separation of their parents"[186] by government authorities. The process is often traumatic, as the family travels to a potential receiving country, unsure of the reception or acceptance. Equally, for children, because their coping mechanisms have not been developed to manage such trauma, they are easily overwhelmed.

Emily M. Cohodes, Sahana Karibakaran, et al., article "Migration-Related Trauma and Mental Health among Migrant Children Emigrating from Mexico and Central America to the United States" insinuates that "migrants and refugee children experience significant adversity before, during, and after immigration."[187] Migration is a complex and challenging process that can have a profound impact on individuals, particularly adolescents. According to researchers, those who migrate from peaceful countries may experience migration trauma differently than those from war-torn countries. In addition, children who migrate with their parents may also be traumatized by the process, and unaccompanied adolescents in the United States may struggle emotionally as they take on new responsibilities in an unfamiliar environment. These new responsibilities, along with the need to follow the host country's rules and laws, can exacerbate anxiety and depression.

It is important to recognize that migration can be a traumatic experience for children, who may not understand why they must leave their homes and loved ones behind. This sense of helplessness and disorientation can have long-term effects on their emotional well-being.

Scholarly studies on trauma suggest that wayward children may be reacting to experienced traumas. In her article "School-Based Mental Health Services for Newly Arriving

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[186] Emily M. Cohodes, Sahana Karibakaran, Paola Odriozola, et al. 2021. "Migration-related trauma and mental health among migrant children emigrating from Mexico and Central America to the United States: Effects on developmental neurobiology and implications for policy." *Developmental Psychobiology* (Department of Psychology, Yale University). https://doi-org.proxy.libraries.smu.edu/10.1002/dev.22158. (Accessed May 20, 2023).
[187] Ibid.

Immigrant Adolescents," Leslie B. Adams suggests that "first-generation immigrants endure several hardships during their migration journey and continue facing challenges while adjusting to their new host country." [188] A study on Ethiopian adolescents who migrated to Israel revealed that "both first- and second-generation Ethiopian adolescent immigrants reported higher levels of drug and alcohol abuse compared to Israeli adolescents."[189] The research also reported a higher heroin usage among second-generation Ethiopian adolescents compared to first-generation and "67% as consuming alcohol and 27% experimenting with drugs"[190] among those who dropped out of school.

To achieve success in adulthood, children with trauma require treatment. Children migrating to a new community find it difficult to assimilate due to "increased violence and aggression at school,"[191] which could lead to adverse mental health concerns and alienation from the host environment. Unfortunately, solutions offered by schools to the 'wayward' children do not address why they are struggling. Adams suggested that school healthcare providers should not be quick to utilize a medicalized approach; instead, they should seek to understand the underlying cause of the children's behavior. Adams avers that children who have experienced "war, violence, torture, persecution, grief, loss, poverty, hunger, displacement, and forced separation"[192] have a higher trauma rate. She advocates the deployment of community brokers

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[188] Leslie B. Adams, 2016. "School-Based Mental Health Services for Newly Arriving Immigrant Adolescents." *J Immigrant Minority Health.* Vol. 18. New York: Springer Science+Business Media, December 12. 717. doi:10.1007/s10903-015-0319-5. (Accessed July 31, 2023).

[189] Aviad -Wilchek, Yael; Levy, Inna and Ben-David, Sarah. 2017. "Readiness to Use Psychoactive Substances Among Second-Generation Adolescent Immigrants and Perceptions of Parental Immigration-Related Trauma." *Substance Use & Misuse* 52 (12): 1646-1655. https://doi.org/10.1080/10826984.2017.1298618. (Accessed July 28, 2023).

[190] Ibid.

[191] Adams. "School-Based Mental Health Services for Newly Arriving Immigrant Adolescents."

[192] Meredith A. Whitley, 2022. *"In Her Own Words: A Refugee's Story of Forced Migration, Trauma, Resilience, and Soccer."* Sport in Society (Abington) 25 (3): 551-565. doi:10.1080/17430437.2022.2017817. (Accessed July 31, 2023). 551

acculturated in both mainstream and minority cultures to "operate a critical support mechanism to newly arriving immigrant groups"[193] to divert or minimize the impact of trauma.

Exposure to trauma at an early age "can lead to costly and chronic psychological, social, behavioral, and physical health problems, with greater exposure increasing the risk for severe and complex symptoms."[194] Different interventions may therefore be necessary to reach children. Traumatized children do not forget what they saw, heard, or happened to them, but meeting them at the points where they are, loving them, and befriending them can create significant milestones in their healing process.

In the article "The Proper Way of Dealing with a Rebellious Child,"[195] Rabbi Riskin argues that parents cannot accuse their child of disobedience if they are not "listening to his dreams, fears, and frustration, or fail to see what he is doing and whom he is befriending."[196] For Riskin, a child's rebelliousness responds to how parents engage in their child's life. He is against parents rushing to punish disobedient children because it is like they are the ones who failed to guide them on life issues. Riskin insists that parents not involved in their child's development have no right to accuse the child of being wayward. He further argues that parents must have a unified guiding voice so that one parent does not accuse the child of waywardness while the other sees the child as doing nothing wrong.

Adolescents typically transition to adulthood and technically are neither children nor adults. It is a transitory stage in which individuals undergo significant physical, emotional, and cognitive development. This phase is characterized by identity changes, increased independence,

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[193] Adams. "School-Based Mental Health Services for Newly Arriving Immigrant Adolescents."
[194] Whitley. *"In Her Own Words: A Refugee's Story of Forced Migration, Trauma, Resilience, and Soccer."*
[195] Rabbi Riskin Shlomo. "The Proper Way of Dealing with a Rebellious Child." *The Jewish Advocate.* (August 27-September 2, 2004) : 34-35.
[196] Ibid.

and an insatiable desire to explore social and personal lifestyles. Consequently, they face myriad challenges, including curiosity, circumnavigating peer relationships, authenticating their identity, and coping with emotional and hormonal changes. In this stage, they are more concerned about issues such as self-esteem, body image, peer pressure, and the need for autonomy, all of which contribute to increased emotional volatility, stress, and anxiety.

Emotional intelligence can serve as a potent instrument for mitigating the challenges faced by children by providing them with the necessary skills to comprehend, articulate, and regulate their emotions. Developing self-awareness enables adolescents to better recognize and manage their emotions, enhancing their self-confidence and resilience when confronted with obstacles.

Chapter 3

Emotional Intelligence (EI) and its Contribution to Mentoring

Emotional intelligence (EI) has gained significant recognition and importance in psychology and personal development over the last two decades. Emotional intelligence is "the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions" [197] effectively within oneself and in interpersonal relationships. It is the ability or capacity to perceive, assess, and regulate emotions in oneself and others and encompasses self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. By developing EI, individuals can better understand their feelings, navigate social interactions, and make informed decisions to enhance not only their well-being but that of others as well.

The American Psychological Association defines emotions as "strong feelings usually directed towards a specific object and typically accompanied by physiological and behavioral changes in the body."[198] The basic emotions comprise sadness, happiness, fear, anger, surprise, and disgust. Emotions and feelings are often confused, but feelings result from emotions triggered by memories, beliefs, and other factors, according to a University of West Alabama article, "The Science of Emotion: Exploring the Basics of Emotional Psychology."[199] On the other hand, emotional intelligence is how an individual utilizes emotions to one's advantage. For example, an individual who "capitalizes on their changing moods to best fit the task they have at hand"[200] can be described as emotionally intelligent.

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[197] Peter Salovey, and Daisy Grewal. 2005. "The Science of Emotional Intelligence." *Current Directions in Psychological Science* (SAGE Publications Inc) 14 (6): 281-285. Doi: 10.1111/j.0963-7214.2005.00381. x. (Accessed July 20, 2023): 281-285. 281

[198] *APA Dictionary of Psychology*. 2023. https://dictionary.apa.org/emotion. (Accessed August 6, 2023).

[199] The Science of Emotion: Exploring the Basics of Emotional Psychology. June 27, 2019. https://online.uwa.edu/news/category/psychology-and-counseling-news/. (Accessed August 12, 2023).

[200] Salovey and Grewal. 2005. "The Science of Emotional Intelligence. 281.

Emotional intelligence traces back to early philosophical and psychological theories. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle emphasized the importance of achieving emotional balance and moderation in one's life. In his views about the Doctrine of the Mean, he enhanced the importance of creating a balance by endorsing the idea that we should have strong feelings and a necessary degree of anger by taking "into account the particular circumstances of the individual."[201] The concept of emotional intelligence has been gaining recognition as a critical aspect of human development and well-being since the latter part of the 20th century. Its historical progression, extending from ancient philosophical wisdom to contemporary psychological research, emphasizes its relevance across various facets of life. Enhancing emotional intelligence enables individuals to effectively manage their emotions, establish meaningful connections, and navigate the complexities of daily life.

Emotional intelligence is an acquired skill that can be adopted over time and is not a fixed attribute. It requires self-reflection, practice, and willingness to learn from successes and failures. Enhancing one's EI can improve relations, communication, and well-being. In his article "Understanding the Neuroscience Behind Emotional Intelligence," Brian Kent defines EI as "a person's abilities to understand their emotional behaviors and manage them."[202] He suggests that people can tap into their emotional intelligence to determine how to respond to or manage their emotions given different circumstances or emotional stimuli. Tapping into one's emotional intelligence is critical because predicting the challenges one will encounter on a given day is impossible. However, knowing how to respond gives one a leading edge in protecting oneself

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[201] Richard Kraut. 2023. "Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy." *Aristotle's Ethics.* https://plato.stanford.edu/entires/aristotle-ethics/#EthiVirtDisp. (Accessed December 2, 2023).

[202] Brian Tait. 2020. "Understanding the Neuroscience behind Emotional Intelligence." Forbes Coaches Council, April 22. https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2020/04/22/understanding-the-neuroscience-behind-emotional-intelligence/?sh=5f6b41c37623. (Accessed July 17, 2023).

and others from hurt and cruelty. Further, Marc A. Brackett, Susan E. Rivers, and Peter Salovey, in their article, "Emotional Intelligence: Implications for Personal, Social, Academic, and Workplace Success," perceive "Emotional intelligence as an outgrowth of two areas of psychological research, i.e., cognition and affect, and secondly, an evolution in models of intelligence."[203] The authors of this article posit a correlation between emotionally intelligent individuals and positive outcomes in both educational and professional settings. For instance, they assert that fostering an emotionally positive learning environment is a precursor to academic engagement and success. Moreover, they propose that emotional intelligence should be understood as a collection of cognitive abilities that can be assessed through performance tests.

Emotional intelligence is not new and has been under intensive study since the seventies. In theory, Salovey and Grewal view "emotional intelligence as a set of interrelated skills allowing people to process relevant information efficiently and accurately."[204] In the 1990s, Salovey and Mayer identified emotional intelligence as the capacity "to monitor one's feelings and that of others, discriminating among them, and using the information to guide one's thinking and action."[205] In 1997, Mayer and Salovey revised the emotional intelligence model by presenting a four-branch model of emotional intelligence: perceiving emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions, and regulating emotions in the self and others.[206] The four-branch model views emotions as valuable sources of information that are necessary for an individual's successful navigation of one's social environment. It involves detecting and utilizing emotions to facilitate perceptive activities, such as thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving. The third

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[203] Mark A Brackett, Peter Salovey, and Susan E. Rivers. 2011. "Emotional intelligence: Implications for personal social, academic, and workplace success." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 5 (1): 88-103. doi:10.1111/j.1751-9004.2010.00334. x. (Accessed August 5, 2023).

[204] Salovey and Grewal. 2005. "The Science of Emotional Intelligence." 282.

[205] Ibid.

[206] Ibid.

ability is understanding emotional language, such as variations between happy and sad emotions, and appreciating how emotions progress.

Brackett, Rivers, and Salovey endorse Young's interrogation of "How one could be intelligent about the emotional aspects of life when emotions derail individuals from achieving their goals."[207] For Brackett et al., EI emerged from two areas of psychological research: investigating the interaction between "cognitive and emotional process and how it enhanced thinking"[208] and "the evolution in models of intelligence."[209] They further suggested two scientific approaches to EI: the ability method and the mixed model.

In the ability model, they perceived "emotional intelligence as a standard intelligence,"[210] where the construct intersected traditional criteria for intelligence. Those who defend this method argue that mental ability is critical for assessing correctness. The second mixed model is referred to as such because it "mixes the ability conception with personality traits and competencies." [211] According to Aljoscha C. Neubauer's contribution in the book *Models of Emotional Intelligence*, "mixed" describes the EI mixed model as a "collection of abilities and non-ability traits."[212] According to Neubauer, this model acted as a label for a group of personality characteristics and did not refer to EI emotions or intelligence "that might predict success in professional and everyday domains."[213] Those in defense of this approach utilize "self-reporting measurement

[207] Brackett, Salovey, and Rivers. "Emotional intelligence: Implications for personal social, academic, and workplace success."
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Aljoscha C. Neubauer and H. Harald Freudenthaler. 2005. "*Models of Emotional Intelligence." In Emotional intelligence: An international handbook.* Edited by R. Schulze and R. D. Roberts. Hogrefe & Huber Publishers: 31-50.
[213] Ibid. 40.

instruments,"[214] which may appear easy to use and preferable but are problematic as respondents may provide intentionally misleading or "socially desirable responses"[215] instead of being truthful.

In her article "Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences,"[216] Michele Marenus engages Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, arguing that intelligence encompasses more than just cognitive abilities. According to Marenus, Gardner's idea laid the foundation for considering emotional intelligence as a distinct form of intelligence. She theorizes that "people are not born with all of the intelligence they will ever have"[217] and that there is only one "single type of intelligence - known as '*g*' for general intelligence - that focuses only on cognitive abilities."[218] Because "there is no empirical evidence to validate the theory,"[219] cognitive psychologists and psychometricians have rejected these multiple intelligences.

In the 1990s, the term "emotional intelligence" gained popularity through the groundbreaking work of psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer. They defined emotional intelligence as monitoring and managing emotions, improving well-being, and interpersonal relationships. They provided an "EI model that defined mental abilities,"[220] such as emotional perspective, utilizing emotion to trigger thought, and understanding and managing emotions. Daniel Goleman's bestselling book *Emotional Intelligence* promoted the concept shortly after, spreading interest and research. Goleman described in his book how scientists had "discovered a

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[214] Brackett, Salovey, and Rivers. "Emotional intelligence: Implications for personal social, academic, and workplace success.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Michele Marenus. 2023. "Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences." SimplyPyschology. March 18. https://www.simplypsychology.org/multiple-intelligences.html. (Accessed August 5, 2023).
[217] Ibid.
[218] Ibid.
[219] Ibid.
[220] Ibid.

connection between emotional competencies and prosocial behavior"[221] and, in doing so, inadvertently popularized the term "Emotional intelligence" as we know it today.

Emotional Intelligence Contribution

Emotional intelligence (EI) is crucial in various areas of life, including personal relationships, professional success, and mental well-being. EI enables individuals to recognize and understand the emotions of others, fostering positive and harmonious relationships, which enhances communication, conflict resolution, and collaboration, leading to healthier personal and professional interactions. It is also a critical factor in effective leadership, as leaders with high emotional intelligence can inspire and motivate their team members by understanding their needs and concerns and making informed decisions. It also creates a supportive and inclusive work environment, increasing productivity and job satisfaction.

On health, EI plays an important role in promoting self-awareness and self-regulation. Individuals with strong EI are better able to manage stress, cope with challenges, and maintain emotional balance, reducing their risk of anxiety, depression, and burnout. It also improves decision-making by helping individuals make more rational and balanced decisions by considering their emotions alongside logical reasoning. EI prevents impulsive reactions and allows thoughtful evaluation of choices that lead to better outcomes. Furthermore, EI is adaptable and transcends different situations, circumstances, and conditions, enabling individuals to adapt to changing events, manage setbacks, and bounce back from failures. It cultivates resilience, allowing individuals to navigate through challenges with optimism and perseverance.

Jeff Feldman and Karl Mulle, in their article "Put Emotional Intelligence to Work," state that unmanaged emotional behavior can be costly, with the possibility of derailing an individual

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[221] Brackett, Salovey, and Rivers. "Emotional intelligence: Implications for personal social, academic, and workplace success."

"from fulfilling their true intentions."[222] They advance that it is more difficult managing emotions "when someone is deliberately hostile or offensive as opposed to when challenged to step outside of their comfort zone."[223] For Fredman and Mulle, the role of "motivating and helping one achieve their desired goal"[224] is realized when one is compelled to employ one's emotional energy to achieve a desired outcome.

The Science Behind EI and its Functionality.

In her article "The Science behind Emotional Intelligence," Emily Sterrett argues that emotions are not just a function of the heart but "a result of brain biochemistry."[225] She suggests that the body feels the emotional signals, "the gut, the heart, the head, the neck,"[226] which subsequently help initiate decisions. She presents three layers of the brain - the first brain acts as the center of "autonomic or automatic response connecting one to the external world through our skin, pores, and nerves."[227] Secondly, the rational or logical brain "assists with thinking, planning, questioning, making decisions, solving problems, and generating new ideas."[228] Thirdly, the emotional brain contributes by "helping us know what to approach and avoid by guiding our preferences."[229] She alludes that as we navigate through life, we encounter various experiences contributing to our reserves of "stronger intuitions, hunches, and gut reactions."[230] These reserves become helpful later in life as resources should we encounter impediments potentially slowing or hindering our progress.

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[222] Jeff Feldman, Karl Mulle. 2007. *Put Emotional Intelligence to Work: Equip yourself for success.* Alexandria: Association for Talent Development.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Ibid.
[225] Emily Sterrett. 2014. *The Science Behind Emotional Intelligence.* In Managers Pocket Guide to Emotional Intelligence. Amherst: HRD Press.
[226] Ibid.
[227] Ibid.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Ibid.

According to Sterrett, stress activates a particular gene that attaches to the brain's DNA, "causing abnormalities that lead to depression and other emotional challenges."[231] When invigorated, "the brain secretes catecholamines, adrenalin, and noradrenaline."[232] She added that the brain secretes cortisol when an individual is stressed, preventing the memory from functioning at its best. Sterrett avows that research has shown that "prolonged stress destroys neurons and shrinks the brain's memory center."[233] She further denotes that we assimilate towards what we see – in other words, people tend to re-create themselves in the mood of others, particularly when exposed to angry people.

According to Sterrett, emotionally intelligent people harness and use these emotions appropriately without allowing them control. She adds that while men are more assertive in "self-confidence and self-control, women are better at empathy and social skills than men"[234] and concludes that "we make better decisions when acting on information from our feelings, instincts, intuition, and information forming from our rational intellect."[235] Emotional intelligence, she maintains, steers people towards controlling and "accessing emotions when adapting to chance, getting along with others, or dealing with stress."[236] In other words, utilizing emotional intelligence helps people overcome life challenges, regardless of causation.

Hillary Lebow, on the other hand, focuses more on EI's five components. First is self-awareness, which facilitates the identification and understanding of emotions and their impact on others. Lebow states that when one observes "patterns of behaviors and motives and tracks how

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[231] Sterrett. *The Science Behind Emotional Intelligence*.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Ibid.
[234] Ibid.
[235] Ibid.
[236] Ibid.

they impact those around,"[237] they become self-aware. Fredman and Mulle, in their article "Put Emotional Intelligence to Work," present self-awareness as the foundation from which EI bifurcates. They view self-awareness as "tuning in to what is happening emotionally within and recognizing and acknowledging one's emotional state."[238] Confident people or people with significant emotional energy, according to Feldman and Mulle, consider they have something to offer the world and are "convinced that their lives count for something,"[239] which inspires a clearer sense of "meaning, direction, and significance"[240] in their lives.

The second component, self-regulation, manages emotions and behaviors. Lebow identifies this component as a control that encourages one to think before acting by weighing consequences and avoiding over-reacting. To do this, Lebow suggests understanding tension-reducing techniques of "stepping backward, managing conflict, coping with difficult scenarios, and adapting to environmental changes."[241] On self-concept, Feldman and Mulle propound that "people tend to suffer distress when they have no clear conception of who they are, or why they are here, or where they are going."[242] Nonetheless, a healthy self-concept produces confidence and self-esteem. Feldman and Mulle further aver that we discover "our significance, our greatness, our challenges, and our limitations"[243] when what we know of ourselves is unknown to others.

The third component, self-motivation, renders itself when one has a thirst for personal development and a drive to succeed. Whatever version of success, one remains inspired to

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[237] Hillary I. Lebow, Reviewed by Kendra Kubala. *PsychCentral*. https://psychcentral.com/lib/what-is-emotional-intelligence-eq. (Accessed July 21, 2023).

[238] Lebow. *PsychCentral*. https://psychcentral.com/lib/what-is-emotional-intelligence-eq.

[239] Ibid.

[240] Ibid.

[241] Ibid.

[242] Feldman and Mulle. *Put Emotional Intelligence to Work.*

[243] Ibid.

accomplish the course because it helps the individual. The fourth component comprises social awareness or empathy, described as the ability to understand the emotions of others, how they feel, and how they share those emotions. Lebow avers that an empathetic person "is not self-centered but has a healthy level of self-interest and understands people."[244] The fifth component, social skills, includes influence, conflict management, teamwork, and inspiring others. According to Lebow, people who are "aware of others and their needs in a conversation or conflict resolution are active listeners and welcoming in conversation" and possess strong social skills.

In his article "Understanding the Neuroscience Behind Emotional Intelligence," Brian Tait claims that EI refers to a "person's capabilities of understanding their emotional behaviors and managing them."[245] Those with higher EI understand and control their emotions in different situations, react better to information, and respond more proactively. Feldman and Mulle argue that self-awareness is "fundamental to self-management"[246] and further submit that by people rendering their behaviors to dispositions, emotions, and uncontrollable urges and impulses, they actually are "giving up their power to manage those behaviors or avoiding responsibility over them."[247]

In refining their definition of EI, Salovey and Grewal identified four proposed abilities, i.e., "perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions."[248] They described perceiving emotions as the "ability to detect and interpret faces, pictures, voices, and cultural artifacts,"[249] using emotions as the ability to "harness emotions to facilitate cognitive activities,"[250]

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[244] Lebow. PsychCentral. https://psychcentral.com/lib/what-is-emotional-intelligence-eq.
[245] Tait. "Understanding the Neuroscience Behind Emotional Intelligence."
[246] Feldman and Mulle. 2007. *Put Emotional Intelligence to Work.*
[247] Ibid.
[248] Salovey and Grewal. 2005. "The Science of Emotional Intelligence." 281
[249] Ibid.
[250] Ibid.

understanding emotions as the ability to understand emotional language and appreciating the complex fabrics of "relationship among emotions;"[251] and managing emotions as regulating "emotions in both ourselves and others."[252]

EI influences various aspects of human functioning and embodies the recognition, understanding, and management of emotions in oneself and others. The American Psychological Association (APA) Dictionary of Psychology describes emotion as "a complex reaction pattern involving experiential, behavioral, and physiological elements"[253] that individuals use to deal with a personal and significant matter or event. It further defines intelligence "as the capacity to obtain information, learning from experience, adapting to the environment, and correctly utilizing thought and reason."[254] These two definitions imply that an emotionally intelligent person "understands, correctly utilizes thought and reason, and adapts to the environment."[255]

EI, therefore, begins with recognizing and accurately identifying emotions in oneself and others. This involves understanding facial expressions, body language, and vocal cues. Research has demonstrated that "individuals with higher emotional intelligence are better at recognizing emotions in others"[256] and are more proficient at identifying their emotional states. This involves understanding and interpreting emotions and the factors that bring them about. It includes recognizing the causes and consequences of emotions and the complex interplay between thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Studies have shown that individuals with high emotional

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[251] Salovey and Grewal. 2005. "The Science of Emotional Intelligence."

[252] Ibid.

[253] *APA Dictionary of Psychology*. 2023. https://dictionary.apa.org/emotion. (Accessed August 6, 2023).

[254] Ibid.

[255] Ibid.

[256] Hillary Anger Elfenbein and Nalini Ambady. 2002. "On the universality and cultural specificity of emotion recognition: A meta-analysis." Edited by Blair T. Johnson. *Psychological Bulletin*. 128 (2): 203-235. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.128.2.203. (Accessed August 5, 2023).

intelligence retain more significant emotional and intellectual capacity and cognitive empathy than those with lower EI.

EI influences how emotions augment or hinder thinking and decision-making processes, and individuals with higher EI tend "to be more effective at harnessing emotions" [257] to facilitate problem-solving, creativity, and critical thinking. Such people can utilize emotional information to guide their reasoning and decision-making, leading to more optimal outcomes. It encompasses the appropriate expression and regulation of emotions in various social and interpersonal contexts. This process involves effectively managing and controlling one's emotions and responding empathetically to others. Additionally, those who "exhibit greater emotional self-control, adaptive emotion regulation strategies, and prosocial behaviors"[258] tend to be individuals with higher EI.

Finally, EI is crucial for building and maintaining healthy relationships. It involves active listening, empathy, conflict resolution, and collaboration skills. Research demonstrates that individuals with higher EI perform better "on cognitive tasks and are better suited to deal with frustrations or helplessness that may result from encountering difficult tasks."[259] Individuals with a high emotional intelligence approach to assignments allocated to them with a positive mentality, regardless of the assignment's complexity. Further studies have revealed that individuals with high emotional intelligence tend to maintain positive moods.

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[257] Paulo N. Lopes, Peter Salovey, and Rebecca Straus. 2003. "Emotional intelligence, personality, and the perceived quality of social relationships." *Personality and Individual Differences* 35 (3): 641-658. doi:10.1016/S0191-8869(02)00242-8. (Accessed August 5, 2023).

[258] Brackett, Salovey, and Rivers, 2011. "Emotional intelligence: Implications for personal social, academic, and workplace success."

[259] Nicola S Schutte, Edward Schuettpelz, and John M. Malouff. 2001. "Emotional Intelligence and Task Performance." *Imagination, Cognition and Personality* 20 (4): 347-354. doi:10.2190/J0X6-BHTG-KPV6-2UXX (Accessed August 15, 2023).

EI and its Efficacy on Adolescents

Adolescents undergo significant emotional and psychological changes during this stage of life. It is a trying time that can bring confusion, self-doubt, and even stress as their interests shift. Developing EI skills during the adolescent stage will help them understand their emotions better, regulate them, and, as a result, improve their mental wellness. Adolescents with higher EI tend to have lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. Brackett, Rivers, and Salovey, in their article "EI: Implications for Personal, Social, Academic, and Workplace Success,"[260] expound on how EI implicates individuals personally, socially, academically, and at the workplace. In their article, they discussed how emotional intelligence aids individuals in detecting the emotional states of others, embracing their views, and managing their behavior. In academics, it assists in enabling individuals to manage their emotions when anxious and supports various aspects of work-related performance.

EI is an essential building block for the construction and maintenance of healthy relationships. Programs incorporating EI "can encourage the development of one's own emotional understanding and peer relationships."[261]Adolescents with higher EI are likelier to have positive and satisfying relationships with their peers, parents, and teachers. They understand others' perspectives better, communicate effectively, and resolve conflicts constructively. If people know themselves in every way, they can control their emotions and have healthy relationships with others.

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[260] Marc A Brackett, Susan E. Rivers, and Peter Salovey. 2011. "Emotional intelligence: Implications for personal, social, academic, and workplace success." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 88-103.doi:10.1111/j.1751-9004.2010.00334. x. (Accessed August 8, 2023).

[261] Güler, Bahar, and Serhat Turan. 2022. "The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Predicting Peer Relationships in Adolescents." *Journal of Educational Issues* 8 (1): 73-84. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1344594.pdf. (Accessed August 8, 2023).

EI can also positively affect academic achievement. Adolescents with higher EI can better manage stress, set realistic goals, remain motivated, and persevere through challenges. They also tend to have better critical thinking skills and exhibit greater self-discipline, which can contribute to improved academic performance. One of the most widely used instruments to evaluate aspects of EI, as defined by John Mayer and Peter Salovey, is the Trait Meta-Mood Scale. The Trait Meta-Mood Scale assessment measures individuals' awareness and regulation of "their moods and emotions."[262] Research according to Natalio Extremera and Pablo Fernandez-Berrocal reveals that "moderate-to-low scores in Emotional Attention and high scores in Clarity and Emotions"[263] are commonly found in people with high EI.

Mayer and Salovey further argue that individuals who are aware of their feelings "are more skillful in treating emotional problems and, therefore, will experience more emotional well-being, compared with less skilled individuals."[264] They also suggest that high emotional intelligence assists adolescents in developing a "fighting-back spirit," which is the ability to bounce back from setbacks and cope with adversity. Adolescents using EI develop skills to navigate demanding situations, cope with stress, and adapt to change by "effectively understanding and managing their emotions."[265] Eventually, resilience contributes to their overall well-being and success in various areas of life.

EI concerns the accurate recognition and assessment of emotions in oneself and others. Therefore, adolescents with higher EI are more likely to make thoughtful and well-informed decisions when considering both their emotions and those of others. Higher EI can also lead to

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[262] Natalio Extremera and Pablo Fernandez-Berrocal. 2006. "Emotional intelligence as a predictor of mental, social, and physical health in university students." *The Spanish Journal of Psychology.*" 2006; 9 (1): 45-51. doi:10.1017/S1138741600005965. (Accessed August 8, 2023).
[263] Ibid.
[264] Ibid.
[265] Güler and Turan. "The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Predicting Peer Relationships in Adolescents."

better decision-making in various contexts, such as relationships, academics, and future career choices.

Developing EI in adolescents can positively impact their personal and social development. It can contribute to improved mental health, social relationships, academic performance, resilience, and decision-making skills. Encouraging the development of EI through education, support, and practice can benefit adolescents' overall well-being and future success.

Complexity in Measuring EI

Measuring EI involves self-reporting, where respondents "rate themselves on characteristics the test designers selected believing they represent emotional intelligence."[266] This method is "less costly, easy to administer, and takes less time to complete."[267] When using self-reported scales, dishonesty shows up as testers respond in conjunction with their perception of the expected response instead of their emotional abilities. The ability-based method "focuses on contribution to important life outcomes"[268] and is not manipulatable.

According to Brackett, Rivers, and Salovey, several "published performance tests measure distinct components of emotional intelligence."[269] Two frequently used tests are "Diagnostic Analysis of Nonverbal Accuracy Scales, DANVA and DANVA-2."[270] The Mayer–Salovey–Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) has a unique version for adults and children (MSCEIT-YV). The designers of this test claim it "meets the criteria for a test of intelligence"[271] because the structure assesses the four EI branches and is "statistically

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[266] Mark A. Brackett, Peter Salovey, and Susan E. Rivers. 2011. "Emotional intelligence: Implications for personal social, academic, and workplace success." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 5 (1): 88-103. doi:10.1111/j.1751-9004.2010.00334. x. (Accessed August 5, 2023).
[267] Ibid.
[268] Ibid.
[269] Ibid.
[270] Ibid.
[271] Ibid.

independent from other well-established constructs."[272] The MSCEIT is a well-known ability-based test developed by Peter Salovey, John D. Mayer, and David R. Caruso. This assessment tool is "widely used in research and has demonstrated good psychometric properties."[273] It measures four branches of emotional intelligence: perceiving, facilitating thoughts with understanding, and managing emotions.

Another popular measuring tool is The Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), a "self-report questionnaire developed by Reuven Bar-On."[274] This tool measures emotional and social skills related to EI, including self-awareness, self-expression, interpersonal relationships, decision-making, and stress management. The limitation of this test is its cognitive bias, specifically where test-takers "overestimate their positive and underestimate their negative qualities"[275] compared to other traits, such as intelligence and personality.

K. V. Petrides developed another self-report assessment tool, the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue). The TEIQue "has been widely used in research and has also demonstrated good psychometric properties."[276] This tool assesses emotional understanding, emotional regulation, emotionality, and sociability.

The Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI), developed by Richard Boyatzis, is a "360-degree assessment tool that measures emotional and social competencies."[277] It assesses the various dimensions of EI and "has been used in research and shown good reliability and

[272] Ibid.
[273] Ibid.
[274] Adrian Furnham and Adrienne Rosen. 2016. "The Dark Side of Emotional Intelligence." *Scientific Research* 7 (3). doi:10.4236/psych.2016.73035. (Accessed August 12, 2023).
[275] Ibid.
[276] K.V. Petrides and Adrian Furnham. 2000. "On the dimensional structure of emotional intelligence." Personality and Individual Differences 29 (2): 313-320. doi:10.1016. /S0191-886999001956-6. (Accessed August 12, 2023).
[277] Ibid.

validity."[278] The ECI measures emotional and social competencies through an assessment

process in which feedback is gathered from the individual being assessed and their peers,

supervisors, and subordinates.

The inventory consists of questions and scenarios assessing distinct aspects of emotional

intelligence, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills, and motivation.

Respondents, in turn, rate the individual's behavior and actions about these competencies,

providing insights into their strengths and areas of development.

Through this process, ECI comprehensively evaluates an individual's emotional and

social competencies, offering valuable feedback for personal and professional growth. By

identifying one's area of strength and improvement, individuals can use the results to enhance

their emotional intelligence, leading to improved relationships and decision-making.

Measuring Emotional Intelligence is complex because it involves assessing intangible

qualities such as empathy and self-awareness. Standardized tests may not effectively capture the

intricacies of human emotions. This requires an integrated approach that considers cultural

differences and individual growth, which makes it difficult to quantify in a standardized manner.

EI's Ubiquitousness

Research has indicated that emotional intelligence (EI) can be learned and honed through

various methods, such as education, training, and practice. Although some individuals may

naturally possess higher levels of EI, it is not solely an innate trait and can be developed over

time. Educators have created programs and training workshops concentrating on EI and

integrated them into schools, workplaces, and personal development initiatives. These programs

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[278] R. E. Boyatzis, D. Goleman, and K. Rhee. 2000. *"Clustering Competence in Emotional Intelligence: Insights from the Emotional Intelligence Inventory."* Edited by Reuven Bar-On and James D.A. Parker, Jossey-Bass. 343-362.

provide individuals with knowledge, strategies, and practical exercises to enhance their EI abilities.

Moreover, practical EI training often includes activities that encourage self-reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation. It also incorporates exercises that help individuals understand and manage their emotions, improve interpersonal communication, and develop empathy and social skills. Although it is difficult to measure the prevalence of EI precisely, there has been a substantial increase in its recognition and importance in various fields over the past few decades.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a universal concept that has been studied across various cultures and societies. Although cultural norms and values may affect how emotions are expressed and perceived, the fundamental principles of EI are applicable across cultures. However, it is essential to acknowledge that the manifestation of EI may differ across cultures. For instance, some cultures may prioritize emotional restraint and self-control, while others may encourage more expressive displays of emotion. The specific behaviors and practices associated with EI may also vary across cultures.

Moreover, while EI benefits individuals in various contexts, it is not a guaranteed predictor of success or happiness, as cognitive abilities, personality traits, and social support also play a significant role in determining individual outcomes. EI has gained substantial attention in the workplace as a crucial factor for effective leadership. Many organizations now recognize that employees with high EI tend to have better skills, handle stress more effectively, and possess more potent problem-solving abilities. As a result, companies are incorporating EI assessments and training programs into their recruitment and development strategies.

Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a vital component in psychology and mental health as it pertains to understanding and addressing various mental health issues. As such, Therapists and counselors frequently concentrate on assisting individuals in enhancing their EI, which encompasses self-awareness, emotional regulation, and interpersonal relationships.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a skill that can be acquired through education, training, and consistent practice. It is important to note that while the fundamental principles of EI are universal, specific behaviors and practices associated with EI may differ across cultures. Developing EI can lead to personal growth, stronger relationships, and improved well-being. For instance, social-emotional learning (SEL) has gained considerable attention in recent years, with schools incorporating SEL programs into their curricula to promote emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and academic success among students.

Furthermore, EI has been addressed in personal development and self-help literature, with numerous books and resources dedicated to enhancing it. As people increasingly recognize the significance of EI in their personal lives, it has become essential for fostering healthy relationships, effective communication, and overall well-being. Although EI is still widely recognized, its relevance has grown significantly in recent years. As individuals, organizations, and societies continue to value the advantages of EI, it is likely to become even more prevalent in various aspects of life.

EI as an Antidote for Bullying Among Adolescents

EI is a major factor in adolescent development and plays a significant role in social and emotional well-being. Research by Brackett, Rivers, and Salovey has demonstrated the relationship between EI and adolescents, stressing its importance in various aspects of their lives. One of their studies presented an overview of EI and its relevance to personal, social, academic,

and workplace success. This study stressed the impact of EI skills on adolescent development and highlighted the significance of cultivating EI in educational settings.

Other studies, such as a report by Justine Lomas, Con Stough, Karen Hansen, and Luke A. Downey, sought to understand the correlations between the "emotional intelligence of adolescents bullying behaviors and peer victimization."[279] They examined EI, specifically in the context of adolescents, by selecting participants who completed a self-report that assessed their EI, such as "how frequently they engaged in bullying behaviors, and how often they were the target of peer victimization."[280] Their study found that "emotional intelligence substantially predicted adolescents' propensity to peer victimization."[281] Interestingly, both the bullies and the bullied scored low on the EI assessment. The researchers concluded that targeting EI deficits in aggressive adolescents and their complaisant enhanced EI and reduced bullying instances.

Bullying behavior escalates during adolescence. The authors in the article attempted to establish a relationship between the "emotional intelligence of adolescents, bullying behaviors and peer victimization."[282] School bullying has adverse consequences for the bullied, aggressors, and bystanders. The report, which focused on an Australian target population, reported that 10-25% of schoolchildren experienced peer bullying. Bullying comes with a negative stigma and other psychosocial impacts, including "emotional well-being, academic performance, and success later in life."[283] They noted that bullying behaviors were associated with low empathetic responsiveness and concern for others. In their research, Lomas, Stough, Hansen, and Downey

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[279] Justine Lomas, Con Stough, Karen Hansen, and Luke A. Downey. 2011. "Brief report: Emotional intelligence, victimization and bullying in adolescents." *Journal of Adolescence* 35 (1): 207-211. Doi: 10.1016/j.adolescence.2011.03.002. (Accessed August 15, 2023). 207
[280] Ibid, 207.
[281] Ibid.
[282] Ibid.
[283] Ibid.

found that adolescents with well-developed EI skills were "less likely to become bullying targets"[284] compared to those with less developed EI skills.

Barragan Martin, A.B. Molero Jurado, Perez-Fuentez, et al., in their article "Interpersonal Support, EI and Family Function in Adolescence," present that families still maintain and support adolescents. They recognize adolescence as a critical period of psychosocial development in which young people must progress. They identified the impact of parents and schoolmates on the psychosocial maturity of yet-to-be adults. They also recognize family functions during adolescence as contributing towards the adolescent's "socialization and behavior management, affective and emotional control," [285] and provide recreational support.

Martin, Jurado, and Perez-Fuentez believed that "a secure attachment style of a relationship predicted all the dimensions of emotional intelligence"[286] and that "emotional support in times of difficulty was instrumental in solving problems"[287] when friends were supportive during the development stage.

Nusaibah Nur Furqani, in his article "The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Adolescent Development," describes adolescence as a transitory stage, where the adolescent encounters unsolicited "physical, hormonal, and psychosocial changes."[288] He defined it as a vulnerable stage for adolescents, as physical changes and hormonal changes occur in their bodies without warning. This developmental stage is difficult for boys, as their voices get hoarse and cracked,

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[284] Ibid. 210.

[285] Ana Belén Barragán Martín, María Del Mar Molero Jurado, María Del Carmen Pérez-Fuentes, Nieves Fátima Oropesa Ruiz, África Martos Martínez, María Del Mar Simón Márquez, and José Jesús Gázquez Linares. 2021. "Interpersonal Support, Emotional Intelligence and Family Function in Adolescence." *Int J Environ Res Public Health* 18 (10). doi:10.3390/ijerph18105145.1. (Accessed August 13, 2023).

[286] Ibid.

[287] Ibid

[288] Nusaibah Nur Furqani. 2020. "The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Adolescent Development." *Advances in Social Science, Education, and Humanities Research* (Atlantis Press) 395. doi:10.2991/assehr.k.200120.058. (Accessed August 13, 2023).

and their hair grows. For girls, breasts and body hair grow, acne develops, and menstrual cycles begin. The stage becomes "a critical period marked by physical and mental development that occurs quickly."[289] Adolescence marks the need for mental adjustment and the formation of new attitudes, values, and interests as they transition to adulthood. "The transitional period means they are no longer children, but at the same time, they are not adults yet."[290] Still, adolescents refer to themselves as adults but are not yet there, nor are they still children.

Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in managing emotions. According to Furqani, adolescents with high "emotional intelligence are adept at expressing their emotions appropriately in response to different situations and circumstances."[291] In contrast, those lacking emotional intelligence may resort to physical altercations "such as fights, expressions of hatred, or engaging in other destructive and harmful behaviors"[292] to exhibit their inability to manage their emotions.

Parents play a significant role in adolescents' EI because a "parenting style can influence the level of EI and interpersonal relationships."[293] Studies have shown that "permissive or democratic parents create positive emotions and behavior in adolescents, such as the ability to express emotion and having initiative."[294] By contrast, "authoritarian or dictator parents make adolescents inflexible, rigid, dependent on the rules, and irresponsible."[295] Those who "display negative behavior and exacerbate mental health or depression"[296] tend to have low EI. In

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[289] Ibid.
[290] Furqani. 2020. "The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Adolescent Development." 277.
[291] Ibid. 278.
[292] Ibid.
[293] Ibid.
[294] Ibid, 279.
[295] Ibid, 280.
[296] Ibid.

contrast, those who "develop social relationships well, reduce stress and frustration on problems they experienced"[297] tend to have high EI.

Martin, Jurado, Perez-Fuentes, et al. defended the impression that a supportive and functioning family exerts a sustaining and supporting role in the adolescent. Their study analyzed the relationship between family function, EI, and how adolescents perceive interpersonal support. The study showed a positive correlation between family function and intrapersonal and mood dimensions of EI, revealing that when the adolescent family was functional and supportive, the "students possessed a high empathy and support." In contrast, those from severely dysfunctional home families had low empathy.

EI and Adolescent Trauma, Emotional Negligence, and Loneliness

Children are often incapable of fully comprehending the intentions of their parents and may consequently suffer emotionally from neglect. As they are vulnerable and reliant on their parents and caregivers, they tend to obey their directives unquestioningly, even when faced with punishment or deprivation. It is common for young children to trust their parents implicitly, which can sometimes result in them being unaware of neglect or abuse. In their defense, parents may argue that they are emotionally drained and inadvertently transfer their frustrations onto their children. This can lead to decisions that profoundly impact their children's lives, such as remarriage, moving to a new neighborhood or state, or altering their social circle. While these decisions may seem adult-oriented, they can significantly affect children's ability to form friendships and maintain connections with extended family members.

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[297] Ibid.

Emotional negligence is a form of trauma that impacts "a person's emotional and psychological well-being."[298] Emotional trauma can significantly shape an adolescent's future as an adult if not addressed at an earlier stage. Further, Nanda et al. highlight a potentially significant consequence "for the emotional and psychosocial well-being of a maltreated child"[299] as they navigate into adulthood.

According to Monica M. Nanda, Elizabeth Reichert, and Uchenna J, emotional neglect can occur unconsciously or unintentionally at home. Jones et al., in their article "Childhood Maltreatment and Symptoms of Social Anxiety: Exploring the Role of Emotional Abuse, Neglect, and Cumulative Trauma," parents may emotionally neglect their children, punishing them for expressing sadness, frustration, and anger. Emotional neglect can also occur when caregivers fail to support their children emotionally or are ill-equipped to do so. Also referred to as emotional maltreatment, it can "occur when the child's primary caregiver violates the child's emotional vulnerability, dependence and communication within the child's social context."[300] Children who have experienced childhood trauma have an increased chance of being fearful and displaying anger and attention problems that can persist into adulthood.

While some family changes are inevitable, primarily when driven by tangible factors such as the economy, family safety, and security, the shifts still impact children. If not addressed, it could lead to mental health issues such as exhibiting withdrawal symptoms, a propensity to be alone, and being anti-social and frequently sulking, among other consequences. Parents'

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[298] Wendy Rose Gould. 2023. How Childhood Emotional Neglect Can Show Up in Our Adult Life. https://www.verywellmind.com/childhood-emotional-neglect-in-adulthood-7568040. (Accessed August 19, 2023).

[299] Monica M. Nanda, Elizabeth Reichert, Uchenna J. Jones, and Ellen Flannery-Schroeder. 2016. "Childhood Maltreatment and Symptoms of Social Anxiety: Exploring the Role of Emotional Abuse, Neglect, and Cumulative Trauma." *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma.* 201-271. doi:10.1007/s40653-015-0070-z. 201. (Accessed August 19, 2023).

[300] Nanda, Reichert, Jones, and Flannery-Schroeder. 2016. *"Childhood Maltreatment and Symptoms of Social Anxiety: Exploring the Role of Emotional Abuse, Neglect, and Cumulative Trauma."*201.

substance dependence often rattles family dynamics, especially when accompanied by arguments over insufficient resources. These differences may trickle down to spousal abuse and children as feuds escalate over general family upkeep and welfare. Nanda et al. suggest that parents' behavior may convey to the child that "he or she is worthless, incompetent, and powerless, thus affecting their social interactions and relationships with others."[301] This usually happens when parents experience feelings of worthlessness and pass these feelings on to their children.

While counseling may be helpful for children encountering such challenges, most communities consider it taboo to take their children for therapy, fearing the community may stigmatize them. In her article "How Childhood Emotional Neglect Can Show Up in Our Adult Life," Gould suggests that parents may punish children for expressing negative emotions or fail to participate with them when they experience positive emotions. Other parents completely dismiss or ignore their children's emotions, fail to demonstrate affection, or intervene "when the child is under emotional stress."[302] These experiences, among others, lead the child to believe that social interactions are abusive, causing them to fear further trauma from people they consider strangers. Such children may feel "unloved, unwanted, flawed, and worthless,"[303] leading to an increased risk of anxiety.

Children who have experienced trauma from neglect display behavioral issues and struggle to maintain relationships at home and school, which may progress into adulthood. Because of this neglect, they develop coping mechanisms and behavior patterns. This coping mechanism may include "numbing their feelings" due to "difficulty expressing and processing

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[301] Ibid. 201.
[302] Gould. 2023. How Childhood Emotional Neglect Can Show Up in Our Adult Life.
[303] Ibid.

emotions."[304] Such children may adopt delinquent behavior by being drawn to hostile groups, breaking home and school rules, and engaging in criminal activities.

Nanda et al. added that such children are content with what they have or do not have and seldom ask for help or assistance for fear of rejection. They are people-pleasers, meeting people's needs other than their own, making them feel "worthy, loved, needed, and good enough."[305] They struggled to trust people and raise walls to protect themselves. Worst of all, they develop excessive ways of coping by becoming co-dependent on people who are not suitable for them or adopting people-pleaser behavior to keep people around them. This behavior inadvertently pushes them to experiment on drugs and alcohol, binge on food, and experience depression and risky sexual actions. A study of adult psychiatric patients found "social anxiety as more strongly related to past childhood emotional abuse" [306]and identified it as a "predictor of social anxiety in adulthood."[307] Emotional abuse in childhood can significantly contribute to the development of social anxiety. Constant criticism, rejection, or neglect during childhood can lead to low self-esteem, fear or judgment, and difficulty trusting others, which are characteristics of social anxiety. Scars from emotional childhood abuse can create fear of social interaction among adolescents, leading them to avoid social settings and an overwhelming sense of self-consciousness. Individuals who have experienced emotional trauma during childhood often struggle to form and maintain relationships, exacerbating feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Emotional negligence and adolescent trauma can have a profound impact on an individual's emotional well-being and development. Developing emotional intelligence (EI) can effectively manage and recover from negative experiences through self-awareness, emotional

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[304] Ibid.
[305] Ibid.
[306] Nanda, Reichert, Jones, et al. Childhood Maltreatment and Symptoms of Social Anxiety. 205.
[307] Ibid.

regulation, empathy, relationship management, and self-care. EI can help individuals understand and recognize their emotions.

While cultivating emotional intelligence (EI) can be advantageous, it is equally important to seek professional assistance when grappling with emotional neglect or trauma. Trauma specialists, including therapists, counselors, and psychologists, can offer guidance, support, and evidence-based interventions that facilitate the healing process. It is crucial to emphasize that seeking professional help is of paramount importance, as emotional intelligence alone may not suffice to address the underlying causes of emotional neglect or trauma.

Adolescence is a transitory stage where adolescents shed off what they consider childish behavior and adopt what they perceive as grown-up behaviors or traits. This transition could lead to loneliness, as they leave out their "not yet ready" friends for those entering adolescence earlier. As they leave childhood, they encounter a "perception of social isolation developed from a frustrated need to belong"[308] or loneliness, which Borawski, Sojda, Rychlewska, et al. view as a derivative of their existing childhood for induction into adulthood.

Adolescents frequently experience inner turmoil as they grapple with self-sufficiency and independence. Despite this, they are not yet fully equipped to handle these responsibilities and often require the support of their families. The conflicting emotions of adulthood and dependence can create a sense of confusion for teenagers, leading them to hesitate in seeking material assistance from their parents. Unfortunately, this reluctance can result in a stigma that causes most adolescents to distance themselves from their parents, labeling them as "unaware" and redirecting their loyalty towards their peers.

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[308] Dominik Borawski, Martyna Sojda, Karolina Rychlewska, and Tomasz Wajs. 2022. "Attached but Lonely: Emotional Intelligence as a Mediator and Moderator between Attachment Styles and Loneliness." Edited by Paul B. Tchounwou. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19 (22:14831). doi:10.3390/ijerph192214831. (Accessed August 10, 2023).

Borawski, Sojda, Rychlewska, et al. argue that loneliness carries the risk of "mental health issues including suicidality, anxiety, and psychological distress."[309] Additionally, they state that as a child in a relationship enters adulthood, it may create insecurity and dependency emanating from insecurity in the upbringing. As such, adolescents' loneliness results from early childhood emotional struggles associated with insufficient "closeness and tenderness."[310] Parental separation from children, regardless of the circumstances, impacts their emotional development into adulthood. Children of immigrant families fall into this category, specifically if they are migrating unaccompanied or with only one parent.

Researchers argue that early life experiences coupled with insecurity make perceiving a close or intimate adult relationship with others paradoxical and may lead to a frustrated sense of belonging and an idiosyncratic feeling of separation from others. Borawski et al. argue that lonely individuals overcompensate by attaching themselves excessively to others "to compensate for their low self-esteem and a high level of rejection anxiety."[311] The researchers further suggest that such individuals "lack interpersonal trust—a mindset that constitutes an important predictor of loneliness"[312] and have a negative view of humanity.

The authors identify EI as a mediation tool "between attachment and loneliness."[313] They argue that studies have shown that EI cushioned against stress and "loneliness among adolescents experiencing cyber-victimization."[314] EI helps reduce excessive dependence on self and "corrects previously acquired negative attributes of others and thus improves abilities associated with

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[309] Ibid.
[310] Ibid.
[311] Borawski, Sojda, Rychlewska, and Wajs. "Attached but Lonely: Emotional Intelligence as a Mediator and Moderator between Attachment Styles and Loneliness."
[312] Ibid.
[313] Ibid.
[314] Ibid.

taking other people's perspectives."[315] They also identified EI as a cushion against "the effect of anxious attachment on loneliness"[316] and diffusing that relationship.

Cultivating healthy relationships is paramount, as underscored by the concept of emotional intelligence (EI). Adolescents with a high EI are proactive in fostering connections with peers, mentors, and trusted adults, which can mitigate feelings of isolation and promote a sense of belonging and connection. However, developing a strong support network may necessitate additional assistance from parents, educators, and mental health professionals, who can provide guidance, resources, and support tailored to the unique needs of adolescents. Furthermore, adolescents may need to be more involved and participate in extracurricular activities, such as sports, drama, and choir, to strengthen their relationships and sense of community.

EI's Limitations

Emotional Intelligence (EI) exhibits tangible advantages as a valuable skill but has limitations. EI provides partial answers to emotion-related questions and faces several challenges in practical application, such as measurement difficulties, cultural and contextual factors, an overemphasis on positive outcomes, and limited predictive capabilities.

A precise evaluation of EI can be challenging due to the availability of various assessment tools. Still, these often rely on self-reporting, which can introduce biases, social desirability, or general awareness into the measurement. Furthermore, EI assessments may only capture a portion of the complexity of emotional intelligence, as it encompasses multiple facets. Different EI models and measures can lead to inconsistencies and differing results across studies.

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[315] Ibid.
[316] Ibid.

Additionally, EI varies across cultures, as diverse people have differing norms, values, and expressions of emotions. For example, many African cultures encourage the expression of courage among adolescent males, regardless of the risks involved. Failure to exhibit courage and grandiosity could lead to missing a leadership role, typically reserved for the bold and courageous. Consequently, what may be considered emotionally intelligent in one culture may not be the same in another. Therefore, a person with high EI in one cultural context may possess diverse levels of EI in another distinct cultural setting.

Although EI is often associated with individual positive outcomes, such as well-being and success, researchers argue that this focus on positive outcomes may overshadow the potential adverse effects of EI. For example, individuals high in EI may be more "susceptible to experiencing negative emotions due to their heightened sensitivity and awareness." [317] Other factors, such as socioeconomic status, education, and personality traits, can also significantly influence outcomes.

EI skills can be utilized for both positive and negative purposes. Individuals with high EI may use their "skills to manipulate others or engage in deceptive behaviors." [318] Considering EI, therefore, should involve ethical factoring and moral evaluation. In addition, EI is not a fixed trait and is developable and improvable over time. The developmental trajectory of EI and its malleability can vary among individuals. Some individuals may naturally possess higher EI, whereas others require more deliberate effort and practice to enhance their emotional intelligence.

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[317] Marie Bayot, Isabelle Roskam, Laura Gallée, Moïra Mikolajczak. 2021. "When Emotional Intelligence Backfires: Interactions Between Intra- and Interpersonal Emotional Competencies in the Case of Parental Burnout." *Journal of Individual Differences* 42 (1): 1-8. doi:10.1027/1614-0001/a000324. (Accessed August 15, 2023).

[318] Kilduff, Martin, Dan S. Chiaburu, and Jochen I. Menges. 2010. "Strategic use of emotional intelligence in organizational settings: Exploring the dark side." *Research in Organizational Behavior* 30: 129-152. Doi: 10.1016/j.riob.2010.10.002. (Accessed August 15, 2023).

Moana Monnier, in her article, Difficulties in Defining Social-Emotional Intelligence, Competencies and Skills, identifies the existence of inter-conceptual confusion in defining social-emotional intelligence, competencies, and skills. She argues that "concepts of social skills, interactional skills, assertiveness, self-esteem, social or interpersonal competence" are used interchangeably, resulting in inter-cultural confusion. Inter-conceptual confusion occurs when distinct ideas become blurred, leading to misunderstanding and misinterpretations. [319] The literature on EI has yet to reach a consensus on the terms' definitions, terminologies, and boundaries, which can lead to misinterpretation of data or misrepresentation. As EI develops, scholars actively address its limitations to refine its conceptualization and measurement. Considering these limitations, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the role and impact of EI. Furthermore, it is vital to recognize EI as a component of a broader set of skills and competencies. Although it plays a role in personal and interpersonal growth, it does not entirely encompass emotional well-being or success. In addition, mental health professionals can offer alternative viewpoints on emotional obstacles and provide intervention and specialized guidance.

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[319] Monnier. "Difficulties in Defining Social-Emotional Intelligence, Competences, and Skills - a Theoretical Analysis and Structural."

Chapter 4

Using Emotional Intelligence and Faith Reflections as Mentoring Tools

Bullying among adolescents and agemates is common in many communities. However, bullying is most common in schools, among classmates, teammates, clubmates, and especially among new pupils joining a school, where their peers make fun of their ethnicities, accents, and skin colors instead of befriending them. Bullying is a power game wherein the bully exerts power on the victim, who, to the bully's delight, becomes embarrassed, ashamed, and powerless.

Consequently, bullying and microaggression profoundly impact immigrant youth because they are vulnerable and unsure of how to respond. Given the humiliation bullying exerts on them, adolescents often choose not to involve authorities or their parents, opting to carry shame and pain alone. Bullying thrives by creating fear and intimidation in victims. In her book *Bully-Proof Kids*, Stella O'Malley suggests that kids find that the easiest way to make friends is by "playing victims." [320] In O'Malley's view, playing the victim is to play the bully's game, meaning that it repeats itself with the same results. Furthermore, she adds that bullies do not bully randomly but are attracted to "certain tendencies" [321] and societal expectations of their victims.

The consequences of bullying and microaggression can have a lasting impact on victims, who may feel compelled to distance themselves from their educational institution permanently. In many cases, immigrant students who are subjected to bullying and microaggression become reluctant to display their cultural heritage, which can lead to a decline in self-confidence and an internal struggle between their cultural identity and the need to fit in. Moreover, bullying hinders the assimilation process, as the initially welcoming environment transforms into one that

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[320] O'Malley. *Bully-Proof Kids*, 90.
[321] Ibid, 96.

promotes exclusion and rejection. The effects of bullying and microaggression can impede

immigrant youth's successful integration into their new community. Although parents play a

pivotal role in this process, immigrant youth who have experienced bullying are often no longer

willing or compliant. Furthermore, parents and the wider community may place pressure on the

children to acculturate to their new culture while also reminding them to preserve their African

identity without realizing the resistance they are facing from their peer group.

Moreover, financial limitations can restrict the choices available to new immigrants when

selecting a location to settle their families. Consequently, they may choose more affordable

housing options, which are frequently situated in neighborhoods with schools that are struggling

academically due to discipline issues and limited budget allocation. Additionally, schools in low-

income areas are more likely to experience criminal activity, exposure to violence, and

racial/ethnic conflicts, which can overwhelm new immigrant adolescents who have not

previously encountered such adversity. For lack of "other outlets for social recognition,"[322] these

exposures may lead to unintended consequences for curious immigrant children willing to

engage in delinquent behaviors.

According to Hong, Merrin, Crosby, et al., "immigrant youth are more vulnerable to

perceived and real violence while navigating new environments, relationships, and cultural

differences."[323] Hong posits that immigrant youth not proficient in English may be "subject to

ridicule, bullying, and fights by their classmates and peers and less likely to receive support from

their teachers."[324] To Ukpokodu, "African Immigrant Students are marginalized and seemingly

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[322] Craig C. Hill, *Servant of All: Status, Ambition, and the Way of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 2016). 173.

[323] Hong, Merrin, Crosby, et al., "Individual and Contextual Factors Associated with Immigrant Youth Feeling Unsafe in School." 1003.

[324] Ibid.

invisible to the host country's academia,"[325] resulting in "jeopardizing their academic vision"[326] due to lack of proper school counseling, which he claims may result in the breakdown of their social skills.

Bullying and marginalization have a detrimental impact on the mental and psychological health and educational progress of adolescents. The fear of being targeted or ridiculed by peers hinders their ability to concentrate on their studies and participate in extracurricular activities, leading to long-term consequences that affect their future success. The difficulties faced by African immigrant children, such as having a difficult-to-pronounce name, an accent, and such, can exacerbate these issues and negatively impact their grades, leading them to engage in unhealthy behaviors and relationships.

When school administrators neglect to intervene in situations where immigrant children are being persistently bullied and mistreated, it can lead to the victims experiencing mental health issues or engaging in harmful behaviors such as substance abuse. These behaviors can have lasting consequences that extend into adulthood, impacting their self-esteem, relationships, and overall life satisfaction and hindering their academic progress. Furthermore, the long-term effects of bullying and marginalization may include the development of early mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, and even suicidal thoughts.

Recognizing the enduring consequences of bullying, it is imperative that we promptly address this issue within immigrant communities to safeguard the long-term welfare of their young people. By taking immediate action, we can disrupt the pattern of disadvantage and offer immigrant students the prospects they require to succeed.

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[325] Omiunota. "African Immigrants, the ''New Model Minority'': Examining the Reality in U.S. k-12 Schools." 82.
[326] Ibid.

The government website "stopbullying.gov" presents a four-step approach to stop bullying. The website suggests helping the kids first "understand bullying and how they can stand up against it safely."[327] It also means the parents keep an "open communication"[328] with the child and help the kids "do what they love,"[329] and finally, encourages parents to be models on how to treat others "with kindness and respect." [330] O'Malley suggests that "parents need to lead the way and show their children that 'boxing clever'[331] is the way to fight back bullying"[332] and encourages parents to keep "the communication doors with the children open"[333] by being engaged.

Parental Intervention and Involvement

Immigrant parents must remain vigilant and observant in detecting any changes in their children's behavior. Such changes may be indicative of bullying and may include withdrawal, mood swings, declining academic performance, avoidance of school, and physical symptoms. By closely monitoring these signs, parents can identify potential instances of bullying and intervene accordingly. Furthermore, they should maintain an ongoing dialogue with their adolescent children and encourage open and honest discussions about their experiences at school and in the community. This approach can lead to the early detection and mitigation of bullying behaviors.

It is crucial to create a safe and supportive environment for children to discuss their concerns and fears. By actively listening to their children's narratives and providing emotional

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[327] Stopbullying.gov/. August 1, 2023. https://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/how-to-prevent-bullying. (Accessed October 6, 2023).
[328] Ibid.
[329] Ibid.
[330] Ibid.
[331] Stella O'Malley uses the term "Boxing clever" to imply outwitting the opponent; usually, the weaker one outwits the stronger one, and in this case, the victim outwits the bully.
[332] O'Malley, *Bully-Proof Kids*. Croydon.
[333] Ibid.

support and guidance, parents can help adolescents develop effective coping strategies to deal with bullying.

In addition to addressing bullying, parents must promote cultural pride and a positive cultural identity in their children. Parents can empower their children to navigate cultural assimilation challenges with confidence and self-assurance by instilling a sense of dignity in their cultural heritage.

It is vital for parents to take an active role in their children's lives and to be attentive to any changes in their behavior. By offering support and guidance, parents can help their children navigate the challenges of bullying and create a safe and inclusive environment where they can flourish. Collaborating with schools, promoting resilience, and instilling cultural pride are essential components of this process. By working together, immigrant communities can build a society that values diversity, fosters empathy, and ensures the well-being and success of all its members.

Unfortunately, some parents may inadvertently contribute to the problem of bullying by emotionally neglecting or punishing their children when they express frustration and anger related to their experiences at school. Immigrant parents may face a range of expectations and pressures that they did not encounter in their country of origin, leaving them feeling overwhelmed and in need of an outlet. In these situations, parents need to seek support and find healthy ways to cope with their frustrations rather than taking out their emotions on their children. In her article How Childhood Emotional Neglect Can Show Up in Our Adult Life, Gould argues that some parents punish their children for expressing negative emotions. In

contrast, other parents "when the children are under emotional stress,"[334] dismiss or ignore their feelings and fail to intervene to show them affection.

When parents fail to support their children, they neglect them inadvertently. Emotional neglect is a form of trauma causing "long-lasting and acute effects on an individual's psychological welfare."[335] If not addressed, emotional trauma can significantly manipulate adolescents' future. Children suffering trauma from neglect often exhibit behavioral issues at home and school and struggle to maintain relationships even later in life as adults. Because of this parental neglect, they develop coping mechanisms and behavior patterns, such as "numbness." Gould describes the numbness mechanism as a "difficulty in expressing and processing emotions."[336] She contends that children utilize numbness as a coping mechanism and are content with what they have, seldom asking for help or assistance for fear of rejection. She suggests that such children tend to be people-pleasers, often leaning towards meeting peoples' needs other than their own and making others feel "worthy, loved, needed, and good enough."[337] Yet they struggle to trust people and raise walls to protect themselves.

Community's Involvement

Community involvement[338] is a powerful connection that ensures members' welfare. A community comprises individuals who share common interests, demonstrate genuine passion, and collaborate for a shared purpose. They support one another and work together to address their shared interests. The success of a thriving community is defined by the strong sense of

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[334] Gould. How Childhood Emotional Neglect Can Show Up in Our Adult Life.

[335] Ibid.

[336] Ibid.

[337] Gould. How Childhood Emotional Neglect Can Show Up in Our Adult Life.

[338] Notably, not all communities focus on positive influences. In the context referred to, references to communities isolate and focus on the well-being of humanity. Any community that builds or focuses on such does not fall under the umbrella of community herein. Some communities can be toxic with practices that are repugnant to moral justice.

camaraderie that prevails among its members. The participants of an active community tend to thrive more frequently, and children raised in close-knit communities are more likely to achieve success due to the support they receive. However, not all community members are equally committed; some may only be interested in gaining popularity. Those actively participating in the community reap the full benefits, such as a more efficient assimilation process.

To derive the maximum benefits from being part of a community, it is essential to make promises or commitments and be willing to sacrifice for others. Active participation, collaboration, idea exchange, and contribution to a standard solution are crucial. For immigrant families to better support their adolescents during challenging times, they could consider joining the Kenyan Immigrant Community in America (KICA). KICA is a community encompassing Kenyan immigrants across all 50 states in the United States. The KICA community offers cultural activities and opportunities for newly arrived immigrants to meet and interact with other members within their geographic region. These members can provide guidance and share strategies to facilitate a smoother assimilation process. KICA is a hub for various communities, including churches, Christian associations, Kenyan regional communities, and trade associations.

New immigrants must live in harmony and expect reasonable progress in the assimilation process. However, being part of an immigrant community gives them a sense of belonging. A church community is among the most influential communities with which a new immigrant connects. Craig Hill reminds us, "The Church is the place where the reign of God is experienced and not just talked about; where living relationships demonstrate love, and where Godly character is learned and practiced." Hill demonstrates enthusiasm about ensuring people gather towards the center where God is and not away from him. He supports creating a positive

relationship in the church, where people can relate to one another. Where there is a relationship, Hill says, there is a community.

Bullying impacts not only the immigrant youth's family but the entire community. As such, parents play a pivotal role in recognizing and addressing changes in their children's behavior. Intimate parental involvement is essential in supporting and protecting children from bullying. When parents actively participate in their children's lives, they establish communication lines that construct trust and provide safe spaces for their children to express their concerns.

Immigrant parents must remain observant and vigilant in recognizing any changes in their children's behavior, as continuous bullying can cause significant distress. Signs of distress include withdrawal, mood swings, sudden changes in academic performance, reluctance to attend school, and physical ailments. Therefore, parents should be tuned to these indicators and intervene accordingly. Maintaining an ongoing dialogue with adolescents and encouraging open and honest conversations about their experiences at school and within the community is also essential. By doing so, parents can facilitate early intervention and mitigation of bullying. Creating an environment where children feel comfortable discussing their concerns and fears is crucial. Parents can provide emotional support and guidance to adolescents by actively listening to their narratives and helping them develop coping strategies to navigate bullying.

Promoting cultural pride and fostering a positive cultural identity in children is crucial for their emotional well-being, academic performance, and overall development. Parents play a vital role in achieving this goal by providing support and guidance, nurturing open communication, and collaborating with schools. By encouraging children to embrace their cultural background,

language, traditions, and values, parents can empower their children to navigate cultural assimilation challenges confidently and self-assuredly.

Parents are indispensable in the upbringing of their children, as they not only provide care and guidance but also act as protectors, counselors, and advocates against abuse. Furthermore, parents play a significant role in helping their children develop resilience against bullying, which can have short-term or long-term effects on adolescents' well-being, academic performance, and overall development. Thus, it is vital for parents to be vigilant about any changes in their children's behavior and offer the required support. By working together, immigrant communities can foster a society that embraces diversity, cultivates empathy, and ensures the well-being and success of its children.

Immigrant children face increased bullying compared to non-immigrant children and are subjected to microaggressions over trivial things like food, clothing, religion, and names, among others. This treatment not only leads to isolation, whether forced or voluntary but also affects them emotionally, with limited outlets if their parents are not supportive. By promoting resilience, encouraging open communication, and instilling cultural pride, parents can equip their children with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of cultural assimilation and create a safe and inclusive environment for their adolescents to flourish. Regrettably, some parents inadvertently contribute to the problem by emotionally neglecting or punishing their children when they express sadness, frustration, or anger due to the experiences they face in school.

Understandably, parents may sometimes be required to work longer hours by their employers, leaving them in a quandary as, on the one hand, they need the money, and on the other, their children may need their assistance or support. As a result, parents experience job-related stress, which may lead to other stresses such as emotional and work-life balance and

increased pressure of raising children. If not professionally managed, these struggles may culminate in mental health conditions that would hinder them from supporting their children.

Immigrant parents often confront a multitude of expectations that were not present in their native country, giving rise to psychological stress and the urgent need for a means of relief. In their distress and isolation, they may unintentionally vent their frustrations onto their children, exacerbating their feelings of harm and loneliness. As Gould points out in her article, "How Childhood Emotional Neglect Can Show Up in Our Adult Life," some parents may punish their children for expressing negative emotions. Others may dismiss or ignore their children's feelings, fail to show affection, or intervene "when the child is under emotional stress."[339]

When parents are unsupportive, they emotionally neglect their children. Emotional neglect is a form of trauma causing "long-lasting and acute effects on an individual's psychological welfare."[340] If not addressed, emotional trauma can significantly manipulate adolescents' future. Children suffering trauma from neglect often exhibit behavioral issues at home and school and struggle to maintain relationships even later in life as adults. Because of this parental neglect, they develop coping mechanisms and behavior patterns, such as "numbness." Gould describes the numbness mechanism as a "difficulty in expressing and processing emotions."[341] She contends that children utilize numbness as a coping mechanism and are content with what they have, seldom asking for help or assistance for fear of rejection. Such children also tend to be people-pleasers, often leaning towards meeting peoples' needs other than their own and making others feel "worthy, loved, needed, and good enough."[342] Nevertheless, they struggle to trust people and raise walls to protect themselves.

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[339] Gould. How Childhood Emotional Neglect Can Show Up in Our Adult Life.
[340] Ibid.
[341] Ibid.
[342] Gould. How Childhood Emotional Neglect Can Show Up in Our Adult Life.

To adequately support their children against bullying, parents should inoculate themselves against the same vice by seeking help, guidance, and counseling from their community members. New immigrant families need support navigating hoops to settle in their host country. Other peripheral problems associated with settling down may not be unique, and if the immigrant family connects with a church community, it will receive the help they need. Craig Hill reminds us, "The Church is where His reign is not just talked about but experienced as well; where living relationships demonstrate love, and where Godly character is learned and practiced."[343] Hill demonstrates enthusiasm about ensuring people gather towards the center where God is and not away from him. He supports creating a positive relationship in the church, where people can relate to one another.[344] Where there is a relationship, Hill says, there is a community.

Mentoring

Mentoring programs for immigrant youth who experience bullying and microaggressions can yield considerable advantages that extend beyond the individual level. By fostering resilience, empowerment, and social change within communities, mentoring provides a secure space for immigrant adolescents to express their emotions and negative experiences. This, in turn, helps them develop skills to navigate challenging situations more effectively, acquire a stronger sense of cultural identity and pride, and facilitate their social integration by connecting them to supportive networks and resources within their communities and gaining community support. Mentoring programs can also benefit immigrant parents by helping them successfully integrate into a new culture while preserving aspects of their cultural identity. This can involve

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[343] Hill, *Servant of All.*178.
[344] Ibid.179.

cultural orientation, language skill development, cultural competency promotion, and social integration.

While the two strategies are intricately connected, addressing them together is highly beneficial. To accomplish this, the suggested plan will simultaneously tackle these challenges. The objective is to aid parents in comprehending their children's educational experiences at school so that they can provide them with suitable support and guidance. At the same time, parents will need assistance navigating the legal process to acquire the necessary documentation for residing and working in the host country, searching for employment, and familiarizing themselves with state/city regulations and community standards.

When supporting new immigrants, KICA will have a significant impact by utilizing its members as mentors or guides. The mentoring approach for parents and adolescents could take various forms. However, considering Kenyans' inherent religious nature, they tend to favor the faith-based approach, as they respect and rely on faith communities that guide and shape their communities. These communities are typically well-organized and structured to provide services to their community, making them more effective at running programs. Furthermore, faith values are incorporated into their mentoring and guidance processes, which enriches and strengthens new immigrants. This approach strengthens families and fosters a sense of belonging as immigrants become familiar with the people in their community.

Local communities run different mentoring programs, either private or government-sponsored, such as the Big Brother/Big Sister program. According to a recent online search, [345] there are over one million youth mentoring programs in Dallas. However, each program serves a specific purpose or group of people. In addition, we noticed programs that were no longer

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[345] https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-1-d&q=mentoring+programs+for+youth+in+Dallas%2C+Texas. (Accessed December 2, 2023).

operative, but hundreds of thousands of mentoring programs that we observed remained active for anyone in need. However, one may question why so many mentoring programs should exist in a single locality if they are all effective. In response, it is essential to note that mentoring is as diverse as adolescents requiring mentoring.

In the last chapter of his book *Servant of All*, Craig C. Hill asks, "How do we do it?"[346] He suggests that the "church should be where the things God honors are honored."[347] Hill opines that we start with the church. The church, he argues, is a safe place, a sanctified place where people receive guidance, mentoring, and direction on how to live better lives. When we start in the church where people gather, seek God's direction and wisdom, and bless those in attendance, God is honored. In his book *Visions of Vocation - Common Grace for the Common Good*, Steven Garber follows Hill's suggestion and avers that vocation implies that no one can sit back and do nothing when implicated. The implication, Garber suggests, occurs when one becomes involved and sees people at the point of their neediness, at a place they did not choose, and at a place they cannot help themselves. He views visualization and experience as a "call for action,"[348] an implication.

The involvement of the Kenyan Immigrant Community in America (KICA) is essential in addressing immigrant children's needs. KICA in Dallas has twenty-one churches spread through Dallas, Tarrant, Collin, and Denton Counties. Because of the community's intense devotion to churches, KICA would welcome the proposal to establish a youth mentoring program and accommodate mentorship programs to operate on their church premises, which would be instrumental to the program's success.

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[346] Hill, *Servant of All.* 175.
[347] Steven Garber, *Visions of Vocation - Common Grace for the Common Good*. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 139.
[348] Hill, *Servant of All.* 176.

While mentoring can happen anywhere - for example, in city libraries, social halls, and schools - the church is the best option. In support of this theory, Hill adds that "in the church, people retell stories of faith and their meaning reinforced…an alternative reality is not only envisioned but demonstrated."[349] He envisions the church as the central place where "people experience God, demonstrate love in a loving relationship, and where a godly character is learned and practiced."[350] New immigrant families would be more comfortable mentoring on church premises than in other locations. Further, mentorship outside the home is helpful, as it creates a form of freedom where the mentee can freely share what they are enthusiastic about or hinders them from becoming their utmost without worrying about eavesdropping from siblings or parents.

Defending this assertion, Christine D. Pohl posits that as a community, "How we live together is the most persuasive sermon we will ever get to preach."[351] She argues that people can passionately bring changes to their communities. Pohl speaks out against isolating the less privileged and those struggling to seek community. She instead compels community leaders to "allow them to be part of the community; our community where we can all flourish *together* and become most fully human.[352] In Pohl's mind, the community must reach out to families of children struggling in school or society to make them whole. She further advocated for adolescents to receive mentoring in the community instead of isolating them to receive it elsewhere.

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[349] Hill, *Servant of All.*178.
[350] Ibid.
[351] Christine D. Pohl,. *Living into Community: Cultivating Practices that Sustain Us.* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 2.
[352] Ibid. 3.

Central to Pohl's argument is the claim that mentoring is an interventional tool for struggling adolescents. According to Jean Rhodes's study, "Mentoring Relationships and Programs for Youth,"[353] the American society considers mentoring a "popular social intervention" where associations with youth involvement in mentoring relationships yield positive developmental outcomes. The association between mentors and youth is often close to support and encourage positive developmental change in the mentee. Cynthia L. Sipe, in her study" Mentoring programs for Adolescents," rightfully avers that not all mentorships are successful as "they depend on other variable factors such as program practices and strategies"[354] to be successful. Rhodes also opines that mentoring programs can be successful if they embrace "fun activities to promote a broad nonspecific range of positive outcomes."[355] Mentoring should not focus on discovering what negative things are happening in a mentee's life. It should also involve identifying the core drivers of the adolescents' struggles, considering how the mentee could have responded, and specifying tools the mentee can apply when confronted with an indistinguishable situation.

In addition, the mentor's involvement with the mentee goes beyond the mentee's wellness. Other factors may contribute to the mentee's conditions and, if not addressed, restrict the mentee from reaching the intended wellness level, such as whether the mentee's behavior correlates with their parent's relationship with their children at home. If the relationship is cordial, the mentee has a higher chance of actualizing wellness sooner. If parents are absent, come home angry, and engage in inconsonant talk that creates discord and anger, the mentee will

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[353] Jean E. Rhodes and David L. DuBois. 2008. "Mentoring Relationships and Programs for Youth." *Associations for Psychological Science* 7. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8721.2008.00585. x. (Accessed September 9, 2022).

[354] Cynthia L. Sipe, 2002. "Mentoring Programs for Adolescents: A Research Summary." *Journal of Adolescent Health,* 31 (6): 251-260. doi:10.1016/S1054-139X (02)00498-6. (Accessed September 9, 2023).

[355] Rhodes. Older and Wiser; New Ideas for Youth Mentoring in the 21st Century. 3

take longer to realize wellness. Simultaneously, mentees may also be going through emotional growth experiences, encountering challenges at school, and needing to manage their emotions better, which may impede their pursuit of overall wellness. However, a patient mentor can understand mentees' struggles and help them overcome these deterrents.

Mentoring Using Emotional Intelligence

Mentoring young people with emotional intelligence can significantly benefit their personal and future success. Through the development of skills such as self-awareness, empathy, and emotional control, mentors play a crucial role in the holistic growth of adolescents during critical periods of their lives. Research-supported mentoring techniques can equip adolescents to manage their emotions, interactions, and challenges with confidence and assurance, paving the way for a fulfilling adulthood. Emotional intelligence mentoring facilitates the growth of emotionally intelligent individuals better equipped to navigate life's complexities, relationships, and personal development.

Mentoring plays a crucial role in shaping adolescents' EI. Mentors provide guidance, support, and opportunities for adolescents to develop and practice emotional intelligence skills. Research by DuBois et al. indicates that "adolescents who receive effective mentoring tend to exhibit better emotional regulation, social skills, and overall psychological well-being."[356] Moreover, according to Schwartz et al., mentoring interventions "focusing on emotional intelligence improve academic performance, reduce aggressive behavior, and enhance self-esteem."[357] A successful mentoring program creates a positive relationship between the mentor

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[356] David L. DuBois, Nelson Portillo, Jean E. Rhodes, Naida Silverthorn, and Jeffrey C. Valentine. 2011. "How effective are mentoring programs for youth? A systematic assessment of the evidence." *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 12 (2): 57-91. doi:10.1177/1529100611414806. (Accessed October 4, 2023).
[357] S.E.O. Shwartz, S.S. Kanchewa, J.E. Rhodes, G. Gowdy, A.M. Stark, and J.P. Horn. 2016. "I am Having a Little Struggle with this. Can you help me out? Examining impacts and processes of social capital

and mentee, embraces mentors as accountability partners to support and encourage them when they fall short, and provides the mentee with guidance, listening ears, and practical solutions.

Effective mentoring strategies comprise modeling emotion regulation, active listening, empathy, teaching emotional vocabulary, problem-solving, decision-making, and conflict-resolution skills. Mentors can also be role models by demonstrating "healthy emotional expression and regulation,"[358] which assists adolescents in managing their emotions in various situations. According to Susan E. Rivers,[359] actively listening to adolescents involves a "genuine display of empathy and fostering a safe environment for open communication,"[360] which enhances their emotional understanding and connection with others. Mentors can also introduce adolescents to emotional vocabulary to enable them to identify and label their emotions accurately. Additionally, mentors can guide adolescents in making better decisions while considering their feelings, thus helping them "develop critical thinking skills and making informed choices"[361] that align with their emotional well-being. Finally, mentors can constructively coach adolescents on problem-solving strategies, demonstrating that they can manage their emotions and have compassion for others' perspectives during disagreements.

The KICA members are willing to commit to guiding the children of immigrant families as mentors. As mentors spend time with their mentees and foster relationships, their lives simultaneously change. Additionally, the mentor/mentee bond solidifies as they share personal

intervention for first-generation college students." *Journal of Adolescence*, 49: 84-97. (Accessed September 9, 2023).

[358] Salovey and Mayer. 1990. "Emotional intelligence. Imagination, Cognition and Personality."

[359] Marc A. Brackett, Rivers, Susan E., and Salovey, Peter. 2011. "Emotional Intelligence: Implication for Personal, Social, Academic, and Workplace Success." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 5 (1): 88-103. doi:10.1111/j.1751-9004.2010.00334. x. (Accessed August 12, 2023).

[360] Salovey and Mayer. 1990. "Emotional intelligence. Imagination, Cognition and Personality."

[361] Nicola S. Schutte, Edward Schuettpelz, and John M. Malouff. 2001. "Emotional Intelligence and Task Performance." *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality* 20 (4): 347-354. doi:10.2190/J0X6-BHTG-KPV6-2UXX. (Accessed August 15, 2023).

moments. Garber accentuates asserting how hard "it is not to act if implicated."[362] When one becomes involved in someone's life, it is hard to turn away without exploring the contribution one can make to changing that individual's life. Mentees also gain confidence in their journey as the mentor experiences fulfillment in contributing to the mentee's success. The immigrant community's children become the ultimate beneficiaries because when children flourish, the community also flourishes.

Mentorship programs are only a solution for some of the difficulties faced by immigrant children. If young people are compelled to join these programs and do not participate willingly, the mentoring relationship will not be effective. Similarly, the relationship will only be successful if the mentor and mentee are compatible. Moreover, if the program leader, initiator, or mentor does not establish parameters for commitment, the program may fail. Additionally, if there are no clear expectations, such as a lack of time commitment, support structures, follow-up, assessment, or parent support, or if the program sponsor withdraws their initial support, the program will fail.

The program aimed at mentoring immigrant children helps them surmount the obstacles they face in and out of school, thus allowing them to complete their education and become productive citizens. Through this program, these children learn to cope with negative experiences in school and overcome verbal and physical abuse. Their mentors work with the program coordinator or director to provide additional support to those who need it, ensuring they receive the assistance they require until they fully recover. As a support mechanism, mentoring can increase the graduation rate of immigrant youth from high school and their pursuit of higher education. When the youth complete the mentoring program, they are encouraged by their

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[362] Garber, *Visions of Vocation.*

mentors to serve as mentors to other young people in the community. Doing so will lead to an academically, spiritually, and socially robust society as the mentoring program increases its effectiveness.

Adolescents are usually at a stage of significant emotional development, making emotional intelligence mentorship particularly pertinent. Emotional intelligence involves self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, crucial for recognizing and understanding emotions in oneself and others. An effective mentorship is founded on building a solid mentor-mentee relationship based on trust and rapport, with mentors functioning as role models who guide adolescents in expressing their emotions in a safe and nurturing environment. Integrating emotional intelligence in mentoring adolescents is highly beneficial, as it provides them with essential life skills to navigate their emotional landscape, establish healthy relationships, and achieve personal growth. This mentorship approach acknowledges the importance of emotional intelligence in shaping academic success and emotional well-being. It equips adolescents with coping mechanisms that enhance their resilience when facing challenges.

Emotional intelligence mentoring coaches guide adolescents in making decisions while considering their emotions. These mentors aid teenagers in evaluating emotional factors together with logical reasoning when making decisions and encourage them to employ emotional intelligence skills in practical situations. This may involve the mentor and mentee discussing challenges at school, with friends, or at home and strategizing how emotional intelligence can positively impact various issues.

Through the guidance of emotional intelligence (EI) mentoring, adolescents acquire the necessary skills to manage their emotions effectively, resulting in improved emotional well-being and reduced engagement in harmful impulsive behaviors. Additionally, EI mentoring facilitates

the development of strong interpersonal skills, enabling adolescents to form and maintain healthy relationships while making informed decisions by considering both rational and emotional aspects. As a result, they are better equipped to make better life choices. Research has shown that adolescents with strong EI skills tend to perform better academically and experience higher levels of life satisfaction.

Faith-Support Integrating Emotional Intelligence Tools

Faith-based mentoring in the care and guidance of adolescent immigrants offers a comprehensive approach that integrates theological perspectives with practical knowledge. The methodology designed propounds holistic care and mentorship by interweaving theological values with emotional intelligence tolls that can benefit young people spiritually and offer a solid foundation for their faith journey. The proposed mentoring program emphasizes spiritual grounding by incorporating biblical ideologies, which serve as the cornerstone of this approach.

Additionally, the mentoring model will incorporate the four domains of Emotional Intelligence: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management. These domains are crucial in the mentoring approach, as they help mentors create an environment that fosters growth, empowerment, and resilience for adolescent immigrants.

The intersection of theology and mentorship for adolescents presents a unique combination of spiritual reflection and personal guidance. This model aims to assist adolescents in navigating life challenges, making ethical decisions, and developing a sense of purpose and meaning rooted in their religious or spiritual beliefs. By integrating theology into mentorship, adolescents can explore questions of faith, morality, and identity while receiving guidance that aligns with their religious convictions and upbringing. Theology, as the study of the nature of God and spiritual beliefs, offers valuable insights into the mentoring process. Faith-based

mentoring is primarily concerned with a particular religious group's authoritative and definitive teachings, adding complexity and depth to mentoring and providing an invaluable asset to the mentee's social development.

Faith-based mentoring offers a structured and coherent framework for comprehending and interpreting life experiences. By connecting individual experiences with theological teachings, individuals can uncover meaning, purpose, and direction. Faith-based mentoring fosters a sense of affiliation and identity. As individuals engage with the teachings of their faith community, they develop a powerful sense of self and a deep connection with their community, which can provide significant emotional and social support. Faith-based mentoring also encourages moral and ethical development, and as individuals grapple with intricate moral and ethical issues, faith teachings offer guidance and wisdom. This process can facilitate moral and ethical growth and promote a more profound commitment to living a life aligned with one's values and beliefs.

Faith-based mentorship, while offering numerous benefits, also poses several challenges. One of the main difficulties is the rigidity of theological teachings, which allows little room for personal interpretation or questioning. Moreover, there is the danger of indoctrination, which is at odds with the goal of fostering genuine spiritual growth. If mentors emphasize imposing dogmatic teachings, the mentoring relationship may become authoritarian instead of supportive or nurturing. As a result, it would impede the mentees' development of critical thinking and independent decision-making skills. In addition, this approach can lead to feelings of exclusion for those who do not strictly adhere to dogmatic teachings, resulting in guilt, shame, or rejection that can be detrimental to an individual's personal and spiritual growth and lead to unsuccessful mentorship.

Community Members as Mentors

Adolescents' development and prospects are greatly influenced by communities, which are social units composed of individuals who share common values and responsibilities. These groups can provide essential guidance and support during the formative years. The effectiveness of a community may be gauged by assessing its members' social, economic, and academic connections, as well as their capacity for joint action and their relevancy to the community's individuals. Communities hold significant importance in molding adolescents' futures by imparting essential life skills, offering guidance, and providing support, which are all critical factors in their growth and development. Mentorship programs that pair adolescents with adult mentors can offer a platform for open dialogue, problem-solving, and learning.

Community members are often familiar figures to the target adolescents and their families. Adolescents view community adults as authority figures, and their familial relationships can simplify the mentor/mentee matching process. Trust and familiarity are crucial elements of a mentoring relationship, and community involvement can be vital in cultivating these qualities.

A program director, responsible for overseeing the matching process and maintaining detailed records of mentors and mentees, will be crucial. The director will create individual files for each mentor containing personal information, such as their workplace, phone contact, home address, and references. The director also creates a separate file for each mentee, including contact information for their family, school, grade, and age. The file also records areas covered in informal training and coaching and progress made on formal mentoring using the workbook. Before matching the mentor and mentee, they both will sign confidentiality waivers prohibiting the program director or mentor from releasing confidential information about the mentee to third parties without proper authorization.

Communities can be pivotal in creating safe and supportive environments that encourage learning and personal development. By establishing recreational spaces, libraries, reading and study centers, and cultural facilities, adolescents can explore their interests and gain valuable experience. Moreover, organizing community events and activities can foster a sense of belonging and involvement, thereby enhancing adolescents' social skills and civic engagement. Additionally, communities can engage in city affairs and advocate for additional resources for their youth mentoring programs, such as utilizing the city's facilities during the week for academic or athletic coaching as needed. Community-based mentoring is a valuable resource that provides adolescents with a supportive network beyond their immediate family, offering a broader perspective on life. The expanded support system can help adolescents navigate difficult times by providing guidance and assistance.

Additionally, community-based mentoring can play a significant role in reducing risky behaviors among adolescents. A study[363] by Jean Rhodes indicated that mentoring programs can significantly decrease substance use, school dropout rates, and teenage pregnancies. Developing and implementing community-based mentoring programs is a challenging endeavor. One of the primary obstacles is the difficulty of finding committed and dependable mentors who can consistently dedicate their time and effort. The success of these programs hinges on the quality of the mentors, who must be individuals of integrity, well-grounded, and respected within their communities. Moreover, establishing and maintaining these programs requires substantial financial resources. The quality and sustainability of these initiatives depend heavily on adequate funding. As a result, funding, or the lack thereof, can be a significant issue. Evaluating the

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[363] Jean E. Rhodes, 2005. "A Model of Youth Mentoring." In *Handbook of Youth Mentoring*, edited by David L. Dubois and Michael J. Karcher, 30-43. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications. https://www.google.com/books/edition/Handbook_of_Youth_Mentoring (2002). (Accessed September 8, 2023).

success of mentoring programs is also challenging due to the complexity of developing metrics to measure their effectiveness. Furthermore, the impact of mentoring becomes evident over an extended period, which may not result in immediate changes in adolescents. Despite these challenges, community-based mentoring programs can provide numerous benefits, such as fostering a sense of belonging and increasing community engagement among adolescents. These programs can also teach important values, such as the importance of community, empathy, and the benefits of giving back, which are essential qualities for responsible adulthood.

Indeed, some challenges face communities. It is essential to recognize that while Kenyan immigrants may share specific characteristics and experiences, they are not a homogenous group. Comparing communities across different countries can be complex, as they may have unique cultural, social, and economic contexts. The term community is a relative one, and it can refer to any group of people who share commonalities such as language, religion, or shared goals. However, it is essential to note that communities are not static and can be influenced by various factors, including differing opinions among members, which can distract from their core mission and weaken their impact.

Despite their sensitivity, the community members play an indispensable role in guiding adolescents and shaping their futures. Moreover, they inculcate a sense of belonging and civic responsibility in them. Additionally, the benefits of community-based mentoring extend beyond just mitigating risky behaviors, as it cultivates responsible and well-rounded adults. Hence, communities must acknowledge the importance of investing in the well-being of their children and supporting adolescent mentoring programs. By doing so, communities can significantly influence the development of a generation of responsible, compassionate, and engaged individuals.

The Intersection of Faith-Based and Emotional Intelligence Mentoring

Theology and emotional intelligence (EI) coaching share a common objective of facilitating personal growth and transformation. Both methods aim to guide individuals toward a more profound comprehension of themselves, their relationships, and their position in the world. Theological contemplation provides a spiritual foundation for comprehending life's events, while EI coaching supplies practical advice and assistance for handling these occurrences. In dogmatic-oriented mentoring, coaches employ specific religious teachings to guide mentees. This approach combines theological and spiritual insights with the personal support of coaching, allowing individuals to interpret their experiences through the lenses of their faiths. The junction of these two methods creates a unique environment for spiritual and emotional development in which theological contemplation and individual experiences mutually enrich each other.

Community-Led Mentoring Using Emotional Intelligence and Faith Support (CEIFS)

Adolescents who face various challenges, such as bullying, self-esteem issues, loneliness, peer pressure, poverty, and discrimination, can benefit from the influence of their communities. To help these adolescents navigate these difficulties, a well-organized community-based mentoring model incorporating theological reflections and emotional intelligence domains can offer a comprehensive framework. This paper presents a proposed community-based mentoring model incorporating theological values and emotional intelligence, detailing its design, implementation, and potential benefits.

To create a mentoring map, we identified the competencies that our mentees lacked and listed them as "immigrant experiences" in Table 1 (Appendix I). We then examined the limitations these deficiencies imposed on the immigrants and listed them as "Hindrances." Next, we determined how these experiences hindered acculturation and documented this as an

"impact." This process enabled us to pinpoint the competencies the immigrants needed to develop to overcome the adverse effects of their experiences. Table 1 shows that mastering the emotional intelligence skills of motivation and resilience would be necessary to overcome the language barrier impediment.

Table 2 (Appendix II) displays our mentoring approach that bridges the gaps highlighted in Table 1. Specifically, our mentors will employ faith reflections, such as Philippians 4:13, which states, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," to address the motivation gap. By applying this text, mentors aim to empower migrants to overcome obstacles and develop confidence in acquiring new skills.

When mentoring is handled meticulously, the outcome is often rewarding. We first identified the competence that needed to be mastered for faith reflection and identified a Bible text that addressed the same. The last box determines the anticipated learning outcome.

CEIFS Overview and Deployment

The proposed Community-led Emotional Intelligence and Faith-based Support (CEIFS) model is a comprehensive framework that combines four main elements, including theological reflections, emotional intelligence, community engagement, and individual mentorship. The CEIFS model creates a nurturing and supportive community environment that promotes adolescent development and fosters resilience, self-awareness, empathy, and social skills. The model emphasizes the community's role in guiding adolescents through life challenges and provides them with a moral and ethical framework by integrating religious teachings and spiritual reflection. The lessons will focus on universal values such as love, kindness, forgiveness, tolerance, respect for others, and emotional intelligence, which includes self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. These skills are

crucial for personal growth and building positive interpersonal relationships. Mentors will teach adolescents how to identify and manage their emotions, understand others' emotions, and establish healthy relationships. Additionally, the model encourages community members to participate in mentoring by contributing their time, skills, and resources, fostering a sense of belonging and shared responsibility, and strengthening the community's social fabric.

The model comprises individual mentorship, where youth are paired with a mentor who offers guidance and support. The selection process for mentors is expected to be thorough and will include vetting by the program director and the youth's parents, if necessary, and training to ensure the mentors can effectively guide youth through their personal and spiritual journeys. Furthermore, as a community-led model, the program director will invite parents to participate in identifying or recommending potential mentors and in the vetting process.

Deploying CEIFS successfully will require a lot of prior preparation, including recruiting volunteers and signing a memorandum of understanding with the sponsoring church and commitment/consent forms with parents allowing their youths to participate in the program. The volunteer program director, who will be responsible for ensuring the program runs smoothly, will, in addition, incorporate the following framework:

i. Identifying suitable mentors is a crucial aspect of ensuring the success of this model. While a mentor's education may be necessary, it is not the sole determining factor in the selection process. Other factors, such as an individual's reputation and standing within the community, are critical and must be considered. Potential mentors must possess a genuine interest in mentoring adolescents, be willing to undergo training and adhere to the formal mentoring process. This includes completing a background check, abstaining from

alcohol and drug use, complying with reporting requirements, and other requirements the sponsoring church may demand.

ii. Adopting a continuous training component in the mentor selection and retention strategy. Ensure potential mentors undergo training to familiarize themselves with the model's objectives and components, enhance their mentoring skills, and gain a deeper understanding of adolescent development and challenges faced by young people. Emphasizing the significance of complying with reporting requirements in evaluating the program's success or failure and the need for mentors to comply. The program director may also require mentors to attend periodic training sessions or meetings with the program director and submit regular mentee progress reports. To ensure the mentorship remains on track, the program director provides mentors with a standard mentoring workbook to use with their mentees.

iii. The model necessitates the provision of mentors for teenagers. After thoroughly vetting the mentors and thoughtfully matching them with the mentees, pairing will occur. Each adolescent is assigned a mentor who shares common interests, exhibits compatibility, and attends to their needs. This pairing fosters an environment of trust and support, encouraging open dialogue and mutual respect.

iv. Regular mentorship sessions are essential to maintain the continuity and consistency of the mentor-mentee relationship. During these sessions, mentors offer guidance, support, and a secure environment for adolescents to express their emotions and concerns. These sessions encompass discussions on theological teachings per the workbook/guidelines, emotional intelligence exercises, and practical advice for tackling specific difficulties. In

subsequent sessions, feedback is provided on how the mentee applied the lessons learned, and the mentee shares the outcomes observed with the mentor.

v. Undertaking community activities, such as stocking food banks and serving hot meals, alongside a mentor can broaden a mentee's worldview. The community often organizes these activities to promote social interactions, shared values, and community. Such activities include community service projects, cultural events, and educational workshops.

Potential Benefits of CEIFS

The CEIFS model offers several advantages for adolescent development. One of its chief benefits is its integrated approach, which considers both the spiritual and emotional aspects of maturation by integrating theological reflections and emotional intelligence. This comprehensive perspective can lead to a deeper understanding of oneself, others, and the world, fostering personal growth and maturity. Another advantage of the CEIFS model is its community-based system, which establishes a supportive network for adolescents, promoting a sense of ownership. This network provides emotional support, practical aid, and a sense of belonging, empowering adolescents to navigate life's challenges better.

Moreover, through mentorship and community support, adolescents can develop resilience, a crucial skill for overcoming bullying, discrimination, and other obstacles. By participating in and contributing to the community, adolescents can create a more favorable self-perception and a sense of pride in their identity. Finally, the CEIFS model's incorporation of theological reflection ensures that the mentoring process is culturally sensitive and relevant by incorporating the community's cultural and religious beliefs. This results in adolescents

enhancing their self-perception and gaining a greater appreciation for their community and culture.

Limitations of the CEIFS Model

The CEIFS model, despite its potential advantages, presents several obstacles that must be addressed. To implement this model successfully, it is necessary to have committed mentors, financial resources, and community support, which can be a significant challenge, especially in low-income areas. Moreover, mentors and mentees may not have a physical place to meet or can only meet on specific days of the week, making it challenging to integrate theological reflections, particularly in religiously diverse communities. It is crucial to respect all faiths and beliefs, which may require adapting the model to accommodate different theological perspectives. On a positive note, this may also present an opportunity to replicate the model with other faiths.

Maintaining high levels of engagement among mentors, adolescents, and the community can be challenging and demanding for program directors and mentors. To achieve a substantial impact on adolescents, the program director must make continuous efforts to keep all parties motivated and involved. However, determining the model's success can be complex due to the subjective nature of personal and spiritual growth. Developing appropriate metrics to measure success is also challenging. Furthermore, mentees have unique life experiences, which can exacerbate the complexities of the assessment process.

Despite these challenges, the CEIFS model offers a comprehensive approach to mentoring adolescents and addressing their spiritual, emotional, and social needs. The potential benefits, particularly for adolescents with significant life challenges, are substantial. The model can be vital in shaping resilient, empathetic, and socially responsible individuals by nurturing emotional intelligence, promoting theological reflection, and fostering a supportive community

environment. The CEIFS model underscores the power of the community in shaping the future of its younger members and, in doing so, contributes to the creation of a more compassionate and understanding society.

CEIFS Model Assessment

The CEIFS model is a multifaceted construct encompassing theological reflections, emotional intelligence, community engagement, and individual mentorship. Given its complexity, evaluating its effectiveness necessitates a comprehensive, multidimensional approach. To provide a complete assessment of the CEIFS model, quantitative and qualitative measures must be considered to capture all relevant outcomes. The following are the essential elements of the assessment design:

i. Employing qualitative measures, such as interviews and focus group discussions, can provide a more in-depth understanding of the experiences of adolescents, mentors, and community members. By incorporating these methods, it is possible to explore changes in attitudes, perceptions, relationships, and personal growth that may not be fully captured through quantitative measures. Qualitative measures allow for the collection of rich, detailed data that can provide a more nuanced understanding of the impact of a program or intervention on the lives of the individuals involved. These measures can be instrumental in exploring the subjective experiences of participants and can provide valuable insights into the processes and mechanisms through which change occurs. However, this approach is lengthy, time-consuming, and may be costly. The costs and time may outweigh its benefits.

ii. Observational studies of adolescents in diverse settings, including their homes, schools, and communal activities, can yield insights into their behavioral modifications, social competencies, coping mechanisms, and interpersonal connections.

iii. Feedback from mentors and community members can be a valuable resource for assessing the model's effectiveness, identifying potential issues, and suggesting areas for enhancement.

iv. Longitudinal evaluation: Considering the extended nature of personal and spiritual development, assessing feasible changes over an extended period would be advantageous by following the same cohort of adolescents over a protracted period. This type of evaluation could be more viable for adolescents who participate in a mentorship program during their early adolescence and continue to participate through their high school years.

Efficacy of the CEIFS Model

The CEIFS model, which assesses its effectiveness through factors like quality of mentorship, community engagement, theological reflections, and emotional intelligence, is designed to address adolescents' various challenges. The model's emphasis on theological reflections and emotional intelligence development may provide adolescents with a moral and ethical framework to navigate life's complexities and facilitate personal growth, resilience, and enhanced social relationships. The CEIFS model's community-led approach is also a key strength, as it fosters a supportive network and provides practical and emotional support to help adolescents overcome challenges more effectively.

CEIFS efficacy will depend on several factors, such as the implementation process and potential challenges, such as resource constraints, religious diversity, mentor/mentee engagement maintenance, and progress management. In addition, continuous assessment, evaluation, and

modification based on feedback and assessment are necessary to ensure the model's effectiveness. By continuously addressing potential challenges and improving the model, the CEIFS program can significantly enhance adolescents' lives by fostering resilience, motivating them to achieve their full potential, and contributing meaningfully to their community's personal growth and a sense of belonging. To accomplish this, conducting mentor and mentee surveys and gathering feedback from stakeholders such as parents, mentors, mentees, and church leadership can help steer the program's effectiveness continuously and ensure its goal congruence.

Community Parent Peer Support Group -NIPPS

The primary objective of the second portion of this proposal is to establish a New Immigrant Parent Peer Support (NIPPS) group. NIPPS is designed to support new immigrants and parents navigating unfamiliar systems, seeking quick and successful cultural assimilation. This community-based parent peer group is crucial because it fosters awareness of expectations, generates ideas, and provides leads for jobs, schools, and other strategies for successful cultural integration. The Kenyan Immigrant Community in America (KICA) and church communities will collaborate to initiate and support NIPPS and ensure its successful implementation.

NIPPS meetings aim to offer a valuable resource for new immigrants by providing access to dependable, professionally researched information and the opportunity to pose questions to community professionals. These meetings may also offer job resources and employment opportunities for those seeking work. In addition to seminars, NIPPS may incorporate other activities such as meditation, Bible study, or book study. At NIPPS meetings, new immigrants can seek answers to specific questions, including clarification on immigration processes, career recertification, neighborhood recommendations, or general advice on children's academic progress. Further, NIPPS may also help immigrant parents learn how to communicate better with

their adolescents while identifying warning signs and proactively addressing the risks or dangers they may or have encountered, such as depression, anxiety, and other disorders.

The New Immigrant Parent Program (NIPPS), a three-month initiative, is designed to help new immigrant parents establish themselves in their new community. Offered twice a year by KICA, the program provides a platform for peer support and knowledge exchange through biweekly meetings held at local churches. During these sessions, participants discuss their experiences, challenges, and success stories and can connect and share valuable information about housing assistance, employment, schools, public transportation, and personal healthcare. The program may also provide resource materials and handouts to complement discussions and offer ongoing support. Besides, NIPPS may promote social interaction by introducing new immigrant parents to the local church community, enabling them to expand their networks and access additional resources to foster a sense of belonging and successfully settle into their new community.

The program will expatiate community involvement activities that will make new immigrants feel welcome, such as the following:

i. Community Events and Festivals - where community leaders periodically pull together events and cultural activities and invite the community to participate as participants or guests. The events and festivals are usually well attended as countrymen and women experience the cultural festivities while connecting with others.

ii. Volunteer Opportunities - NIPPS will facilitate volunteer opportunities within the local community. The participants will contribute their skills and time to community events and, as a result, gain a sense of fulfillment by building connections with the host

community residents. The program will also provide information on volunteer opportunities and work with the local community to find placements.

iii. Community Workshops and Training - NIPPS will collaborate with local community organizations to provide workshops and training sessions on relevant topics such as financial literacy, language skills, parenting strategies, and intercultural communication. These workshops will empower participants with practical knowledge and skills, enhancing their ability to navigate their new community.

The three-month New Immigrant Parents Peer (NIPPS) Group Meeting Program (Table 3, appendix III) aims to provide new immigrant parents with essential information, peer support, and community involvement opportunities. The program will empower parents in their settling and integration journey by addressing issues related to immigration, such as housing assistance, employment, schools and challenges, public transportation, and personal healthcare. Through this program, new immigrant parents will gain the knowledge, resources, and connections necessary to successfully navigate their distinct environments and provide stable foundations for their families.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Immigration refers to the process where individuals and families relocate to a new host country, which can be an intricate endeavor. While immigration presents fresh prospects, it also entails challenges for both immigrant children and their parents. Regrettably, these obstacles are often intentionally and malevolently created by individuals who seek to impede the success of immigrants. It is crucial for immigrants to successfully integrate into the host country's culture, education system, and society to prosper and contribute positively to their new communities. However, certain impediments can hinder immigrants from achieving their goals as they grapple with these challenges. Parents and children confront distinct hurdles that, if left unaddressed, can result in an unsuccessful assimilation, leading to dire consequences for immigrant families.

The community is composed of immigrants who have relocated earlier, and they possess a range of resources to assist new immigrants. The community's strength stems from its ability to come together and build supportive networks for fellow immigrants. These networks provide new immigrants with valuable resources, contributing to their faster assimilation into the new environment. Additionally, the community provides emotional and material support to adolescents and their families through community churches. The community plays a critical role in shaping adolescents' futures by equipping them with skills, guidance, and support, as well as sharing success stories about programs, schools, and neighborhoods that are beneficial to the community.

While numerous mentoring programs exist for adolescents and their parents, they do not all serve the same purpose. As such, every community must design a program centered around its specific needs. It is important to note that community-led or community-based support offers

several benefits, such as providing adolescents with a supportive network outside their immediate family and offering a broader perspective on life. This extended support can be particularly beneficial for immigrant adolescents as they navigate the challenging phases of their lives and receive support and guidance from the community. In addition to promoting accountability, community-based programs also play a considerable role in reducing risky behaviors among adolescents, including a decrease in substance use, school dropout, and teenage pregnancy.

The proposed mediation program seeks to empower and facilitate the assimilation process for immigrant children and their parents by addressing the obstacles they face. For the intervention to succeed, the participation and dedication of immigrant adolescents and their parents are essential. Additionally, community support and the establishment's structure that assist new immigrants are critical factors for the program's success.

The Community Led Emotional Intelligence and Faith Support (CEIFS) mentoring program embraces the community. It allows the community to contribute to the success and welfare of new immigrants by mentoring adolescents and providing resources for parents. Through mentoring, the community guides immigrant children on proficiency, overcoming language barriers, improving educational goals, social interactions, and overall integration into the host community. It also helps smoothen the adolescents' transition to the new education system, which may otherwise overwhelm parents. Through parental intervention and advocacy with teachers, the new immigrants can address cultural differences, seek to understand the school curriculum, and confidently address insufficiencies identified in the support systems, thus assisting in improving their children's academic progress and chances for success.

Mentoring facilitates the acclimation of immigrant children to new cultural standards by assisting them in adjusting to fresh social norms, values, and anticipations. This process encourages immigrant children to participate in sports and community activities, enabling them to overcome cultural incongruity and the dilemma of choosing between their heritage and the new culture they have adopted. Through mentoring, children can surmount feelings of isolation, identity crises, and difficulties in establishing social connections with their local peers. Mentoring helps immigrant children cope with the pain of discrimination and prejudice arising from their ethnic background, language, or physical appearance. This discrimination can be emotionally distressing and may hinder their sense of belonging and acceptance in new communities.

The CEIFS mentoring model is a pioneering initiative that combines spiritual and emotional support to facilitate the personal growth of immigrant children. This program guides on improving language skills, educational opportunities, social connections, and overall community integration for both children and parents. It aids parents in comprehending the new educational system, navigating cultural differences, and advocating for their children's needs. The program offers strategies for managing discrimination and fostering self-esteem, social integration, and overall well-being for immigrant teenagers. By adopting an integrated approach, the program also helps individuals cultivate empathy, emotional resilience, and spiritual grounding, enhancing their lives and relationships.

Language and communication barriers, much like immigrant children, present significant obstacles for immigrant parents. Limited language proficiency can negatively impact their ability to secure employment, access necessary services, and engage in meaningful social interactions. Insufficient language skills can restrict their integration into the workforce, limit their social

support networks, and hinder their assimilation processes. To address this issue, the New Immigrant Parents Peer Support (NIPPS) group aims to provide resources and support for parents to improve their language proficiency, such as coaching or access to other resources. Additionally, the NIPPS group offers updated information on employment requirements through regular meetings and seminars that address such issues as recognizing foreign qualifications, understanding the local job market, and exploring opportunities for professional growth.

The New Immigrant Parent Peer Support (NIPPS) provides support systems and social networks for immigrant parents. By hosting regular meetings, NIPPS enables parents to exchange ideas, ask questions, and reduce cultural differences and unfamiliarity with local customs that could lead to social isolation. This isolation can result in loneliness, depression, and a lack of community engagement, which can hinder successful integration into the host country's society. Immigrant parents may face various challenges when attempting to understand and comply with complex immigration laws, access social services, and fulfill legal requirements. Limited knowledge of legal processes, language barriers, and a lack of resources or guidance can impede their ability to navigate these systems effectively. NIPPS aims to provide information and resources to help immigrant parents navigate the bureaucratic and legal systems of the United States.

It is crucial for immigrant children and their parents to integrate into the adopted country's culture, education system, and society. However, numerous obstacles can impede this process, and immigrants may face challenges in various areas. A comprehensive approach that involves support from the host country's government, educational institutions, social service providers, and local communities is necessary to address these impediments. The CEIFS mentoring program and NIPPS support group can offer leadership within the Kenyan Immigrant

Community in America. CEIFS assists immigrant children in overcoming obstacles that hinder their educational success. At the same time, NIPPS provides new immigrant parents with opportunities to connect with the Kenyan Immigrant Community in the United States through personalized support, such as job placement services, networking opportunities, and information on legal procedures, alongside socialization, which can enhance their integration and overall well-being.

These two programs will collectively foster a welcoming and inclusive environment for new immigrants in the host community, encourage cultural exchange, promote diversity, and combat prejudice and discrimination, which can create a supportive atmosphere for immigrant children and their parents. Building bridges of understanding between the immigrant population and the local community can facilitate social integration and contribute to the successful assimilation of immigrants.

The Kenyan immigrant community in America is characterized by a sense of privacy, and its members tend only to reveal information that they perceive as innocuous to the public. Due to the limited available data, scholars are unable to fully grasp the consequences of bullying, microaggressions, and racism in this community. It is imperative to conduct further research on the experiences of immigrant adolescents in middle and high schools to gain a deeper understanding of their lives and how they compare to those of immigrants from non-African countries. Additionally, studying the reasons behind high school dropouts among immigrants may provide valuable insight into the effectiveness of the education system in supporting immigrants, particularly those of African descent, and its relationship with crime rates and homelessness within the community.

In conclusion, it is crucial to identify and address the hurdles that impede immigrant children and their parents from assimilating successfully. By doing so, societies can become more inclusive and prosperous. Providing extensive support, resources, and opportunities enables immigrant children and parents to surmount these challenges and contribute positively to their new host country. The successful assimilation of immigrants benefits both the immigrants and the host country, leading to greater diversity, cultural enrichment, and socioeconomic progress.

Appendix I

Table 1: Mapping Immigrant's experiences to EI Skills

Immigrant Experiences	Description	Impact on immigrant	EI Skills Required
Language Barrier	inability to communicate through a common language	impedes communication and limits the building of relationships	Motivation, Resilience
Cultural differences and unfamiliarity	culture different from the immigrant's	may cause misunderstanding	Motivation, flexibility/adaptability
Immigration stress/trauma	Trauma and stress triggered during and after immigration	Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety	Motivation, Resilience, Emotional expression
Family stress	Stress affecting one or more members of the family impacts the emotional connection with other family members	transfers stress to children, limiting their acculturation and education progress	Flexibility/adaptability, resilience, Emotional expression
Low Confidence Level	Low self-esteem may be caused by issues of self-identification in a new habitat	diminished feelings of self-efficacy feelings of helplessness	Resilience, Relationships, Conflict Resolution
Personal health	immigrant personal health is essential, but many immigrants have limited access due to restrictions	productivity, and inhibits learning and growth if not addressed in time	Resilience, Emotional Expression, Decision Making
Psychological stress	Experiences immigrants go through under mental and or emotional pressure	Isolation and decreased community support, mental health disorder	Motivation, Resilience, Emotional Expression
Marginalization	The intentional act of being placed in a position of less importance, influence, or power	poor health, increased depression, reduced self-esteem, increased chances of acquiring a mental health disorder	Empathy, Decision Making, Conflict Resolution
Bullying, teasing, name-calling, physical fighting	An intentionally harmful and repetitive aggressive behavior exerted on immigrants because of their immigrant status perception	poor health, few close friends, weak family relationships, increased depression, reduced self-esteem, and increased chances of acquiring a mental health disorder	Empathy, Relationships, Conflict Resolution
Discrimination	Unfair treatment because of their ethnicity, accent, or appearance	poor health, few close friends, weak family relationships, increased depression, reduced self-esteem, and increased chances of acquiring a mental health disorder	Empathy, Decision Making, Conflict Resolution
Isolation	inability to maintain contact with family or loved ones.	poor health, loneliness, stress, depression	Relationships, Decision Making

Appendix II

Table 2 Mitigating EI deficiencies identified in Table 1.

EI Competencies	Recognition	Faith Reflections	Mentoring Outcome
Self-Awareness		*To encourage self-acceptance and build confidence:* Psalms 139:14, "I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."	The participants will learn and understand their personality, emotions, values, and influence/contribution.
Self-Regulation			
	Motivation	*To encourage a growth mindset and foster motivation:* Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."	Motivation inspires participants to set goals, persevere through challenges, and maintain a cheerful outlook.
	Resilience	*To encourage perseverance and resilience:* James 1:2- 4: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance."	The program will focus on building resilience among participants by teaching them how to bounce back from setbacks.
	Flexibility	*To encourage patience and respect for others' views:* Ecclesiastes 3:1 "There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens."	Mentoring will emphasize the importance of adaptability and flexibility in various situations.
	Emotional Expression	*To encourage personal expressions:* Psalm 34:17-18 "The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those crushed in spirit."	The participants will learn healthy ways of expressing their emotions and seeking support when needed.
Social Awareness		*Learn the importance of healthy relationships:* Matthew 25:40, "The King will answer, 'Truly I say to you, as you have done it for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you have done it for Me.'	Participants will learn to be aware of others' behavior and how it impacts them. They learn to apply social skills, promoting effective communication, conflict resolution, and teamwork.
Social Regulation			
	Empathy	*Promote compassion and understanding:* Romans 12:15-18, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not be haughty but associate with the lowly."	Develop and express empathy towards others by understanding different perspectives and experiences.
	Handling Relationships	*Promote kindness, respect, and forgiveness:* Matthew 7:12: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you."	Learn strategies for building and maintaining positive relationships with peers, teachers, and others.
	Decision Making	*Guide in decision-making:* Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."	Develop critical thinking skills and make responsible decisions.
	Conflict Resolution	*Learn conflict resolution skills:* 2 Corinthians 13:11, "Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, and live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you."	Learning to identify solutions acceptable to all could mean spending more time looking for solutions or understanding the cause of conflicts- the goal is to coexist peaceably with one another by recognizing others as equals in Christ.

Appendix III
Table 3. NIPPS Group Meeting Guidelines and Suggested Topics

Meeting 1: Orientation and Community Resources	Introduction to the program and its objectives Overview of available community resources and support services for new immigrants Explain the importance of networking and building social connections. Icebreaker activities to foster a sense of community among participants
Meeting 2: Housing Assistance	Discuss the local housing and rental options. Information on government housing programs and subsidies Tips for navigating the rental process, understanding leases, and tenant rights. Guest speaker from a local housing agency or expert to provide insights and answer questions.
Meeting 3: Employment and Job Search Strategies	Understanding the local job market and employment opportunities presentation on building resumes, enhancing interview skills, and general job search strategies. Exploring professional networks and mentorship opportunities Guest speaker from a local employment agency or career counselor to provide guidance and resources.
Meeting 4: Schools and Educational Challenges	Introduction to the education system and school enrollment process Discussion on challenges and opportunities for immigrant children in schools Understanding parent-teacher communication and involvement Strategies for supporting children's academic success and cultural adjustment.
Meeting 5: Public Transportation and Mobility	Overview of the local public transportation system and fare options Navigating bus/train routes, schedules, and transfers Understanding transportation accessibility for individuals with special needs Tips for safe and efficient travel within the community
Meeting 6: Personal Healthcare and Well-being	Introduction to the local healthcare system, including primary care providers and clinics. Accessing health insurance and understanding coverage options Promoting personal and family well-being, including mental health and self-care strategies Guest speaker from a local healthcare organization or healthcare professional to provide insights and resources.

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