



DEPARTMENT:

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PROJECT TITLE:

Racial Disproportionality in
Students with ADHD



Racial Disproportionality for Students with ADHD

Melanie Monroe

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not”

- Dr. Seuss, The Lorax



Engaging Activity

- You are the parent of a 7 year old child, Johnny, who struggles in school. Johnny's teacher has sent home many notes in the past few weeks that explain that Johnny talks out of turn, walks away from his tasks and roams around the classroom, and he has many emotional breakdowns. You don't know how to ask Johnny's teacher for help because of the language barrier, your only language is Spanish and the teacher only speaks English. You yell at Johnny for misbehaving and take away his toys. You think Johnny is trying to be the class clown.
 - **How would you feel if you were Johnny's parent and couldn't communicate with his teacher?**



Engaging Activity cont'd.

- Johnny's teacher suggests holding him back a year in school because he didn't perform at the scores he needed to in order to move onto second grade. You don't know how to help Johnny score better on his tests or help him with his homework because you and your spouse don't understand what he's learning. Johnny gets very emotional when he doesn't understand anything, he doesn't retain information very well, and has a sporadic thought process. You decide he should be held back too.
 - **What do you wish you could do for Johnny? How would you advocate for him?**




What is ADHD? What are the symptoms?

- **Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)** is a brain disorder that is marked by an ongoing pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development.
- **Symptoms:**
 - Trouble focusing
 - Trouble managing emotions
 - Have difficulty remembering information
 - Don't start tasks or don't finish them
 - Impulsivity



Statistics

- A study of 6,000 children found Latino children (4%) were less likely than African American (9.1%) and Caucasian children (10.8%) to be diagnosed with ADHD (Rowland, Umbach, et al., 2002; see also Rowland, Lesesne, & Abramowitz, 2002)
 - In the same investigation, racial and ethnic minority children (53% of Latinos and 56% of African Americans) were less likely to be on medication for ADHD as compared to 76% of Caucasian youth (Rowland, Umbach, et al., 2002; see also Rowland, Lesesne, & Abramowitz, 2002).
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The Cause of Racial Disproportionality

Barriers for Latinos not seeking and receiving mental health care:


- Lack of insurance
- Low socioeconomic status (SES)
- Limited parental education
- Transportation problems
- Culturally based negative emotions and beliefs toward mental health treatment
- Unfamiliarity and distrust providers
- Lack of appropriate bilingual/bicultural providers
- Language barrier
 - Latino youth don't get put into as many research trials because of the language barrier



Parents

“Children with ADHD experience more negative and fewer positive interactions with their parents than comparison children resulting in less positive relationships” (Dupaul et al 2001; Keown and Woodward 2002).

Parents have:

- ADHD
 - Depression
 - Substance abuse
 - Martial issues
 - Parenting stress
 - Families of children with ADHD are more likely to experience family conflict
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How Parents Feel

"Learning and thinking differences are not unusual in children. There *is* help out in the community. You just have to know where to look."

"Once I realized that my daughter was having trouble with focus, I started to research online. I found a lot of unreliable and inaccurate information. This left me feeling overwhelmed and, once again, confused."


"I wish I'd known from the beginning that we weren't the only ones who had these issues. Many families, both immigrants and nonimmigrants, were in our shoes. In fact, I've learned that one child in five has learning and thinking differences, just like my child."

-Myriam Alizo




Personal Experience

2nd grade boy:

- Does not take any medication or receive any type of therapy.
 - Has many emotional outbursts and can lash out at students and teacher.
 - There was flexible seating in my mentor's classroom and he would create distractions for other students with these seating options.
 - The behavioral coach would come in and speak with him.
 - Lived with grandparents and they only spoke spanish.
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How to help

As educators or in a place of being an advocate for a child you can:

- Recognize potential ADHD symptomatology
 - Encourage help seeking behaviors - medication doesn't work for everyone
 - Parent management therapy
 - Behavior modification
 - Cognitive behavioral therapy
 - Family therapy
 - Adopt culturally and linguistically sensitive screening procedures to help reduce the early onset of ADHD diagnosis disparities
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Parent Help Centers

A free resource that every state has at least 1 of. Parents are able to receive information for their child from birth to the age of 22 about their disability. Can help parents with understanding IDEA and 504 plans.

PEAK Parent Center - Colorado Springs, CO

THRIVE Center - Aurora, CO



Resources

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Morgan, P. L., Hillemeier, M. M., Farkas, G., & Maczuga, S. (2014). Racial/ethnic disparities in ADHD diagnosis by kindergarten entry. *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry*, 55(8), 905-913. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.coloradomesa.edu/10.1111/jcpp.12204>

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