

Adolescence is a *critical* time for teenagers to develop...



- Identity, values, & interest
- Healthy habits that will persist *atravez de la edad adulta*
- Future aspirations and career goals



Teens go through *many changes* during adolescence that can be *rewarding and challenging*, but ultimately these changes help teens mature into healthy adults.

Opportunities available to teens:

Improve problem solving skills

Learn how to overcome obstacles in school and their relationships.

Explore their identities

Develop a sense of who they are: gender, sexuality, values, religion, race, ethnicity, etc.



Explore career interests

What passions and interests they could develop into a career.

Develop new social roles

Making new friends, getting leadership roles in their schools, jobs, churches, clubs, etc.

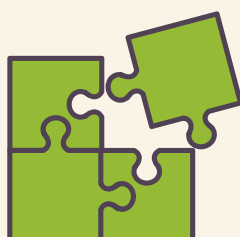
Challenges faced by teens:

Differences in values and expectations

Teens may struggle to manage the different values and expectation around them in school and home.

Exposure to risk factors

Such as alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use.



Stressors related to identity, culture, race, and ethnicity

Examples include discrimination and racism.

Lack of access to basic needs

Como cuidado de salud accesible.

What can families do to support their teens?

Support from the family can serve as a tool in helping teens manage the stress associated with the challenges of adolescence...



Support can look like:

- Family members promoting positive ways for teens to manage stress



- Parents providing a safe place for teens to discuss troubling matters and to share their successes

From a participant in the JUNTOS Youth Study:

"...before I wouldn't feel comfortable talking to [my parents], like telling them how I felt or, like, why I was feeling this way, because sometimes I didn't necessarily have a reason to be feeling that way. It's just how I felt. So now I definitely talk to my father more than I talk to my mother, but I feel like that's just because he's my dad and he's like [the] only real male person in my life."

- Open to teen's negative feelings and questions.
- Provide *warmth*, not judgment.



Through practicing these forms of support, parents can:

- Help teach their teens healthy ways to cope with the challenges of adolescence
- Celebrate their teens successes and opportunities during adolescence and beyond

Adolescence For Latino/a/e Teens

Challenges faced by Latino/a/e Teens

From participants in the JUNTOS Youth Studies

Discrimination

Being treated in a poor manner due to identity characteristics such as your race, ethnicity, sex, and/or gender

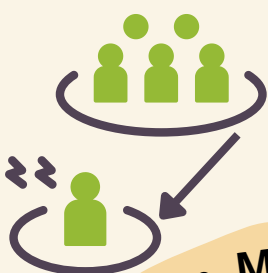


Racism

A form of discrimination targeted directly towards an individual's race.

"...in Walmart...they look at the receipts... and there was nothing but...white people...they didn't even check [off their receipts], **but for me and my mom's since they see..we're Hispanic** they were...checking every little thing, **so that's kind of discriminating against us**, like saying like, "Oh, you're a minority"

"...we got a noise complaint, because we were on the second floor. And **a cop just comes in with his gun out** and a flashlight, and like, "Everyone get on the ground." ...And so then I tell my mentor and he was like, "**Cops aren't supposed to do that, because that door was closed**". But then my big brother was like, "**That's just how it is.**" And it was a white cop too..."



Intragroup Marginalization

Feelings of rejection by family, friends, and other Latinos for taking on the majority culture

Code Switching

Having to alternate between languages and cultures to fit in certain situations



Family Cultural Conflict

Disagreement due to differences in values, expectations, and behaviors between youth and parents

Opportunities for Latino/a/e Teens

Biculturalism

Latino/a/e teens benefit from feeling close to both their Latino culture and U.S culture.

Strong Family Ties

Through strong family ties, Latino/a/e teens can call on their family for support.

Community

A caring ethnic community can help Latino/a/e teens manage stressors related to their culture.



These opportunities have been found to promote better mental health, self-esteem, academics, and lower risky behaviors, such as substance use, in Latino/a/e teens.

When parents help their Latino/a/e teens embrace these opportunities, it can help teens overcome the challenges they experience and be successful in life.

Coping With Cultural Stressors

What is Coping?

Cognitive and **behavioral** efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands felt *as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person.*

When teens learn how to cope with cultural stressors effectively, it assists in their healthy development.

Healthy Coping Strategies

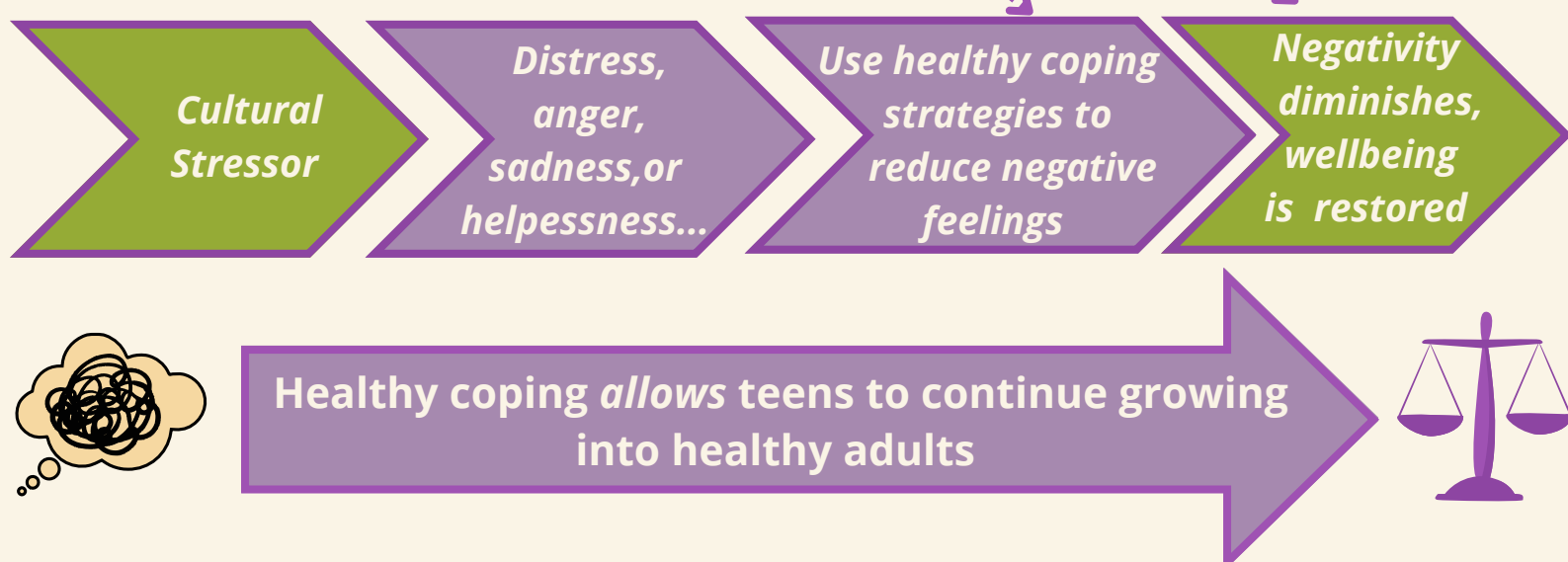


- **Active coping includes...**
 - **Problem-solving:** finding solutions and ways to reduce the problem.
 - **Positive reframing:** taking a negative situation and looking at it from a different, more positive perspective.
 - **Support seeking coping:** asking for support or help from family, friends, and other adults.
- **Distraction coping is...**
 - Taking part in activities to take one's mind off the problem **temporarily**.
 - Playing sports, being with friends, engaging in hobbies/interests, etc.



JUNTOS Youth Study Participant quote:

"...my mom is my best friend at home. So when I'm feeling stressed or something, I talk to her about it. It's just something about talking to my mom, at least for me, it calms me down and it tells me that everything's gonna be okay. I don't need to worry about anything."



Unhealthy Coping Strategies

- **Engaging in risky behaviors, such as..**
 - Alcohol and illicit drug use, for example.
- Although risky behaviors are a **temporary fix, it can lead to poor health outcomes if used in excess:**
 - Examples include poor sleep, lowered self-esteem, and reduced appetite.
- It is **important** for teens to feel **comfortable seeking support** from **family** when they experience cultural stressors...
 - As a **strong support system** can assist in a teen's **healthy development**.

JUNTOS Youth Study Participant quote:

"One thinks that alcohol will help them forget, but they only forget momentarily, but after the alcohol wears off they are still in the same situation, and so they drink again, and that is where they fall into addiction."





HOW CAN FAMILIES SUPPORT THEIR TEENS?

Why is parental support important?



When teens experience discrimination & racism, parental support can be **extremely** beneficial for their well-being

Teens may have trouble realizing that **HOW** they cope with cultural stressors could be **harmful to their health and wellbeing**.

The **ways** that parents support their teens can teach teens **effective ways** to manage experiences with discrimination & racism

Parents can help their teens learn **healthier ways to cope** so that **youth can continue growing into healthy and mature adults**.



According to the JUNTOS Studies, this is what Latino/a/e parents are doing to support their teens

POSITIVE REFRAMING:

Encouraging one to **change their perspective** about the stressor to be more positive.



PRIMING FOR ETHNIC BIAS:

Preparing one for **future experiences** with discrimination and racism.



*"[My parents] try to look at the positive side. Also tell me like **to be careful about what's said, what I do**, my actions so it won't reflect badly on me, something like that."*

RELIGION:

Using **spirituality** as a form of hope, self-protection, or faith to **manage** discrimination and racism experiences.



*"Whenever I leave the house or [do] anything, my mom always says a prayer, because she's scared of what might happen. Especially being in the neighborhood that we live in...**There's always cops around...**"*

RESISTANCE COPING:

Encouraging pride in your ethnic identity and **advocacy** against discrimination/racism, **speaking up**, or **avoiding** stores/places where the discrimination or racism took place.



*"I'll be walking into a place and a white man opening the door for me [will] say, **"Buenos días,"** in Spanish, and I'm like, **"Good morning."** I know English. I know that I look like I can speak Spanish and I can, **but It's the part where they assume I only speak Spanish.**"*

SHIFT AND PERSIST:

Accepting that experiences with discrimination and racism are **out of one's control** and encouraging **perseverance**.

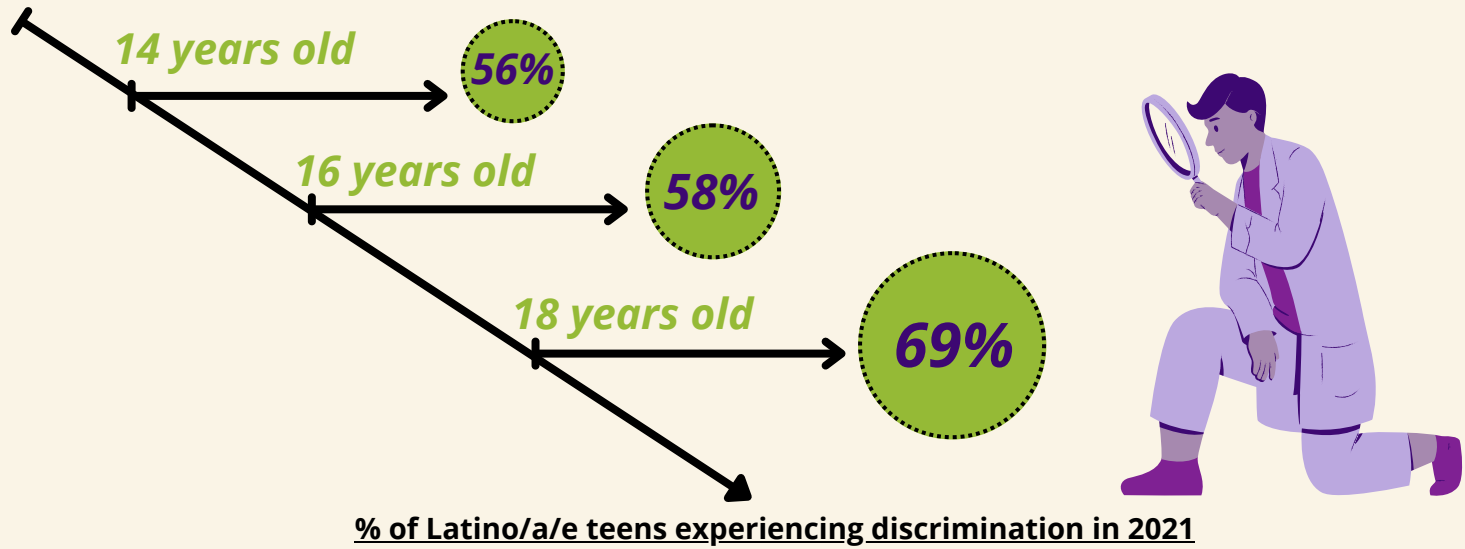


*"We made a decision to come here. And then see why we're doing it. **To raise our children or look for a better way of life...** And when you get here you come across a different reality. And I tell him one has to think, **'Well, I'm already here. To give it forward. To see the good of what I am living.'**"*

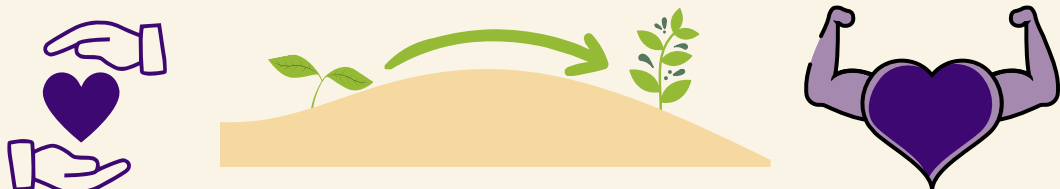
CHALLENGES IN SEEKING SUPPORT FROM THE FAMILY

The new experiences of adolescence include successes and joys, but also stressors and challenges...

Rates of discrimination increase with age for Latino/a/e teens¹



Teens of all ages can benefit from parental support when they experience discrimination and racism



But, the JUNTOS studies found that parental support can be hard to ask for AND to give...

TEENS wish they felt more comfortable going to their parents to talk about their experiences with discrimination and racism

A fear of being misunderstood by their parents



Feeling like they won't reach their parents' expectations

PARENTS wish their teens came to them more when they experienced discrimination and racism

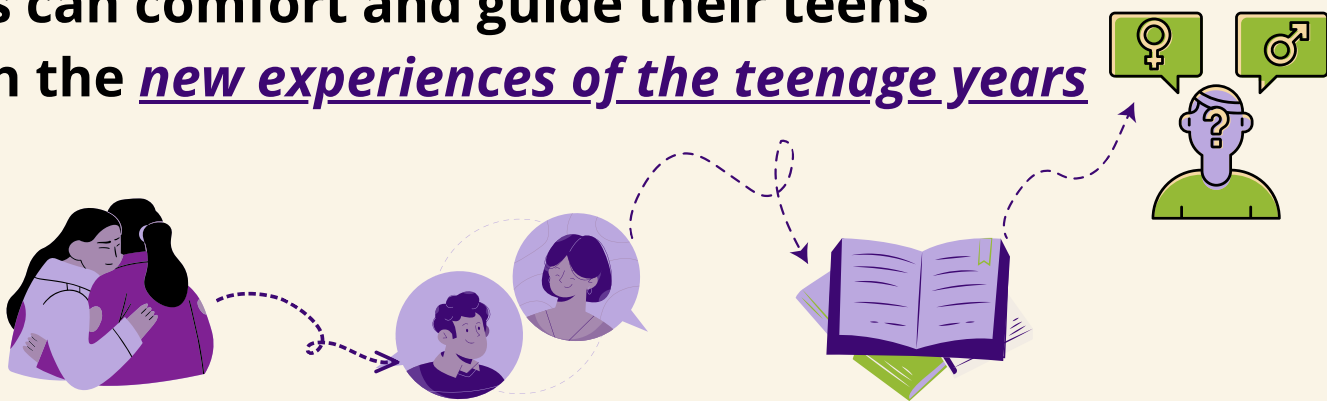
Parents may feel unsure about HOW to comfort their teen



Parents may not even know that their teen is experiencing discrimination and racism

Through building effective communication and trust with each other...

Parents can comfort and guide their teens through the new experiences of the teenage years



1. Zeiders, Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Martinez-Fuentes, S., Updegraff, K. A., Douglass Bayless, S., & Jahromi, L. B. (2021). Latina/o youths' discrimination experiences in the U.S. Southwest: Estimates from three studies. *Applied Developmental Science*, 25(1), 51–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2018.1527695>