

Restoration for All Inc. (REFA): Enhancing Protective Factors and Preventing and Addressing ACEs

This case study is about some of the Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (PACEs) efforts of Restoration for All Inc. (REFA). It is intended to supplement the REFA PACEs community video (2023) linked with the MDH PACEs data dashboard.

Restoration for All Inc. (REFA) is a community-based and African-led organization that partners with individuals and communities to restore their social and cultural connections by addressing trauma and promoting socio-cultural well-being and resilience. The organization's vision includes building resilient communities for immigrant and refugee people. To do this, REFA uses culturally appropriate resources while centering the discovery of cultural heritage, cultural values, and interconnectedness. Dr. Tolulope Ola, founder and executive director of REFA, began this work in 2018 in recognition and acknowledgement of the physical and emotional symptoms of African people who have experienced exposure to individual, institutional, and historical trauma.

One of the important initiatives that REFA is currently working on is to prevent and address adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) while building resilience and protective factors and focusing on the African personality. More specifically, Dr. Ola notes that focusing on the African personality involves achieving wellness and healing using an African Centered Wellness Model (ACWM). She explains that the ACWM is an equitable and sustainable model that intentionally works towards well-being using traditional cultural values relevant to the person or group of focus.

As an organization, REFA works with and draws insights from other BIPOC cultures and community-defined practices that lead to individual and collective healing. Dr. Ola notes that much of the work that REFA does happens in collaboration with community partners like the Mental Health and Wellness Action Team at Ramsey County Public Health and Progressive Individual Resources Inc.

Another central focus of REFA is to help people of African descent have an in-depth awareness and knowledge of community-defined cultural practices that aid in mind, body, and spirit alignment; self-healing; and emotional and mental health sustenance. Toward this goal, Dr. Ola notes that REFA is having success, and that it is evident when clients say, "because of this work, they were able to discover, renew and restore their culture." Dr. Ola explains that REFA is also having a lot of success finding new and creative ways to form community connections, as well as create healing spaces that are culturally appropriate. Moving forward, Dr. Ola says REFA will focus on how to decolonize from individualism and reconnect with ways of cultural community care.

Visit [Restoration for All \(https://restoreall.org/\)](https://restoreall.org/) to learn more about what Restoration for All Inc. is doing to prevent and address ACEs.

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