



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER *for*
HEALTHY MARRIAGE *and* FAMILIES



Working
with
Latino
***Individuals, Couples,
and Families***

A Toolkit for Stakeholders





Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Section 1: Culture and Values	5
Chapter 1: Cultural Considerations	7
Family Values	7
Marriage and Family Dynamics.....	9
Worldview: Collectivism and Individualism	12
Gender Issues: Machismo/Marianismo	16
Fatalism	18
Abuse and Fatalism	18
Communication Style.....	20
Educational Background and Views of Education	23
Views of Work and Money	27
Time Orientation.....	30
Power Distance	32
Chapter 2: Family Issues	35
Intimate Partner Violence.....	35
Blended Families	39
Differences in Parenting.....	41
Section 2: Immigration and Acculturation	45
Chapter 3: Impacts of Undocumented Immigrant Status	47
Daily Life, Marriage, and Children.....	47
Work and Personal Finance Practices	50
Undocumented: Costs and Benefits to the Family's Overall Well-being	53
Chapter 4: Acculturation	57
Stages of Acculturation	57
Generational Differences	62
Language Issues	63

Section 3: Engaging and Retaining Latino Families in Services	65
Chapter 5: Increasing Program Recruitment, Participation, Retention, and Collaboration	67
Strategies for Recruitment	67
Collaborating with Faith-Based Organizations	71
Collaborating with Other Agencies.....	72
Chapter 6: Strategies for Engaging Latino Families	73
Engaging Latino Families in Programs and Services	73
Factors Affecting Latino Family Engagement in Safety-net Services.....	77
Section 4: Integrating Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education into Safety-net Services	83
Chapter 7: Integration Resources for Stakeholders	85
Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education	85
Strategies for Integration	86
Conclusion	89
Works Consulted	91
References	95

Introduction

On July 1, 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau released new data revealing that most children younger than the age of one in the United States are now minorities. These demographic shifts are a clear signal of the important and growing role of minorities in this country. Nationally, Hispanics are the most populous minority group (numbering 52 million in 2011), compared to 43.9 million blacks and 18.2 million Asians (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Hispanics are the fastest growing minority, with their population increasing by 3.1% since 2010, compared to blacks (1.6 %) and Asians (3.0%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

Safety-net service agencies need to increase and develop their capacity to serve Latino and Hispanic clients. This toolkit is designed to help stakeholders—including administrators, supervisors, and safety-net service providers—around the country better serve Latino families, couples, and individuals. The term safety-net service providers refers to governmental agencies and programs, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), child support services, child welfare, labor and workforce services, and Head Start, along with other stakeholders who provide community and family services, education, youth independent living, and Tribal services.

This toolkit recognizes that the Latino community in the U.S. is not homogeneous and static. The experiences of immigrant families and subsequent generations of Latinos are diverse, complex, and rich. Most of this toolkit's content was based on studies conducted on Mexican and Puerto Rican families, who represent 64.9% and 9.2% of the U.S. Hispanic population, respectively. Citing these studies is not intended to undermine the experiences of other Latinos.

This toolkit will help safety-net service providers acquire cultural competence. Having cultural competence is defined as, “conducting one’s professional work in a way that is congruent with the behavior and expectations that members of a distinctive culture recognize as appropriate among themselves” by Sabin (as cited in Rice-Rodriguez & Boyle, 2006).

The purpose of this toolkit is:

- To help increase recruitment and retention of Latino families in services;
- To maximize provider impact on the lives of Latino families; and
- To encourage the integration of healthy marriage and relationship skills into existing service delivery systems as part of a comprehensive, culturally appropriate, family-centered approach to promoting self-sufficiency.

Use this toolkit as a starting point and reference guide:

- To better understand Latino culture and values;
- To better understand the impacts of immigration and acculturation on Latino families;
- To improve outreach, engagement, and support of Latino clients; and
- To learn more about the importance of marriage and relationship skills, as well as strategies for integrating healthy marriage and relationship skills into service delivery systems.

Common Terms

The following terminology will be helpful to stakeholders using this toolkit:

Hispanic: A term commonly used to refer to Spanish-speaking immigrants, but often rejected by Latin American immigrants. The term Hispanic has traditionally been used by conservative political groups in Spanish-speaking nations to assert the superiority of Spanish-European ancestry over the “conquered” indigenous groups of the Americas. Additionally, in 1980, the U.S. Census Bureau designated the term Hispanic to mean a person born in any of the Spanish-speaking countries of the Americas, Spain, and/or Spanish territories. Many Latin American immigrants chose to reject this term because they view it as a government-imposed label (Rice-Rodriguez & Boyle, 2006).

Latino: People from Latin American nations or heritage. Many individuals prefer to identify themselves in terms of their ethnic identity—e.g. Mexican American, Puerto Rican, or Cuban—rather than by the terms Latino or Hispanic. It is important to ask clients how they self-identify and if they have a preference (Rice-Rodriguez & Boyle, 2006). Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably throughout this toolkit.

Acculturation: Changes in attitudes, values, practices, and beliefs of the immigrant group. Specifically, acculturation refers to the individual’s process of learning about and adopting the dominant group’s cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors into his or her self-concept (Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, & Alexander, 2010).

Cultural Awareness: Understanding the similarities and differences among cultural groups (Rice-Rodriguez & Boyle, 2006).

Cultural Sensitivity: Being aware that cultural differences and similarities exist and have an effect on values, learning, and behavior (Rice-Rodriguez & Boyle, 2006).

Ethnicity: Of, relating to, or characteristic of a sizable group of people sharing a common and distinctive racial, national, religious, linguistic, or cultural background (Rice-Rodriguez & Boyle, 2006).

Race: A group of people who share the same physical characteristics such as skin tone, hair texture, and facial features (United Nations, n.d.).

Immigrant: A person who leaves one country to settle permanently in another (Rice-Rodriguez & Boyle, 2006).

Temporary Resident: Individual who has permission to legally live and work temporarily in the U.S. (Rice-Rodriguez & Boyle, 2006).

Undocumented Immigrants: An individual who has no legal authorization to live or work in the U.S. This group includes individuals who enter the country illegally, along with those who remain in the country with expired visas (Rice-Rodriguez & Boyle, 2006). The terms “unauthorized immigrants” and “undocumented immigrants” are used interchangeably in this toolkit.



Toolkit Structure

This toolkit is organized in four sections:

- Section 1: Culture and Values;
- Section 2: Immigration and Acculturation;
- Section 3: Engaging and Retaining Latino Families in Services; and
- Section 4: Integrating Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education into Safety-net Services.

Each section includes chapters that address the core and most relevant issues discussed in the research literature and by experts in the field. Each chapter answers questions related to the topic and highlights program development and implementation recommendations. Case studies with discussion questions are also integrated throughout the sections.

Agencies and stakeholders can use this toolkit in many ways, such as:

- **Include chapters or sections during cultural awareness trainings or in-service trainings;**
- **Include in agency resource libraries;**
- **Include in new employee orientation materials; and/or**
- **Integrate sections during scheduled staff or partner meetings.**

SECTION 1:

Culture and Values

Chapter 1:

Cultural Considerations

Family Values

Individuals often respond to situations and make decisions according to their values. Many of the values held by Latinos are transmitted by extended family and their religious affiliation. Understanding the role of the extended family and religion is an important component of delivering successful services to the Latino community.

What role does the extended family play?

In the Latino community, family determines an individual's identity, self-confidence, worth, and security (Ho, 1987 as cited in Skogrand, Hatch, & Singh, 2005). Agencies should consider this cultural value in relation to their programs and services, as ignoring it can lead to low participation rates, poor retention rates, and a minimal impact in the lives of Latino individuals and families.

Pressure on individuals to cast aside their extended families altogether might lead to a drop in participation. For example, if a father is forced to decide between supporting his mother in his home country or his children in the U.S., this demand might lead him to drop out of a child support program (The National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute [NLFFI], 2003). However, agencies should consider exploring a third option, that of supporting both in varying degrees.

Latino families are large extended networks that often include grandparents, siblings, godparents, and even neighbors. These individuals, in turn, have a stake in the well-being of the nuclear family because they provide a web of support and accountability. For example, engaging godparents in couples counseling programs and invoking the image of grandfathers in educational initiatives for Latino fathers have proven to be effective strategies for some programs (NLFFI, 2003).



Family is one of the major Latino cultural values and affects everything from setting priorities to making decisions.

Skogrand, Hatch, and Singh (2005) found that educational or counseling services for Latino families will be more effective if they include the entire family.

While the extended family is often a source of support, it can sometimes cause stress and anxiety. For instance, there are varying views about the degree of responsibility that an individual has toward his or her extended family in the Latino community. At times, the demands of extended relatives can put pressure on the nuclear family, creating tension and conflict, especially related to financial support issues (NLFFI, 2003). Skogrand, Hatch, and Singh (2005) found that “couples with strong marriages made it clear that their spouse and children were their first priority over extended family.” Agencies should evaluate how to include the extended family in their programs and services in a way that strengthens nuclear family relations.

What is the role of religion in Latino family values?

According to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life and the Pew Hispanic Center (2007), more than 68% of Hispanics identify themselves as Roman Catholics, 15% as born again or evangelical Protestants, and 8% do not identify with any religion at all.

Faith and religious institutions play an important role in Latino family life.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative (2007), religious institutions provide a “context and rationale for marriage, contribute to family rituals, and offer social support in Hispanic communities.” Research shows that religion reinforces positive messages about commitment and encourages respect and other virtues that may help strengthen marriage (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007). Within the Catholic Church, marriage and children are considered part of God’s plan for humanity and marriage is considered vital to bear and raise children (Williams, 1990 as cited in Ellison, Wolfinger, & Ramos-Wada, 2011). For many Latino couples, marriage equates to family (Skogrand, Hatch, & Singh, 2005).

Negative effects of religion in Latino families are related to domestic violence and gender roles. Studies have found that relationships involving a conservatively religious male and a less religious female tend to have increased domestic violence (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007). Research is forthcoming about how religious practice may lead religious wives to have higher expectations of their husbands, possibly resulting in tension in the relationship (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007).

Tips for Stakeholders Working with Latino Families

- **Bringing children to an event is considered normal, not rude.**
- **Whenever possible, provide childcare services for events/workshops/sessions. Ensure that childcare services are well thought out, developmentally age appropriate, and align with the educational insights the parents are receiving.**
- **Programs and services should benefit the whole family, not just the individual, the couple, or the children.**
- **Inviting the extended family to participate in programs and services can be an effective tool for strengthening nuclear families.**

Whether the effects of religion on Latino family values are positive or negative, research shows that faith and religion are cultural values that are closely linked with Latino family dynamics. Religion has been so intimately linked with Latino cultural values for centuries that it cannot be separated from almost every aspect of life, even for people who are not actively involved with any church.

Family is one of the major Latino cultural values and affects everything from setting priorities to making decisions. Consider ways to engage the whole family when providing services.

RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

For more statistics about religion and family values see:

- Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative <http://www.acf.hhs.gov>
- Center for the Study of Latino Religion <http://latinostudies.nd.edu/cslr/>

Marriage and Family Dynamics

While the institution of marriage is often defined in North America as a union between two people, the Latino community commonly understands marriage and family as being intrinsically interconnected. Safety-net service providers should develop an understanding of family life trends among Latinos, ways the immigration experience changes family structure, Latino views on cohabitation, and the role of religion in family dynamics.

What are recent trends among Latino families?

Latinos have historically held a positive outlook on marriage and family life, emphasizing values within the traditional family. As Latinos have migrated to the U.S. and experienced economic strains, social isolation, immigration stress, barriers to marriage, and shifts in cultural norms, their traditional family values have changed and expanded. One of the most recently observed trends for Latinos is an increase in cohabitation and non-marital births. According to Child Trends (2011), in 1990, 37% of births to Latino women were non-marital, compared to 53% in 2009.

Recent Demographic Trends

- **Hispanics have a higher rate of teen births than any other racial group.**
- **Hispanics are the youngest minority: median age is 27, compared to 31 for blacks, 36 for Asians, and 41 for whites.**
- **One quarter of all newborns in the U.S. are Hispanics.**
- **Hispanic females are projected to have just over three children in their lifetimes.**

From the Pew Hispanic Center (2009)

Using U.S. Census Bureau survey data, Kreider and Ellis (2011) identified an important change in marital patterns for the entire population: divorce rate leveled between 1996 and 2009, after decreasing from a high around 1980. According to Kreider and Ellis, this change signifies that, “As marriage rates have decreased and cohabitation has become more common, marriage has become more selective of adults who are better off socioeconomically and have more education, and divorce rates have leveled.”

According to Wildsmith, Steward-Streng, and Manlove (2009), about 41% of births in the U.S. occur outside of marriage, up sharply from 17% three decades ago. Less than 10% of the births to college-educated women occur outside marriage, but for women with high school degrees or less the figure is nearly 60%. While the percentage of births outside of marriage increased for all ethnic groups, there is variability by race and ethnicity. In 2009, Latinos and blacks accounted for the highest proportion of births outside of marriage; 53% of births to Latinos and 73% to black women were nonmarital, compared to 29% for white women.

RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

For more information about the attitudes, values, social behaviors, and family characteristics of Latinos:

- Pew Hispanic Center. (2009, December). *Between two worlds: How young Latinos come of age in America*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2009/12/11/between-two-worlds-how-young-latinos-come-of-age-in-america/>
- Landale, N. S., Oropesa, R. S., & Bradatan, C. (2006). Hispanic families in the United States: Family structure and process in an era of family change. In M. Tienda & F. Mitchell (Eds.), *Hispanics and the future of America*. Retrieved from U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Center for Biotechnology Information website: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK19902/>

How does the immigration experience change Latino family structure?

Two major factors that determine authority in a Latino household are age and sex; those with the most authority are the husband, parents, males, and elderly. Latino fathers are expected to be hardworking, protective, fearless, and stoical figures, and Latina mothers are expected to assume a more submissive, supportive, nurturing, and self-sacrificing role. As families are exposed to new cultural definitions of fatherhood and motherhood based on the dominant culture’s belief system, this traditional structure may be challenged, causing distress in relationships (La Hoz, Caceres, Komuro-Venovic, & Kwee, 2005).

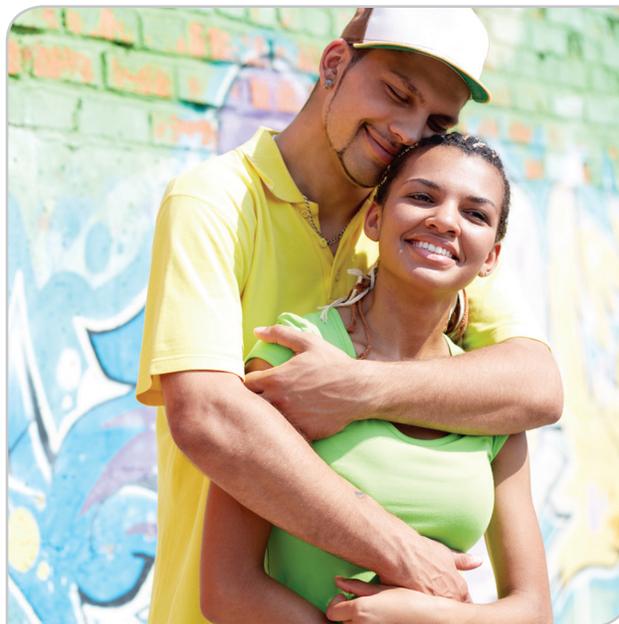
Latino families traditionally have a hierarchical structure with clear expectations for each member of the family.

Landale, Oropesa, and Bradatan (2006) found that while Hispanic families traditionally prioritize family needs over individual needs, the experience of living in the U.S. erodes traditional family values—reducing familism and increasing individualism. Landale et al. point out that the growing divergence between Hispanic subgroups and the non-Hispanic

majority is due to the growth in immigrant families, higher fertility rates than non-Hispanics, and a shift in the generational composition of the Hispanic population.

How do Latinos view cohabitation?

In their study of marriage and cohabitation, Ellison, Wolfinger, and Ramos-Wada (2011) concluded that roughly 25% of all Latino children in the U.S. are born to cohabiting couples. These births are more likely to be planned than those in subgroups of other races/ethnicities (Manning, 2001; Musick, 2002 as cited in Ellison et al., 2011). Moreover, when Latino cohabiting relationships involve children, they are less likely to dissolve than relationships in other subgroups (Manning, 2001; Musick, 2002 as cited in Ellison et al., 2011). The benefits of marital stability are more apparent to first generation immigrants and diminish with subsequent generations (Bean, 1996 as cited in Ellison et al., 2011). Ellison et al. (2011) also found that marriage rates, likelihood of marriage in response to a pregnancy, and early marriages “are all contingent upon nativity, generation, socioeconomic factors, and particularly education.”



Although these factors have been widely discussed, religion is a potential source of variation in marriage and cohabitation among Latino couples. Ellison et al. (2011) found that religion reduces the odds of cohabitation (cohabitation also reduces religious involvement in general) and that Catholics and Evangelicals tend to oppose sex outside of marriage. However, they also found that there seems to be a high level of tolerance of cohabitation among Latinos, especially if couples are stable and involved in childbearing (Manning, 2004 as cited in Ellison et al. 2011).

Ellison et al. (2011) also concluded that devout Evangelicals are less likely to tolerate cohabitation and less tolerant of divorce than their Catholic counterparts. Catholics who do not attend services regularly tend to hold more relaxed views of divorce than their Protestant counterparts, according to Ellison et al. (2011). Other factors that Ellison et al. (2011) reported from their findings are language and education; for example, people who completed interviews in Spanish tended to hold more conservative views than those who completed them in English, and those who were college graduates tended to hold more relaxed views than those without a college degree.

What is the role of religion in family dynamics?

In terms of the effect of religion on attitudes towards marriage, divorce, and cohabitation, Ellison et al. (2011) concluded that Evangelical Protestants who attend church regularly have almost uniformly more conservative attitudes than equally observant Catholics. These

conservative Protestants tend to have a more literal interpretation of the Bible and view marriage as the only context where sexual activity can take place.

For Evangelical Protestants, the main purpose of sexual activity, if not the most important, is procreation (Ellison & Goodson, 1997 as cited in Ellison et al., 2011). They emphasize that Jesus taught, “what God has put together, let no man separate” (Matthew 19:6). Based on these teachings, many Evangelicals advocate that divorce is actually a sin, permissible only when adultery, cheating, or abuse are involved (Stokes & Ellison, 2010 as cited in Ellison et al., 2011).

Catholicism, on the other hand, holds marriage as a holy sacrament, and therefore strongly discourages divorce. Traditionally, the Catholic Church has also discouraged divorced individuals from remarrying in the Church, although Ellison et al. (2011) found that given the increasing divorce rate, it has had to adjust by granting more annulments (Wilde, 2001 as cited in Ellison et al., 2011). The most important implication of these religious views on marriage and divorce counseling programs is that Latino parents, depending on their generation and personal beliefs, might be less willing than the non-Latino majority to seek a divorce for the sake of the children.

While the institution of marriage is defined and understood in North America as a union between two people, for the Latino community the relationship between marriage and family is intrinsically interconnected. Marriage is understood in the context of family.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

- **During intake and case management, seek to understand the current family structure, reasoning behind any changes, and a complete picture of the needs of the couple. Consider the couple’s stressors and the family’s needs as well.**
- **Seek out partnerships with the faith community and collaborate in serving Latino families in the community.**

Worldview: Collectivism and Individualism

Researchers and practitioners have documented that Hispanic individuals and families have a collectivistic worldview, different from the predominant individualistic worldview in the U.S. This collectivistic worldview influences Hispanic relationships and parenting practices.

How are Latino families rearing children in the U.S.?

Working with Latino families requires an understanding of their worldviews and priorities. Peña, Silva, Claro, Gamarra, and Parra (2008) determined that Greenfield’s collectivism-individualism model provides a framework for understanding Latino family dynamics. The model identifies competition and individual achievements with an individualistic perspective, and interdependence and community with a collectivistic perspective.

According to Peña et al. (2008), “in general, mainstream Americans tend to fall on the individualistic side of the continuum, while Latinos typically trend toward a collectivistic outlook.” However, the degree to which an individual or family favors individualism or collectivism depends on a variety of factors such as generational status, socioeconomic status, and acculturation levels (Peña et al., 2008).

Rudy and Grusec (2006) found that higher levels of maternal authoritarianism—more prevalent among collectivist groups such as Latino families—were not necessarily related to a more negative or positive image of motherly affection. Instead, studies found that people from individualist and collectivist backgrounds interpret maternal authoritarianism in different ways (Rudy & Grusec, 2006). For example, while individualist groups associate authoritarianism with negative emotions, collectivist groups do not.

An interesting area for further research is the effect of acculturation on immigrant children who have authoritarian mothers and may have to interact with people with less authoritarian parents and more individualistic values (i.e., their teachers and classmates). Children living in more collectivist societies see authoritarian parents as normal (Rudy & Grusec, 2006). Children in families with more collectivist values who live in an individualistic society may have a harder time adjusting to the difference in values, especially when compared to their classmates.

Agencies that work with Latino families or serve areas with large groups of immigrant families should be aware of different worldviews and priorities. For example, healthcare and social workers often face issues with interpreting what are perceived to be high levels of parental control and strict parenting (Vincent,



Tips for Parenting Workshops

Regardless of ethnicity or race, most parents can relate to hearing adolescent complaints of “my friends’ parents would let me” in reference to engaging in certain activities, wearing particular clothes, or enjoying additional freedoms.

The interventions offered by many parenting curricula suggest involving children in discussions so that parents can understand their point of view and listen to their needs.

These interventions need to be considered in light of the parenting practices accepted by the Latino community served. Latino parents have to negotiate their family values and the cultural values of their country of origin against the socially accepted values of the dominant society.

Safety-net service providers should explore Latino parents’ comfort level with involving children in decision-making before suggesting such interventions. Failure to do so may come across as promoting the adolescent’s viewpoints, which parents may view as too liberal.

1996 as cited in Rudy & Grusec, 2006). Asking children or adolescents to make their own decisions can violate some of these cultural norms, not to mention spark tensions within families, depending on the level of acculturation.

Graduates of a relationship education workshop at Family Bridges, a healthy marriage demonstration program in the Midwest, participated in a focus group. Their answers illustrated the parenting tensions faced as a result of this acculturation experience. Participants described parenting styles in the U.S. as being more liberal than in their countries of origin and reported experiencing a lack of control over their children. In some instances, to compensate for their loss of control, they became even more authoritarian, using corporal punishment:

Siempre nos enseñó que todo tiene que ser derecho, porque si hace uno algo malo, al tiempo se va a dar cuenta de lo que esta pasando. Pero, también a mi me enseñó mucho a respetar con el cinto. Por ejemplo, él me decía, vamos a hacer esto, y yo no demoraba, no esperaba que me lo dijera dos veces. (*“Our father always taught us that everything has to be right, because if you do something wrong or bad, over time he will find out what is happening. But, also, he taught me to respect via the belt. For example, he would tell me, we’re going to do this, and I would not waste time, I wouldn’t wait for him to tell me twice.”*) (La Hoz, Cornejo, & Venovic, 2012).

CASE STUDY

A married couple attends a relationship education workshop because they struggle with differences in their approaches to parenting their adolescent daughters. Specifically, they argue often because the mother adamantly opposes the girls’ clothing (which she says is too fitted and gives the wrong impression) and is against the girls dating or courting any boys until they are 18. The father feels that the girls should dress according to the current trends so they do not feel out of place at school. He believes that as long as he or their mother chaperones the daughters, they can begin dating at around age 16. They are young, he says, and they should enjoy their youth.

- **How do the cultural factors of individualism and collectivism affect differences in parenting styles in this situation?**
- **How could a facilitator address this problem using a conflict-resolution approach or problem-solving model?**
- **In this case study, the mother is the one assuming a more strict parenting position. Would the conflict vary if the roles were reversed, with the father assuming a more strict parenting position?**

How does individualism affect service seeking attitudes?

Fraga et al. (2012) conducted a study to test whether Latinos in the U.S. believed in the major tenets of liberalism (individualism, self-reliance, and equality of opportunity): they asked survey participants whether they attributed their personal success or failure to the system or to themselves. Their survey results revealed that 70% somewhat or strongly

agreed that “they have only themselves to blame if they don’t get ahead.” More importantly, the survey found that the percentage of people who agreed with this affirmation decreased slightly with each generation.

Fraga et al. (2012) also found that fewer of the second and subsequent generations believed that “if you work hard in the U.S. you can get ahead.” This trend may be attributed to disillusionment with the American dream when economic prosperity does not increase at the expected rate (Fraga et al., 2012). The survey also provided evidence that second and subsequent generations more strongly oppose inequality of opportunities than first-generation Latinos, especially at the lowest levels of income (Fraga et al., 2012). These findings show that Latinos in the U.S. share many American ideals and their tolerance for inequality of opportunity decreases over generations as they move up the socioeconomic ladder and have increased access to education.

These findings also imply that generational status affects attitudes and behaviors towards seeking help and assistance. Peña et al. (2008) point out that, “acculturation impacts utilization of mental health, education, and social services.” Those individuals who are more acculturated are more likely to seek out assistance because they are aware that their success or failure not only depends on their individual efforts, but also on outside factors that may give them better or worse opportunities to get ahead.



Children in families with more collectivist values who live in an individualistic society may have a harder time adjusting to the difference in values, especially when compared to their classmates.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Consider and discuss these questions:

- How would engagement strategies vary for Latino family members of different generations?
- Would engagement look different for a first-generation couple versus a second-generation couple seeking to attend a relationship education workshop? Would these couples have different acculturation levels?
- Besides parenting differences, are there other factors relevant to collectivism versus individualism that agencies should consider as they deliver services to the Latino community?

Gender Issues: Machismo/Marianismo

Safety-net service providers working with Latino families need to understand traditional gender roles in Latin America and how they change with the experience of immigrating to the U.S.

What is machismo and marianismo?

In her review of the literature on machismo, Mendoza (2009) points out that machismo in Latin American culture is “a social behavior pattern in which the Latino male exhibits an overbearing attitude to anyone in a position he perceives as inferior to his, demanding complete subservience.” Mendoza finds that in the U.S., machismo has a negative connotation, usually associated with “aggressiveness, physical strength, emotional insensitivity, and womanizing.”

Researchers vary in their conclusions about what triggers the more negative aspects of machismo. Dr. Roberto Reyes observed that, “men may feel justified in engaging in destructive behaviors such as infidelity or substance abuse as long as they are fulfilling their cultural obligations to provide for their family economically” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006).

However, within the traditional Latino culture, machismo also has positive aspects that are usually neglected in the U.S. (Mendoza, 2009). Researchers explain that Latino men are expected to be a good “varon.” Woody (1997, as cited in Mendoza, 2009) defines a varon as a man who is “caring, responsible, decisive, strong of character, and the protector of the extended family.” Thus, machismo has both positive and negative aspects as a cultural value.

The counterpart of machismo is marianismo. Experts like Woody (1997) describe marianismo as “a behavior pattern in which the traditional Latin female perceives herself as morally and spiritually superior to the man in direct proportion to his sexual behavior.” According to Stevens (1973), the social behavior that marianismo promotes comes from an idealized view of femininity based on the image of Mary, the Virgin Mother, which “connotes passivity and submissiveness and the appetence of a virgin like model for women.” Marianismo affects the perception of the ideal mother, wife, and daughter in Latino culture and influences the traditional gender roles of women in the family.

He Said: Machismo	She Said: Marianismo
<p>Dr. Roberto Reyes observed that, “men may feel justified in engaging in destructive behaviors such as infidelity or substance abuse as long as they are fulfilling their cultural obligations to provide for their family economically” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006).</p>	<p>Experts like Woody (1997) describe it as “a behavior pattern in which the traditional Latin female perceives herself as morally and spiritually superior to the man in direct proportion to his sexual behavior.”</p>

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Safety-net service providers should request male participation in all programming and case planning. This approach demonstrates cultural sensitivity, shows respect for the man's position as head of the household, and will increase success with more traditional families (Nicoletti, 2010).
- Service providers can take advantage of the positive cultural attributes of machismo. For example, emphasize the man's responsibility in keeping his appointments (Nicoletti, 2010).
- Service providers working with Latino men can express their admiration for his hard work ethic and his ability to sustain the family through hardships (Nicoletti, 2010).

These strategies make machismo a bridge, instead of a barrier, for working with Latino families. Remember that views on egalitarianism in a relationship vary according to acculturation levels—different individuals acculturate at different rates. The members of a couple may develop different views of traditional gender roles from each other, and this discrepancy can lead to increased marital conflict as each individual's expectations and behaviors change over time (Nicoletti, 2010).

Case Study

Susana, a Hispanic wife in her mid-forties, calls your agency looking for services to help her marriage. Susana and her husband have been on and off for the last five years and are contemplating getting a divorce. Ever since Susana started working a few years ago, she has been demanding that her husband become a more involved parent and follow through with his financial commitments. Susana reports a history of emotional abuse from her husband and one incident of violence (dating back about seven years). She recognizes that their roles have reversed because she is now the one verbally attacking and instigating trouble in the relationship. Previously, she would remain silent, but she eventually tired of that and started speaking up. She asked about services, such as a healthy marriage program, hoping she could attend by herself. She has been unable to encourage her husband to participate in the past and doubts that he would attend with her now. In addition, they work different shifts, making it virtually impossible for them to attend anything together. In spite of the unstable marriage, she still hopes things can work out and wants to give it one more chance.

- How do you think that traditional gender roles have changed in this family?
- How do you handle a situation when only one partner wants services and the other either cannot attend a program or refuses?
- How do you determine the most appropriate service? Should she attend a domestic violence program? Should he attend a responsible fatherhood program? Should they both attend a healthy marriage program?
- Are there handouts or online resources that you can direct her to that she could share with her husband?

Fatalism

Fatalism is one of the predominant beliefs within the Hispanic community. Fatalism has significant implications for abusive behaviors, as well as ideas about education, help-seeking behaviors, and service provision. This attitude of resignation in the face of future events (that are thought to be inevitable) tends to mean that the community feels powerless in accomplishing its goals or even controlling its actions.

What is fatalism in Latino culture and how does it differ from American fatalism?

Ho, Rasheed, and Rasheed (2004) defined fatalism as a Latino cultural expression that has both positive and negative effects. Fatalism may disempower an individual by teaching him or her that he or she must accept God's will, whether it brings good or bad fortune (Nicoletti, 2010), but it may also ease the sense of despair after tragic and unfortunate events, viewed as beyond one's control (Ho et al., 2004).

Latino fatalism is not just a pessimistic view of life, but also a versatile and practical cultural concept (Ho et al., 2004). In their study of Latino cancer patients, Flórez et al. (2009) found two important distinctions in the concept of destiny: fate and fatal. Fate is "a predetermined event" and fatal means "certain to cause death." According to Flórez et al., the concept of destiny is complex and involves the combination of both internal and external forces that determine an outcome.

How does fatalism affect Latino couples' help-seeking preferences?

Fatalism affects the help-seeking attitudes of Latinos through the belief that divine self-will, fate, and the environment control human life and health (Neff, 1998 as cited in Robayo, 2003). Abraido-Lanza et al. (2007) claim that fatalism "deter[s] Latinos from engaging in various early detection and other health preventive behaviors, such as cancer screening and diabetes and HIV testing and prevention."

Other studies have countered this traditional view of fatalism and shed light upon the complexity of Latino spirituality. Flórez et al. (2009) found that "if considered from the vantage point that religious-oriented fatalistic beliefs reflect acceptance of and provide meaning for difficult life circumstances when there is little else that can be done, then this particular aspect of fatalism may actually serve an adaptive coping function." This adaptation of fatalism as a coping strategy may have positive effects such as diminished stress when facing difficult health decisions, promoting physical and psychological well-being (Flórez et al., 2009). These studies have yet to explore the role of external factors such as everyday hardship, dislocation, and immigration in the use of fatalism as a coping mechanism (Flórez et al., 2009).

Abuse and Fatalism

"Controlarse" and "aguantarse" are important cultural concepts related to fatalism. According to Anez, Paris, Bedregal, Davidson, and Grilo (2005), controlarse means "conscious control of negative effects" and aguantarse is "the ability to withstand stressful situations during difficult times." These are other cultural constructs related to fatalism

which can bring forth emotional and physical strength in times of adversity (Anez et al., 2005). However, these cultural constructs may cause individuals to withstand conditions that they do not have to endure, such as domestic violence, labor abuse, or even sexual assault. In his study of disclosure among Latinas, Glamb (2011) found that families may view tragic events, such as sexual abuse or a cancer diagnosis, as a “test from God” and therefore believe that there is nothing they can do to prevent a tragedy.

How does fatalism affect academic achievement?

Fatalism affects views of the future, which may be noteworthy to agencies working with education and youth. For example, some studies have shown that fatalism can affect academic achievement among Latino students. Navarrete, Bentacourt, and Flynn (2007) found that fatalistic orientations are associated with perceptions of failure, its causes, and whether they can change over time (i.e., stability of causes). Navarrete et al. (2007) also concluded that “more fatalistic individuals were more likely to perceive the cause of failure as stable” and a perception of “causal stability, in turn, was associated with lower academic performance.” That is, if students believe that their causes for failure come from their lack of innate ability, then they believe there is nothing they can do to alter their performance (Navarrete et al., 2007).

The concept of fatalism changes over time, across generations, and according to the level of acculturation. A survey by the Pew Hispanic Center revealed that one-third (33%) of Latino immigrants arriving in the U.S. at or before the age of 10 agreed with the statement that it didn’t do any good to plan for the future because “you don’t have control over it,” whereas for Latino immigrants who arrived after the age of 10 the percentage of those agreeing with the statement rose to 55% (2004). This would suggest that people who immigrate to the United States after the age of 10 have a harder time acculturating, and so would tend to have more fatalistic views about planning for the future.

What are the implications of fatalism for service providers?

If a person experiences or understands “fatalism” as a divine intervention, safety-net service providers should first try to understand his or her spiritual beliefs before giving that person any services. Otherwise, Latino patients/clients may perceive the professional as insensitive, not follow through with service referrals, drop out of the program prematurely, or avoid seeking help in the future because of this bad experience (Anez et al., 2005). With closer analysis, professionals can identify ways to address fatalismo in a way that empowers clients and helps them finish treatment or a program without undermining their connection to God. According to Anéz et al. (2005), this requires active listening and exploring how clients contribute to the achievement of their goals, thus empowering them to accept more responsibility for their destiny without negating their spiritual beliefs (Anez et al., 2005).

Safety-net service providers can identify ways to address fatalismo in a way that empowers clients and helps them finish treatment or a program without undermining their connection to God.

Communication Style

While language barriers must be overcome when working with Latino clients, there are other non-verbal mechanisms which are equally important to successful interactions. Holladay (2004) recommends that the first step to effective communication involves understanding the “verbal and non-verbal mannerism, social tendencies, and cultural idiosyncrasies” of Latino culture.

How is directness perceived?

Though Americans are accustomed to “getting to the point” quickly, Bello, Ragsdale, Brandau-Brown, and Thibodeaux (2006) found that in some high-context cultures, such as the Latino culture, information may be more effective when implied (rather than stated) and non-verbal cues and contextual factors may be necessary to have effective personal interactions.

In some situations, directness is not encouraged; especially when expressing negative comments or feelings. For example, when it comes to healthcare professionals and Latino patients, studies have found that there is value in at least the appearance of agreement, which leads to the concept of “simpatia” (Bello et al., 2006).

What role does the concept of simpatia play in interpersonal relations?

According to Rodriguez (2007), simpatia is a cultural value that means “a general tendency to avoid personal conflict,” which involves keeping down negative feelings while emphasizing positive behaviors in order to maintain smooth relations. Some studies have even shown that Latinos are more willing to comply with others and appear to be in agreement in order to avoid direct conflict (Rodriguez, 2007). Safety-net service providers should be aware that this behavior does not necessarily mean that Latinos do not have strong viewpoints or opinions; indeed, Rodriguez (2007) found that “they are simply following their cultural script.” A lack of simpatia may seriously hinder interpersonal relations with Latinos (Rodriguez, 2008).

How is making eye contact interpreted?

Depending on acculturation levels, eye contact may be considered rude, especially if maintained over long periods of time (Rodriguez, 2007). This lack of eye contact should not be interpreted as absence of confidence, or worse, honesty. In fact, the inability to maintain eye contact is a sign of respect. On the other hand, steady eye contact may be considered intimidating to Latinos, especially when there is a clear hierarchy between the people involved in a conversation, such as the worker and the boss or the student and the teacher (Rodriguez, 2007).

What role do interruptions play in communication patterns?

Interruptions are a regular component of the communication pattern between Latinos; indeed, service providers should regard interruptions as part of a normal conversation style. Elliot (1999) found that in Latino culture, “it is urgency, status, and the ability to command attention from others” and not necessarily hand-raising that determines speaking order. After an interruption, the person may then continue speaking, depending

on how well others accept his or her ideas (Kochman, 1981 as cited in Elliot, 1999). Sometimes there is no clear pause between when one person finishes speaking and another begins. People usually make remarks towards a speaker's points and this is not viewed as an interruption, but as engagement with the conversation (Kochman, 1981 as cited in Elliot, 1999).

What are cultural differences related to the concept of personal space?

Non-Latinos may feel their personal space is violated when speaking with Latinos because of a difference in what is considered normal interpersonal distance. Elliot (1999) found that “the typical 2-3 foot ‘arm’s length’ spacing preferred by European Americans is experienced by many Hispanics as cold, unfriendly, or a way for the European American to show superiority.” Since social distances are unconscious, a non-Latino and a Latino may each try to conduct a conversation in a way that is comfortable for each other (Rodriguez, 2007). Sometimes one can observe this dynamic as a Latino tries to get close to a non-Latino, and he or she keeps stepping away. Although the research above specifically references European Americans, safety-net service providers of all races and ethnicities should be aware of different conceptions of normal interpersonal distance in order to help individuals from different cultures feel more comfortable, whether in an interview, workshop, or personal counseling session.



How to communicate respect when addressing participants?

For agencies that have rarely interacted with Hispanic families, one of the first concepts to master for effective communication is respect. There are two words for “you:” “usted” and “tu.” Usted is used to address people formally and tu can be used with friends and family. Upon first meeting someone, it is prudent to use usted, not tu. Since there is no such difference in English, using “sir,” “ma’am,” “Mr.,” and “Mrs.” becomes an important way for Latino immigrants to address strangers and people in leadership positions. It is not uncommon for Hispanics to address people by their professional title. Insisting that a Latino subordinate, whether a student, younger person, or employee, call teachers, older persons, or employers by their first name may make Latinos feel uncomfortable.

Another important tradition of respect is greeting. When people enter the room, they are expected to greet everyone present. Failing to greet everyone can negatively affect relations with the people in the room. This is especially important when an organization is trying to establish a participant base in an event or workshop. A simple greeting before getting down to business will go a long way (Holladay, 2004).

Case Study

At a local resource fair hosted by the Public Health Department, an agency has set up a booth to inform the neighborhood about its family strengthening programs. Marcella Lopez approaches the booth showing interest. Without greeting her, Frank Smith from the agency tries to grab her attention and starts a 15-minute speech about the department's events and programs. At some point, he remembers to ask for her name. She answers and he begins to call her by her first name, which she finds disrespectful. Suddenly, her baby in the stroller starts to cry. Her 5-year old starts to get impatient and tugs at her pants. She uses this opportunity to thank Mr. Smith and exits the scene.

- How can the differences in communication style influence communication between Latinos and non-Latinos?
- How can communication misunderstandings between providers and participants affect service delivery?

What is the role of non-verbal communication?

Non-verbal communication is strongly conveyed in the Latino community. Hispanic graduates of a healthy marriage program at Family Bridges, who participated in a focus group discussion, described facial expressions, tone of voice, and gestures as all being part of non-verbal communication. One of the participants provided a helpful example of the power of non-verbal communication:

“Por ejemplo, como yo vengo de una familia en donde mi papa era que con la mirada nos dominaba. Ahí uno creció creyendo que así era la vida. Así era la realidad. Entonces cuando me case con ella [mi esposa], así era yo también. Me hacia el enojado y nada mas, casi con la pura mirada, ella sabia lo que tenia que hacer. Y ya voy viendo yo que no funciona así...” (*“For example, since I come from a family in which my father would dominate us with his look, one grew up believing that was the way life was. That it was reality. Therefore, when I married her [my wife] that was the way I was also. I would act angry and with just one look, she knew what she needed to do. But I am seeing that it doesn't work that way...”*) (La Hoz, Cornejo, & Venovic, 2012).

Many of the materials on relationship education emphasize verbal communication skills. Understanding that non-verbal communication can be very intense with Latinos, safety net service providers may want to consider adjusting interactions to include an emphasis on the role of non-verbal communication and emotion. Just as an emphasis is made in mainstream relationship curricula to emphasize soft start-ups and “I” messages, curricula can and should be adapted to include soft start-ups expressed non-verbally as well.

Participants explained that non-verbal communication was predominantly used to convey emotions. Couples described anger as the feeling most frequently communicated through facial expressions. Women in the focus groups most often reported that they knew when their husbands were upset or angry and “needed space;” whereas men often reported that they noticed their wives’ facial expression when they were upset, angry and sad (La Hoz, Cornejo, & Venovic, 2012).



Educational Background and Views of Education

In 2006, there were more than 10 million Latinos between the ages of 5 and 17 years old, compared to nearly 30 million whites and 8 million blacks. In some parts of the U.S., the concentration of Latinos has created a significant presence in schools. In 2005, Latinos accounted for about half the children in all public schools in California, with percentages as high as 54% in New Mexico, and 18% in New York (Kidsdata.org, 2011). This significant increase of Latino students in U.S. public schools has made their academic success a pressing topic of discussion for educators, parents, safety-net service providers, and other stakeholders.

Latino high school dropout rates are among the highest in the country (Chapman, Laird, Ifill, & KewalRamani, 2011). An important trend, which is directly related to Latino dropout rates, is the gap between immigrant Latinos and first-generation native-born Latino offspring. First-generation and native-born refers to those born in the U.S. to immigrant parents. Lopez (2009) found that 60% of native-born Latinos ages 18 to 25 planned to attain at least a bachelor’s degree, whereas only 29% of immigrant Latinos in that age group reported plans to attain at least a bachelor’s.

How are parent aspirations related to the educational success of their children?

In his research on Latino parent involvement, Vega (2010) found that children whose parents participate at school and encourage learning at home tend to do much better in school. Research suggests that educators assume that when Latino parents are not present at school functions, then they do not value education (Jones, 2002; Vega, 2010). However, Rivera-Batiz (2008) found that both involvement in school and educational expectations of Latino parents exceeded that of other groups. When asked whether they ever attended a PTA meeting, 74% of Latino parents with children in schools replied affirmatively, compared to 59% of whites and 1% of blacks. When asked how important it is for their child to go to college, 95% of Latino parents responded that it was important, with blacks nearly the same at 94%, compared to 78% of whites (Rivera-Batiz, 2008).

Case Study

Javier is a 15-year old Hispanic adolescent who is doing exceedingly well in school and dreams of one day becoming an engineer. Javier lives with his maternal grandmother, his mother, and three sisters. He has not met his father. His mother's previous two boyfriends (the fathers of his sisters) were abusive and he is relieved that they are gone. His grandmother, whom he loves dearly, has become increasingly ill and the treatment needed is very expensive. The family does not have insurance. His mother's income barely helps them get by and the added medical strain only further complicates their financial situation. After overhearing a phone conversation with his mother saying she could not purchase the needed medications for his grandmother, Javier decides he has to get a job to help out in the home. After looking for work for a few months, he lands a job as a local mechanic. Javier learns quickly and his supervisor asks him to cover more and more day shifts. One day, Javier's mother is surprised to get a call from the school counselor asking about Javier who has missed school for 30 consecutive days.

- What other strong values held by Javier and his family truncated the value of education? Why?
- How would the situation have been different if Javier's father would have been actively engaged in his life?
- What educational components of healthy relationship services would be helpful for Javier's mother?
- What resources can be offered to assist the family and allow Javier to return to school?

How does socioeconomic status affect Latino parents' interactions with schools?

Hispanics make up nearly three in 10 of the nation's poor—28.6% under the official poverty measure and 28.7% under the Supplemental Poverty Measure (Lopez & Cohn, 2011). These statistics

show why many Latino parents have to work more than one shift and as a result have less time available to spend with their children after school. Even if they could stay at home, many could not help their children with their homework because they do not speak English. Rivera-Batiz (2008) points out that “the lower socioeconomic status of parents of Latino children has an impact on the availability of home educational resources, such as computers, book collections etc.” Also, a closer evaluation of the relationship between socioeconomic status, parents' expectations, and student achievement reveals a parallel between parents and children. In their study of aspirations of Latino youth and their parents, Behnke, Piercy, and Diversi (2004) found that “those parents with expressed interest in becoming better educated tended to have children with a great degree of interest in college.”

College-age Hispanics accounted for 1.8 million, or 15%, of the overall enrollment of 12.2 million young adults in two- or four-year colleges in 2010 (Fry, 2011).

When Latino students do make it to college, they tend to face greater challenges related to socioeconomic status. Out of all Latino undergraduates, only 51% complete a bachelor's degree in six years (Huneke, 2010). Almost 50% of Latino undergraduates have parents whose highest educational attainment is high school or less, which means that these students are first-generation college-goers (Bell & Bautsch, 2011). Despite this accomplishment, Lascher (2004) points out that “Latino students tend to arrive at college with characteristics that make them more vulnerable to stress and other problems that impede degree completion.” Such characteristics include fewer financial resources, greater obligations to work and be self-supporting, and less solid academic preparation for college as the result of attending weaker elementary and secondary schools (Lascher, 2004).

What factors make Latino parents reluctant to interact with the educational process?

When surveyed, Latino respondents explain that some parents, especially immigrant parents, do not know enough about the educational system to participate, have to work long hours, are children themselves, or cannot cope with the schools' expectations (Jones, 2002). Respondents also identified low

teacher expectations, a lack of concern about talking with parents at the secondary level, and an absence of encouragement for students to go on to higher education (Jones, 2002). There was also an overall concern that teachers do not want to be in a particular district with high Latino populations and do not see Latino children as achievers (Jones, 2002). These factors may prevent Latino parents from becoming more engaged in their children's schooling.

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How does legal status affect educational achievement?

Advocates of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act legislation argue that “without a means to legalize their status, these [Latino] children are seldom able to go on to college, cannot work legally in the United States, and therefore cannot put their educations to good use” (Gonzalez, 2007). Latino children who may have illegally immigrated with their parents at an older age will not qualify for many private or State scholarships, and this may be a deterrent to pursuing higher education, though possibly not the only one. Despite the need for continuing research, stakeholders will be better equipped to help Latino families if they understand that these families often have to juggle competing priorities: the education and betterment of their children and the economic survival of the family.

Family Bridges, one of the recipients of a Federal Healthy Marriage demonstration grant, conducted focus groups of Hispanic participants. Participant responses showed that Hispanic parents support and value education. A participant of the focus group who identified himself as a father stressed that immigration status was not an excuse for not taking advantage of educational opportunities:

“Es precisamente impulsarlos a que sigan adelante, a no dejarse amedrentar, no dejarse bloquear por las circunstancias, superar cualquier circunstancia, salir adelante y aprovechar lo que un país como este te puede ofrecer” (*It's exactly pushing them to move forward, not to stay lingering, not to let themselves be blocked by circumstances, to overcome whatever circumstance, to go forward and take advantage of all the opportunities this country offers*) (La Hoz, Cornejo, & Venovic, 2012).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

Schools with a high minority population struggle with parent involvement, and frequently PTA meetings, parenting groups, or open houses are poorly attended. School staff members know and understand that parent engagement improves academic performance. Many school districts and States have even passed regulations requiring systemic parent engagement under social and emotional learning standards.

Schools should consider collaboration with the local Cooperative Extension or a community-based provider to provide relationship and self-sufficiency workshops. Schools offer wonderful facilities and have access to the students and families that need social services, while the Cooperative Extension or community-based provider offers research-based programming. To ensure school programs are successful, buy-in needs to be developed at multiple levels including with school administrators and parents, not just with the principal or dean of a school.

Moreover, because the Latino community more readily relies on relationships, marketing a service with flyers or through traditional school outreach methods may not be effective for recruitment. Consider seeking out the “gatekeeper” in the school, the parent advocate or social worker who is trusted and well respected by Latino parents and students. The gatekeeper can coordinate space for hosting workshops, invite and encourage parents to attend the program, and serve as the liaison between the parents and the school.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Delivering programs in small group settings, such as workshops, is cost-effective and leverages the value Latinos place on education and the respect they hold for professionals and authority figures. Many programs across the nation have successfully used workshops to bring awareness to Latinos about relationship and self-sufficiency skills.

- Understand that clients will have varied learning styles and degrees of educational attainment. Plan to have a wide array of activities that conform to the different learning styles of participants.
- Avoid asking participants to read out loud and avoid extensive questionnaires that require a lot of reading (unless you know the audience well), as there may be varying literacy levels in the group.
- Seek evaluation tools that are simple and do not require participants to bubble in answers (a testing format that is unfamiliar to many first-generation Latinos).

Views of Work and Money

The Latino population in the U.S. is expected to nearly double by 2050 (Hannon, 2012). Today, Latinos contribute an estimated \$700 billion to the U.S. gross domestic product and are expected to eventually add \$1 trillion (Hannon, 2012). Given the Latino population's growing size, their views of work and money have far-reaching consequences. Stakeholders need to understand these views in order to better serve Latino families and help them overcome barriers to achieving long-term economic stability.

What are attitudes and beliefs about self-sufficiency? How do they differ among Latino men and women?

According to the National Latino Father and Family Institute (NLFFI) (2003), “in traditional Latino culture, a strong work ethic and self-sufficiency are core values.” Latino men and women believe that working hard to support their families is a fundamental responsibility. Some suggest this commitment to their families is evident in the risk they are willing to take to cross borders illegally and the shame some endure as they leave behind their professions to work as house maids or construction workers in order to feed their families (NLFFI, 2003). NLFFI concludes that “working hard is a matter of pride and seen as an essential part of true manhood” for Latino men.

NLFFI also found that dignity and pride lead Latino men to believe it is better to work every day, several shifts, even for very little money rather than to be unemployed or “enter a program with the chance they may not complete it and no guarantee they will be better off in the end.” In addition, according to NLFFI, these factors combined with machismo, “make it more culturally acceptable for women to receive assistance from [welfare] programs than for men to receive similar assistance.”



Are Latino families saving for the future?

The statistics about Latinos and retirement planning are abundant and alarming. Of all groups in the U.S., Latinos feel the least prepared to plan for retirement. Hannon (2012) found that more than half (54%) felt “not very” or “not at all” prepared, compared to 50% of black, 48% of white, and 44% of Asian respondents. Eighteen percent of Latinos have not started saving for retirement yet. Of the 82% who do save, their average

savings is \$15,000 less than the average balance of \$69,000 across all groups (Hannon, 2012).

More than half of all Latinos are not currently saving for retirement in an IRA, Roth IRA, or CD, compared to 42% of respondents overall (Hannon, 2012). Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor (2011) found that 10% of the nation's 50.5 million Hispanics have individual retirement, or Keogh, accounts compared to 35% of non-Hispanic whites. Kochhar et al. also discovered that 25% of Latinos have 401(k) or thrift accounts, compared to 45% of non-Hispanic whites. Researchers at ING found that “57 percent of Hispanics have never calculated how much money they’ll need to continue their current lifestyle, and 70 percent do not have a formal investment plan to reach their retirement goals” (ING Report, 2012 as cited in Hannon, 2012). Thus, the statistics show that Latinos are lagging far behind other groups in their savings.

Some attribute this lack of savings to a lack of income in general. Recent government trend data indicate that the income gaps between Latinos and the rest of the U.S. population have widened since 2005, a period of time that includes both the housing market crash and the Great Recession (Hannon, 2012). From 2005 to 2009, there was a 66% drop in median household wealth among Hispanics, compared with a drop of 53% among blacks and 16% among whites (Kochhar et al., 2011). The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the unemployment rate among Latinos in 2011 was higher than during the Great Recession in 2007 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012 as cited in Hannon, 2012).

Despite these statistics, the argument that Latinos do not save because of a lack of income fails if savings are analyzed across different wage scales. According to a retirement savings survey of minority groups that was released in 2009 by the Ariel Education Initiative, there is a lack of retirement savings even among those who earn more (Ariel Education Initiative, 2009 as cited in Hannon, 2012).

Family values that affect savings behavior may include parents’ willingness to spend money on their children or on extended family members in other countries who need to be financially supported, money that could otherwise be going to savings or retirement accounts (Hannon, 2012). Latino children also have a cultural obligation to support their parents in their old age.

Optimism affects saving behaviors because young Latinos believe they will be better off than their parents and adult Latinos think their children will be better off than they are (National Public Radio, 2009). Sixty-seven percent of Latinos say they expect their



Cultural practices and beliefs may explain the lack of savings among Latinos, with two major factors—family values and optimism—contributing in particular.

financial situation to improve over the next year, compared with 58% of the general population who say the same (Hannon, 2012).

Therefore, optimism about the future of their children, obligation of the parents to support their children, and the responsibility to take care of parents in old age make Latinos less likely to save for retirement.

Why do so few Latinos have bank accounts?

While Latinos may be optimistic about their future, the outlook for their financial well-being does not look so good. In a recent survey, 32% of Latinos reported that they did not have a bank account and that number rose to 42% for foreign-born Latinos (Muñiz, 2004).

There are strong cultural and socio-historical barriers that could be preventing Latinos from developing a better relationship with financial institutions.

First is a negative view of debt. Twenty-two percent of Hispanic borrowers had no credit score compared to 4% of whites and 3% of African Americans. Latinos who do have credit scores are more likely to have credit scores below 620 than their white counterparts (Muñiz, 2004). Muñiz (2004) states that, “Latinos, especially immigrants, are more likely to avoid accumulating good or bad debt; disproportionately use fringe banking services, which often do not report information to the credit reporting agencies; and are often employed as seasonal or contractual labor that enables them to pay off debt in irregular cycles, which often results in lower credit scores.” Many of these immigrant families do not understand the importance of credit in the U.S.: without a credit history, a person in this country cannot be eligible for loans and major purchases (Muñiz, 2004).

Another important deterrent to saving is the history of banks in Latin America. Muñiz (2004) observed, “depending on the country of origin, many new Latino immigrants may distrust financial institutions because, in their experience, banks were unreliable havens for savings...during economic downturns.” Their experience in the U.S. has not eased this mistrust; for example, many banks fail to have bicultural, bilingual staff “who can meet the diverse needs of Latinos, especially immigrants” (Muñiz, 2004). Overall, these cultural barriers can discourage Latino families from placing their money in a bank or other financial institutions (Muñiz, 2004).

Muñiz (2004) also noted that “limited access to mainstream financial services has resulted in the disproportionate use of fringe banking providers among Latinos.” Even where financial institutions have conducted extensive outreach to the Latino community and have made it easier to open bank accounts by offering bilingual services and accepting foreign identification, fringe banking providers have still proliferated in communities where Latinos work and reside (Muñiz, 2004). Stakeholders working to boost individual savings among Latinos should offer more bilingual support and financial education to the family, including education about the steep fees often associated with fringe banking outlets.

Family values and a sense of optimism are powerful contributors to saving among Latinos, while lack of financial education and bilingual support are strong deterrents. Social service providers should consider partnering with Bank On initiatives that target Latino communities to encourage families to use mainstream financial services and reduce the high risk and fees associated with fringe banking, like check cashing and payday lending organizations.
<http://joinbankon.org/programs/>

Case Study

Juana and Jorge, a married couple in their mid-twenties with two children, decide after years of living on their own to move back in with Jorge's parents. They figure that by living with Jorge's parents, they will be able to save enough money to pursue their dream of owning a house. Though they both work full time, they struggle to save because their paychecks barely cover expenses.

After six months of living with Jorge's parents (switching from a comfortable apartment to very cramped living quarters), Juana ended up being hospitalized for what the family called "un ataque de nervios" (nervous breakdown). Juana reports that she had experienced some bouts of depression as a child and that it wasn't until recently that she experienced the same intensity of emotions as she had when she was younger. The couple reports that their relationship turned sour within weeks of the move. While they say they previously argued infrequently, they are now arguing daily, mainly about their relationships with the in-laws. Jorge feels that they will be able to purchase a home in two to three years if they stay with his parents and is still very committed to this plan. He reports that the only problem is the tension between his wife and his extended family. He feels that if his wife made an intentional effort to get along with his parents and extended family, everything would work out fine. Juana has threatened to leave and has packed her bags more than once, but says she stays because she loves him.

- What barriers do Juana and Jorge face to reaching their dreams?
- How does their economic situation bind them to their extended family?
- The couple has made a decision on the priority of meeting a financial goal even though it is causing them relationship distress. Do these priorities conflict with the premises of healthy relationship education?
- How do you guide and support a couple to successfully meet their financial goals while helping them maintain a stable relationship?

Time Orientation

How does the Latino past/present-oriented culture differ from a future-oriented culture?

Latinos exhibit a past/present orientation in relation to time. This cultural behavior leads them to be more concerned with the present than with the future and has important implications for safety-net service providers working with Latino families. According to Sue and Sue (2008), people with past/present time inclinations are "more likely to seek immediate, concrete solutions rather than future oriented, abstract goals." Agencies providing services to Latinos should encourage long-term goals, while simultaneously focusing on immediate solutions. For example, an employment training program serving Latinos should focus on how to help individuals achieve short-term paid work, as well as opportunities to gain skills and education for future jobs.

What are common attitudes towards punctuality?

The biggest obstacle that safety-net service providers working with Latino families might encounter is the lack of punctuality. Latinos tend to be more relaxed and flexible about time, especially in less formal occasions. For example, Latinos who are invited for an 8:00 a.m. event may not begin to arrive until 8:30 a.m. or later (Clutter & Zubieta, 2009). While not being on time is a socially acceptable behavior within the Latino community (Clutter & Zubieta, 2009 as cited in Sue & Sue, 2008), outside the Latino community this may lead to some misunderstandings and negative reactions. The following dialogue illustrates this point:

Service Provider: "Mrs. Rivera your next appointment for the whole family is at 3:00pm on Tuesday"

Client: "Very good, after the kids return from school we can come right in" (Inclant, 1985 as cited in Sue, 2007).

The service provider will likely be annoyed and interpret the client's behavior as passive aggressive or irresponsible, but it is important to understand that many Latinos mark time by events rather than by the clock (Sue, 2007). In other words, what is happening at the moment is always more important than what will happen in the future. For example, the fact that a person is picking up his or her kids right now takes precedence over the fact that he or she was supposed to meet the counselor 15 minutes ago (Holladay, 2004). Service providers should also keep in mind that if clients are late it does not necessarily mean that they are lazy or disrespectful (Holladay, 2004). One strategy that agencies might utilize is to allow for more flexible time schedules for appointments to avoid this type of misunderstanding.

Tips for Service Providers

Financial education often focuses on planning for the future. Many Latinos have a present orientation rather than a future orientation. When a service provider asks a Latino family to plan for the future, they are often distracted by their current needs and crises. This scenario does not bode well for learning and applying the skills taught. Before focusing on future planning, consider discussing time perspectives.

***Suggested Activity:* Ask clients to share what they are currently burdened with or thinking about by writing it down or drawing a picture. As they share their thoughts, list them on one end of a board or flip chart. Draw a line to the other extreme and list some of the skills required in financial planning. Discuss the wide gap from the present to the future and ask them to share some ideas on ways they can bridge the gap.**

How can service providers on a tight schedule best work with Latinos?

If an agency cannot be flexible with time, then the best thing to do is explain why. Latinos are aware that their sense of punctuality is different from that of other people in the U.S. and that other people take being on time very seriously, especially in relation to work (Holladay, 2004). Safety-net service providers should take extra care in explaining the importance of deadlines, schedules, and why things have to be done within certain time constraints. For example, a facilitator teaching a workshop can explain that students will only get 30-45 minutes of class rather than a full hour

if they arrive late. This way, clients will understand that being late is going to negatively affect their experience.

Holladay (2004) found that “once Latinos understand why things happen from the big-picture perspective they are likely to adjust their behaviors quickly.” Safety-net service providers should work to convince Latino clients that punctuality is imperative in this country, while also being flexible and allowing extra time in between appointments when possible. If clients are late to scheduled appointments, providers should try to keep in mind that their lateness does not necessarily mean that they are disrespectful or lack commitment.

Power Distance

The Hispanic community is the largest minority community in the U.S. There is a built-in power differential between the minority and majority groups in societies. As the dominant group exercises privileges, rights, and pride with regard to self, nation, and possessions, minority groups often feel discriminated against, shamed, and have a sense of being victims of injustice. This macro-level dynamic can trickle down to micro-level relationships.

Even service providers, stakeholders, and facilitators with the best intentions may unconsciously assume certain roles, such as that of caretaker to care recipient, helper to victim, facilitator to participant, or social worker to client. The service provider or stakeholder—who has the advantage of more knowledge, education, resources, and higher socioeconomic status—passes down information to the participant or client. The potential problem is that this power differential can exacerbate the distance between the minority group and the majority group, alienating the client. Power distance has implications for program development and implementation.

What is power distance?

Power distance, a concept coined by Hofstede (1980) is “the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.” In cultures with high power distance, people are more likely to

An obstacle that safety-net service providers working with Latino families might encounter is a lack of punctuality. If clients are late to scheduled appointments, providers should try to keep in mind that their lateness does not necessarily mean that they are disrespectful or lack commitment.



accept inequality; in societies with low power distance, people believe that everyone should have equal access to money and opportunity.

In a study of the application of Hofstede's model, Maloney (2003) found that in Latin American and other cultures where power distance is high, "there are large income differences, those in authority exercise absolute power, those in authority are respected and not questioned, superiors consider subordinates as different from themselves, the ideal boss is autocratic and paternalistic, and there is a tendency to accept one's place in society." Tolerance for this inequality is different across generations: the more time people have stayed in this country [the U.S.] the less tolerant they become of inequality (Fraga et al., 2012). Service providers should take notice of the differences among first-, second-, and third-generation Latinos in their distinct views of authority.

Latinos are more culturally sensitive to power distance. It is important for service providers and clients to have a relationship that is reciprocal—where participants and program leaders mutually accept influence from each other in order to create trust and improve retention rates.

How does power distance affect the relationship between providers and program participants?

This culturally intrinsic concept of power distance affects a Latino participant's perceived role in any given program or service setting. According to Holladay (2011), participants "will typically maintain a sense of power distance from their superiors, showing them respect and obedience." In the eyes of Latino participants, the service provider, in his or her position as manager/leader, has a distinct role and is separate from the client in terms of responsibility, authority, and social class.

How does hierarchy affect service delivery?

A high power distance or top-down leadership style may be necessary in some relationships, such as those between a supervisor and an employee. For service providers and participants though, it is more useful to have a reciprocal relationship that establishes trust. People are more likely to continue attending a program or take advantage of services if they feel they can confide in the service provider.

If the power distance is too high, Riedel (2008) provides the following warnings and recommendations:

- **Participants may fail to provide the program facilitator with critical feedback.** Even if a facilitator asks for comments about the program, participants may be unwilling to give any suggestions for improvement because they believe they are not in charge of making decisions.
- **Participants may not challenge the leader, even if the leader is making some significant errors.** For example, if there is a significant dropout rate in a program, consider this power differential as one of the plausible reasons for the high dropout rates.

- **Participants may be reluctant to ask questions, even when they do not understand concepts, because they may think it is rude to question the service provider.** For example, in a workshop where the facilitator asks if there are any questions and nobody raises their hands, the facilitator may assume that everyone understood the lesson. However, when the facilitator asks for someone to recap the last lesson the next day, there might be silence.
- **Participants may be unwilling to share personal information.** For example, participants may not feel that they can trust the service provider with personal family problems.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

When a service provider's style of relating to clients is perceived as, or is consistent with, power distance, it may lead to disengagement and disinterest rather than connection. The following are some suggestions to help equalize power distance:

- **Omit information that may lead individuals to automatically create power distance.** For example, if a provider has a doctorate or master's degree, unless absolutely necessary, it is better not to mention it so that the participant does not feel intimidated and can talk to the facilitator more comfortably one-to-one.
- **If appropriate, such as in a marriage and relationship workshop for couples, the facilitator can call everyone by their first names (unless there is a significant age difference between the facilitator and the participants).**
- **Offer a snack and coffee break during workshops or program orientations to provide opportunities for fellowship.** This time together can help break down barriers and increase trust.
- **In a group environment, form groups and select moderators from the participants.** The brainstorming, cooperation, and personal interaction that take place in these groups may encourage participants to divulge more information amid the security of others like themselves (Bradford, Meyers, & Kane, 1999).

RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider doing an in-service training with staff and facilitators on servant leadership. The servant leadership model provides a framework for service modality that emphasizes a more equal distribution of power.

- Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership: <http://www.greenleaf.org/>
- Ten Thousand Horses by John Stahl-Wert and Ken Jennings. (2007), www.tenthousandhorses.com

Chapter 2:

Family Issues

Intimate Partner Violence

What is intimate partner violence?

The CDC defines four main categories of intimate partner violence: physical violence, sexual violence, threat of physical or sexual violence, and psychological/emotional abuse.

- **Physical violence** is defined as “the intentional use of physical force with the potential for causing death, disability, injury, or harm” (Saltzman et al., 2002).
- **Sexual violence** is divided into three categories:
 - “use of physical force to compel a person to engage in a sexual act against his or her will, whether or not the act is completed;”
 - “an attempted or completed sex act involving a person who is unable to understand the nature or condition of the act, to decline participation, or to communicate unwillingness to engage in the sexual act (e.g., because of illness, disability, or the influence of alcohol or other drugs, or due to intimidation or pressure);” and
 - “abusive sexual contact” (Saltzman et al., 2002).
- **Threat of physical or sexual violence** is defined as “the use of words, gestures, or weapons to communicate the intent to cause death, disability, injury, or physical harm,” as well as “the use of words, gestures, or weapons to communicate the intent to compel a person to engage in sex acts or abusive sexual contact when the person is either unwilling or unable to consent” (Saltzman et al., 2002).

Intimate partners, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2010), include:

- **Current spouses (including common-law spouses);**
- **Current non-marital partners;**
- **Dating partners, including first date (heterosexual or same sex);**
- **Boyfriends/girlfriends (heterosexual or same sex);**
- **Former marital partners;**
- **Divorced spouses;**
- **Former common-law spouses;**
- **Separated spouses;**
- **Former non-marital partners;**
- **Former dates (heterosexual or same sex); and**
- **Former boyfriends/girlfriends (heterosexual or same sex).**

- **Psychological or emotional abuse** is defined as “trauma to the victim caused by acts, threats of acts, or coercive tactics” (Saltzman et al., 2002) and is distinguished from psychological or emotional violence, which is defined as current abuse in the context of prior violence or threat of violence.

Recent research emphasizes the importance of identifying spiritual abuse, particularly as part of culturally competent assessment and intervention with abused individuals. Dehan and Levi (2009) define spiritual abuse as “any attempt to impair the woman’s spiritual life, spiritual self, or spiritual well-being.”

How prevalent is domestic violence in the U.S.?

In clinic samples, between 36% and 58% of women and between 37% and 57% of men report being victims of physical violence perpetrated by their partners. Psychological aggression is perpetrated by approximately 75% of men and 80% of women in representative samples, and by 95% of men and 95% of women in clinic samples (Jose & O’Leary, 2009). In terms

Representative samples in the U.S. show that about 1% to 12% of women and about 1% to 12% of men report being the victim of physical violence by their partners (Jose & O’Leary, 2009).

of sexual violence, prevalence of sexual victimization has been defined and measured in such different terms (yearly rape, lifetime rape, current partner sexual assault) and across such different samples (national random, community random, community/clinical) as to make comparisons across studies extremely difficult (Monson, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, & Taft, 2009). Lifetime rates of intimate partner rape from random national samples range from 10% to 34% (Monson et al., 2009).

Many factors affect prevalence rates, including age, marital status, substance abuse, religious identification, education level, socioeconomic status, immigration status, and ethnicity. Many researchers have found higher prevalence rates for ethnic minority groups in the U.S., including black and Hispanic couples (Alhabib, Nur, & Jones, 2010). However, many authors have also suggested that low socioeconomic status may be a confounding factor for ethnic minority groups in the U.S. (Kasturirangan, Krishnan, & Riger, 2004). At least one study has found that socioeconomic status is a stronger predictor of intimate partner violence than race or ethnicity (Cunradi, Caetano, & Schafer, 2002).

How do culturally based gender roles affect domestic violence in Hispanic communities?

U.S.-born Latino women report higher levels of domestic violence than their foreign-born counterparts (Frias & Angel, 2005). Research has also found that those who report moderate or severe violence have a higher English proficiency than those who report no violence (Frias & Angel, 2005). Women who arrive in the U.S. before age 15 are at higher risk for

As families become more acculturated over time, they start assuming many of the values and customs of the new culture. However, higher levels of acculturation do not necessarily lead to lower levels of domestic violence (New Mexico State University, 2008).

partner violence than those who immigrate later (Frias & Angel, 2005). Thus, more time in North America is not necessarily correlated with less domestic violence for Latino women.

One factor that affects domestic violence is “familismo” (La Hoz, 2011b). This cultural value gives the extended relatives an active role in the life of the nuclear family and it can have both a positive and a negative effect in domestic violence. If the extended family strongly opposes domestic violence, they may see the batterer as betraying the entire family and may intervene to help the partner who is being abused, as well as the children. However, if the extended family sees violence as normal or “even the woman’s fault, then they may interpret ending a violent relationship as an act of disloyalty (La Hoz, 2011b).

How does religion affect a woman’s choice to end an abusive relationship?

In accordance with the cultural belief of fatalism, individuals are not in control of their future and pain may be interpreted as a test from God. Suffering and “bearing pain with dignity and showing minimal discomfort, known in Spanish as *aguantar*, is valued among many Hispanic populations” (La Hoz, 2011b), especially among women who are deeply religious. *Mujeres Latinas en Accion*, a social service agency that supports Latino women affected by domestic violence, discovered that many of the women they serve believe that a violent spouse is their “cross to bear” (2012). These cultural factors, in addition to Latin American laws about marriage and the Catholic Church’s ban on divorce, contribute to a lack of support from family members when a woman tries to leave an abusive husband. The view that suffering is part of the victim’s fate and the belief that people are not in control of their future may contribute to an increased acceptance of violence against Latino women (La Hoz, 2011b).

Professionals working to promote family safety in Latino households should first identify key factors contributing to violence, as well as opportunities to start discussions about family goals, roles of the extended family, and the impact of immigration on family roles and values (La Hoz, 2011a).



How can immigration status prolong an unhealthy relationship?

Moving to the U.S. may or may not help individuals with an abusive spouse, depending on their awareness of U.S. laws. Isolation from family and friends may be a contributing factor to the prolongation of unhealthy relationships among Latino couples. After moving to the U.S., couples may lack the social support networks that they used to have in their countries of origin and the new ones that are formed in the U.S. may be significantly different. An abusive spouse can also use isolation as a control tactic by keeping a partner from getting involved outside the family in order to maintain power over the relationship. Without a network of support, individuals have fewer ways to learn about their legal rights or agencies and programs with bilingual services (La Hoz, 2011b).

For undocumented immigrants, the risk is even higher. Abusive husbands may use fear to manipulate their partners. According to *Mujeres Latinas en Accion* “a batterer who is a U.S. citizen may manipulate and control his immigrant wife by threatening to have her deported if she complains about his violence. He may coerce her to stay with the empty promise of filing her residency papers” (2012). The batterer may also hide passports and visas and threaten to contact immigration authorities or take children back to the home country. Another factor that may prevent someone from ending a violent relationship is the inability to financially support the family without the other partner. A batterer may start withholding financial support for family members in the country of origin once the relationship has ended (La Hoz, 2011b).

Lack of awareness about U.S. laws is another important factor in the prolongation of abusive marriages. Women or men who are abused may think that authorities will not believe them because they are immigrants and do not speak English well. Batterers may even take advantage of their partners’ language problems by making them sign legal documents in English that they do not understand. Moreover, they may not realize that U.S. laws related to intimate partner violence are different than those in their home countries. According to *Mujeres Latinas en Accion*, in Mexico and other Latin American countries, for example, “a law called “abandono de hogar” punishes women who leave their homes, even to flee violence. Women convicted of “abandoning the home” often lose custody of their children (Mujeres Latinas en Accion, 2012). Some Mexican women who immigrate to the U.S. erroneously believe that this law applies here and this may prevent them from leaving an abusive relationship.

Although research on the effectiveness of healthy relationship education as an intervention against domestic violence is ongoing, one recent study shows promising preventive results. Jenseng et al. (2011) studied program evaluation surveys of 2,220 Hispanic couple participants in a large healthy marriage program and found that for Hispanic couples who completed Strongest Link, a relationship education program for couples, the programming was effective at increasing relationship satisfaction levels, even in the presence of verbal and physical abuse as reported by participants.

Professionals working to promote family safety in Latino households should first identify key factors contributing to violence, as well as opportunities to start discussions about family goals, roles of the extended family, and the impact of immigration on family roles and values (La Hoz, 2011a).

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

- When delivering healthy marriage or relationship education programming, screen participants during the intake process for domestic violence or intimate partner violence.
- Develop a domestic violence protocol within your agency in collaboration with your local domestic violence and child welfare agencies.
- Create a master referral list or brochure of comprehensive social services for participants and include domestic violence referrals. Avoid creating separate domestic violence referral handouts. Some organizations will post information about domestic violence and abuse resources in the ladies restrooms of buildings where relationship workshops are held to reduce the chance of putting victims at risk.
- Have resources available in Spanish for the Latino clients.

RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

For more general information, tips, and tools on integrating awareness and prevention of intimate partner violence, see ***Family Violence Prevention: A Toolkit for Stakeholders*** by the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families (www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org).

Blended Families

How commonplace are Latino stepfamilies?

A Pew Social and Demographic Trends Survey showed that 46% of Hispanic respondents had a step relative, 38% had a step or half sibling, 18% had a stepparent, and 8% had stepchild (Pew Research Center, 2011). Surveys like this are significant because Latino stepfamilies are undercounted in U.S. censuses due to linguistic and cultural barriers (Martin, 2009). Factors contributing to undercounting may include the influence of the Catholic Church in Latin American countries and stigma, as stepfamilies may tell census workers that a stepmother is the biological “mother,” fearing judgment or legal repercussions (Martin, 2009). Cultural differences thus lead to skewed numbers, misrepresentation, and perhaps misunderstanding of Latino stepfamilies in the U.S. (Martin, 2009).

What kind of stigma do Latino stepfamilies face and why?

Research shows that Latino stepparents have challenges to overcome, as their friends and family may look down upon someone who is taking care of another person’s children. In a study of Mexican-American stepfathers, for example, Coltrane, Gutierrez, and Parke (2008) found that 51% reported that it was harder to treat stepchildren as their own children. In general, Latino stepparents have to overcome strong culturally enforced social stigmas.

Case Study

Roberto is requesting services for his son, Manuel, age seven, for wetting his bed. Roberto says that he and his current wife are very organized and maintain firm rules with their children. Roberto complains that Manuel's mother Lupe, his ex wife, is very flexible and lax when it comes to rules.

Roberto has visitation rights every weekend with his son, but says he wishes he could have full custody because he feels that Lupe is neglectful. He says it takes Manuel a bit to get used to his home because he is used to having "no rules" with this mother, meaning Manuel goes to sleep whenever he wants, eats whatever he wants, and does not complete his homework.

Roberto also suspects that Manuel's stepfather is abusive. Roberto says he has pictures of Manuel with bruises on his arms and legs as proof. Roberto and his wife say they love Manuel and that he gets along very well with his stepbrothers.

When the agency contacts Lupe, she says that Roberto is too rigid and inconsiderate. She says Roberto is being manipulative and trying to create a case so he can take her son away. Lupe says she is having a hard time finding a permanent job, but that she has learned of a nurse training program and would like to enroll because this may provide her with long-term employment and better pay. The problem is that she cannot afford enrollment right now and does not know how she will find time to study and keep her household of four children.

- What services do you provide and to whom? What issue do you address first?
- What information is missing that may be helpful as you develop a service plan?
- If you do not normally use a service plan, should you refer this case to a service provider who does?
- Are some of the issues raised in this case study common in stepfamilies?

What is the effect of immigration on Latino stepfamilies?

Besides cultural stigmas, another stressor for stepfamilies is the immigration experience. As Berger (1998) points out, "immigrant families find themselves caught between two cultures that may have different views of stepfamilies." Immigrants have to cope with the differences between the position of stepfamilies in their country of origin and the views of the new culture (Berger, 1998). These additional stressors may impede or slow down the process of acculturation.

Another factor that can affect stepfamilies is whether remarriage took place before or after immigration (Berger, 1998). For example, couples who remarried after they immigrated may have an easier time than those who remarried before (Berger, 1998). In the former case, the process of settling into a new family and settling into a new culture reinforce each other, whereas in the latter case the processes may oppose each other (Berger, 1998).

In addition, stepfamilies have to deal with the issue of child support, which may play an important role in the family's economics (Berger, 1998). For example, men may be paying

child support for the children they left behind in their country of origin. Another example might be immigrant mothers who had to trade the father's commitment to pay child support for permission to immigrate with his children (permission is often necessary to apply for a visa) (Berger, 1998). As it may be harder to enforce child support payment from another country, the way stepfamilies cope with their unique problems often depends on their countries of origin and its respective laws (Berger, 1998).

Education and socioeconomic factors may also affect the experience of stepfamilies after they immigrate. One study of Mexican-American stepfathers reported that “language barriers limited opportunities for fulfilling the traditional father roles of educating their offspring” (Coltrane et al., 2008). The socioeconomic class and education level of the stepfathers may also limit their ability to increase their children's education through extracurricular activities in the U.S. For example, only 36% of Mexican stepfathers reported having ever taken their children to a museum or a lecture (Coltrane et al., 2008). Furthermore, economic, social, and language barriers may become obstacles for stepparents to establish authority in the household. The combinations of these demands may lead to uncertainty about internal boundaries, parental authority, and traditional roles in the family (Berger, 1998).

In addition to the many issues that all immigrant families face, stepfamilies have to cope with blended family issues and economic and legal concerns (such as complying with child support requirements from their country of origin and how those laws conflict with or complement laws in the U.S.).

Differences in Parenting

Life experiences affect the parenting styles of Latino families. Parra-Cardona, Córdova, Holtrop, Villaruel, and Wieling (2008) stress that service providers should keep in mind “the ways in which contextual stressors negatively impact the parenting experiences of Latino parents.” Understanding Latino parenting styles and how they are affected by the immigration experience is an important step toward providing better support for Latino families raising children in this country.

How do Latinos raise their children?

Researchers, such as psychologist Diana Baumrind and others (Allen, Svetaz, Hardeman, & Resnick, 2008), have grouped complex parenting information into four categories:

- **Authoritative:** Parents with high nurturance and discipline (the optimal combination) are frequently referred to as positive.
- **Authoritarian:** Parents who are controlling but aloof or hostile (high on discipline but low on nurturance) are frequently called dominating.
- **Indulgent:** Parents with high nurturance but low discipline are often referred to as permissive.
- **Neglectful:** Parents with low nurturance and discipline are commonly considered unengaged.

According to this model, different categories of parenting are related to different outcomes for children. For example, children raised in a more authoritative parenting environment “show strong advantages in psychosocial development, mental health, social competence, academic performance, and avoidance of problem behavior compared to their peers raised in any of the other three styles” (Allen, Svetaz, Hardeman, & Resnick, 2008). These advantages are because “authoritative parents are able to find a balance between restriction and their child’s independence in a way that allows the child the opportunity for freedom and growth while setting standards, limits, and guidelines” (Allen, Svetaz, Hardeman, & Resnick, 2008).



These research results show that “the four traditional parenting categories only accounted for approximately one-third of the Latino families,” 31% classified as authoritative, and 61% as protective.

Characterizing Latino parenting practices in particular categories, according to this model, is problematic. While “some researchers label Latino parents as nurturing, egalitarian, and authoritative,” others argue “they are authoritarian or permissive” (National Campaign, 2008).

Still other research supports the idea that it is the environment that matters the most. Immigrant Latino parents “adapt their parenting practices to specific local conditions where they settle—often poor urban environments” (Allen, Svetaz, Hardeman, & Resnick, 2008). In order to adapt to these new environments, Latino parents may have to become more authoritarian than parents in their country of origin (Allen, Svetaz, Hardeman, & Resnick, 2008).

Researchers have questioned the applicability of these categories to parenting styles for Latinos, especially recent immigrants. Other research has expanded the number of categories to include: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, neglectful, protective, cold, affiliate, and neglectful (Domenech Rodriguez, Donovan, & Crowley, 2009).

How can different parenting styles cause relationship distress?

Differences in parenting styles can create additional relationship distress. During a focus group with graduates from Family Bridges, a healthy marriage demonstration program in the Midwest, participants reported that resolving differences in parenting styles was one of the main marital issues with which they struggled. These participants explained that parenting issues often evolved out of marital problems and that the nature of their relationship with their children (albeit positive or negative) reflected their communication as a couple. They reported disagreeing over discipline, time spent with children, and how to handle problems that came up.

One mother in the focus group explained that she was initially very overprotective when her husband would try to discipline their son:

“Y yo cometía ese error mucho, porque si mi esposo lo reganaba por algo yo inmediatamente saltaba, por mi protección maternal, eso esta mal, no? O sea, me cegaba en ese momento y entonces ahí ya había un conflicto con el niño y después entre el y yo, pero si, ya después aprendí que estaba mal, que no debía hacer eso, que si él lo esta corrigiendo era por algo, pues tengo yo que ni modo...” *(And I would commit that mistake, because when my husband would reprimand him for something, I would jump, because of my maternal protection, and that would be wrong, no? That is, I would be blind at that moment and then there would be a conflict with our son and then between him and I. Then I would learn that it was wrong, that I shouldn't do that because he is correcting him for something)* (La Hoz, Cornejo, & Venovic, 2012).

Parents also recognized that problems arose due to children learning how to manipulate one or the other parent, which in turn caused conflicts between husband and wife:

“Entonces ahí y ellos son bien despiertos también, porque ellos saben que si él lo manda a hacer algo y no lo hacen saben que yo los voy a defender o si yo lo mando y no lo hace, sabe que mi esposo lo va a defender...” *(They are very astute as well, because they know that if he asks them to do something and they do not do it, they know that I will defend them or if I asked and they do not do it, they know my husband will defend them)* (La Hoz, Cornejo, & Venovic, 2012).

How do parenting styles differ across generations?

Parenting styles, like any other component of culture, change over time. Immigration has a significant impact on parenting styles and outcomes for the children of different generations.

The research on immigrant families shows that the acculturation process changes the attitudes and behaviors of immigrant children and influences the values and behavior of their parents (i.e., how they raise their children and what kind of relationship they have with them) (Kao, 2004; Pong, Hao, & Gardner, 2005). Studies show that acculturation influences the emotional and behavioral outcomes of first-, second-, and higher-generation Latino youth (as cited in Driscoll, Russell, & Crockett, 2008). In the long run, the acculturation process has a significant impact on the well-being of Latino youth through direct influence on children and an indirect impact on their parents.

Driscoll, Russell, & Crockett (2008) found that:

- **Permissive parenting increases with each generation, while there is a decline in other parenting styles.**
- **With each generation there is an increase of young people with behavioral problems.**
- **With each generation self-esteem improves, but depression scores do not.**
- **Outcomes worsen in proportion with more permissive parenting in each successive generation. There is no worsening of outcomes under authoritative parenting.**

How do parenting styles differ between Latina mothers and Latino fathers? How are expectations different for female and male children?

Despite the traditional gender roles in Latino culture, studies have found that mothers and fathers are similar in their parenting styles. Domenech Rodriguez, Donovan, & Crowley (2009) noted a “similarity in the degree of warmth, demandingness, and autonomy granted across fathers and mothers in their interactions with their child.” However, the same study found that while parental expressions of warmth were equal across genders, the expectations were different for male and female children. Parents granted less autonomy to their girls compared to boys, but were more demanding with their daughters compared to their sons. It is unclear how these findings relate to development stages and cultural values. For example, Latino parents may anticipate that girls mature earlier than boys, but as their children grow up, expectations change and boys are expected to get a job outside the home and start leaving the household first.



Other studies show girls are granted less autonomy compared to boys, especially in relation to sex. Sylvia Morales, director of the documentary “Values, Sexuality and Family” points to a double standard in Latino culture where “it’s acceptable for men to have sex...but a woman is expected to be virginal” (Dubin, 1990). According to Domenech Rodriguez, Donovan, and Crowley (2009), these findings about gender may suggest that “interventions targeted at parents can be equally applicable for fathers and mothers and may need to directly address parents’ differential expectations for male and female children.”

Traditional Latino values such as *familismo* and *respeto* have been shown to contribute to specific types of parenting styles; these, in turn, are influenced by the acculturation process and generational nuances.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Since parenting is such a critical aspect of family strengthening, marriage and relationship programming that is tailored to reach the Latino community should include parenting education. Parenting can be addressed as a stand-alone lesson, or common issues that parents face can be used as examples when demonstrating communication and problem-solving skills. If parenting cannot be covered as part of the core competencies, consider offering subsequent follow-up workshops that address parenting concerns.

SECTION 2:

***Immigration and
Acculturation***

Chapter 3:

Impacts of Undocumented Immigrant Status

Daily Life, Marriage, and Children

Stakeholders working with Latino communities should understand undocumented immigrant family structure and parenting styles for more effective program development and implementation.

Case Study

A young married bi-cultural couple with a five-year-old is at a crossroads. The husband, Marcos, is originally from Mexico and came to the U.S. on a working visa several years back. During his time in the U.S., he met his Polish wife, Sasha. Sasha had a green card and was working on her residency papers. During their marriage, they both worked to change their immigration status. Eventually, their lawyers explained that Marcos would have to return to Mexico in order to obtain the legal documentation required. Marcos and Sasha discussed this and decided to follow the lawyers' advice to avoid living under constant stress over his immigration status.

After several weeks in Mexico, Marcos was informed that he would not be able to return to the U.S. for 10 years. Upon learning this, Sasha quickly said that she would move to Mexico with him. Marcos resisted this plan because of the difficult economic situation in Mexico and his concerns for their son, Lucas, who would not have the same opportunities available. Marcos does not have a job or a place to live because all his relatives and extended family live in the U.S. He has found himself at a loss in Mexico.

Sasha receives a call from one of the staff members at a social service agency reminding her to attend the next parenting workshop. Sasha explains her situation and apologizes because she and her husband will not be able to follow through with the program.

- What would you say to Sasha in her distress? Does she still qualify to attend the parenting workshop without her spouse? If so, how would you encourage her to continue to participate, even though she is very distraught given her current situation?
- If Sasha asks you how she is supposed to keep a long-term, long-distance marital relationship healthy, what would you say and what resources would you provide?

Hispanics with U.S. citizenship show the greatest growth in numbers of any group within the Hispanic population in North America. Many undocumented parents have children born in the U.S. who are considered U.S. citizens based on current policy.¹ According

¹ The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, adopted in 1868, grants an automatic right to citizenship to anyone born in the U.S.

to Passel & Taylor (2010), while there were 1.1 million foreign-born children of unauthorized immigrant parents, there were 4 million U.S.-born children of unauthorized immigrant parents living in the U.S. One explanation for this trend is that Hispanics who immigrate to the U.S. are relatively young and have high birth rates. Twenty-three percent of all children in this country ages 17 and younger are from Hispanic parents. About 85% of the children of immigrants were born in the U.S. (Passel & Taylor, 2010).

Safety-net service agencies and other stakeholders working with Latino families will inevitably serve families made up of a mixed group of undocumented and documented members. This interaction with families of mixed citizenship status presents new challenges for community-based models focused on intervention and prevention of different social issues.



In relationship education programming, providers should be aware of the particular stresses that mixed status families may be facing. For example:

- A couple with legal status raising a niece or nephew while the biological parents remain in the country of origin;
- A family in the U.S. turning into a single parent household when one parent moves back to the country of origin; or
- A family that risks living in the U.S. in spite of their undocumented status. An illegal living situation will likely make such a family fearful and act as a barrier to obtaining resources available in the community. Children in such families may have limited opportunities to engage in positive experiences (such as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts) and activities that increase their chances of succeeding and excelling. Researchers have found that extracurricular activities can enhance academic performance (Brown, 1999).

One common theme underlies each of these different situations—in each case, decisions are made in the context of family. Healthy marriage and relationship education programming needs to be inclusive of the entire nuclear and extended family (as defined by the primary caregiver or parents) to effectively serve mixed status families.

How does being undocumented affect daily life?

According to Passel and Cohn (2009), “53 percent of undocumented immigrants live in mixed-status families, where one or more family member is undocumented.” Over the past few years, several States and cities have passed new laws and initiatives targeting

undocumented immigrants and families. Such laws affect daily life for families both with and without legal immigration status. Even if a person is a legal immigrant, he or she is often indirectly affected by changes in immigration policies because of knowing or living with someone who is undocumented.

Case Study

An agency has been planning a financial literacy workshop for Latino participants for months. They have 60 participants registered to attend the workshop. A volunteer calls the participants a few days prior to the workshop and most confirm their attendance. Previous workshops have had about 75% attendance. The evening before the workshop, an immigration raid is conducted in a nearby factory and is televised on the local news. The day of the workshop, only five participants attend the program. The agency is surprised because the registered participants did not have legal issues.

Questions for discussion:

- How are the agency's services affected by immigration enforcement?
- How are immigration laws affecting client use of services, even when participants have legal status?

City governments have started enforcing tougher initiatives aimed at undocumented immigrants, including “driver’s license checks at roadblocks, banning landlords from renting to undocumented immigrants, anti-day-labor policies, and E-Verify requirements” (Center for American Progress, 2011). All of these reforms have created additional stresses for undocumented individuals and their families. A study by Garcia and Keyes (2012) examining the lives of undocumented immigrants in North County, California (near San Diego) found these individuals go to great lengths to avoid contact with officials by:

Over the past few years, several States and cities have passed new laws and initiatives targeting undocumented immigrants and families. Such laws affect daily life for families both with and without legal immigration status.

- **Making adjustments in their appearance** (e.g., a change of clothing after work to avoid standing out).
- **Enlisting the aid of surrogates** (friends or family members) to report crimes for them, pick up their children, or shop for them.
- **Modifying their behavior** (e.g., purposely using body language that makes them appear calm and not anxious) in order to avoid drawing attention.

In addition, many intact families facing deportation are faced with the decision to either return to their country of origin together or to split up the family between those with legal status and those with illegal status. These separations may disrupt marriages and prevent parents from having direct influence on their children.

Case Study

Isabel and Juan are married with three children (9, 13, and 19 years old). When Juan faced deportation, the couple decided that Isabel would remain with the children in the U.S. They planned to keep Juan involved with the children's lives.

After several months, Isabel was unable to make ends meet, even though she worked two jobs, and their home was foreclosed on. As a result, they had to move in with Isabel's parents. The rural community that her husband moved back to had poor telephone service. Regular calls from Juan slowly dropped from once a week, to once a month, to an occasional call every two to three months.

Within a six-month time frame, Isabel's children lost their father's involvement, home, and much of their one-to-one time with their mother. Isabel's 13-year old daughter and 9-year-old son have begun to act out in anger. Her 19-year-old daughter has dropped out of community college to help support the family. Isabel is beginning to experience depression and anxiety.

Questions for discussion:

- If Isabel had originally assumed a traditional family structure with expectations of the husband as provider, how can the agency or program best support Isabel as she adapts quickly to new roles of caregiver, parent, provider, and primary decision-maker?
- Given the complex nature of Isabel's situation and the changes to her family's structure, an effective approach to service provision might involve multiple tiers of services. How might support be provided for Isabel's most urgent needs and progressively move towards healthy relationship services?

Work and Personal Finance Practices

Financial discussions with Latino families need to be understood in light of factors such as cultural norms and values, parent guilt, economic labor laws, and immigration status. Many Latinos come to this country to work in the most physically demanding yet least paid fields. According to a Southern Poverty Law Center (2009) survey, "construction was the leading industry employing them, with 17 percent of respondents, followed by factory work (11 percent), cleaning (10 percent) and restaurant work (9 percent)." Wage theft, intimidation, and unsafe working conditions are common hazards for Latinos working in these industries.

Educating workers about labor rights is one of the best ways to help address these issues. For example, workers need to know that it is important for them to have basic information about their employers because lawyers cannot help them without it.

Guest workers can also be subjected to labor abuse and wage theft. Guest workers have H-2 guest worker visas and are bound to the employers who hire them under the program. Guest workers may enter the country legally, but find that working conditions are not what they were promised. In this situation, they cannot get a second job or quit to find other work. The Southern Poverty Law Center (2009) explains, "They [guest workers] are

often forced deeply into debt because of exorbitant fees charged by the recruiters who bring them to the United States.” According to Southern Poverty Law Center (2009) survey responses, returning to their countries of origin is not an option because “accepting abuse and earning what little money is available is often seen as better than returning home with crushing debt and no earnings.”

Agencies working with Latino families need to be aware that these kinds of situations exist and seek to create a safe context in which immigrants can share their fears and difficult work experiences in order to be helped.

Do undocumented immigrants pay taxes?

In 2005, Stephen C. Goss, Social Security’s chief actuary, estimated that “about three-quarters of other-than-legal immigrants pay payroll taxes” (Porter, 2005).

According to the 2005 Economic Report of the President, more than half of undocumented immigrants are believed to contribute to tax rolls. Using analysis by the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy, a 2011 report from the Immigration Policy Center found that households headed by undocumented immigrants paid \$11.2 billion in State and local taxes in 2010. According to the Immigration Policy Center (2011), “that [figure] included \$1.2 billion in personal income taxes, \$1.6 billion in property taxes, and \$8.4 billion in sales taxes.”

According to a 2012 Internal Revenue Service manual (Internal Revenue Service, 2012), undocumented immigrants can still get an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).

However, an ITIN does *not*:

- Give immigrants the right to work.
- Change a person’s immigration status.
- Entitle immigrants to tax credit or Social Security benefits.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (2009) reported that a survey of Latino immigrant workers in the South found shocking statistics on labor conditions:

- **Almost half of those surveyed (41%) reported experiencing wage theft, meaning they were not paid for work performed. Eighty percent of survey respondents working in the city of New Orleans reported wage theft.**
- **Eighty percent of survey respondents had no idea how to contact government enforcement agencies and many respondents did not know such agencies even existed.**
- **Thirty-two percent of Latinos surveyed reported on-the-job injuries; among those injured on the job, only 37% reported that they received appropriate treatment, while the remainder reported that they were not paid for their lost wages, did not receive medical care, and/or were fired because of their injury.**

A significant number of undocumented immigrants pay at least one of three types of taxes: income taxes, property taxes, and sales taxes.

According to Porter's 2005 article in the *New York Times*, the Social Security Administration has been receiving W-2 earnings reports with incorrect or fictitious Social Security numbers since the 1980s. The Social Security Administration classified these reports in what it called the "earnings suspense file" (ESF) with the hope of someday figuring out the correct owners. The file has been growing ever since, recording \$189 billion worth of wages in the 1990s, more than twice the amount in the 1980s (Porter, 2005). In a presentation to a congressional committee in 2006, the Inspector General of the Social Security Administration indicated that "the ESF is by far the largest indicator of unauthorized noncitizens working in the U.S." (Office of the Inspector General, 2006). In that presentation, the Inspector General noted that, by the end of the tax year 2003, the ESF held \$520 billion in wages.

Wage theft, intimidation, and unsafe working conditions are common hazards for Latinos working in low wage, high-risk industries. Educating workers about labor rights is one of the best ways to help address these issues.

How does undocumented status affect the ability to buy a house?

Many undocumented immigrants have used their ITIN for purposes other than paying taxes. In 2007, *The Boston Globe* reported that immigrants find ways to build credit and buy homes, "they file tax reports, take jobs, pay bills, open bank accounts, and sign up for credit cards" (Sacchetti, 2007). According to the Comptroller of the Currency, a bureau of the U.S. Treasury that regulates national banks, "banks can legally accept passports, tax identification numbers, and consular cards from people who want to open bank accounts or get home loans" because there is no Federal law that prohibits illegal immigrants from owning homes (Sacchetti, 2007). According to a *Boston Globe* article from 2007, critics accuse banks of using legal loopholes to essentially authorize illegal immigration into this country. These same critics, according to *The Boston Globe*, have shown concern for those immigrants who cannot speak English well or are not well-versed financially and might become victims of unscrupulous lenders (Sacchetti, 2007). Safety-net service providers should be sure to address undocumented home buying with clients.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Safety-net service providers working with Latino clients, particularly those known to be undocumented, should consider these suggestions:

- **Integrate financial services with other programs already in place within the service delivery system.**
- **Discuss financial budgeting, attitudes relating to money, and how these are influenced by acculturation with agency staff and service providers.**
- **Collaborate with other agencies that offer services to prevent victimization and help families when they are the victims of predatory lending.**
- **Provide literature in Spanish that offers tips for families to develop financial goals and save.**

Undocumented: Costs and Benefits to the Family's Overall Well-being

As the unemployment rate increases and immigration laws become more restrictive, Latino immigrants are reassessing the costs and benefits of moving to the U.S. Shannon O'Neil, writing for the Council on Foreign Relations of the Americas Society, mentions the "rise of restrictive immigration laws in States such as Arizona, Alabama and Georgia" (O'Neil, 2012). O'Neil adds, "cities with restrictive immigration laws lower local employment numbers by nearly 20 percent." One of the recent immigration laws passed is Arizona's SB 1070, which added new State requirements, crimes, and penalties aimed at tougher immigration enforcement (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2011). Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed SB 1070 into law in 2010. The controversial law came under judicial review before it could go into effect, and went to the U.S. Supreme Court to determine its constitutionality. On June 25, 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court struck key provisions, but let stand the provision allowing police to "check a person's immigration status while enforcing other laws if 'reasonable suspicion' exists that the person is in the United States illegally" (Cohen & Mears, 2012).



The costs and benefits of immigration for immigrant families vary according to their particular experience. For example, the experience of a refugee who fled the violence of a civil war might be different than that of a person looking for better economic opportunities.

What are possible stresses or costs due to the immigration experience?

Undocumented immigrants risk serious consequences for entering the U.S. illegally, including:

- Possible deportation and even prison;
- Lack of access to public or private health coverage, making sickness and injury unaffordable; and/or
- Being the subject of discrimination, labor abuse, or exploitation from employers (Legal Regulation Review, n.d.).

Graduates of Family Bridges, a large healthy marriage program in the Midwest, explained other costs of the immigration experience during a focus group. Participants explained that costs of the acculturation process included changes in lifestyle, leaving family behind, and having to work long hours to provide for economic needs and wants. These issues adversely affected marital relationships and eroded family values. One of the main issues reported was a lack of free time, as time constraints eroded a sense of family unity. Further, being “on the clock” negatively affected the women’s view of their roles in the household. One participant lamented the fast nature of life here:

“Entonces eso es algo en lo que yo he luchado aquí, con la cultura de aquí, porque se vive muy de prisa, haciendo una cosa tras otra. Entonces yo le digo a mi esposo, como madre no me siento realizada, porque yo siento que le falta atención a mi casa” (*So it is something that I keep fighting with here, with the culture here, because we live very rushed, doing one thing or the other. So I say to my husband, as a mother I don't feel fulfilled, because I feel like I am not attending to my home*). (La Hoz, Cornejo, Venovic, 2012).

Another participant (a husband) agreed, adding that family time is neglected, leading to conflicts in families and marriages. He attributed his family’s problems to the lack of time dedicated to the family:

No hay tiempo familiar y los niños crecen así, o sea bien descuidados, con muy buena ropa, siempre traen dinero en su bolsa, pero bien descuidado.” (*There is no family time and the children are born like that, neglected, with good clothing and money in their pockets, but very neglected*). (La Hoz, Cornejo, Venovic, 2012).



Understanding the rights of undocumented immigrants is important when working with Latino communities. For example, there are court rulings that have important implications for undocumented immigrants, such as the Plyler v. Doe ruling in 1982. This landmark Supreme Court case guaranteed that all children residing in the U.S. are entitled to public education, including the children of undocumented immigrants. The Supreme Court held that denying such children a public education violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The U.S. Department of Education ([www.ED.gov](http://www.ed.gov)) offers a fact sheet that explains the rights of all children to attend school: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-factsheet-201101.pdf>

What are possible benefits of the immigration experience?

While there are multiple stressors and costs related to the immigration experience, there are also many benefits. Hispanics coming to the U.S. aspire to live the “American Dream” and work diligently and tirelessly in this pursuit. First-generation immigrants demonstrate resiliency in the midst of adversity from transition and acculturation, as many benefits undergird the hardships and help immigrants endure the costs.

Focus group participants at Family Bridges described benefits, including learning to persevere in spite of adversity and learning to value family members more. A Latina wife conveyed her increased reliance on the spousal relationship:

“Entonces nada mas tu me tienes a mi y yo te tengo a ti, entonces como que no teníamos tiempo ni ganas de pelear porque en México si nos peleábamos, a lo mejor él se iba con sus papas o yo con mis papas o con mis hermanos, así, pero aquí con quien nos íbamos a ir? Entonces, eso nos ayudo para crecer mas y unirnos mas.” *(So I only have him and he only has me, so it’s like we didn’t have the time nor the desire to fight. In Mexico when we fought, he would go to his parents and I would go to my parents or to my siblings. But here, where would we go? So this taught us to grow more and figure things out better).* (La Hoz, Cornejo, Venovic, 2012).

Her husband added:

“Y eso nos ayudó a que aprendamos a depender también de nosotros mismos, a confiar mas el uno en el otro. A salir adelante los dos como pareja, porque allá lo teníamos todo y si nos enojábamos también, ahí estaban papa, mama dándole consuelo al hijito, a la hijita, pero acá no.” *(And that taught us to learn how to depend on each other, trust in each other. To get ahead and keep at it as a couple because there we had everything and when we would get upset, mom and dad were there to comfort us, but not here).* (La Hoz, Cornejo, Venovic, 2012).

Some researchers have called the validity of these benefits into question. The benefit of education, for example, can be challenged given the rise of dropout rates among Latino immigrants² both in high school and in college (Fry, 2011). Moreover, 28% of the total

The benefits of immigration for undocumented immigrants include:

- **Having access to more jobs than they had in their countries of origin at the time of immigration.**
- **Raising fully bilingual children (if the children also learn Spanish).**
- **A better public education for their children compared to what they would have received from public schools in their countries of origin at the time of immigration.**
- **Freedom from crime, terrorism, and violence that may have existed in the countries of origin at the time of immigration.**
- **If they can afford a private health plan, more advanced medical procedures and services than what they could receive in their countries of origin.**

² The Hispanic dropout rate is significantly higher than that of white and black populations (Lard, 2011).

population of Hispanics lives below the poverty line (Short, 2010). These trends may mean that many children of Hispanic immigrants do not reach desired educational and economic goals.

How does the economy affect migration patterns?

Net migration from Mexico fell to zero (and perhaps less) according to a recent study by Passel, Cohn, and Gonzalez-Barrera (2012). In a National Public Radio interview, political analyst Rafael Fernandez de Castro (2012) of the Autonomous Institute of Technology of Mexico commented that, “the number one reason behind this [fall in net migration] is the U.S. economy. It’s the lack of jobs in the U.S., it’s the high unemployment rate.” Fernandez also pointed to the decline in the construction industry and the backlash against the migrant population in places like Alabama and Arizona. He predicted that this change in historic migration patterns will have lasting consequences for both Mexico and the U.S.

Case Study

Sandra and Javier have been married for 15 years and have four children. They met and wed in Mexico, living there for the first three years of their marriage, before moving to the U.S. for the next four years. Then they decided that the cost of living in the U.S. outweighed the benefits and moved back to Mexico. After two years in Mexico and not finding secure employment, the couple moved back to the U.S.

Sandra and Javier recently attended a marriage and relationship workshop where they shared that one of their reoccurring arguments is over their residency. Javier always envisioned coming to the U.S. for a limited time while they improved their financial status to save enough to buy a home in Mexico and live there permanently. Sandra also felt this way at the beginning of their marriage, but has recently changed her mind because of their children. She feels that the frequent dislocation has negatively affected their children and that they will not cope well in Mexico (now that they have learned to appreciate the American lifestyle). When Sandra and Javier share their experience, many couples nod in agreement

- What assumptions, if any, should a facilitator make about the other couples who are nodding in assent?
- How can the situation that Javier and Sandra describe help to address a prevalent issue that many Hispanic couples face?
- How can a facilitator, upon listening to a story such as that of Javier and Sandra, encourage discussion among couples in the group on decisions about difficult family and life transitions such as this one?

Chapter 4:

Acculturation

Stages of Acculturation

When an immigrant family moves to another country, they have to adjust to the non-native culture. This process is known as “acculturation” (Rogler, Cortes & Malgadi, 1991 as cited in Miranda & Matheny, 2000). This chapter addresses the different stages of acculturation and implications for stakeholders serving Latino communities.

The order of the acculturation stages depends on the individual, as a person may move back and forth among the stages. Cases should be considered on an individual basis after evaluating each person’s unique immigration experience. Service providers need to be aware that acculturation is important for the recent immigrant and can be a lifelong journey reaching across several generations. Miranda & Matheny (2000) explain that there are both internal and external factors that affect acculturation, such as “stress-coping resources, cohesion of the family, language use, and length of residence in the United States.”



Stages of acculturation:

1. **Submission/Acceptance:** Rice-Rodriguez & Boyle (2006) explain that stage one is the submission/acceptance stage. During this stage, an immigrant “may accept a subordinate status by immersing himself/herself in new culture and trying to ‘shut out’ culture of homeland (Rice-Rodriguez & Boyle, 2006).” Immigrant families and their children adapt to pressures to acculturate and an important topic during this stage is language negotiation at home. Even though many families would like their children to be bilingual, after encountering much discrimination against Hispanics with an accent, they choose to curtail this experience for their children by requiring children to speak only English in the home (Urcioui, 1996 as cited in Lutz, 2008). Thus, parents force acculturation upon their children. During this stage, children are also “Americanized,” leaving behind some of the traditional Latino values like *familism*, *respeto*, *machismo*, and *marianismo*. As a result, according to Rice-Rodriguez and Boyle (2006), parents often begin to feel a loss of parental authority while children start to sense a difference in values, “resulting in tension and family dysfunction.” Studies have found family

functionality at this stage to have an important buffering effect; that is, those who had more supportive and cohesive families at the start of the process will be able to cope better with the initial challenges of acculturation (Hovey and King, 1996 as cited in Miranda & Matheny, 2000).

2. **Assimilation:** Stage two, called assimilation, involves withdrawal from the old culture and a dualism between the old and new cultures. An immigrant starts to “deny self-identity and accept the image/identity that the dominant group holds of immigrant population” (Carazos, 2002 as cited in Rice-Rodriguez & Boyle, 2006). For example, even if an immigrant was a doctor or lawyer in his country of origin, he may begin to accept that in the U.S. he may be seen as a person from a third-world country. During this stage, a person may also keep two cultures distinctly separate. For example, the idea that there are Mexicans and that there are Americans. Often, this process also involves “a rejection or denigration of old culture” (Sluzki, 1991 as cited in Rice-Rodriguez & Boyle, 2006) or seeing the old culture as inferior to the new culture. This may lead to problems, especially for younger generations, such as the children of Hispanic immigrants who may refuse to speak Spanish.
3. **Separation:** Stage three is called separation. For some people, it may be harder to adapt to the new culture and they may choose to isolate themselves from it. In this stage, according to Rice-Rodriguez & Boyle (2006), the “immigrant avoids contact with new culture making no attempt to interact or acculturate with group.” He or she may speak only Spanish and even maintain the hope of returning home someday (McGoldrick and Carter, 1996 as cited in Rice-Rodriguez & Boyle, 2006). This view of the new culture and the old culture as polar extremes can lead to depression, disillusionment, and a longing for the old, familiar culture (Falicov, 1998 as cited in Rice-Rodriguez & Boyle, 2006).
4. **Integration (also referred to as biculturalism):** In this stage, a person finally overcomes ideas of cultural superiority or inferiority; that is, that one culture is better than another. Rice-Rodriguez & Boyle (2006) say that immigrants begin to “integrate cultures while maintaining the positive aspects of both cultures.” The person then “assumes a bicultural family that allows for maintaining traditions and heritage while living in new culture.” Thus the old culture and new culture are no longer in conflict and the person starts to see that both cultures enrich the life of his or her family. At this stage, people may start embracing bilingualism and biculturalism.

How does the acculturation process affect gender roles?

The concepts of *marianismo* and *machismo* vary according to many factors, such as nationality, socioeconomic status, and acculturation levels. In a memo on gender norms, published by the Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (2006), service providers are encouraged to see that the traditional role of women in Latino families may provide both opportunities and challenges. For example, women’s dedication to their families and their children “can be a powerful motivator for participating in marriage education workshops.” However, it may also mean that Hispanic women may struggle to communicate assertively with their husbands, depending on the acculturation levels (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006).



Relationship dynamics can be difficult for women who are challenging traditional conventions by working to support their families. For example, among exilic Cuban families in the U.S. in the 1970s, “this new role [of women working outside of the home] wreaked havoc on the machismo of the husband, who felt his inability to be the sole provider as a loss of prestige, respect, and honor” (De la Torre, 2003). These Cuban wives gained a greater sense of power and independence from their ability to provide for their families, but holding down a job did not free them from their traditional female responsibilities. Instead, working outside of the home added to their list of chores, as their husbands still expected them to provide emotional support, clean the house, and take care of the children (Rogg, 1976 as cited in De la Torre, 2003).

Cespedes and Huey (2012) found that Latina adolescents, “reported greater differences [than their male counterparts] in traditional gender role beliefs between themselves and their parents.” These same studies concluded that the discrepancy of gender roles and levels of family dysfunction were associated with higher youth depression rates (Cespedes & Huey, 2012). Cultural and generational differences can be an important point of consideration in family dynamics and functional problems.

Traditional gender roles and the process of acculturation may also have a negative effect on the children of immigrants.

Those seeking to serve Latino families must keep in mind the cultural impact of *machismo* on those families. However, as pointed out in a study by Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank & Tracey (2008), “most conceptions of *machismo* focus on a restricted, negative view of hypermasculinity.” Their study produced a “more defined measure of *machismo*, integrating both positive and negative male characteristics” (Arciniega et al, 2008). In other words, when considering fatherhood among Latinos, machismo has both positive and negative effects on Latino families.

Case Study

Margarita, a Hispanic mother in her mid-forties, is seeking services for her 16-year-old son, Cesar, because his school social worker is concerned. Cesar comes to school dressed in dark clothing and shoulder-length hair with bangs covering his face. He hunches over and avoids direct eye contact. The school social worker found troubling letters written by Cesar stating that he no longer wants to live. Margarita has also found Cesar self-cutting. She reports that when he comes home from school, he shuts himself in his room, covers the windows, sleeps most of the afternoon, and refuses to join the family for dinner. She has found him more than once, wide awake at midnight, playing video games and chatting on the Internet.

Margarita looks worn out and exhausted. She says that she escaped an abusive relationship with Cesar’s father seven years ago and re-married a North American, Steve, who she describes as a great provider. Margarita says Cesar is distant and aloof, rejecting any efforts Steve makes to spend time with him. Margarita says Steve is very strict and firm with rules and often criticizes Margarita for being soft.

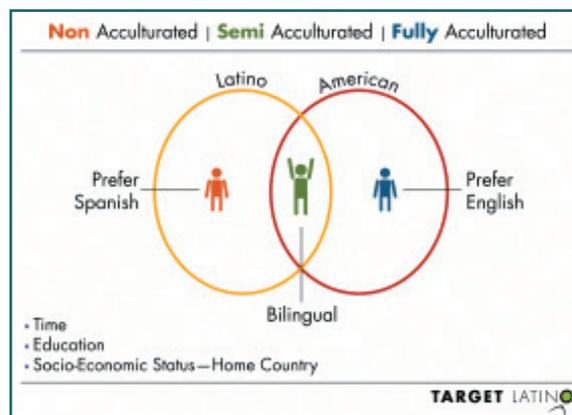
She mentions that while the family used to speak both English and Spanish, they now have a new rule—English only. They decided on this new rule because their three-year old child, Marcus, was delayed in speaking and his pre-school teacher thought he might be confused by learning dual languages. When Steve goes on business trips, the family reverts back to speaking Spanish in the home.

- **What additional information would a service provider need to better help Margarita’s family?**
- **What stage of acculturation are Margarita and Cesar at?**
- **How do the different stages of acculturation that each family member is working through contribute to family conflict?**
- **Pretend Steve and Margarita attend a relationship education workshop and bring up their different parenting styles and issues regarding acculturation. How could they be encouraged to use conflict resolution and communication skills to address this issue?**
- **How could Cesar’s mental health symptoms be tied to the relationship stress that Margarita has endured in the past and is currently experiencing?**

What is acculturative stress?

Acculturative stress causes a reduction in the well-being of individuals who have to adapt to a new culture. Understanding contributing factors can help lessen the impact of acculturative stress on Latinos (Miranda & Matheny, 2000). For example, “acculturative stress increases when ‘there are minimal rewards for learning English’” (Smart & Smart, 1995 as quoted by Miranda & Matheny, 2000). Immigration stress may prevent families from being fully acculturated. Generational status and age, according to Miranda and Matheny (2000, citing the work of Hovey & King, 1996), also appear to influence acculturative stress. Younger Latinos of second and subsequent generations appear to experience less acculturative stress than older, first-generation Latinos. Thus, acculturation is a process that spans across lifetimes and generations.

Segmentation According to Acculturation Stage



Adapted from “Let’s Talk Segmentation - Part I. Latino Target” by Claudia Goffan with creative design by Jim Perez. Copyright 2008 by Claudia Goffan. Available at <http://hispanic-marketing.com/bl/hispanic-marketing/lets-talk-segmentation/>.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

- **Assess the acculturation level of participants before determining service delivery options.** If clients are first-generation, consider services where Spanish language materials are available, content is delivered in Spanish, and providers are sensitive to the stressors participants have endured in migrating to the U.S. On the other hand, if participants are second-generation, facilitators may need to deliver the program in English with metaphors and phrases or dichos (sayings) with which the participants can easily identify.
- **Consider the generational status of the target audience during development of programmatic approach and model.** If the target audience is second- and third-generation, the approach may differ from what would be effective for first-generation participants.
- **Discuss generational differences, acculturation stress, and the different stages of acculturation with agency staff, service providers, and other stakeholders.**

Generational Differences

“Foreign born” no longer represents the majority of Latinos in the United States (Fry & Passel, 2009). Most Latinos living in the U.S. are the U.S. born offspring of immigrants (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). Suro and Passel (2003) found that “the Hispanic population grew by 25.7 million; immigrants accounted for 45 percent of that increase while the second generation accounted for 28 percent.” Studies project that from 2000 to 2020, the Hispanic population will grow by 25.1 million with immigrants accounting for 25% of this growth and second generation for 47% (Suro & Passel, 2003).

How do generational differences affect economic status?

Native-born Latinos have higher levels of education than their immigrant counterparts (Suro & Passel, 2003). Due to their higher educational levels and fluency in English, second and subsequent generations also earn more than immigrants on average (Suro & Passel, 2003). However, some trends result in worse outcomes for later generations, including increases in single parent families, teen parenthood, and high school dropout rates. Research shows that two-parent homes and couples who are married have greater economic stability than that of single-parent families. Since Latino children in the third generation are more likely to be raised by a single parent than first- or second-generation Latino children, this suggests a negative trajectory in terms of economic status. Teen parenthood and high school dropout rates, which are higher among second generation than first or third generation, also threaten economic stability for Latino families (Fry & Passel, 2009). If generations were organized by highest to lowest rates of teen parenthood and dropout rates, the order would be first generation, third generation, and then second generation.

Classic Pattern of Socioeconomic Gains for Immigrant Families from One Generation to the Next

Characteristics	1st Generation	2nd Generation	3rd Generation
Not fluent in English	43%	21%	5%
Have less than a high school education	47%	40%	16%
Live in poverty	34%	26%	24%
Live in married-couple families	69%	73%	52%
Mean weekly earnings	\$457	\$535	\$550

Adapted from “Latino Children: A Majority Are U.S.-Born Offspring of Immigrants,” by R. Fry and J. Passel, 2005. Available at <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2009/05/28/latino-children-a-majority-are-us-born-offspring-of-immigrants/> Copyright 2009 by Pew Hispanic Center.

Language Issues

Not all Latinos are comfortable speaking English—their comfort level may be determined, in part by stage of acculturation. Agencies should assess the linguistic preference and proficiency of participants so that they can identify services that have materials available in the participant’s preferred language.

How do low literacy levels in Spanish affect English language proficiency?

Spanish language proficiency is related to literacy levels in English. Chamot (2000) observed that “secondary school-aged students with little schooling in their native countries” are going to “face severe obstacles” in school achievement in the United States. Chamot (2000) also notes that “students who arrive well-prepared academically and highly literate in a language other than English possess conceptual knowledge and skills such as reading and writing that can be transferred from their native language [to English].” Literacy levels are a particularly important concern for agencies serving immigrants, but may not be as pressing for second- and third-generation Latino participants, as education levels and English fluency increase with subsequent generations.



Language proficiency and literacy affect service participation because clients need basic information to make appropriate well-being and self-sufficiency decisions. For example, basic health literacy “is a critical determinant of a person’s ability to navigate the health care system, fill out forms, locate providers and services, and engage in self-care and chronic disease management” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007).

Why is it better to have bilingual staff than to rely on participants’ friends or family to translate?

Bilingual staff members are more effective than the services of casual interpreters (such as a client’s friends or relatives) because they ensure objective interpretation and open discussion. For example, using a patient’s family member or friend as an interpreter in a healthcare situation is not recommended because “the patient may not be as forthcoming about his or her behavior, symptoms or concerns” (Sevilla & Willis, 2004).

Children often do not understand specific jargon (such as medical or financial terminology), “and will substitute these terms with words that they are more familiar with but that might not be correct.” Moreover, “children can become fearful for their parents and may filter information to try to protect them” (2004). Additionally, relying on children as translators disempowers the parent (Colorado, 2007). These factors are especially important for safety-net service providers working with youth to keep in mind when they need to communicate with parents.

Parents should not use their school-aged child to interpret for them in any situation.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

- **Hire bilingual staff who can interact directly with clients (without having to go through a translator), when serving communities with a significant immigrant or Spanish-speaking population.**
- **Encourage and support bilingual staff members to participate in training to learn to provide translation services.**
- **Avoid regional words or dialects and rely on the universal form of the language being interpreted to avoid misunderstandings.**
- **If a translator must be used, ensure translations are objective and the translator does not become a participant in the discussion.**
- **Enforce consistency in the translation by having a quality assurance system.**
- **Provide oversight and management. Institute an internal quality assurance policy so products translated and published in Spanish are thoroughly reviewed before printing and distribution.**
- **Evaluate program materials by surveying participants. Examples of questions to include are: Is the material that you need available in Spanish? How would you rate the translator's services? The outcome of the surveys can provide direction for improving program materials, resources, and translation services.**

SECTION 3:

*Engaging and
Retaining Latino
Families in Services*

Chapter 5:

Increasing Program Recruitment, Participation, Retention, and Collaboration

Strategies for Recruitment

Many people see the Hispanic population as being composed of two basic groups: a non-assimilated group that only speaks Spanish and an assimilated one that speaks English and has preferences similar to those of the general American population (Arjona et al., 1998). Professionals should avoid this simplistic view of the U.S. Hispanic population.

How is the Latino market segmented?

Marketers use three categories to segment Latino customers:

- The **isolated** category is made up primarily of recent immigrants;
- The **acculturated** category is made up of second-generation Latinos, although not exclusively; and
- The **assimilated** category comprises subsequent generations.

As the second-generation is the fastest growing population of Latinos in the U.S. (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009), it is safe to say that the acculturated segment is the largest and fastest growing of the three (Arjona et al., 1998).

Many people who were not born in Latin America still identify with the Latino culture. According to the Pew Hispanic Center's (2009) national survey of Latinos, more than half of all Latinos ages 16–25 identify themselves first by their family's country of origin. Among the U.S. born children of immigrants, 33% identify as American, 24% as Hispanic or Latino, and 41% refer to themselves first by the country their parents left in order to settle in the U.S. "American" is commonly used among second generations as a primary term of self-identification, but a plurality still identifies with another country of origin, that of their parents (e.g., Mexican-American, Cuban-American). Self-identification shapes a person's preferences and agencies serving second-generation Latinos should keep in mind that their target audience is not homogeneous.

What are recruitment strategies for the different segments?

Given that not all Latinos are simply assimilated or non-assimilated, statistics help identify trends and patterns to guide recruitment strategies.

- **Many Latino clients may speak both Spanish and English.** According to a Pew Hispanic Center survey, "more than eight-in-ten (82%) Latino adults say they speak Spanish, and nearly all (95%) say it is important for future generations to continue to do so" (2009).

- **Pride in their Hispanic heritage is common.** Results from a 2009 Pew Hispanic Center survey show, “About half (47%) of Latinos surveyed say they consider themselves to be very different from the typical American.”
- **Acculturated Hispanics retain the core values of their traditional culture while adopting many of the behavioral norms of the general market.** According to the Pew Hispanic Center survey (2009), “U.S.-born Hispanics (who now make up 48% of Hispanic adults in the country) express a stronger sense of affinity with other Americans and America than do immigrant Hispanics.”
- **There are “certain regions of the United States where acculturated Hispanics have achieved sufficiently large and concentrated populations to be able to sustain their own community, institutions, culture, and language” (Arjona et al., 1998).** For example, Latinos represent 51% of all youths in New Mexico, 42% in California, 40% in Texas, and 36% in Arizona (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009).

In terms of advertising and media, Latinos tend to have different preferences depending on acculturation levels and circumstances. For example, “radio stations in Texas play Tejano (Tex-Mex) music, which usually has Spanish lyrics, but announcers that frequently speak in English, with Spanish or “Spanglish” words thrown in” (Arjona et al., 1998). Latinos might not listen to this type of radio station at work, but will when they are at home with their families.

When creating a marketing or promotional strategy, agencies working with Latino families should not be afraid of crossing over categories. For example, it is perfectly reasonable to use Spanglish in marketing materials when targeting an acculturated segment of second-generation Latinos or when working in areas with a significant Latino population and a long history of immigration. However, when marketing to first-generation Latinos, it is very important to maintain consistent language and use universal Spanish.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

- **Understand the specific needs of the Latino community you want to serve (Arjona et al., 1998). Make sure that your agency accurately assesses the needs of the population served and that services provided are useful and practical.**
- **Ensure that programming brochures, descriptions, and materials are respectful of Latino heritage while promoting the benefits of the services offered.**
- **Decide if you want to tailor one, some, or all aspects of the agency’s recruitment strategies to Latinos. The most efficient strategy is not necessarily to change it all, depending on the range of products and services that your organization offers to Latino families. (Arjona et al., 1998).**

What is the difference between translating vs. transcreating?

Instead of translating an outreach piece word for word, think of “transcreating” the document. Transcreating is adapting a message from one language to another, while maintaining its intent, style, tone, and context. A successfully transcreated message will

elicit the same reaction in the target language as it does in the source language. A good translation translates concepts, not words, reflecting the document’s cultural underpinnings.

Different Spanish linguistic nuances, which vary among countries and regions, are another issue to consider. When possible, safety-net service providers should undertake a thorough effort to identify their audience before translating materials.

For example, using a Mexican translation in a predominantly Cuban neighborhood will not be effective. To understand why, consider the English word “bus”—the Spanish translation is “camion” in Mexico, but “guagua” in Cuba. If an agency uses the wrong translation, participants cannot understand directions to an event and may decide not to attend. Agencies can also use English words if it will help to drive the point across; for example, in this case, referring to “Bus N302” would have been clear to all Spanish speakers no matter their nationality.

Immigrants living in the U.S. commonly mix English with Spanish. An example of a Spanglish word is “parquear,” which comes from the English word “to park [a car],” though the proper Spanish word is “estacionar.” Another example is the word “troca,” which comes from the English word “truck,” while the proper Spanish noun is actually “camioneta.”

Service providers should not worry about using proper Spanish and should make selections based on what the clients they are trying to reach will understand; particularly if the target population has poor literacy in Spanish—either because they received little education in their countries of origin or because they were born here and learned little Spanish from their parents.

Another issue that agencies might encounter is that there are words and phrases that have no direct translation. Agencies are most likely to face this problem when trying to translate idioms. For example, the English idiom “to cheat on someone” is “engañar a alguien” in Spanish, but idioms for the same concept include “poniendo los cuernos” in Mexico and “sacar la vuelta” in Peru, literally “to put the horns on someone” and “to take out the turn” respectively.

Examples of Translating Mistakes

- In marketing its Nova sedan in Latin America, Chevrolet overlooked the fact that in Spanish, “no va” means [the car] doesn’t go” (Arjona et al., 1998).
- The U.S. Milk Board’s “Got milk?” campaign for Hispanic consumers accidentally asked consumers if they were lactating when it translated the slogan into Spanish (Arjona et al., 1998).

Tips for Translators

- Use transcreation (intent, style, tone, context), not literal translation.
- Ask a native speaker to translate and a different person to proofread.
- Use universal Spanish and be aware of vocabulary differences between countries.
- Have a small group of people review the translation to test alternative wording and check understandability, interpretation, and cultural relevance.
- Do a reverse translation to English.
- Proofread for any typographic, grammatical, or other errors.



How to create culturally relevant materials?

Outreach is the key to building awareness of an agency among potential and existing clients. An appealing design and appropriate messaging will attract potential participants to programs and services. Outreach materials should be visually appealing, have useful content, and deliver consistent messages in order to be effective.

Here are some tips to keep in mind when designing outreach materials for Latino community members:

- **Use photos and cultural and ethnic symbols that resonate with the target population.** When designing program and marketing materials, pay attention to the target audience and try to match the overall look of the people in the photos with the participants. For example, avoid using pictures of Asian and white families to advertise an event primarily targeted to Latinos. Avoid using ethnic symbols that are not reflective of the target population. Use the same or similar visuals and graphics throughout outreach materials to make them easily recognizable.
- **Use appropriate language and consider the audience's literacy levels and learning styles.** Write text at a fourth-grade reading level.
- **If the tone of the message is formal, avoid using informal Spanish idioms that only a certain percentage of the population will understand.** Do not be afraid of using Spanglish if most people will understand it. If the target population has low literacy levels, do not be too concerned about using proper Spanish or elaborate sentences, but rather focus on simpler wording and short sentences.
- **Be positive in your message and emphasize benefits to the family, not just the individual.** Providers should keep the social stigmas surrounding some of their services in mind. For example, if an organization offers healthy marriage education, frame the service as a family-strengthening program that benefits children too (not just the couple) to emphasize the positive aspects of the program.

Collaborating with Faith-Based Organizations

Collaborating with faith-based organizations allows social service providers to leverage trusted relationships to reach Latino families who might not trust agencies and access needed services otherwise. Latino faith-based organizations are “predominantly Latino churches, social service entities associated with religious denominations or their Latino subsets (such as Catholic Charities), faith-based organizing groups, and coalitions” (NCLR, 2011).

Both faith- and community-based collaborations can be essential for recruiting and retaining Latino participants. The high value placed on the church by the Latino community may bring credibility and trust to agencies that collaborate with faith-based organizations, even for Latinos who do not actively participate in religious activities.

Faith-based collaborations can include groups or agencies that are not faith-based (and do not have the same religious motivation), but agree with the general outcomes which are goals of collaboration. Faith-based organizations can help safety-net service providers establish connections with the target audience without proselytism (attempting to convert people).

When a faith-based collaboration is established, it is important to define the nature, roles, and limitations of the organizations involved.

A good example is the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Center for Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships Nutritional Assistance Program for Hispanic Communities. This program helps Latino pastors and community leaders connect their congregations and communities with USDA programs that can help them ensure that the people in their communities have access to healthy and affordable food.

However, the program is not based on specific Bible teachings, nor does it only help Christian believers. Churches only provide a safe place to connect families with the right resources, nutritional programs, food pantry initiatives, or appropriate government programs.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

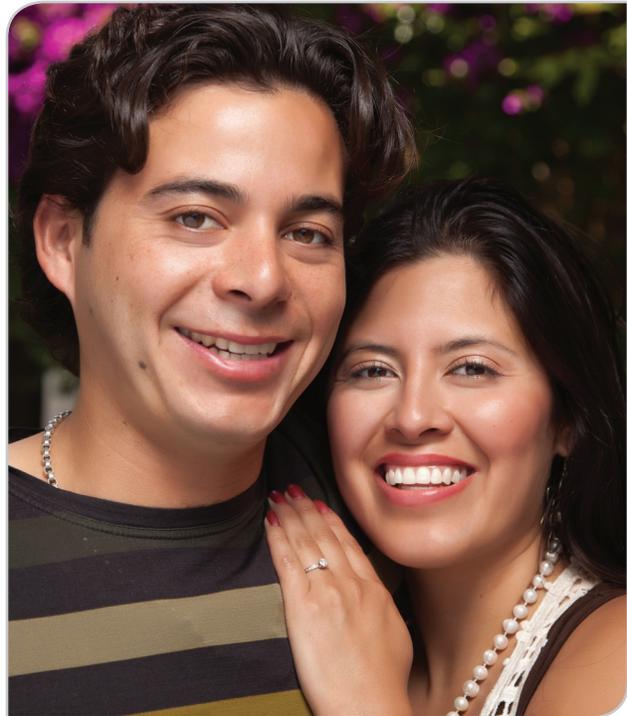
When first approaching a congregation, stakeholders should contact the leaders of the congregation, (i.e., the priest or pastor) to show respect. Often, this leader can refer the stakeholder to the person or group within the congregation that would be most appropriately served. The congregation may already have a committee dedicated to a similar cause and it may be helpful to connect with its efforts (C. M. Woehr, personal communication, July 25, 2012).

Another approach is to reach out to ecumenical or inter-denominational commissions—usually a group of pastors of different congregations that meets on a regular basis. Contact the head of this group and request to attend their next meeting, where stakeholders can reach out to several congregations at once.

Challenges may be encountered with faith-based collaborations, including the reluctance of some pastors to get involved in an effort without having the opportunity to evangelize, but not all pastors will feel this way. It is perfectly reasonable for agencies to approach faith-based organizations about healthy marriage and relationship services and only expect the church to provide referrals or a safe space for people to learn how to improve marriage and family relations.

Collaborating with Other Agencies

Head Start, Child Support Services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), child welfare, public and mental health, and other safety-net service providers within each State and jurisdiction should seek out partnerships with other safety-net service providers, including those that have established healthy marriage and relationship education programming.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

- Invite other service providers to make presentations to your agency staff about their program highlights, services, and initiatives.
- Find opportunities to make presentations to other organizations about the programs and services your agency offers.
- Work collaboratively with other agencies to share information and procedures about how to make referrals.
- Follow up with social workers and program managers in regional centers to ensure there is consistency throughout the referral system.
- Evaluate the referral system and make improvements based on staff feedback.

Chapter 6:

Strategies for Engaging Latino Families

Engaging Latino Families in Programs and Services

Many organizations working with Latinos experience issues with participation, referrals, and retention rates. To increase these rates, agencies need to identify challenges and evaluate how to overcome them. In their study of recruitment rates among Latino dementia family caregivers, Gallagher-Thompson, Solano, Coon, and Areán (2003) found that the major barriers to participation were cultural beliefs and stigma, lack of education about certain topics, language barriers, time constraints, transportation, child care, and lack of knowledge of services. Other impediments included economic constraints, lack of trust, and an absence of proper follow-up.

What are successful recruitment and retention strategies for agencies offering fully integrated healthy marriage and education programming?

Successful programs have effective recruitment strategies that align with the target population and desired outcomes. Recruitment is not an end point but a continuous process for successful programs. Within the context of the Latino community, recruitment strategies must consider issues of acculturation, immigration, and cultural and family values. Stakeholders should consider all of these components as they develop engagement and retention strategies for their programs and services.

Recruit the family, not the individual

Robust programs that reach every member or multiple members in a family unit have the most chance of being well attended. Utilize outreach strategies that will appeal to multiple family members, plan activities and programs for the whole family, and find ways to reduce barriers to participation.

An agency that organizes quality children's programs and brings families together for joint activities creates natural recruiters within the family unit. If children enjoy the program, they are more likely to encourage their parents to attend every week. Only offer child care that is part of a careful and well thought out program. Put time and effort into organizing quality child care and accommodations for children. This time and effort will pay off when the children's program enhances the agency's credibility and gives parents a sense of relief knowing that their children are well taken care of as they are attending a workshop or participating in a program.

Resolve barriers, such as cost and time involved

Agencies should try to minimize expenses related to participation as much as possible—offering food, providing child care services, and reducing travel times when possible. One strategy for achieving this could involve asking partner organizations to host events in the

neighborhood where participants live. Other strategies might include offering transportation stipends or vouchers to program participants.

Discuss potential roadblocks

During the intake phase, address possible obstacles that participants may face while receiving services. For example, explain that couples often argue when they are on their way to a relationship workshop. Encourage participants to persevere and continue attending in spite of the conflict; the workshop will give them the needed tools and skills to address the issues they are facing and strengthen their families.



Build upon trusted relationships

Stakeholders should not undervalue the importance of informal assessments of credibility. Organizations that are known, trusted, and reliable earn a favorable reputation that quickly spreads. Stakeholders who are building coalitions and partnerships should know and understand who is or is not well trusted in the community. Avoid partnering with organizations that have poor credibility and seek out partnerships with agencies and individuals who are highly trusted and have proven to be reliable.

Seek out the gatekeepers

Do not rely solely on marketing flyers for recruitment and outreach in the Latino community. Latinos value relationships and are most likely to pursue a program if someone they trust invites them. Seek out the gatekeepers in the community and engage them in program planning and implementation. Listen to their feedback and offer services and programs that align with the needs they cite.

Provide participant leadership and volunteer training opportunities

The best recruiters are past participants who have received services, benefitted from them, and want to speak to others and tell their story of success. Invest in past participants by providing them with leadership or volunteer trainings and they will be even more equipped to tell their story and motivate others to participate.

Leverage partnerships to increase outreach

Referrals from partner agencies and organizations are an effective recruitment tool. Make sure that partners have the most up-to-date information about the programs and services your agency offers. For example, practitioners at a community medical clinic may see hundreds of Latino families each day and can refer clients to a healthy marriage and relationship workshop when appropriate.

Maintain a presence at local community events

Participate in local events and gatherings to spread the word about services and meet potential participants, partners, and gatekeepers face-to-face. For example, an agency can set up a booth and distribute flyers and other information at local fairs, parades, conferences, and other events. When possible, include interactive activities for children at your booth. As children work on crafts or are entertained by other activities, parents can listen and speak to the volunteers or staff about programs and services offered.

Stakeholders should also make presentations about programs and services at local networking events for the Latino community. Places for presentations include PTA meetings, hospital and clinic in-service centers, chambers of commerce, and community open houses.

Use culturally appropriate outreach materials

Develop culturally appropriate outreach strategies and advertising materials. Agencies should ensure that outreach strategies are sensitive to traditional gender roles, stigmas, and taboos about certain topics. For example, in their study of HIV prevention programs, McQuiston, Choi-Hevel, and Clawson (2001) found that “although women are usually the health educators in their family, men would not accept HIV information from women, so female participants could not be expected to talk to men in their community about HIV prevention.”

Have clear and simple brochures available both in English and Spanish that explain the services available. Use conceptual rather than literal translations of recruitment and program materials (S. Pichardo, personal communication, August 2, 2012). Using conceptual translations will help avoid embarrassing mistakes and confusing potential participants.

Schedule programs with the participant in mind

For many Latino participants, time management is one of the most difficult challenges they face in their marital relationships and acculturation experiences. Latino families often struggle to maintain their cultural and family values in a time-sensitive society where they juggle multiple jobs, as well as the stressors of parenting and family life. A good strategy to help accommodate participants is to offer a continuity of services across several meeting times in

Consider the follow suggestions:

- **Divide the longer program into manageable components, organized within a relatively short time frame (for example, four to six weeks). Provide the next component of a program as another level or enrollment phase after the first has been completed.**
- **Remind participants about their commitment with multiple forms of communication, including reminder cards they can receive by mail, text messages, phone calls, Twitter and social media reminders, and emails.**
- **Create accountability by including activities or discussions in the workshops that stress the importance of participants finishing the workshop and program.**
- **Celebrate participation by providing certificates of completion.**

order to provide multiple opportunities for participation. Service providers should also keep in mind that programs that demand a commitment of several months will be difficult for families with competing priorities to attend.

Promising Practices for Effective Recruitment and Retention

Recommendation	Description	Examples
Recruit the Family, not Just the Individual	Well-attended programs often find ways to reach every member or multiple members in a family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s programs and joint family activities
Resolve Barriers	Agencies should seek to minimize expenses related to participation, particularly those involving cost and time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer food and child care when possible • Hold programs in neighborhoods where participants live
Discuss Potential Roadblocks	Address obstacles that participants may face so that they can prepare for them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During orientation, discuss possible relationship issues that might arise in a workshop
Build Upon Trusted Relationships	Create a positive reputation in the community through associations with credible organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build coalitions and partnerships with reputable organizations and agencies
Seek Out the Gatekeepers	Create relationships with gatekeepers, or highly trusted advocates, in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage gatekeepers in program and strategic planning
Provide Participant Leadership and Volunteer Training Opportunities	Successful participants can be the best advocates for a program by sharing their story and motivating others to participate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership of volunteer training opportunities, where past participants can help with upcoming workshops and events
Leverage Partnerships to Increase Outreach	Make sure partner agencies have up-to-date information about your programs and services so that they can share information with their clients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute a monthly or quarterly e-newsletter to partners with information and updates about programs • Make a presentation during an in-service training for a partner agency’s staff
Maintain a Presence at Local Community Events	Participate in local events to spread the word about your program and meet potential participants and stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in local fairs, parades, conferences, and other events • Make presentations at networking events in the Latino community

Promising Practices for Effective Recruitment and Retention (continued)

Recommendation	Description	Examples
Use Culturally Appropriate Outreach Materials	Ensure outreach materials are sensitive to cultural and linguistic conventions in the targeted community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have brochures available in both English and Spanish that explain available services
Schedule Programs with the Participant in Mind	Keep families' competing priorities and busy schedules in mind when deciding on events and programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide longer programs into manageable components • Send reminders to participants before upcoming workshops and events

These recommended strategies are not the only solutions available, nor are they guaranteed to work in all circumstances. An organization also may need to develop a more targeted strategy to increase participation among certain groups. For example, if an organization is finding that work schedules are making recruitment of males very difficult, it might be a good idea to focus time and energy trying to increase male retention rates specifically (McQuiston et al., 2001).

Before any recruitment attempt, professionals should learn about the community in which they work. Facilitators need to be aware of socioeconomic differences and levels of education and literacy, and should stay away from simply making assumptions. In addition, when working with partner organizations, partners should be allowed to create their own strategies for their individual communities.

Fear of Government Programs

The many immigration laws passed in recent years can increase stress on Latino families because even families who have legal status likely know someone who is undocumented. Providers working with Latino families should use caution when requesting personal information from participants, clearly explain how information will be used, and describe any requirements (or lack of requirements) for sharing information with other government entities.

Factors Affecting Latino Family Engagement in Safety-net Services

Many different factors affect Latino engagement with safety-net services. This section provides an overview of some of the specific benefits and deterrents of which agencies working with Latino clients should be aware.

Increasing opportunities for English learners is one of the most important issues concerning education for Latino families.



Head Start

Head Start programs offer a variety of services based in centers, schools, family child care homes, and children’s own homes. The goal is to build relationships with families, support positive parent-child relationships, and nurture family members to be learners and educators (Head Start, 2011).

In *Winning the Future: Improving Education for the Latino Community* (The White House, 2011), the Administration observed that “it is in classrooms across the nation that the future of America and its economic competitiveness is being decided.” The report indicated that one out of every five students in the public schools system is Latino, but almost half of these students never receive their high school diplomas. Latino students face persistent obstacles to educational attainment. Early education could provide a window of hope for these students. As the report noted, “empirical studies have proven that investments in high-quality early learning are among the most cost-effective of any investment along the educational pipeline.” Hence, Head Start has an important role in improving educational success for Latinos.

Currie and Thomas (1996) reported that “on average, Head Start closes at least 1/4 of the gap in test scores between Latino children and non-hispanic white children, and 2/3 of the gap in the probability of grade repetition.” Garces, Thomas, and Currie (2000) also found long-term effects for subpopulations such as higher vocabulary scores, less grade repetition, more high school graduations, increased college attendance for whites and Latinos, and fewer criminal charges and convictions for African Americans. Other studies have found issues with design of this research and concluded that many of these positive effects fade over time. Future studies that compare Head Start participants and demographically similar children who did not attend Head Start will probably shed more light on the long-term benefits for children (Barnett & Hustedt, 2012).

The effects of Head Start may vary across Latino subgroups. For example, Currie and Duncan (1996) found that “the gains from Head Start are greatest among children of Mexican-origin and children of native-born mothers, especially those whose mothers have more human capital. In contrast, Latino children whose mothers are foreign-born and Puerto Rican children appear to reap little benefit from attending Head Start.”

Increasing opportunities for English learners is one of the most important issues concerning education for Latino families. According to a White House (2011) publication, English learners comprise 10% of the nation’s students in grades K–12, 78% of whom were born in the U.S. in predominantly Spanish speaking households. The most valuable educational opportunities for English learners start early. The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 included several key provisions to improve Latino children’s access to high-quality programs. The National Council of La Raza (2011) found the main ones to be “improving the quality of instruction for English language learners (ELLs), improving teachers’ skills in working with ELLs, expanding access for Early Head Start, and increasing parent and community participation to ensure a smooth transition into kindergarten.”

Though Head Start provides an important source of support for Latino families, Latino parents face more barriers to participation than non-Latino parents. Garcia and Levin (2001) found that Latino parents reported four factors: “child care needs, language/cultural differences, concern for safety, and a lack of support from their spouse/partner as barriers to program involvement while non-Latino parents reported only two: “interference by a work schedule or health problems.

Child Support

According to a recent census (Grall, 2011), approximately 23.4% of Hispanic children of any race lived with their custodial parent, compared to 49.2% of black children, and 22.4% of white children. In general, the majority of custodial parents are mothers and only 17.8% are fathers. Of all custodial mothers, 19.9% were Hispanic, 27.2% were black, and 49.9% were non-Hispanic white (Grall, 2011). “Before their twentieth birthday, an estimated 24 percent of Hispanic women will have given birth to at least one child” (Ryan, Franzetta, & Manlove, 2005).

Latina women who have an abusive ex-husband or partner may be afraid to reach out to Child Support Services (CSS). They should know that CSS will code a case for family violence based on what the custodial parent says and then will not share information with the non-custodial parent about the custodial parent (and vice versa).

Although the need is eminent, there are many barriers keeping Latino mothers from seeking child support, including cultural biases and lack of information. Latino women believe that seeking child support makes them bad mothers and the action is viewed by many Latino men as mean spirited; asking for child support is a form of vengeance instead of a right (M. S. Arellano Buchanan, personal communication, July 8, 2012).

Latina women may think that difficult circumstances make the men ineligible to pay child support. The unemployment rate averaged 11.5% among Latinos in 2011 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012). One in every 36 Hispanic men is incarcerated, compared to one in every 106 white men (Center for American Progress, 2012). However, a father can still pay child support (even if he is unemployed or in jail) if he received Federal benefits, wages from a work release program, or has other assets such as property.

Latina women who have an abusive ex-husband or partner may be afraid to reach out to Child Support Services (CSS). CSS will code a case for family violence based on what the custodial parent reports to them and then will not share information with the non-

custodial parent about the custodial parent (and vice versa). Also, if the female custodial parent is receiving public assistance, she is required to report to CSS, otherwise the Federal government will sanction her by withholding her check (C. Moreno, personal communication, August 17, 2012). Fathers in potential domestic abuse situations still have a right to be in the life of their children, but a judge can order supervised visitation and can even assign a guardian to assess the circumstances, if a mother is concerned for the safety of her children and family (Moreno, 2012).

CSS can only track non-custodial parents with Social Security numbers, so they cannot help with child support from undocumented fathers (C. Moreno, personal communication, August 17, 2012). Oftentimes, undocumented fathers use someone else's Social Security number and the unaware owners end up receiving the child support notices. If a custodial mother is undocumented, she can still seek child support, as long as the father is working and has a real Social Security number.



Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

A study by Lopez and Cohn (2011) revealed that “Hispanics make up nearly three-in-ten of the nation’s poor.” Of families receiving TANF help in 2009, 33% were African-American, 31% were white, and 29% were Hispanic (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012).

Factors such as language barriers, lack of information, and disparate treatment can be barriers to the TANF program’s ability to help struggling Latino families become self-sufficient.

Edin and Kefalas (2005) concluded that “waiting to intervene until a child’s birth is likely to prove too late for most” to break generational cycles of welfare dependency. According to Edin and Kefalas, the solution involves marriageability, specifically the need to “figure



out a way to make low skilled men safer prospects for long-term relationships with women and children.” Proactive solutions to welfare dependency should focus on strengthening family relations and creating an “intervention at a much earlier age, before these troubles have had a chance to take root” (Edin & Kefalas, 2005). In addition to providing short-term relief, TANF helps the unemployed return to the workforce while strengthening families.

Factors such as language barriers, lack of information, and disparate treatment can be barriers to the TANF program’s ability to help struggling Latino families become self-sufficient. In many cases, Latinos with limited English proficiency exit the TANF system without learning about the important transitional medical and work supports that are available to them (Yzaguirre, 2003).

Fording, Schram, and Soss (2005) found that race and ethnicity also make a difference in sanctioning: the longer a Hispanic or black person is on welfare, the more likely that person is to experience sanctions, compared to their white counterparts, especially if they live in an area with a relatively high wage rate. TANF workers should be aware of these potential barriers for Latino families and help identify solutions to prevent barriers from unnecessarily affecting family outcomes.

Child Welfare Services

The purpose of child welfare services is to strengthen families and protect children from harm by focusing on child safety, permanency, and well-being. Certain trends in child welfare are a concern for the Latino community. For example, Latino and white children are proportionately likely to be reported for child abuse or neglect, but Latino children’s cases are more likely to be substantiated (Casey Family Programs, 2009). From 2000 to 2010, the percentage of Latinos in foster care rose from 15 to 21% (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2012).

Child welfare services agencies have a complex relationship with Latino families. Immigrant parents are often shocked that government agencies in the U.S. have the jurisdiction to take custody of their children because equivalent organizations in their home countries did not have such authority (C. Moreno, personal communication, August 17, 2012). Strong family ties in Latino culture may prompt family members to take custody of a relative's child when intervention is necessary. According to research compiled

by Casey Family Programs (2009), "more than one third (37.4%) of Latino children in family foster care live in relative placements, representing the highest rate among all racial/ethnic groups." This also means that there is more pressure for Latino family members who witness child abuse or neglect to become responsible for that child after making a call. Immigrant children are less likely to be placed in relative foster care (Casey Family Programs, 2009). Safety-net service providers working with Latinos should take this into consideration when dealing with abuse or neglect of immigrant children.

According to the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families (2004), "all too often, placements are finalized without sufficient research on kinship placement opportunities for the child, or whether Spanish speaking fathers or mothers in bicultural families are identified and assessed as potential placement opportunities." The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (2011) found that for "28 percent of children adopted from foster care, the adoption was transracial, transethnic, or transcultural." Placing Latino children in relatives' homes is a way to preserve family relations and cultural values. Overall, these statistics demonstrate that supporting Latino children and families is an important issue for both the Latino community and agencies.

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SECTION 4:

***Integrating Healthy
Marriage and
Relationship Education
into Safety-net Services***

Chapter 7:

Integration Resources for Stakeholders

This chapter explains different strategies for integrating healthy marriage and relationship skills into existing service delivery systems for Latino individuals, couples, and families.

Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education

Healthy marriage and relationship education teaches core relationship skills to individuals, couples, and families on a voluntary basis to help them achieve, maintain, and strengthen relationships. Healthy relationship education often occurs in a group setting and is not meant to be therapy or clinical treatment for couples experiencing serious issues.

A couple's relationship health can change over time. Research shows that an unhealthy marriage can negatively impact the couple's physical and mental health, job functioning, and parenting, as well as their child's social and cognitive skills and educational achievement (Anderson et al., 2004).

Healthy marriage and relationship education builds the core skills of healthy **communication** and **conflict-resolution**, and enhances critical skills like *parenting* and **financial education**. Enhancing these skills can reduce stress and improve coping skills for families navigating the normal issues related to parenting, everyday life, and finances.

Based on an extensive literature review, Child Trends identified the following as core constructs of a healthy marriage (Anderson et al., 2004):

- Commitment to each other and any children;
- Satisfaction;
- Communication;
- Conflict resolution;
- Lack of domestic violence;
- Fidelity;
- Quality interaction/time together;
- Intimacy/emotional support; and
- Duration/legal marital status.



Strategies for Integration

Levels of Integration

Healthy marriage and relationship education skills can be integrated in different ways based on local strengths, needs, and capacity. The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families has created a Levels of Integration concept to visualize levels along a continuum of integration efforts.



Level 1- Basic Engagement

Sharing facts about the importance of healthy marriage and relationship skills is a good starting point for basic engagement of Latino individuals, couples, and families. Basic engagement strategies can include distributing tip sheets throughout the community, such as at Head Start centers or WIC offices.

RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families has a virtual library with more than 500 free materials in a variety of formats, including factsheets, research-to-practice briefs, brochures, pamphlets, training resources, program reports or evaluations, and research materials. Visit www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org to learn more.

Level 2 - Partnerships

Engaging community members and other stakeholders also helps agencies reach the next level of integration—partnerships. Developing partnerships with other agencies in the community is a great way to pool resources and expertise for the benefit of Latino families. All partners should share a common vision of promoting healthy marriage and relationships, which may require educating other stakeholders about the positive impacts of a healthy marriage on family safety and stability, employment, and self-sufficiency.

Through partnerships, agencies can identify resources and experts on various components of healthy relationship skills—such as communication, conflict resolution, parenting, and financial capability—and collectively integrate the components into a group workshop or class for Latino couples and families.

RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

For more tips and tools on developing partnerships to promote healthy marriage and relationship education, including a collaboration assessment and partnership agreement template, visit the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families web page about partnerships at www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org/partnerships.

Level 3 - Full Integration

Stakeholders can help strengthen couples' and families' health and well-being by fully integrating healthy marriage and relationship education into existing social service delivery systems that serve Latino individuals, couples, and families. To achieve full integration, all service providers should be trained or cross-trained so they are prepared to discuss and teach core skills (e.g., healthy communication, conflict resolution, parenting, and financial management) as an interwoven part of service delivery. Well-established partners can help effectively integrate healthy marriage and relationship education into service delivery systems by providing training, tips, and other resources.

RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are many considerations involved in program planning, development, and implementation. The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families website features helpful tips and tools on full integration and program development for State, local, and Tribal stakeholders. Visit www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org/program-development to learn more.

Conclusion

Latino families face many challenges in their efforts to realize the “American Dream” and safety-net service providers may encounter obstacles in helping them achieve self-sufficiency. Conversely, Latino cultural values provide a strong work ethic and family-centered support system.

Service providers who understand that these cultural nuances are part of a complex web of traditions and strongly held beliefs will be better equipped to serve these families. Building trust based on mutual respect and the recognition that both service providers and Latino families have the same goal—strong, self-reliant families—will result in more effective service provision.

Making healthy marriage and relationship education skills available through trusted resources in a non-punitive environment is one way of helping Latino families strengthen their family relationships while developing a balance between maintaining their rich culture and adapting to their new communities.



Language and cultural differences add to challenges of poverty, unemployment, and low literacy.

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This toolkit was prepared by Family Bridges for the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families.

Family Bridges is a not-for-profit organization that delivers healthy relationship and marriage programs and economic self-sufficiency services to low-income communities in the Chicagoland Metropolitan Area.

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Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant: 90FH0002. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.