

Growing Together Objectives

- Build Effective Communications
- Increase Partnerships between schools and Latino /Hispanic Communities
- Establish linkages and dialogue
- Seed new initiatives that foster change

OUR ROOTS

- **EMBRACING THE DIFFERENCES**
- **BRIDGING THE GAPS**
- **CULTURAL INFORMATION ABOUT LATINO/HISPANIC**



“Our Roots” / “Nuestras Raices”
***Embracing the differences, Bridging
the gaps.***

CULTURAL INFORMATION ABOUT HISPANIC/LATINO

An informational guide for service providers: Advocates, case managers, social workers, health care providers and any other individual who work with the Hispanic/Latino Community.

Developed by Latinas who work closely with Hispanic/Latino families in this community. Dilcia Colindres (Shelter for Help in Emergency), Marcela Estay (ASG), Ivonne Lopez (RHOP), Linda Winston (VSDVAA), Florencia Aranda (SHE).

Objectives

- ❖ Increase the understanding of the Hispanic / Latino Community and Culture.
- ❖ Recognize diversity within the Hispanic / Latino Community.
- ❖ Improve the relationships between service providers and Hispanic / Latino families.
- ❖ Facilitate the integration of the Hispanic / Latino Community to the local community.

UNDERSTANDING

1. Cultural Values

- a. Respeto/ Respect
- b. Personalismo/ Personal Space
- c. Confianza/ Trust
- d. Espiritismo/ Superstitions
- e. Fatalismo / Fatalism
- f. Religion/ Religion
- g. Familismo / Family

2. Barriers that Hispanics Families face in the US to access services.

3. Suggestions to work with the Hispanic / Latino Community.

4. Case studies.

DIVERSITY

History of terms “Hispanic” and “Latino”.

- ❖ The term “**Latino**” was introduced in the late 1980’s as a reference to persons living in the United States whose ancestors were from Latin American countries in the Western Hemisphere. It was considered a more linguistically accurate term and more culturally neutral.
- ❖ The term “**Hispanic**” did not gain wide use until 1970’s and 1980’s. In earlier decades, Hispanics tended to be organized around their own national identities as Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, etc. The term Hispanic, came as a reference to all Spanish-speaking ethnic subgroups into a more unified voice around a variety of social, civil, and political causes. Hispanic is a English-language term not generally used in Spanish-speaking countries.
- ❖ In current use both terms cover all Spanish-speaking ethnic subgroups.
- ❖ **The Hispanic/Latino population in the US is very diverse** in terms of national origin, immigration and migration patterns, historical and racial backgrounds, languages, dialects and cultural values.

Similar History and Origins: Colonization

- Fifteen century Spanish explorers discovered what we know today as Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti. In the following years, Spain expanded it's empire into the “new world” Spanish culture spread from Mexico to Central and South America, and over what is now the southwest United States. Early Spanish settlements were established in what became Florida, New Mexico and California.
- The term **Mestizos** represents intermarriage of Spaniards and indigenous natives that produced persons of mixed blood.
- Conquistadores claimed treasures for the Spanish crown and brought Catholic missionaries to forcibly convert indigenous inhabitants. Some indigenous populations became extinct during this period.

Reasons for Immigration into the US

Hispanics/Latinos travel to the United States can be understood in terms of pull and push factors.

The network theory: Those who migrated first would help their family and friends come to US, who would then help others, and so on.

Pull Factors:

- Higher living standards

Push Factors:

- Shortage of jobs, unemployment, low wages

- Political conflicts

- Forced displacement

- Persistent poverty, hunger

- Violation of human rights, corruption, high crime indices

- Insufficient lands (specially in Central American countries)

Barriers Latino/Hispanic Families face to access services.

- **Poverty:** Approximately 23% of Hispanic families live below the poverty level.
- **Misunderstanding of cultural values:** Lack of bilingual staff in agencies and organizations lead to misunderstandings of cultural beliefs and values.
- **Language barriers:** Lack of interpreters or bilingual staff available.
- **Legal Status and Fear of deportation:** Many of the Hispanics will be not be eligible for services for being undocumented.
- **Lack of knowledge on how the US health care system works.** They may think it's cheaper to go to the ER than to a PCP.
- **Many of the Hispanic families won't have access to health insurance coverage.** Latino children who are not US citizens or legal residents will not be eligible for the health insurance state programs.
- **Lack of knowledge on how the US educational and legal system works.** Hispanics may think they can't file for protective orders or custody.
- **Lack of information that leads to misconceptions about resources in the community.** Hispanics may think that they are not eligible for WIC, Food Stamps, etc.
- **Transportation:** Local Public Transportation does not provide services to some of the Latino neighborhood.

Suggestions for providers working with Latino/Hispanic

- Strive to spell and pronounce names correctly.
- Avoid asking if a person speaks “Mexican or” Puerto Rican”. Spanish is Spanish.
- Use qualified interpreters. Children should never be asked to act as interpreters.
- Try to learn Spanish. Speaking in Spanish facilitates a greater level of comfort.
- Identify and address the decision-maker or spokesperson, the Patriarch and Matriarch.
- Be formal in interactions with older Hispanic.
- Encourage the family to ask questions. Explain thoroughly and confirm understanding.
- Check to make sure recommendations will fit into the family lifestyle.
- And finally listening is the key
- Use Spanish words you know when comfortable.

Background data follows

Cultural Script: Latino/Hispanic Cultural Values and Beliefs

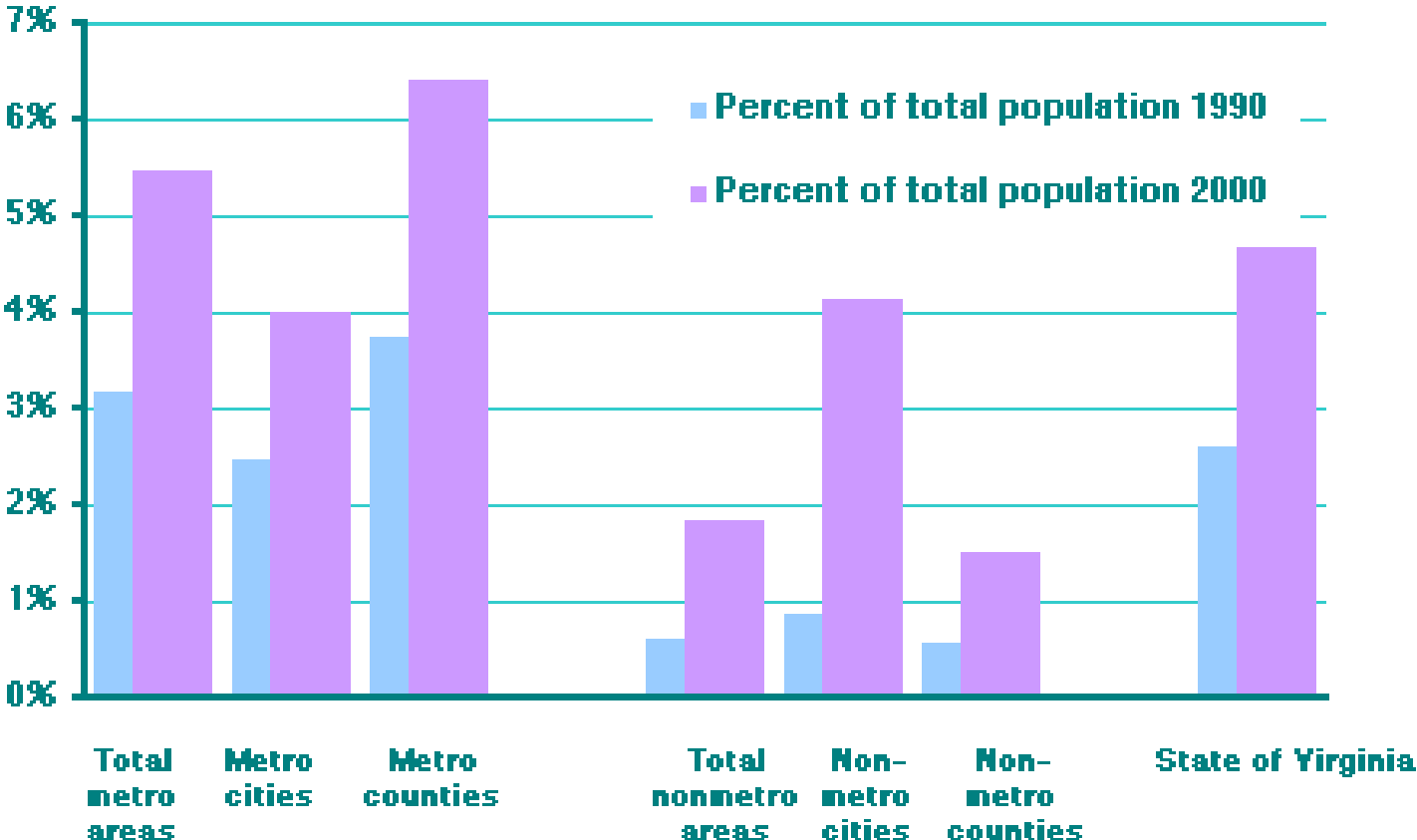
- **Importance of Family:** Family is the primary social unit and source of support. Family goes beyond parents and siblings, it includes the extended family (cousins, uncles, aunts, etc).
- **Respect:** It indicates appropriate behavior towards others based on age, gender, social and economic position and authority. Formality is seen as a sign of respect. Use of suffixes are very important such as: Señor/Don, Señora/Dona.
- **Personalismo:** Latinos/Hispanics tend to stress the importance of personalismo, personal rather than institutional relationships. Person to Person contact it's very important to develop trust . It's very common that Latino clients find uncomfortable to leave messages in office voicemails.
- **Trust:** Confianza is built on mutual respect over time. Showing personal interest in Hispanics individual may help establishing trust.
- **Machismo:** Hispanic Families are characterized by traditional gender roles. Men are expected to be rational, strong, authoritarian, independent and strong. Women are expected to be submissive, dependant as well as take care of children and household.
- **Fatalism:** Many Hispanics believe that events are meant to happen because of fate, because of power and that they can not control it. Many clients will say “It's my cross to bear”, or “If God wishes so”. This may prevent them to seek for help.

Cultural Script: Latino/Hispanic Cultural Values, Beliefs and Characteristics

- **Espiritismo:** In Latino/Hispanic culture spiritual healers play an important role in helping people with physical as well as mental concerns. Curanderas, espiritistas, Santeria.
- **Religion:** In general Latino/Hispanics are very religious. The church serves as a guide for perceptions and behaviors, influencing decisions and judgments. The church is often an important source for social support and interaction.
- **Belief in Bewitching:** Some Latino/Hispanics believe that bewitching is often the cause of a change in behavior or illness. Bewitching involves the use of magical acts and supernatural powers either by humans or supernatural beings. This may simply involve the casting of a spell.
- **Personal space:** Personal space tends to be closer, Latino/Hispanic cultures are more open to physical contact and less aware of personal space
- **Time orientation** Latino/Hispanics are generally more concerned with the present than with the future or planning ahead. Often times Latinos need to be reminded the day before of an appointment or activity.

Growth in the Latino/Hispanic Population - Graphics

PERCENT HISPANIC IN METRO & NONMETRO AREAS, 1990-2000



CASE STUDIES

Isabel is a 24- years old Latino, married and the mother of 2 month old baby Anita (name has been changed). Anita is the only child that Isabel has with her husband, Arturo. Isabel came from Mexico a year and a half ago and met with Arturo. Arturo came from Mexico 6 years ago and has been working in an apple orchard, picking apples since then; Isabel was also working in the same place when she started to date Arturo.

Isabel and Arturo got married and Isabel got pregnant at the same time. She starting to feel depressed as Arturo was very abusive to her-slapping her, pulling her hair, and hitting her everywhere on her body. Isabel become very depressed and started to think of committing suicide. She tried to cut her veins, hit herself on the wall, and took every medication in her house. Isabel was taken several times to the doctor and was prescribed Zoloft.

On December the 2nd, Isabel called her Family Support Worker from RHOP, who has been helping her since she had her baby. She reported that her husband had slapped her face pulled her hair and tried to strangle her. The FSW called the police Her husband was taken to the jail, Isabel was rescued by the Shelter for Help in Emergency.

The case of Isabel was successful, because she had the system helping her.