

# ***Doing Therapy with Latino Clients***

***(Issues, Dilemmas and Diversity)***

***Presented by***

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## ***Presentation Contents:***

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# ***Latino Demographics***



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **Latino Population (U.S. Demographics)**
  - U.S. Census Bureau predicts that by 2050 Hispanic population will reach 81 million (1/4 total U.S. population).
  - Represents 20% of any group in the U.S. (will create social/political influence).



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **Demographic (Official Count)**
  - 22.8 million (9% of total population)
  - Represents 100% jump from 1980 (Continual increase of 50% between 1980 to 1990)
  - 1 of every 4 Americans will be Hispanic by 2050
  - Growth rate 3 to 5 times faster than the general population
  - Youngest median age of 18 years (compared to 28 years of general population)



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **Over the age of 65 years**
  - Latino population represents just less than half of the entire senior citizen population of U.S.



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **Hispanic**

- A term often interchanged with Latino or Latina.
- Diverse population that represents 21 Spanish speaking countries.



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **North America**
  - Mexico
  - Belize
  - Guatemala
  - El Salvador





# ***Latino Demographics***

- **South America**
  - Columbia
  - Venezuela
  - Ecuador
  - Peru
  - Chile



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **Caribbean Islands**
  - Puerto Rico
  - Cuba
  - Dominican Republic



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **European Countries**
  - Spain
  - Portugal



# ***La Familia Latina***”(The Latino Family)

## **IMPORTANT**

***“All the countries  
(with the exception of Portugal and Brazil)  
share a common official language...Spanish”***



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **Most Prevalent Population**

- Mexico (67% or  $2/3 = 13.5$  million)
- Puerto Rican (2.7 million)
- Cuba (1 million)
- Other Hispanic groups (5.1 million)



# ***La Familia Latina***”(The Latino Family)

## **IMPORTANT**

***“Its important for a therapist to be willing to familiarize themselves with a client's country or region of origin.”***



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **Therapist (Needs to)**
  - Be aware of the areas where Hispanic dwell.
  - History of client (Hispanic) country of origin.
  - Helpful in understanding client/family that seeks help.



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **Mexican Americans**

- People who can trace their immediate ancestry to Mexico.
- Live primarily in (Highest Concentration)
  - Texas
  - New Mexico
  - Arizona
  - California (30% of population)





# ***Latino Demographics***

- **Socio-Economics (Mexican Americans)**
  - 6% are professionals (Exponentially increasing).
  - ½ of Hispanic (California) are middle-class.



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **Future Predictors (Mexican Americans)**
  - Strong political force  
(Education is a critical factor in that prediction).



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **Puerto Ricans**

- Are Naturalized U.S. Citizens.
- Reflect a blend of indigenous (Originally Native Tainos influence) with a blend of African Slaves and European Spanish.
- Settlement (Northeast – New York/New Jersey).
- Represent more than ½ Latino population.



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **Puerto Ricans (Demographics)**
  - American citizens by birth.
  - Highest rates of poverty (38%).
  - Unemployment (11.2%).
  - Household headed primarily by single women (Highest among any Hispanic groups).



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **Cuban Americans**

- Largest Caribbean island.
- Historically a blend of Spanish and African cultures.
- Most immigrated during early phases of Castro's take-over.

(First wave, White European Backgrounds).

- Substantial losses of:
  - Extended family
  - Wealth/Properties



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **Cuban Americans (Cont'd)**

- Many already had professional training
- Quickly adapted to U.S. culture.
- Immigration came in waves (i.e., Tampa Settlement, 40's; 50's, "*Freedom Flight*"; "*Pedro Pan*", 60's; Mariel Boatlift, 80's, *Guantanamo Bay*, 90's)
- Have played a critical, political, economic and military role in the U.S.
- Reside primarily in Florida (60%) of overall population (Miami-Dade County).
- Firmly believe in Democracy and Free Enterprise.



# ***Latino Demographics***


- **South American Hispanics (Columbians)**
  - Median income comparable to Non-Hispanic (2/3 populations).
  - Have achieved economic success.
  - Mean family income - \$50,000. (Annually).
  - Educated professionals (like Cuban first-wave counterparts).
  - Concentrated (highest) Miami, Florida.



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **Central American Hispanics**
  - Blend of Indian and European cultures.
  - Many fled because of political issues/persecutions.





# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

## **IMPORTANT**

***“Immigration to the U.S. has been constant  
and Hispanics occupy all 50 States”***




# ***Latino Demographics***

- **Language (Spanish)**
  - The strongest force uniting Hispanic groups.



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **The Latino vs. Hispanic (Name)**
  - A general category
  - Californian incline to identify with “*Latino*” more than ‘*Hispanic*’ name.



# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

## **IMPORTANT**

***“What a group calls and identifies itself with is a fundamental human act that will represent the culture one is from.”***



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **Who are You? (When asked)**
  - Many prefer to be identified with the name of their country-of-origin (i.e., Puerto Rican American, Cuban American....).



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **Therapist (Standing Rule)**
  - Don't presume to know the clients preference about how they identify themselves.
  - A “*Not-Knowing*” stance is not advisable.



# ***Latino Demographics***

- **What a Therapist Needs to Do**
  - Let go of labels.
  - Let client describe for themselves what their ethnic background should be called.
  - Take the time to listen.
  - Facilitate a trusting/genuine relationship.



***‘La Familia Latina’***  
**(The Latino Family)**





# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

- **Cultural Understanding (For Therapist):**
  - Essential backdrop for therapy
  - Utilizes family resources
  - Enhances options available
  - Broadens perspectives



# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

- **Diversity and Uniqueness:**
  - Basic guiding principle when working with Latino populations:
    - 3 Basic Assumptions:
      - Diversity in family interactions (Cultural Contents)
      - Diversity within/between Latino Groups  
(Break down ethnocentric or stereotypical views)
      - Diversity on a personal familial and cultural levels  
(Draw from a clients personal and collective resources).



# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

- **“Who Am I” (“*Quien Soy Yo?*”):**
  - Universal question
  - Impacted strongly by:
    - Religion
    - Family of Origin
    - Migration
    - Settlement
    - Social class
    - Media (TV, Radio...)
    - Geographical Setting




# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

- **Culture (Defined):**
  - Set of:
    - Values
    - Beliefs
    - Language
    - Customs
    - Arts/Music



# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***


- **Cultural Significance (Therapeutic Process):**
  - Important intervention
  - Creates space/respect
  - Essential part of helping a Latino client or family



# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***


- **Personalism:**

- Essentially, a group norm that emphasizes that relationship formation must be established before a task can be accomplished.
- Inner quality of respect and dignity (“*Dignidad*”).

A black and white photograph of a family with children, showing a man, a woman, and several children in a close, affectionate group.

# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

- **Anglo (Defined):**
  - English-speaking people, or
  - Those descended from Northern Europe.



# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

- **Goodness vs. Task Orientation**
  - The accomplishment of a task (Anglo Orientation), not the person’s goodness (Latino Orientation), is what is most valued.





# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

- **Reasons for Coming to U.S.**
  - Economics (Central Americans)
  - Political Oppression (Cubans)



# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

- **Highest Labor-Force Participation:**
  - Hispanic Men  
(More than any other male ethnic group).
  - Male ethnic group
  - The poorest group



# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

- **Latino Immigrants**  
**(What They Experience Most):**
  - Psychological distress
  - Cultural shock
  - Marginal and social alienation
  - PTSD
  - Psychosomatic symptoms
  - Depression



# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***


- **Latino (Therapeutic Orientation):**
  - Meeting basic needs
  - Developing the capacity to cope



# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***


- **Therapeutic Errors:**

- Putting Hispanic or Latino families in a position of having to choose between “*Anglo*” vs. ‘*Latino*’ cultures (Creating an “*Us and Them*” mentality).



# ***La Familia Latina***”(The Latino Family)

- **What Can a Therapist Do?**
  - Help clients move beyond the idea of Latino culture (as “*static*” or “*fixed*”).
  - View bicultural identity as a process of becoming/recreating (weaving in “*old*” with the “*new*”).



# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

- **Family Culture**

- (Focusing on What is Important):**

- Establishes a means of negotiating differences.
- Remaining true to one’s distinct interpretation and system of thinking.



# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

## **IMPORTANT**

**The message is not to avoid the subject of culture/ethnicity, but not to automatically interpret every Latino’s presenting problem as culturally related.**





# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

- **Latino Families (Biggest Fears):**
  - Losing connection with one’s family (immediate and extended).




# ***La Familia Latina***”(The Latino Family)

- **Extended Family (What It Represents):**
  - Valuable and cherished characteristic of a Latino Family.
  - A means of support and nurturing.
  - Transcends national boundaries.
  - Forms a “*Global Community*” of sorts.
  - Fundamental underlining in all Latino people.
  - Closely related to “*Blood*” (i.e., *Abuelos, Abuelas, Tios, Tias, Padrinos, Madrinas, Compadres, Comadres...etc.*)



# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

- **Therapist (What Should Be Asked?):**
  - The extended family involvement and influence in the family and for the client.
  - Who’s important?
  - How connected?



# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***


## **IMPORTANT**

***“The greater the social support system in place, the greater the survivability and resilience of the client.”***




# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

- **Extended Family (Advantages):**
  - During times of conflict, it represents a place where the client will feel and find:
    - Support
    - Love
    - Care
    - Refuge
    - Help



# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

- **Extended Family (Disadvantages):**
  - Lack of confidentiality
  - Protective system vulnerable



# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

- **Latino Family (Family-of-Origin):**
  - Purveyor of culture
  - Unique patterns of interaction
  - Interpreter of the culture




# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

## **IMPORTANT**

***“The less connected a person is with his or her culture, the more poorly he/she does in adapting/succeeding in the U.S.”***





# ***La Familia Latina”(The Latino Family)***

- **Therapeutic Goal:**

- Tapping the clients resources to help themselves in adjusting and overcoming difficulties.
- Encourage clients to be proud of their heritage.
- Acknowledge a client's cultural uniqueness.
- Validate a client's cultural values and experiences.
- Preserve and express their cultural traditions/practices.
- Discover the strengths of a client's culture.



***“El Hombre Latino ”***  
***(The Latino Male)***



# ***“El Hombre Latino ” (The Latino Male)***

- **Latino Men (Defined):**
  - Similar to other people, but
  - They are also differentiated apart of Americanos.




# ***“El Hombre Latino ” (The Latino Male)***

- **Latino Men**

- (Function Within the Constraints of):**

- Poverty
- Unemployment
- Racism

A black and white photograph of a family. A man is in the center, looking towards a young girl on his right. To his left, a young boy is smiling. In the background, a woman is visible, and another child is partially seen on the far right. The image is slightly faded and serves as a background for the title.

# ***“El Hombre Latino ” (The Latino Male)***

- **Latino Men (Challenges):**
  - Increased demands for gender equality.
  - Threatened by changes to conform.



# ***“El Hombre Latino ” (The Latino Male)***

- **Machismo (Commonly Defined):**
  - Violence in orientation.
  - Often exerted over Latina women to conform to social-role expectations.
  - Underlying element is often directed against Latina women.
  - Serves to perpetuate negative conceptions and/or myths of Latinos.
  - Legitimizes economic and political subordination.



# ***“El Hombre Latino ” (The Latino Male)***

- **Machismo (Another Viewpoint):**
  - A man’s responsibility to provide for, protect, and defend his family.
  - His loyalty and sense of responsibility to:
    - Family
    - Friends
    - Community



# ***“El Hombre Latino ” (The Latino Male)***

- **Therapist (What Can We Do?):**
  - Acknowledge that the client (Latino Male) is in a process of:
    - Evolving and changing, as part of the acculturation process.





***“La Mujer Latina”***  
***(The Latina Female)***



# ***“La Mujer Latina” (The Latina Female)***

- **Latina Female Represents:**
  - Largest growing population (U.S.)
  - 54.1% increase since 1996
  - 1,485,000 out of 6,2000,000 families (U.S.)
  - Average size: 3 to 4 persons  
(Family composition)
  - Lower median incomes
  - Median income: \$13,474 (Female headed)



# ***“La Mujer Latina” (The Latina Female)***

- **Latina Female Growth:**
  - 59.4% Mexican
  - 24.2% Puerto Rican
  - 11.4% Cuban



# ***“La Mujer Latina” (The Latina Female)***

- **Cuban Women (Demographics):**
  - Higher educational attainment
  - Typically older
  - Lower unemployment



# ***“La Mujer Latina” (The Latina Female)***

- **Latina Women**

- (Lower Socio-Economic Strata):**

- Puerto Rican
- Mexican



# ***“La Mujer Latina” (The Latina Female)***

- **Concept of “*Familiso*”  
(Among Latina Women):**
  - Promotes:
    - Resilience
    - Quiet Survival
    - Marginalization
    - Working hard
    - Endurance
    - Social invisibility



# ***“La Mujer Latina” (The Latina Female)***

- **Latina Mothers and Grandmothers (What Roles Do They Have):**
  - Social construction of Latina female to be:
    - Pure
    - Virginal
    - Respectful (Self/Others)
  - Marriage to men (Latino) deemed appropriate by the family.



# ***“La Mujer Latina” (The Latina Female)***

- **Latina Female (Foreign Born):**
  - Most often forge an integrated identity that often does not challenge (Includes):
    - Class
    - Gender role assignment
    - Sexuality





# ***“La Mujer Latina” (The Latina Female)***

- **Therapist Responsibility:**
  - Acknowledge unique family patterns of expectations
  - Consider the intersection of:
    - Gender
    - Race
    - Class
    - Sexuality
    - Nationality
    - Spirituality



# ***“La Mujer Latina” (The Latina Female)***

- **Therapy (Can Be Viewed as):**
  - Powerful vehicle for change.
  - Creation and implementation of culturally sensitive interventions.
  - Creating a safe space where a Latina women can explore options.



# ***Cultural Considerations and Sensitivity***



# ***Cultural Considerations & Sensitivity***

- **Cultural Sensitivity (For Therapist)**
  - A necessity
  - Knowledge of culture and ethnicity is needed to be an effective vehicle of change for the client.



# ***Cultural Considerations & Sensitivity***

- **Hispanic Culture (Defined):**
  - A collection of Latinos from different nations with many different customs.



# ***Cultural Considerations & Sensitivity***

- **Cultural Labels (What It Implies):**
  - Common geographical origins.
  - Presumption that Latino people share cultural commonalities as:
    - Customs
    - Emotional temperaments
    - Health issues
    - Single linguistic base
    - Shared experiences of discrimination



# ***Cultural Considerations & Sensitivity***

- **McAdams's Theory (Life Stories):**
  - Over time, we create a sense of identity or personal myth.
  - Sharing our stories with each other creates meaning out of our cultural setting – facilitating the constructs of culture.



# ***Cultural Considerations & Sensitivity***

- **Therapist Responsibility:**
    - Listen to our clients:
      - Stories
      - Interpretations
      - Ask questions
      - Remain curious
      - Assess family-of-origin issues
      - Determine existing support systems
      - Create therapeutic solutions
- (A *“New Normal”* where it is needed)

Anderson, 1997; Freedman and Combs, 1996; White and Epston, 1990





# ***Cultural Considerations & Sensitivity***

- **Language (Cultural Connection):**
  - The bridge through which we connect with each other.
  - It constructs our “*reality*” (Our shared meaning).



# ***Cultural Considerations & Sensitivity***

- **Therapy**

- (Positive Changes Acquired Through):**

- Shared meaning
    - Connection
    - Mutuality
    - Authentic relating



***The Latino Couple  
(Intimacy Explored)***



# ***The Latino Couple (Intimacy Explored)***

- **Intimacy (Defined)**
  - A quality of a relationship characterized by:
    - Emotional closeness
    - Trust
    - Self-disclosure
    - Reciprocity



# ***The Latino Couple (Intimacy Explored)***

- **Intimacy (To Develop and To Be Sustained):**
  - Partners must:
    - Be committed to becoming honest with themselves.
    - Take into account the “*world view*” of their partner.
    - Negotiate their positions as an expression of “*good will.*”



# ***The Latino Couple (Intimacy Explored)***

## **IMPORTANT**

***“Maintaining intimacy and satisfaction in a marriage is, at best, a formidable task.”***



# ***The Latino Couple (Intimacy Explored)***

- **Timmerman's Operational Definition of Marital Intimacy**
  - Closeness
  - Reciprocity
  - Self-Disclosure
  - Trust



# ***The Latino Couple (Intimacy Explored)***

- **Intimacy and Latino Couples**

- **(What a Therapist Needs To Know):**

- Explore the personal and cultural positions (Includes):
  - Gender roles and expectations
  - Significance of spirituality in each partner
  - Role of extended family
  - Expression of intimacy
  - Negotiation of boundaries
  - Negotiation of power
  - Role of authority figures
  - Expression of affection and sexuality
  - Parenting styles

Flores, and Carey, 2000





# ***Religious Considerations (Therapeutic Sensitivity)***

# ***Religious Considerations (Therapeutic Sensitivity)***



- **Latinos (Most Influential Factors)**
  - Religious belief in Latino cultures.
  - Primarily Roman Catholic (Majority of Latinos).
  - Most Latinos have a religious “*world view*” and look to their faith and religious beliefs to make sense and interpret the world around them.
  - **Faith:** Comes from deep within the person and transcends the person(s) and connect him/her to others in the Latino community.

# ***Religious Considerations (Therapeutic Sensitivity)***



- **Faith and Religion:**

- **Faith:**

- Is about belief in the sacredness of the world and an experience of a divine presence and will.

- **Religion:**

- A mechanism for survival.
- A way to understand and put order in ones universe.

# ***Religious Considerations (Therapeutic Sensitivity)***



- **Therapist Responsibility**

- **(With Respect to Religion in Therapy):**

- Religious material should not be introduced by the Therapist.
- When introduced by the Latino client:
  - Explore how religion affects:
    - Self-concept
    - Interpersonal relationships with family
    - Perception of reality

# ***Religious Considerations (Therapeutic Sensitivity)***



- **Therapist Responsibility (Cont'd)**
  - Assist the Latino client in developing adaptive skills that facilitate adjustment to their new land.
  - Adjust to new situations that facilitate developing new realities.
  - Sort out the tensions of living in two worlds; and,
  - Help them (Latino clients) in choosing what's best for them (given their particular circumstances).
  - Explore feelings of “*Self-Worth.*” (“***La Vida Tiene Valor***”)
  - *Be open to contemplate and deal with spiritual ideas that may arise in a session.*

# ***Religious Considerations (Therapeutic Sensitivity)***



## **IMPORTANT**

***“Clients with a sincere belief in God and a faith-oriented disposition may be able to draw strength from their religious traditions.”***

# ***Religious Considerations (Therapeutic Sensitivity)***



- **Latinos (Raised in Religious Families):**
  - Call on: (To help them along their path)
    - God
    - Jesus
    - Mary
    - Saints
  - Latinos find comfort in their church, where, for a brief moment, they feel at home and are safe.

# **Religious Considerations (Therapeutic Sensitivity)**



## **IMPORTANT**

***“When immigrants leave their home, everything may seem strange/unknown, but the church is a place of familiarization (the priest, the Mass, etc.) becomes an oasis away from the stresses of being in the United States.”***



# **Religious Considerations (Therapeutic Sensitivity)**



## **IMPORTANT**

***“Latinos have a passion about life that is missing in the mainstream society. It is that passion that indicates the presence of a soul, a spirit that permeates feelings and actions.”***

# ***Religious Considerations (Therapeutic Sensitivity)***



- **Christ (As The Model for Latinos):**
  - He has a special place among Latinos.
  - 87% of Latinos believe that Jesus is God.
  - His humanity is a reflection of the humanity of the Latino people.
  - Christ (Latinos believe) understands their suffering, because he himself endured persecution/abuse.
  - They (Latinos) do not suffer in isolation.

# Religious Considerations (Therapeutic Sensitivity)



- **The Concept of the “Virgin Mary”  
(For Latinos):**
  - She is an archetype in the Latino psyche.
  - She is seen as “*Nuestra Madre*” (“*Our Mother*”).
  - Viewed/seen as:
    - “*Our Lady of Guadalupe*” (Mexican)
    - “*La Virgen de la Carida del Cobre*” (Cuban)
    - “*Immaculate Conception*” (Puerto Ricans)
  - She is revered and exemplifies the “*Ideal Mother.*”

# ***Religious Considerations (Therapeutic Sensitivity)***



- **Priest and Ministers:**

- May be the first person a Latino or Latina turns to for help or advise.
- Priest have historically been the “*chief*” interpreters of “*God’s will.*”
- A priest may be a rich source of information for therapist when pastoral counseling is not enough.
- A collaborative involvement with the church and the therapist is the ideal setting.



# ***Acculturation and Therapy***



# ***Acculturation and Therapy***

- **Acculturation:**

- The process by which an ethnic group accepts the cultural patterns and traits of the other group with whom they (Latinos) are in contact with.
- Changes occur while in the process of moving towards adoption of the majority culture.
- It is manifested at the (Level of Functioning):
  - Behavioral Level
  - Affective Level
  - Cognitive Level



# ***Acculturation and Therapy***

- **Acculturation (For the Therapist):**
  - Has been found to impact the nature of problems presented by Latinos in therapy.
  - Knowledge of the process is an important issue for the therapist working with Latino clients.
  - Levels of acculturation correspond with preference of a therapist's ethnicity.
  - It is not uniformly experienced by each (Latino) member the same way.



# ***Acculturation and Therapy***

- **Acculturation (For the Therapist): Cont'd**
  - Uneven rates of acculturation occurs between Latino Husbands and wives.
  - Role reversal between Latino parent and children can occur (*“Parentification”*).
  - Incorporating the acculturation implications and measurements as part of the in-take process may be helpful.





***Thank You***

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