



Centering Self-Compassion in Mental Health Programming with Latina Immigrant Women

Why do we need this project?

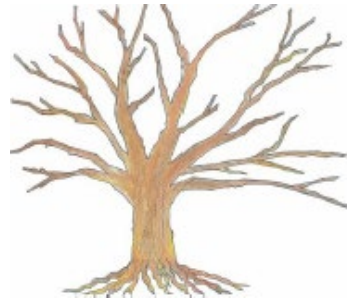
Research shows that Latina immigrant women are at higher risk for poor mental health (Alegria et al., 2008). We conducted focus groups with Latina immigrant women to better understand their experiences and the types of programs that would support their mental health (Casas et al., 2020). Women in these focus groups told us they wanted a program that would help them reduce stress, connect with other women, relax and have fun.

What is ALMA?

The program Amigas Latinas Motivando el ALMA/Latina Friends Moving the Soul (ALMA) aims to reduce stress and prevent depression and anxiety amongst Latina immigrant women. The program consists of (8) sessions to teach and encourage women to use strategies to manage stress, depression, and anxiety. Over the course of (8) weekly group sessions, women participating in the program:

- (1) identify coping strategies they are currently using to manage stress and their mental health (they are encouraged to continue using them) and address strategies that are being used by other women in the program;
- (2) practice new coping strategies (e.g. mindful awareness of the breath, emotions, and the body, self-compassion, and increasing social ties and social support); and,
- (3) receive resources for seeking additional help if needed.

ALMA Tools



The Tree of Stressors

In ALMA, we do an activity where we ask program participants to write down the major stressors in their lives and place them on the 'Tree of Stressors.' The 'Tree of Stressors' helps us feel less alone with our stress by seeing connections between the stresses we each feel. It also reminds us that we are strong like a tree: our branches can move side to side with the winds of stress, but our roots are firm in the soil and our trunks are solid and stable.



Parar y Respirar
Aceptar
Darte Cariño
Stop & Breathe, Accept What's
Here, Offer Yourself Care

Stop and Breathe, Accept What's Here, Offer Yourself Care

In a challenging moment, we can:

- ❖ Stop and Breathe. Relax our body, recognizing this is a difficult moment.
- ❖ Accept what we are feeling at this moment -- in our bodies, our hearts and our minds.
- ❖ Offer ourselves care, putting a hand on our heart, cheek, or giving ourselves a hug.

List of stress-reducing strategies shared by ALMA participants we can all use to practice self-compassion

- ❖ Take a warm bath
- ❖ Read or listen to audio books
- ❖ Listen to relaxing music
- ❖ Move your body (stretch, dance, etc.)
- ❖ Drink a tea or coffee, alone, or with a friend (virtually ;)
- ❖ Light a scented candle
- ❖ Take a walk in nature
- ❖ Smile and laugh
- ❖ Draw
- ❖ Pray
- ❖ Hug a tree
- ❖ Meditate or do breathing exercises
- ❖ Take a nap
- ❖ Cook or bake

For more information about the National Hispanic and Latino Addiction Technology Transfer Center, to request Training and Technical Assistance and to watch the the recordings of the 90-minute webinar on this topic, please visit please visit us at:

<https://attcnetwork.org/centers/national-hispanic-and-latino-attc/home>

Alegria, M., et al., *Prevalence of mental illness in immigrant and non-immigrant U.S. Latino groups*. Am J Psychiatry, 2008. 165(3): p. 359-69.

Amigas Latinas Motivando el ALMA (ALMA): National Institute of Health (NIH) National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) Project#: 1R01MD012230-01

Rios Casas, F, Ryan, D, Perez, G, Maurer, S, and Ornelas, I. (2020) Se Vale Llorar y Se Vale Reír: Latina Immigrants' Coping Strategies for Maintaining Mental Health in the Face of Immigration Related Stressors. Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities, 1-12.