

ESSENTIALS

Cultural Elements in Treating Hispanic and Latino Populations



National Hispanic & Latino

ATTC

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

FAMILISMO (FAMILISM):

THE WHOLE IS GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

- ◆ Hispanics and Latinos are known for having strong family ties.
- ◆ Latinos reference to *familia* (family) often expand beyond nuclear and extended family to include not only parents and siblings, but other members and close friends.
- ◆ Many Latinos will put the family's needs before the individual's.
- ◆ An effective way to think about how culture affects treatment is taking into consideration the client's relevant history including family ties and conflicts, precursors to SUD, lifestyle, personality traits, treatment history and how substance use is currently affecting their daily lives and support systems.

You may want to know:

- ◆ Does your client's family of origin remain important to him/her?
- ◆ Does he/she live with the family or see them frequently, or is the relationship more symbolic than real?
- ◆ For most Hispanics, family usually remains important even when things have gone very badly in the past due to substance use lifestyles. Are their friends, spouses, or romantic partners welcome into the homes of their families, or are they seen as outcasts?



RESPETO (RESPECT):

RECOGNITION OF THE UNIQUENESS OF OTHERS

- ◆ Many Hispanics are not retained in treatment or recovery services if they are not directed by a culturally sensitive leader, perhaps because they are not culturally accustomed to sharing their personal problems, and issues with others who are perceived as “strangers.”
- ◆ Aggressive “attacks” methods intended to break down defenses, violates Latino norms of *respeto* (respect) and *simpatía* (kindness) which anticipate reciprocity, and a confidential supportive relationship to exist before intimate information is shared, or advice and criticisms can be advanced.

To improve communication with the client and his or her family you can:

- ◆ When providing services with Hispanic clients who are not proficient in English, avoid using friends, family members, or children for interpretation; utilize trained interpreters.
- ◆ When using an interpreter, arrange the seating so that the provider faces the client, and have the interpreter sit alongside or near the client.
- ◆ Use appropriate titles, such as *Señor* for Mr., *Señora* for Mrs. and *Señorita* for Miss, even if you don't speak Spanish. If you do, show respect by using the more formal *usted* rather than *tú* (you).



CONFIANZA (TRUST):

A VALUABLE PIECE FOR ENGAGEMENT

- ◆ Understanding the importance of culture for a person creates a meaningful opportunity for these clients to culturally inform the treatment process, and helps to disclose family or personal history.
- ◆ This interpersonal communication helps to create the intercultural dialogue essential to trust-building, and setting the stage for effective and acceptable delivery of services.
- ◆ When the Hispanic clients feels there is *confianza*, they value the time they spend talking with their health care providers, and are more likely to believe what they advise.
- ◆ Providing treatment services that are culturally informed and culturally effective demonstrate a willingness to learn, incorporate, infuse, adapt or use practices and approaches that augment and compliment the modality, or program in use by treatment providers.

Good news for you:

- ◆ A Hispanic who understands that him/her is to be valued as a client; as a paying customer; as a cultural being with his/her own set of unique and diverse characteristics; and as a partner in recovery will reciprocate with trust, openness, and involvement far better than someone who is fearful, reluctant to disclose, or further stigmatized.



PERSONALISMO (PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS): BETWEEN PROVIDER AND CLIENT

- ◆ Latinos tend to :
 - stress the importance of personal relationships, and expect health providers to be warm, friendly, and personal.
 - expect providers to take an active interest in his/her life, and to promote a friendly relationship, opposed to overly formal relationships.
- ◆ Hispanics expect providers to take an active interest in his/her life, and to promote a friendly relationship, opposed to impersonal or overly formal relationships.

Establishing a good rapport with Hispanic clients may take a few extra minutes, but even small efforts can go a long way. It is recommended that you:

- ◆ Offer the client a personal greeting to help him or her feel comfortable prior to any intervention. (The Latino client often develops loyalty to the health care provider and other regular caregivers, which can have significant implications for continuity of care.)
- ◆ Listen carefully when a client is speaking, and take care not to appear distracted or uninterested. (If you seem hurried, detached and aloof, the Latino client may experience resentment and be dissatisfied with care. This may reduce the likelihood of compliance with recommendations for treatment, follow-up and recovery.)
- ◆ Be attentive; take your time, show respect, and exhibit confidence.



ESPIRITUALIDAD (SPIRITUALITY)

CONNECTION BETWEEN FAITH AND HEALTH

- ◆ Hispanic culture tends to view health from a holistic point of view; this implies a continuum of body, mind, and spirit.
- ◆ In clients and families where religion influences how one's behavior is seen as sinful, or operates outside of the religious beliefs of the family, there is a stressor associated with resolving, absolving, releasing or healing from the dysfunctional, or destructive consequences of behaviors stemming from substance use.
- ◆ Some Hispanic clients may have traditional syndromes, symptoms, behaviors, or illnesses that are unfamiliar to U.S.-trained health care providers. They may also use folk medicine or traditional healing practices and beliefs that may include herbal medicine, spiritual and manual therapies or exercises in order to prevent, diagnose, treat or cure an ailment or illness.

Strengths at sight:

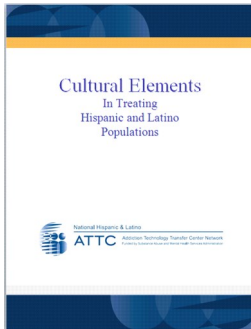
- ◆ It is important that you take in consideration that Latino patients may combine respect for the benefits of mainstream medicine, tradition, and traditional healing, with a strong religious component. Spirituality or religion beliefs may provide foundation to build on recovery.

What you can do:

- ◆ Acknowledge the patient beliefs, and asks about these syndromes and practices and how they are experienced. Respecting and understanding this view can prove beneficial in treating, communicating and building trust with the client.



National Hispanic and Latino ATTC Additional Products and Resources

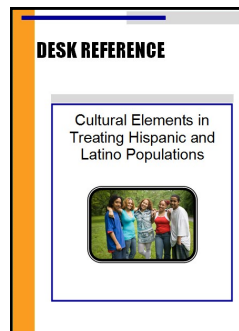


An aid for ATOD counselors for improving their skills in response to treatment challenges presented by clients from Hispanic and Latino cultures.



This training provides knowledge and materials for providers, particularly those who are new to the field or are unfamiliar of Hispanic and Latino clients with substance use disorders.

This guide includes condensed information for behavioral health care providers that may need to assure delivery of cultural competent care to Hispanic and Latino clients.



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