

national latin@ network

casa de esperanza

Addressing the Unique Issues Faced by Latina Survivors

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The Critical Role of Leadership: Coordinating Rural Interagency
Responses to Violence Against Women

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Casa de Esperanza

- “Starting from a small group of Latina activists in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1982, Casa de Esperanza has grown into the premier Latin@ domestic violence organization in the country.”
 - Amy Sanchez, CEER



- We recognize that it is the community that will end domestic violence, not any system or organization.
- We emphasize developing social capital (i.e. trust, reciprocity, information and cooperation) because we believe it decreases domestic violence.

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Our Mission

Mobilize Latinas and Latin@ communities to end domestic violence.



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Five core values:

- Latina leadership
- Entrepreneurship
- Organizational excellence
- Living free of violence
- Community-driven solutions

The National Latin@ Network

- *The National Latin@ Network is a project of Casa de Esperanza that is working at “ending domestic violence and promoting the health and well-being of Latin@ communities around the country.”*

- Amy Sanchez, CEER

- The main goals of the National Latin@ Network are:

- Education and awareness
- Advocacy
- Capacity building
- Accountability and training



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Latin@ Realities



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Latin@s in the United States

- Approximately 50.5 million Latin@s living in the U.S. (16.3% population) (2010 U.S. Census)
- Heterogeneous group embracing varied histories, socio-economic backgrounds, and cultural and linguistic subtleties from 22 countries of origin
- Approximately 40% of Latin@s in U.S. are foreign born; 60% were born in the U.S.
- Many families have mixed immigration status: 75% of children in immigrant families are U.S. citizens



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Latin@s and Domestic Violence

- While the number of studies examining DV in Latin@ populations is growing, research on this issue continues to be limited in quality and breadth.
- The most recent prevalence information published on Latin@ populations must be considered within the context of how the information was collected, the questions asked and the social/community conditions where the research was obtained (e.g., new immigration laws).

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Prevalence & Occurrence

20-25% of Latinas will experience DV during her lifetime, and 1 in 20 in the previous 12 months.

Reported rates of DV were lower for Mexican immigrants (13.4%) than for persons of Mexican descent born in the U.S.

Immigrant women (including Latinas) who are married are more likely to experience DV than unmarried women.

A study that included 2,000 Latinas found 63.1% of women identified being victimized in their lifetime.

Research is beginning to document work related DV among Latin@s.

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Latin@s and Domestic Violence

- Many battered Latinas do not want to leave their families and communities—they want the abuse to stop.
- *Familia* can be crucial to a Latina's ability to survive domestic violence.
- It is very possible that domestic abuse may be subjugated to more urgent issues in her life.

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Latin@s and Domestic Violence

- Caring for her children—having enough money and food—and immigration fears may often be more significant to her than the violence she suffers.
- Misinformation about immigration status often creates anxiety for battered immigrant women that prevents them from seeking help.
- Battered Latinas face a number of barriers to obtaining services within the current domestic violence system.

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Help Seeking

Low rates of reporting and self-help seeking among Latinas experiencing domestic violence may create the illusion that DV services are not needed by this population.

- Latinas reported seeking access to shelters less than other women;
- Latinas are only half as likely to report abuse to authorities;
- Latinas prefer to tell family members, female friends, or neighbors about the DV;
- Latina survivors' help-seeking behaviors are closely tied to their level of acculturation and other cultural factors.

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Violence is not the **ONLY**, nor
the **MOST PRESSING** challenge
that they face



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Barriers to Services



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Barriers to Services

- Lack of knowledge and misinformation about the U.S. legal system
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
- Cultural barriers
- Economic and employment challenges
- Isolation from family and community.

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Barriers to Services

- Fear of deportation while seeking help from social services, police, judicial system, etc.
- Unlikely to call police due to heightened immigration enforcement policies.
- Immigration status is often used as a control mechanism by abuser.
- Denial of DV services due to lack of proper identification.
- Threats of taking children away.

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Barriers to Services

- Lack of knowledge about available resources in the community.
- Lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate services:
 - 1 in 3 shelters did not have Spanish speaking staff.
 - Only half of the participating shelters offer child-related services.
 - Problems stemming from diverse cultural values were not respected.

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Latina Cultural Context

- Cultural context shapes everyone's life.
- It is critical for domestic violence advocates working with Latin@s to be knowledgeable of Latina cultural context and to allow that context to inform their advocacy.
- The cultural context of Latinas' lives includes three components: experience, reality, and consciousness.

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Experience

This component addresses a Latina's daily experience.

Factors:

- Her age when she immigrated or when was she born here.
- Education level and socio-economic level—here and in her country of origin.
- Language ability in both Spanish and English.
- Immigration status in the USA.
- Past experience with mainstream systems and individuals.

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Reality

This component addresses her “way of living.”

Factors:

- *Familia* comes first, regardless of good or bad, triumph or turmoil.
- *Familia* is made up of nuclear and extended members as well as close friends.
- Daily decisions are based on the good of the “whole,” not the “individual.”
- Religion has a fundamental influence.

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Consciousness

This component addresses the “way of thinking.”

Factors:

- Socialized with an extended family structure.
- Interdependent, highly relational.
- Story-telling is a method of communication.
- Great importance is placed on traditions, cultural celebrations, sharing of food, music, art, and dance.
- Living in the moment—not in the future.

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Latina Cultural Context

- This cultural context is the “lens” through which Latinas see the world.
- The lens informs their successes, challenges, goals, and needs.
- Placing priority on **family** and **community**, the lens affects how Latinas understand their personal situations and make decisions.

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In Practice: Rocio's Reality

- Creating a learning environment for understanding the unique issues faced by Latina survivors.
- Up to 10 volunteers will actively participate; the remainder will be observers to the activity.
- Group discussion.

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Challenges Latinas Face in Your Community

What is working?	What are the challenges?	How have you addressed it?	What gets in the way?	What would be of help to you?

What We Want for Latina Survivors

When you think of the safety of women and children who experience domestic violence what comes to mind?



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What We Want for Latina Survivors

“ The wellbeing of women and their families”

- Safety
- Financial stability
- Health
- Education
- Legal stability (including immigration status)



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What We Want for Latina Survivors

Safety :

The right to have a life free of violence. Trust in systems that enhance their safety.

Financial stability:

Includes access to housing, employment, transportation, etc.

Health and emotional wellbeing:

Access to healthcare, reproductive health, mental health, etc.

Education:

Access to formal and informal educational opportunities, i.e. English classes, job training, informational community workshops, etc.)

Legal Stability:

Access to attorneys (for immigration, family law matters etc).

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How Do We Get There?



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Responding to the Needs of Latina Survivors

- Supporting Latina survivors cannot happen in a vacuum.
- Partnerships with Latina survivors and other programs/services need to be intentional, thoughtful, collaborative in nature to ensure that Latina survivors and their children receive quality, culturally relevant advocacy services and support.
- It is a collaborative process which is fluid and flexible.

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Responding to the Needs of Latina Survivors

- It starts with an agreement that agencies, programs organization and services will work together to ensure that they are providing appropriate resources and access to services.
- It requires ongoing communication and sharing of information, resources and tools between the collaborative group, as well as working together with Latina survivors to ensure that her needs are met.

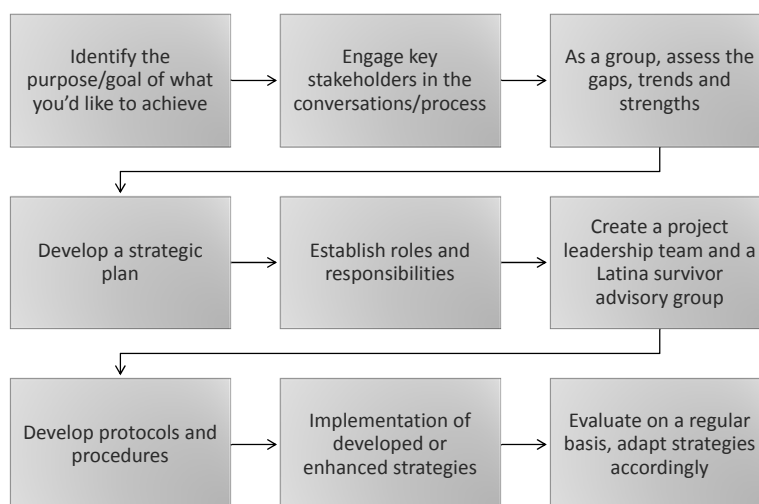
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Responding to the Needs of Latina Survivors

- Collaboration requires the following from everyone involved:
 - Flexibility
 - Ability to be open-minded
 - Coordination with partners
 - Ongoing, effective communication
 - Cross-training and networking
 - Intentionality and reflection
 - Established protocols and evaluation processes

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Responding to the Needs of Latina Survivors



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In Practice



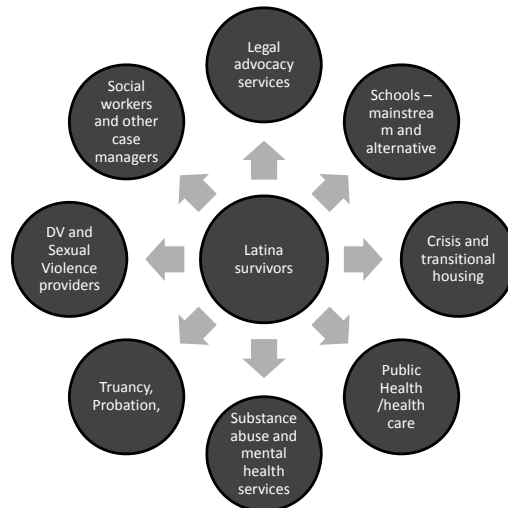
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Purpose

- Provide holistic, culturally-relevant, support and advocacy to Latina adolescent mothers (24 years of age and younger) experiencing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking.
- Provide access to culturally relevant mental health services, legal advocacy, housing, and limited financial support for childcare, and transportation.

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Key Stakeholders



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Assess Gaps, Trends and Strengths



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Assess Gaps, Trends and Strengths



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Assess Gaps, Trends and Strengths



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Strategic Plan

- Identified critical services needed to support the survivor's safety.
- Each service provider established their role and responsibilities in the project.
- Developed protocols and procedures for information sharing and referrals to services.
- Established a Project Leadership team.

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Strategic Plan

- Established a Latina survivor advisory group.
- Commitment from each stakeholder to share information about the project within their spheres of influence.
- Established monthly project leadership meetings and bi-weekly Latina survivor meetings.
- Created awareness of the program by sharing information with others in the community.

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What Works for Latina Survivors

- Engaging and supporting Latina survivors in ways that are intentional and respectful.
- Strategies that are grounded in the experiences of, and reflective of, the voices, needs and wants of Latina survivors.
- Strategies that are collaborative, culturally relevant, and holistic in nature.
- ASKING. LISTENING. TAKING ACTION.

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