Doing Therapy with Latino Clients
(Issues, Dilemmas and Diversity)

Presented by
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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.

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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

IMPORTANT

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

Ornish, 1998
Latino Demographics

• Most Prevalent Population
  • Mexico (67% or $\frac{2}{3} = 13.5$ million)
  • Puerto Rican (2.7 million)
  • Cuba (1 million)
  • Other Hispanic groups (5.1 million)

U.S. Census Bureau, 1997
IMPORTANT

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

Ornish, 1998
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.

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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)

U.S. Census Bureau, 1995
Latino Demographics

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

U.S. Census Bureau, 1995
Latino Demographics

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

Meyer, 1992
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 $\frac{1}{2}$ Latino population.

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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).

Roy, 1998
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

Bustamante and Santa-Cruz, 1995; Ortiz, 1995; Bernal, 1982
• 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, Guantánamo 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.

Bustamante and Santa-Cruz, 1995; Ortiz, 1995; Bernal, 1982
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.

Robinson, 1998
Latino Demographics

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

Robinson, 1998
La Familia Latina” (The Latino Family)

IMPORTANT

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

Ornish, 1998
Latino Demographics

• Language (Spanish)
  • The strongest force uniting Hispanic groups.

Flores, and Carey, 2000
Latino Demographics

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

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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.”

Orrabazo, 1997
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….).

Roy, 1998
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.

Anderson and Goolisain, 1992
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.

Anderson and Goolisain, 1992
‘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

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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 client’s personal and collective resources).

Flores, and Carey, 2000
“Who Am I” (“Quien Soy Yo?”):

- Universal question
- Impacted strongly by:
  - Religion
  - Family of Origin
  - Migration
  - Settlement
  - Social class
  - Media (TV, Radio…)
  - Geographical Setting

Flores, and Carey, 2000
La Familia Latina” (The Latino Family)

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

Flores, and Carey, 2000
La Familia Latina” (The Latino Family)

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

Falcon, 1998; Minuchin, 1980
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").

Flores, 1994; Levine and Padilla, 1980
La Familia Latina” (The Latino Family)

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

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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.

Flores, and Carey, 2000
La Familia Latina” (The Latino Family)

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

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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

U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996
La Familia Latina” (The Latino Family)

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

Falicov, 1996
La Familia Latina” (The Latino Family)

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

Flores and Sprenkle, 1989)
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).

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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”).

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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.

Hardy and Laszloffy, 1994
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.

Hardy and Lazloffy, 1994
La Familia Latina” (The Latino Family)

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

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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.)

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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?

Flores, and Carey, 2000
“The greater the social support system in place, the greater the survivability and resilience of the client.”

Ornish, 1998
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

Flores, and Carey, 2000
La Familia Latina” (The Latino Family)

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

Flores, and Carey, 2000
La Familia Latina” (The Latino Family)

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

Montalvo, 1991
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.”

Montiel, 1978
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.

Fontes and Thomas, 1993
“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.

Flores and Sprenkle, 1989)
“El Hombre Latino” (The Latino Male)

• Latino Men

(Function Within the Constraints of):

• Poverty
• Unemployment
• Racism

Flores, and Carey, 2000
“El Hombre Latino ” (The Latino Male)

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

Davenport and Yurish, 1991
“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.

Denis, Brandt, Fand and Quirez, 1993; De La Cancela, 1986, 1990
“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

Morales, 1996
"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.

Flores, and Carey, 2000
“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)

U.S. Department of Labor, 1997
“La Mujer Latina” (The Latina Female)

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

U.S. Department of Labor, 1997
“La Mujer Latina” (The Latina Female)

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

U.S. Department of Labor, 1997
“La Mujer Latina” (The Latina Female)

• Latina Women
(Lower Socio-Economic Strata):
  • Puerto Rican
  • Mexican

U.S. Department of Labor, 1997
“La Mujer Latina” (The Latina Female)

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

De La Torres and Pesquera. 1993
“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.

Bernal and Flores-Ortiz, 1997a, 1997b
“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

Anzaldua, 1990
“La Mujer Latina” (The Latina Female)

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

Flores, and Carey, 2000
**“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.

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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.

Rodriguez, 1983
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

Calderon, 1992; Oboler, 1998; Shores, 1992
Cultural Considerations & Sensitivity

• McAdam’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.

McAdams, 1996
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).

Rossi, 1980
Cultural Considerations & Sensitivity

• Therapy
(Positive Changes Acquired Through):
  • Shared meaning
  • Connection
  • Mutuality
  • Authentic relating

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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

Timmerman, 1991; Erikson, 1963
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.”

Timmerman, 1991; Erikson, 1963
“Maintaining intimacy and satisfaction in a marriage is, at best, a formidable task.”

Flores, and Carey, 2000
The Latino Couple (Intimacy Explored)

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

Timmerman, 1991
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.

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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 one's universe.

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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.

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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.”

Flores, and Carey, 2000
• 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.

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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.”

Flores, and Carey, 2000
“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.”

Flores, and Carey, 2000
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.

Gallup, 1985
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.”

Garcia-Preto, 1996b; Rodriguez-Holguin, 1994; Urrabazzo, 1986
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.

Clinebell, 1984
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 occurrs 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

Mena, Padilla, and Maldonado, 1987
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.

Mena, Padilla, and Maldonado, 1987
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.

Szapocznik et al., 1997; Baron and Constantine, 1997
Thank You

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