On the Road to Social Transformation:

Utilizing Cultural and Community Strengths to End Domestic Violence

A Publication of the National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence

Elsa A. Ríos, Author

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About the Author

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NATIONAL LATINO ALLIANCE FOR THE ELIMINATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

ALIANZA LATINA NACIONAL PARA ERRADICAR LA VIOLENCIA DOMÉSTICA

Foreword

As stated in Alianza's Analytical Framework, Alianza believes domestic violence violates fundamental rights — human, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights — with multiple and far reaching consequences for whole families and communities. It affects women, men, and children of all ages, and of all racial, ethnic, economic and religious backgrounds. And, while domestic violence affects all groups, to successfully address the problem will require domestic violence providers to develop culturally proficient programs and strategies that build upon cultural and community strengths and eliminate barriers to information and services.

This document is the product of a collective effort drawing upon the experiences of Alianza during the past ten years, as well as the rich expertise of a diverse group of Latina/o leaders, survivors, service providers, advocates, researchers, community organizers and experts who comprise Alianza's Cultural Proficiency Task Force (see listing on the following page).

Members of Alianza's Cultural Proficiency Task Force generously volunteered their time, energy and insight, participating in numerous conference calls and a two-day summit in New Mexico aimed at articulating key elements of culturally proficient domestic violence programming and developing recommendations for improving access and services for Latinas/os.

As forthrightly stated in this report, the future well-being of this nation is dependent on our ability to embrace diversity, build cross-cultural understanding, help each individual to realize his/her own potential, and build a more just, non-violent society that vigorously protects the human rights of all individuals.

We believe the collective wisdom contained in this document will serve as a major contribution to the field and it is our hope that these insights will inspire service providers, funders and policy makers to work together to promote culturally proficient domestic violence services.

In recognizing and addressing the intersection of multiple oppressions, it is also our hope that we will strive to work together in a more comprehensive and resolute manner toward the common goal of social transformation.

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Executive Summary

By the year 2050, Latinas/os will account for one in four U.S. residents and people of color will comprise one half of the total U.S. population. As the complexion of our nation continues to change, we will need to build our cultural knowledge and skills in order to maximize the many advantages of a diverse workforce and citizenry. The future prosperity and well-being of this country rests on our ability to embrace diversity, build cross cultural understanding, and vigorously protect the human rights of all individuals.

Undoubtedly, the courageous and visionary acts of the anti-violence movement in particular, have contributed to the safety and well-being of countless individuals and families impacted by intimate partner violence. The National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence ("Alianza") now calls upon the movement to challenge itself even further and continue its rich legacy of advocacy — by supporting the universal adoption of cultural proficiency standards — across all programs, community organizing strategies, and services.

What is required is nothing less than social transformation. To end violence, we must recognize that *one size does not fit all*. What is required is a diversity of approaches that fully engage communities of color and allies and maximize cultural and community strengths as a fundamental strategy for change.

Through this publication, Alianza seeks to foster greater dialogue about the benefits of developing culturally proficient programs. Section One provides an overview of changing U.S. demographics, immigration trends and a snapshot of the many contributions of Latinas/os to the U.S. economy. Section Two examines the prerequisites to cross cultural understanding, exploring the concepts of culture, ethnocentrism, racism, cultural proficiency and human rights, among others.

Section Three provides a summary of Latino cultural values and the interplay of various forms of oppression in the lives of Latinos/as. In Section Four, the multiple, complex barriers to accessing services encountered by Latinas/os are examined, including those barriers specifically encountered by immigrant Latinas who are battered. Section Five highlights some of the promising practices for addressing domestic violence in a culturally proficient manner including innovative community based programs, batterers' programs and coalition models, among others.

Section Six provides recommendations for service providers, policy makers and funders about ways to build culturally proficient programs and organizations. Finally, an extensive listing of resources is offered in the Appendix Section of this document to help organizations build their cultural proficiency capacity.

It is our sincerest hope that the ideas contained in this document will inspire program innovation and a deeper commitment by service providers, policy makers and funders to building culturally proficient, 21st century organizations capable of delivering quality services to the growing number of diverse communities.

SECTION ONE

Introduction and Overview of Latinas/os in the United States

In this section, you will find information about:

- U.S. Population Projections through 2050
- Diversity Among Latinas/os in the U.S
- Latina/o Contributions to the U.S.

Introduction

Building Culturally Proficient Organizations: A Foremost Imperative

Our world is changing rapidly and the barriers that once divided nations are quickly melting away. Economic globalization and rapid advances in technology allow for almost instantaneous communication with peoples from around the world.[1] This exchange of ideas and goods is enabling us to bridge cultures, find common ground and *fully realize the extent and beauty of our interdependence*.

Globalization also continues to fuel immigration. In fact, 11.1% of U.S. residents are foreign born[2] and Latin American countries account for five of the top ten nations with the greatest number of immigrants entering the U.S.[3] A 2007 report issued by the Census Bureau indicates that Whites are now the minority in nearly one in 10 U.S. counties and in the next four decades, the nation will undergo a profound transformation. By 2050 it is projected that people of color will account for half of all Americans.[4]

US Population Projections by Race and Ethnicity

	2000	2020	2030	2050
White, not Hispanic	69.4%	61.3%	57.5%	50.1%
Black	12.7%	13.5%	13.9%	14.6%
Asian	3.8%	5.4%	6.2%	8.0%
Hispanic (of any race)	12.6%	17.8%	20.1%	24.4%
All other races	2.5%	3.5%	4.1%	5.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2004, "U.S. Interim Projections by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin," http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/usinterimproj/

Undoubtedly, people of color will continue to play a pivotal role in the economic, cultural and political life of this nation. **As the complexion of our nation continues to change, all U.S. Americans will need to build their cultural knowledge and skills in order to maximize the many advantages of a more diverse workforce and citizenry.**

Our nation's future well-being is dependent on our ability to embrace diversity, helping each individual to realize his/her own potential while contributing at the same time to building a more just, non-violent, multicultural society.

The anti-violence movement has made significant contributions to improving the well-being of individuals in the United States affected by intimate partner violence and **the movement must now challenge itself to continue in its tradition of advocacy by promoting the universal adoption of culturally proficient practices across all programs and services**.

With this publication, Alianza aims to foster dialogue within the anti-violence movement about our collective obligation to develop culturally proficient services to better meet the needs of our increasingly diverse population.

Alianza's Philosophy and Commitment to Cultural Proficiency

The development of this document was guided by Alianza's Analytical Framework[5] and philosophy about how best to address domestic violence in Latino communities. Alianza believes domestic violence is a societal problem, not just a family problem or solely a problem of individual male aggression, but rather a structural problem within our society. Society condones and often glorifies various forms of violence and thus aggression and violence are viewed as acceptable attributes in the U.S. and globally.

Alianza believes domestic violence violates fundamental rights — human, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights — with multiple and far reaching consequences for whole families and communities. It affects women and men of all ages, and of all racial, ethnic, economic and religious backgrounds. And, while domestic violence affects all groups, to successfully address the problem will require domestic violence providers to develop culturally responsive programs and strategies that build upon cultural and community strengths and eliminate barriers to information and services.[6]

Alianza also believes that all sectors of the community must be engaged in developing solutions that are culturally proficient, including men who can act as allies and anti-violence role models. Alianza recognizes that safety and well being is not necessarily to be found in sending women to temporary shelters, men into prison or jails, and children into the child welfare system. Alternatives strategies that keep women and children safe while offering batterers real opportunities to stop their violent behavior must become a priority.

Finally, Alianza acts as a catalyst for change by working to increase cultural proficiency among domestic violence service providers through multiple vehicles including, but not limited to, developing educational materials, providing training and technical assistance, promoting and disseminating research, facilitating collaborations and conducting policy advocacy.

An Overview of Latinas/os in the United States: A Growing and Increasingly Diverse Population

There are approximately 44.3 million Latinas/os living in the United States. In fact, Latinas/os are the largest ethnic group in the U.S., accounting for 14.8% of the U.S. population.[7] Presently, the United States is home to the third largest population of Latinas/os in the world[8] and by 2050, it is estimated that Latinas/os will account for almost 25% of the total U.S. population.[9]

Latinos/as are a heterogeneous group embracing varied histories, class backgrounds and cultural subtleties. They represent 22 countries extending from Mexico in North America through Central and South America and the Caribbean.[10] The term "Latino" refers to ethnic rather than racial identity. Latinas/os may or may not identify themselves with a particular racial group; they can be White, Black, of indigenous ancestry, or a mixed combination.

There are strong African and indigenous influences in Latino music, food, family customs, spiritual practices and responses to oppression. Over 150 million people of African descent live in Latin America and account for about one third of the total population.[11] African descended populations represent a majority on most islands of the Caribbean and constitute substantial minorities in many Central and South American countries, especially in Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela and Panama. The African presence in the Americas goes back to the period of colonization and is largely the result of several centuries of bringing millions of people from the African continent to provide slave labor on plantations and in mines and other commercial enterprises throughout the Caribbean and Central and South America.[12]

According to 2007 estimates from the World Bank, there are approximately 28 million indigenous peoples in Latin America.[13] In Caribbean and Latin American countries Afro-descendants and indigenous people share a history of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion that continues to affect their present socio-economic circumstances.

It is important to note that some people who are identified as Latinas/os may not speak Spanish or self-identify as Latino or Hispanic. Thus a Mexican, a Guatemalan or a Peruvian living in an indigenous community may not identify as "Latino" or "Hispanic" in terms of their cultural background or language proficiency.[14]

The following provides a brief snapshot of some of the major indigenous groups originating in Latin America:

Diversity Snapshot: Selected Indigenous Cultures of Latin America

The Mixtec people, known as *Sa'an Davi, Da'an Davi* or *Tu'un Savi* in their own Mixtecan languages, have lived in the Oaxaca region of Mexico since at least 940 BC. The word Mixtec comes from the Aztec word *Mixtecapan*, meaning "Cloud People." In pre-Columbian times, the Mixtec were one of the major Mesoamerican civilizations, with stratified city-states ruled by kings, queens, and their kinspeople, until they were conquered by the Aztecs about 30 years before conquistadores arrived in the Americas. The culture survived both Aztec rule and Spanish conquest, and survives today in the same area of Oaxaca. Their varried Mixtecan languages, including Cuicatec and Triqui, are still spoken by around 300,000 people.[15]

Another indigenous group, the Zapotecs have also lived in the Valley of Oaxaca since at least 500 BC, and had similarly stratified societies. The word *Zapotec* comes from the Nahuatl word for their region, meaning "place of sapote." They referred to themselves, however as *Be'ena'a*, meaning "the people." Zapotec now refers to a group of about 60 closely related Mesoamerican languages. The Zapotec developed a logosyllabic writing system, using a glyph for each syllable as one of the first forms of writing in Mesoamerica. The Zapotec people were able to fend off Spanish colonization until 1527, and continued to lead uprisings into the 18th century. In more recent history, they rebelled against the French invasion in 1866 and several forms of local government from the mid-1800s to the 1970s. Traditional Zapotec religion is polytheistic, though the majority of Zapotecs now are Catholic. Their population in Mexico is currently between 300,000 and 400,000 individuals. [16]

The Xinca are an indigenous group in southern Guatemala near the El Salvador border (who spell their name Xinka). They are the oldest inhabitants of Southeastern Guatemala, and their language, also called Xinca, is not related to any other Mesoamerican languages. They were conquered by the Spanish in 1524, at which point cultural loss accelerated. Many Xinca were forced into slavery and participated in the conquest of El Salvador. In the 2002 Guatemalan census, about 16,000 individuals identified as Xinka, but after a revival movement in the early 2000s by Xinka political organizations, there are now about 200,000 people in 9 communities identifying as Xinka.[17]

The Aguaruna (or Awajún) are an indigenous group in the Peruvian jungle. They traditionally lived along the Marañón River, a tributary of the Amazon, but today live in many regions of Peru. Unlike most Peruvian peoples, they were never conquered by the Inca. They were conquered by the Spanish in 1549, but successfully forced them out 50 years later, and most missionary attempts to convert them to Catholicism from their polytheistic religion were unsuccessful. However, since the mid-20th century many Protestant and Jesuit missionaries have been successful in converting Aguaruna individuals to Christianity.

Today, the Aguaruna number around 38,000 according to 2000 World Census data. The language is also called Awajún, and though it is widely spoken among their small population, has almost no monolingual speakers. Schooling begins in Awajun, but adds Spanish as children are older, resulting in a population that is almost entirely bilingual with Spanish. The Aguaruna are traditionally semi-nomadic, as the Amazonian soil is not suitable for consistent agriculture. In recent years, they have become more involved in market economy especially as related to the transandean oil pipeline and medicinal plants. Because of outside threats to their ways of life and lands, the Aguaruna have become politically organized and were central in founding the Coordinating Body of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin.[18]

The following provides a brief snapshot of Afro-Descendants in Latin America:

Afro-Descendants in Latin America and the United States

The original peoples of the Americas were the Anishinabeg, according to Gloria Anzaldua, a Chicana lesbian writer and activist. The Indigenous population was decimated by the end of the Spanish conquest as a result of the wars, slavery and diseases brought by the Europeans, such as typhus, smallpox and measles. The almost extinction of Indigenous groups, turned the attention of the conquerors to the African continent in order to continue to provide Europe with products such as sugar cane, textile production, tobacco and silver mining. It is estimated that 12 to 15 million Africans were brought in bondage to the Americas during the Atlantic slave trade. Although many of the enslaved Africans were brought to North America, far more ended up in Latin American Spanish and Portuguese colonies.

The origins of African peoples brought to the new continent represented a variety of ethnic groups located mainly in West and Central Africa, representing what now corresponds to contemporary Guinea Bissau and Senegambia. The following are some of the groups identified from these regions: the Tukulor, the Wolof, the Malinke, the Kassanga, the Bran, the Banyun and the Biafada. Some Africans were also brought from Angola and the Congo. They brought with them their ancient knowledge, skills like farming and crafts as well as a variety of religious, ceremonial and artistic practices.

African men and women along the Americas spearheaded rebellions to stop the inhuman, cruel and devastating conditions of slavery. Whether in open rebellion or through an underground movement, African peoples fought to attain total freedom, self determination, economic sufficiency and the right to practice their religions and cultures. The struggle for liberation began as early as 1502 when Africans joined forces with Indigenous groups to rebel against the European oppressors. The movement of maroons or Cimarrones, slaves who ran away to build their own communities in the mountains, was of vital importance for the preservation of Black selfhood in many different countries in Latin America.

The descendants of the slaves represent large sectors of society in several Latin American countries, the United States and other countries of the world, in what is known as the African Diaspora. An important trend has been the preservation and strengthening of Black movements up to the present time in countries like Panama, Colombia, Brazil, and Ecuador, where Black people constitute a significant percentage of the population. Black political movements, led by Black women and men, have continued and grown in several of these countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, United States, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, Panama, Colombia and Venezuela.

Different grassroots groups have taken different paths to challenge racism, discrimination, lack of education, poverty and economic opportunities. These have included seeking legal remedies through the courts; organizing Afro-Descendant communities to increase participation in the electoral arena, including proposing political and economic agendas; supporting the emergence of Black women leaders as candidates; and promoting human rights for Afro-Descendants at the national and international level. The World Conference against Racism that took place in South Africa in 2001 served to make the world community aware that large numbers of Black people in Latina America and the United States are still suffering from the legacy of colonization. Many groups continue to promote blackness, reclaiming their history and their contributions to the national patrimony, whether cultural, artistic, economic and/or political.

Sources:

1. Anzaldúa, Gloria. (2007). *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books.
2. Gimeno, Antonieta. (2001). Black Mexicans. Unpublished paper.
3. North American Congress of Latin America. (1992). *Report on the Americas: The Black Americas 1492-1992.* Volume XXV, Number 4, pp.15,38. Available from http://www.latinamericanvideo.org/AfricanDiaspora/HTMLS/StudyGuide.html

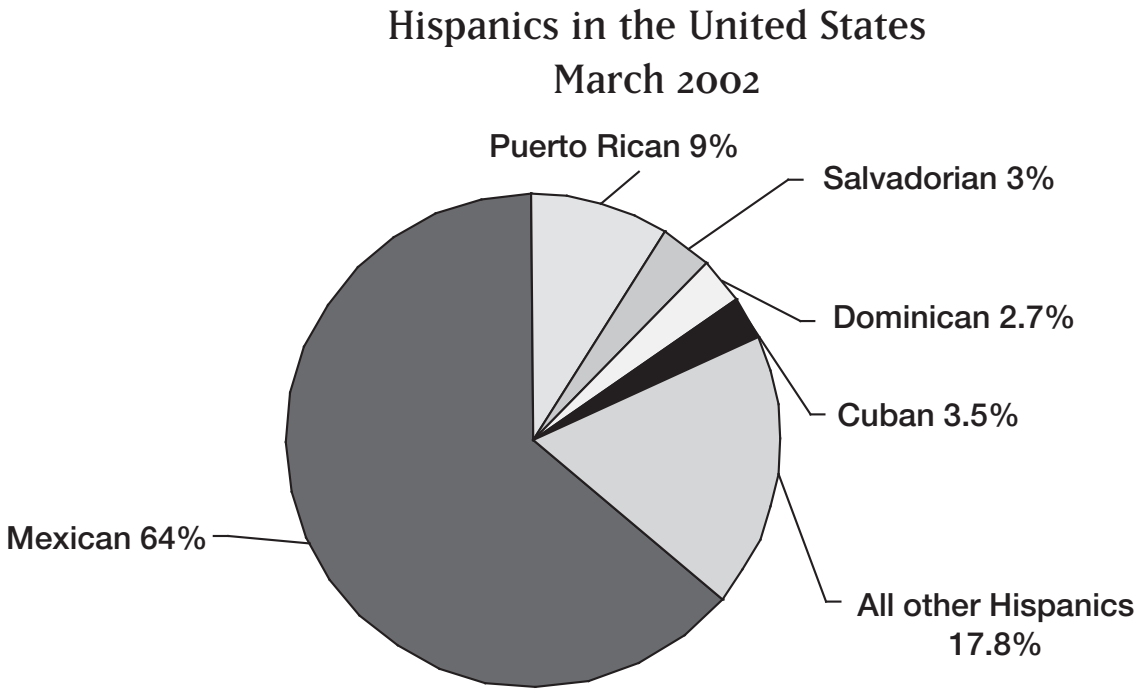
Social, economic and environmental factors are forcing more indigenous peoples to emigrate. A growing number of immigrants to the U.S. come from indigenous groups of Latin America. Many speak indigenous languages with limited or no Spanish language fluency whatsoever and thus experience hardship and difficulty securing services due to language barriers and other cultural factors. At present there is no reliable data on the number of indigenous immigrants in the U.S. although anecdotal reports from service providers suggest the number of indigenous immigrants is increasing.

In the United States the many distinctions among Latin American groups are often lost and there is a tendency towards placing all Latin Americans under the umbrella category of Hispanic or Latino. In the U.S., the terms Hispanic and Latino are often used interchangeably. The term Latino is an abbreviated form of the Spanish word *Latinoamericano*, referring to individuals originating from Latin America.[19] The term *Hispanic*, derives from the Latin word for Spain, *Hispania* and is generally understood to include anyone with linguistic or cultural antecedents in Latin America and Spain.[20] The U.S. Census Bureau defines Hispanic, as individuals living in the U.S. who identify themselves as "Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban and other Spanish/Hispanic/ Latino."[21]

At present, the majority of Latinas/os identify with both terms, Hispanic and Latino. However, a recent survey conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center finds some prefer to be identified as Latino rather than Hispanic in light of Spain's historical role of conquest in Latin America.[22] Starting in the 16th century, Spanish conquistadores colonized much of Latin America resulting in the death and destruction of indigenous communities and cultures.

It is important to clarify that for the purposes of this document, the term "Latinos" refers to men and "Latinas" refers to women. "Latinos" has also traditionally been used when referring to both genders. However, throughout this document we prefer the use of "Latinas/os" as a more gender inclusive term when referring to both men and women.

Overall, Mexicans account for the largest group of Latinas/os in the United States (64%) followed by Puerto Ricans (9%), Cubans (3.5%), Salvadorians (3%) and Dominican (2.7%).[23]



Source: United States Census Bureau News, "Facts for Features: Hispanic Heritage Month, 2007" Released July 15, 2007: http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/010327.html.

The ten states with the largest Latino populations are: California, Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, Arizona, New Jersey, Colorado, New Mexico and Georgia. However, this picture will soon change as recent trends indicate that Latinas/os are now migrating in greater numbers to other states. For example, North Carolina and Tennessee have experienced respectively, a 394% and 278% increase in the number of Latino residents from 1990-2000.[24]

Top Ten States with the Largest Hispanic Populations

State	Total Population	Hispanic Origin	Hispanics as a Percentage of the Total State Population	Percentage of Total US Hispanic Population by State
California	35,278,768	12,523,379	35%	30.3%
Texas	22,270,165	7,903,079	35%	18.9%
Florida	17,382,511	3,414,414	20%	8.0%
New York	18,655,275	3,028,658	16%	7.4%
Illinois	12,440,351	1,804,619	15%	4.3%
Arizona	5,829,839	1,668,524	29%	3.9%
New Jersey	8,521,427	1,307,412	15%	3.2%
Colorado	4,562,244	891,614	20%	2.1%
New Mexico	1,887,200	822,224	44%	2.0%
Georgia	8,821,142	625,028	7%	1.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey

Latinas/os are a relatively young population, **more than one third of the nation's Latinas/os are under the age of 18** and half of all Latinas/os are under 26 years of age.

Approximately 40% of Latinas/os living in the United States are foreign born and of these, 43% entered the U.S. in the 1990's.[25] According to the Census Bureau's 2006 American Community Survey, an estimated 37.5 million authorized and unauthorized foreign-born residents live in the United States. This is a somewhat smaller proportion of the total U.S. population compared to the number of foreign-born residents living in the United States a century ago. Foreign-born residents make up 13% of the population today, compared with 15% in 1910.[26]

Countries of Birth of the U.S. Foreign Born Population			
Rank	1980	1990	2000
1.	Mexico 2,199,000	Mexico 4,298,000	Mexico 7,841,000
2.	Germany 849,000	China 921,000	China 1,391,000
3.	Canada 843,000	Philippines 913,000	Philippines 1,222,000
4.	Italy 832,000	Canada 745,000	India 1,007,000
5.	United Kingdom 669,000	Cuba 737,000	Cuba 952,000
6.	Cuba 608,000	Germany 712,000	Vietnam 863,000
7.	Philippines 501,000	United Kingdom 640,000	El Salvador 765,000
8.	Poland 418,000	Italy 581,000	Korea 701,000
9.	Soviet Union 406,000	Korea 568,000	Dominican Republic 692,000
10.	Korea 290,000	Vietnam 543,000	Canada 678,000

Source: Profile of the Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2000. U.S. Census Bureau, 2001.

Approximately 56% of Latino adults are U.S. citizens and an additional 20% are legal permanent residents. An immigrant must be a legal permanent resident for three to five years in order to qualify for naturalization to become a U.S. citizen and must be able to pass exams in English and civics, among other requirements. About a quarter of Latino adults are undocumented immigrants.[27] However, many immigrant families are of mixed legal status; approximately two out of three children of undocumented parents are U.S. citizens.

The need for bilingual/bicultural services can not be overemphasized as 14% of Latinas/os in the U.S., representing approximately 6 million people, speak only Spanish, making it difficult to navigate institutions and negotiate needed services. However, studies show that English fluency increases across generations. Whereas research has shown that only 23% of Latino immigrants report being able to speak English very well, by contrast fully 88% of their U.S.-born adult children report that they speak English very well. Among later generations of Latino adults, the figure rises to 94%. [28]

The Social, Economic and Educational Status of Latinas/os

Latino contributions to the economic prosperity of this nation are impressive. Currently, **Latino males have the highest labor force participation rate of any group**. In fact, two out of every five new workers hired in 1999 were Latino. The workforce participation rate of Latinas has also increased steadily reaching 56.1% in 2005. Latino purchasing power in 2000 reached $452.4 billion, an increase of 118% since 1990.

Even undocumented immigrants pay taxes in various ways, including income and sales taxes. The majority of undocumented immigrants pay income taxes using Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs) or false social security numbers. All immigrants, regardless of their immigration status, will pay on average $80,000 per capita more in taxes than they use in government services over their lifetime.[29]

The Social Security system reaps the biggest windfall from taxes paid by immigrants because although the vast majority of Latino workers in the U.S. pay into the Social Security system, they are less likely than their White and Black counterparts to receive benefits. The Social Security Administration reports that it holds approximately $420 billion from the earnings of immigrants who are not in a position to be able to claim benefits.[30]

Labor Force Participation by Race and Ethnicity*

	Unemployed	In Labor Force
White Women	2.7%	58.9%
WhiteMen	3.7%	74.1%
Black Women	6.0%	61.5%
BlackMen	7.4%	66.7%
Hispanic Women	4.3%	56.1%
Hispanic Men	5.4%	80.5%

*For all individuals 16 years and older

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Status by Race, Age, Sex. 2004 Annual Averages. http://www.bls.gov/cps/wlf-table3-2005.pdf

Although by all measurable accounts, Latinas/os are working hard and contributing to the prosperity of the nation, they face formidable challenges to their own social and economic well-being. Latinas/os continue to be concentrated in the lowest paying jobs, have the second highest rate of unemployment and the lowest rate of home ownership and asset accumulation. About 20% of Latinas/os live in poverty and the rate is even higher among Latino children who represent nearly 31% of children living in poverty.[31]

Another contributing factor is lower educational attainment; 27% of Latino/a adults have less than a 9th grade education, only 45.9% of Latinas/os are high school graduates and 11% have secured a bachelor's degree or higher.[32]

Additionally, depressed economies in Latina America and a strong sense of family responsibility prompts many Latinas/os to provide substantial economic support to family members in their countries of origin. In 2005 alone, $53.6 billion in remittances were sent to Latin American and the Caribbean.[33]

Poverty Status by Race, Ethnicity and Sex*			
	Population	Number below Poverty	Percent below Poverty
Total Population	288,378,137	38,231,474	13.3%
Hispanics	41,604,548	8,315,923	**20.0%**
Hispanic Men	21,296,189	4,042,589	19.0%
Hispanic Women	20,308,359	4,273,334	21.0%
Whites	192,025,208	17,374,037	**9.0%**
White Women	97,866,883	9,963,463	10.2%
White Men	94,158,325	7,410,574	7.9%
Blacks	40,009,046	8,889,138	**22.2%**
Black Women	18,674,625	5,222,862	27.8%
Black Men	21,334,421	3,666,276	17.2%
Asians	12,451,831	1,429,204	**11.5%**
Asian Women	6,451,025	754,795	11.7%
Asian Men	6,000,806	674,409	11.2%

*For the prior 12 months.

Source: Based on U.S. Census Bureau 2005 American Community Survey Data

Household Income*				
	Hispanic	**White**	**Black**	**Asian**
Less than $10,000	10.6%	6.8%	34.1%	8.5%
$10,000-$30,000	30.6%	22.0%	31.2%	16.6%
$30,000-$50,000	24.2%	20.5%	21.1%	16.9%
$50,000-$100,000	26.0%	32.1%	22.8%	31.8%
$100,000-$200,000	7.5%	15.0%	6.7%	21.1%
Greater than $200,000	1.1%	3.6%	0.7%	5.1%
Avg. Household Income	**$36,278**	**$50,622**	**$30,939**	**$60,367**

*Based on Race/Ethnicity of Head of Household

Source: Based on U.S. Census Bureau 2005 American Community Survey Data

SECTION TWO

Prerequisites for Cross Cultural Understanding

In this section you will find information about:

- Culture, Ethnocentrism and Oppression
- Using a Human Rights Framework to Address Domestic Violence
- Institutional Racism and its Relationship to Cultural Proficiency

What is Culture?

Culture refers to an integrated pattern of human behavior encompassing values, beliefs, customs, practices, languages, and methods of communicating and interacting within and across cultural groups.[34] Cultural identity and behavior are shaped by factors such as race, ethnicity, country of origin, gender, sexual orientation, class or socio-economic status, education, immigration experiences, religious affiliation and/or spirituality, disability, local norms and conditions and other axes of identification. Each culture has multiple strengths and cultural groups often lend vital support and aid to group members, enabling individuals to experience a sense of coherence and belonging.

In attempting to understand cultural groups it is important to recognize that **culture is multidimensional and dynamic** in nature, continuously adapting and evolving and influenced by larger social, economic and political factors. In Latin America, various national liberation movements have led to profound cultural shifts in the region. Thus **any effort to understand the experiences of cultural groups and address their needs must also incorporate a power and impact analysis**.

In attempting to build culturally proficient services and organizations, it is important to take into account the impact of historical oppression, persistent institutional racism, globalization and economic disenfranchisement, among other manifestations of social injustice experienced by communities of color. Equally important, is the need to recognize the brilliant, courageous and multi-dimensional strategies of resistance to oppression that permeate the history of communities of color in this country and throughout the world.

Beyond Cultural Competency: Adopting a Human Rights Framework

Traditional approaches to cultural competency have focused on acceptance and respect for difference and the acquisition of cultural knowledge. However, this framework lacks the necessary depth needed to adequately address the needs of Latinas/os and other cultural groups. A human rights approach to achieving cultural proficiency and social transformation is more appropriate. **Cultural proficiency goes beyond mere cultural competence to a more proactive state where cultural knowledge and skills are continually sought, integrated and utilized by individuals and institutions to promote cross cultural understanding, service innovation and excellence.**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Under a human rights approach, individuals and organizations recognize the need to go beyond simply acquiring cultural knowledge to best serve clients or constituents and work towards creating multicultural institutions committed to social change and the principles established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).[35] Article 2 of the UDHR recognizes the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family *without distinction of any kind, including but not limited to, race, color, sex, language and religion*.[36] These rights and freedoms include the *right to life, liberty and security of person*[37] and *freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.*[38]

Thus, cultural proficiency is demonstrated not only by the integration of cultural elements in the design and delivery of services but also by the commitment to eliminating institutional barriers (e.g. racism, sexism, heterosexism and nativism) **that hinder access and meaningful participation and/or use of services.**

A human rights approach to achieving cultural proficiency would incorporate the following characteristics or elements:

At the Individual Level:

- ☑ A willingness to live a life free of violence and acts of coercion;
- ☑ A willingness to examine one's own cultural biases and the commitment to make attitudinal and behavioral changes that demonstrate respect for the dignity and self determination of all cultural groups;

- ☑ A life-long commitment to self awareness/reflection, the acquisition of cultural knowledge and skills that facilitate communication and understanding across and within cultural groups; and
- ☑ A willingness to translate cultural knowledge into action by advocating for the elimination of institutional racism and other societal barriers which work to undermine full equality and access to vital services.

At the Organizational Level:

- ☑ The incorporation of fundamental human rights principles such as respect, dignity and self determination as part of the organization's stated mission, vision and values;
- ☑ The adoption of intentional, purposeful practices to eliminate institutional racism and oppression as well as other barriers to services;
- ☑ A commitment to building non-hierarchical, egalitarian organizational practices where clients or constituents have a sense of ownership and are fully incorporated in organizational planning, decision-making, service delivery design and programming;
- ☑ A demonstrated track record of providing services and programs that are designed in a manner that meets community needs and delivered in a culturally responsive manner, including the provision of linguistically appropriate services;
- ☑ An express commitment to recruiting and retaining bilingual/bicultural or culturally competent staff in all areas (including providing training and professional development opportunities for them); and
- ☑ A demonstrated organizational commitment to achieving cultural proficiency reflected in proactive organizational policies and practices, including but not limited to the following areas:
  - recruitment and hiring practices;
  - staff development;
  - board membership;
  - multicultural organizational learning strategies;
  - program design, development and evaluation;
  - leadership development initiatives and structures;
  - community building strategies;
  - strategic planning priorities;
  - collaborations, partnerships, key alliances; and
  - organizational resource allocation decisions.

Understanding the Connections: Racism, Oppression and the Journey Towards Cultural Proficiency

As suggested by the above definition, efforts to develop cultural proficiency can only be successful if individuals and organizations are committed to addressing racism and other forms of oppressions at the individual, cultural, institutional and systemic levels.

The definition of racism is a hotly debated issue and there are a multitude of nuanced definitions to choose from; almost all definitions incorporate the concept of prejudice plus power equals racism.[39]

Erica Sherover-Marcuse provides an especially helpful definition of functional racism described below:

A Functional Definition of Racism

- Racism is the systematic mistreatment experienced by people of color as a result of institutionalized inequalities. Racism is one of several consequences of an imbalance in economic, political and social power perpetuated by the dominant group. This imbalance consistently favors members of some racial, ethnic and cultural groups at the expense of others. The consequences of this imbalance pervade all aspects of society and affect all facets of people's lives.

- At its most extreme, this systematic mistreatment takes the form of physical violence and extermination, but it occurs in many other forms as well. Pervasive invalidation, the denial or the non-recognition of the full humanity and talents of persons of color, also constitutes the mistreatment categorized as racism.

- The systematic mistreatment of any group of people generates misinformation about them, which in turn becomes the 'explanation' of or justification for continued mistreatment. Consequently, racism exists as a set of stereotypes, prejudicial attitudes, assumptions, feelings and beliefs about people of color and their cultures which are often a mixture of misinformation, fear and ignorance.

Source: Adapted from the writings of Ricky Sherover-Marcuse, "Working Definition of Racism," 2000, www.unlearningracism.org.

A related term, **oppression**, refers to systematic, institutionalized and socially condoned efforts to subjugate or mistreat an individual or group, carried out by another group or by people acting as agents of society.[40] While racism is normally thought to be associated with prejudice and discrimination on the basis of race and sometimes color and/or ethnicity, oppression can occur based on many types of group affiliations such as religion, gender, sexual orientation, class or economic status and disabilities, among others.

Internalized oppression is a phenomenon where members of one group begin to accept the negative views other groups have about them. Oftentimes, internalized oppression is carried from one generation to the next and this process of disempowerment and disenfranchisement can result in self-defeating behaviors.[41] A derivative of internalized oppression occurs when members of an oppressed group begin to believe negative views about other groups as well.

Undoubtedly, modern racism and oppression continue to harm African Americans, Latinas/os, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Native Americans and other disenfranchised groups, limiting equality of opportunity and quality of life. Disparities in health status, income, home ownership, and educational attainment continue to be pervasive. For example, the life expectancy for African American males is 68.3 years as compared to 74.4 years for White males.[42] The rate of home ownership for Latino families is 49.5% as compared to 75.8% for Whites and less than 57% of Latinas/os and 80% of African Americans graduate from high school as compared to 89.4% of Whites.[43]

Sadly the reality of discrimination is present in the daily lives of people of color. **A study conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation found 31% of Latinas/os reported incidents of discrimination directed towards them and/or a family member or close friend. Additionally, 41% of Latinas/os reported having received poorer service at restaurants or stores; 30% reported being insulted or called names, and; 14% indicated they had not been hired or promoted for a job because of their racial/ethnic background.[44]**

Building culturally proficient or multicultural organizations that support human rights is an important strategy towards dismantling institutionalized racism and oppression because it promotes cultural democracy, incorporates culturally based practices and supports power sharing.

- **Cultural Democracy or Pluralism**: Culturally proficient or multicultural organizations work actively to 'undo' deeply ingrained beliefs that the dominant group's culture is superior to all others. This form of cultural arrogance often permeates organizational practices and decision making and, if left unchecked, leads to ineffectual strategies that can squander resources as well as disempower, pathologize and/or demonize communities.

- **Culturally Based Practices**: Culturally proficient or multicultural organizations develop a cultural strengths based approach to their work. Programs, strategies and organizational policies and practices are developed utilizing a cultural lens. The work is community centered, takes into account the impact of racism and oppression and draws upon cultural beliefs, traditions and practices to help individuals and communities heal, become empowered and determine their destinies.

- **Power Sharing**: Becoming culturally proficient also involves understanding how power and privilege are (mis) used by dominant groups. Multicultural organizations act as social change laboratories; they critically examine how power and privilege are exercised (both consciously and unconsciously) and how it impacts organizations and communities. And, they test new and better ways to share and responsibly use their individual and collective power to dismantle oppression and improve community conditions.

Countering Ethnocentrism

As mentioned earlier, service providers and advocates working with individuals from different cultures must be willing to: 1) examine their own cultural biases or ethnocentrism and; 2) make the necessary attitudinal and behavioral changes that demonstrate respect for the dignity and self determination of diverse cultural groups.

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to look at the world from the perspective of one's own culture and to consider one's culture superior (consciously and/or unconsciously) to others. Ethnocentric thinking often leads to faulty communication and misunderstanding because the parties involved may approach the same situation from a very different cultural lens. Oftentimes the individual seeking help may "shut down" or disengage when their cultural perspective is not understood and/or devalued.

Latinas/os are likely to emphasize values associated with kinship, collectivism and interdependence while European Americans are more likely to value independence, individualism and personal achievement.

These differences in values may very well affect the way domestic violence survivors seek help and evaluate their options. For many Latinas, community based programs that provide counseling services including services for children and batterers may be preferred to shelters because of their family-centric, cultural orientation.

Some Latino researchers and advocates argue that one of the fundamental problems faced by the Latino community is that domestic violence services are structured from an Anglo American, individualist cultural framework which is fundamentally different from the collectivist cultural framework shared by many Latinas/os.

Dr. Fernando Mederos observes:

> …many of the helping systems and legal remedies offered to battered women frame the solution or the achievement of safety in terms of protecting or establishing an autonomous self; establishing safety for a woman and her children is framed in terms of separating her from the offender and from her community. Protective/restraining orders emphasize removing the offender. Shelters offer women refuge from the offender, but separate them from their communities. This is more culturally appropriate in European American society where the ideal of individuality or the autonomous self has great resonance. In the European American cultural tradition, people want their children to "be their own persons," "to strike out on their own" and to make their own way in life; [whereas Latinas/os] emphasize wanting their children to

be dutiful sons and daughters, to bring honor and prestige to their lineage and to primarily strive to find harmony within their community.[45]

Dr. Mederos' analysis suggests that more community-centered, domestic violence models that employ a Latino/a, collectivist cultural framework should be developed as they are more likely to be effective with Latinos/as. As such, a new wave of Latino domestic violence researchers, service providers and advocates argue that eradicating domestic violence in Latino communities will require:

1. A more holistic approach that emphasizes Latinas and Latinos working collaboratively to end domestic violence;

2. Community centered program models that emphasize the affirmative use of cultural and community strengths and protective factors to promote healing and respectful, non-violent interpersonal relationships within Latino families; and

3. The adoption of a broader human rights framework that recognizes the impact of not only patriarchy but multiple forms of oppression and internalized oppression in the lives of Latino men, women and children.[46]

SECTION THREE

Building Cultural Knowledge

In this section you will find information about:

- Latino Cultural Values
- The Intersection of Oppressions and its Impact on Latinas/os

Understanding Latino Cultural Values

A basic understanding of traditional Latino values and norms that can influence the worldview of Latinas and Latinos is an important first step in gaining a better understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence within Latino communities. This is particularly important because ***there are many Latino cultural values and community strengths that can be employed to promote anti-violence messages and to help Latinas and Latinos address violence in their lives.***

> "Latino culture, as with all cultures, carries both positive and negative aspects that must be recognized and named collectively so they can be used to construct models of identity that open up possibilities for liberation and fulfillment rather than oppression."
>
> —Dr. Julia Perilla, Caminar Latino

It is important to clarify from the onset, however, that while many Latinas/os share a common language and certain basic cultural beliefs and values, their experiences and worldview can differ substantially. Influential factors may include immigration status, level of acculturation or assimilation, class, race and gender identity, age, education, religion and sexual orientation, among others.

As such, an appreciation for ***the diversity existing within and across cultures*** is an essential prerequisite for domestic violence service providers and advocates.

Culture in Context

There is no shortcut or formula that can be followed. When working with individuals, it is important to ascertain the influence discrete cultural beliefs may have upon the individual, taking into account the specific context and point in time in which you encounter the person.

Understanding culture requires one to examine the beliefs, values, behaviors, customs and norms of a group. However, this is a daunting challenge because culture is always in flux, encompassing both continuity and discontinuity, lasting traditions and constant change.[47] It is an ongoing attempt by peoples to adapt to changing circumstances and because it is so dynamic it defies accurate description.

Yet cultural knowledge is critical to building cross-cultural understanding and cultural proficiency and so, with the above caveat in place, a summary of key, traditional Latino cultural values and norms are described below:

Familismo/The Central Role of Family

Generally, Latinas/os view family as a primary source of support (and identity). Traditional Latino families tend to be close knit providing emotional and financial support to nuclear and extended family members. The concept of family is broadly defined within the Latino culture incorporating not only extended family but also individuals not related by blood or marriage.

It is not unusual for extended family members to reside with the family or visit for extended periods. Extended family members often assume caretaking responsibilities for children, the elderly and other frail family members. As mentioned earlier, the concept of family also incorporates individuals not related by blood or marriage, such as *hijos de crianza* (children taken in and raised as the family's own), *compadres* and *comadres* (godparents and marriage witnesses) who often become a life-long social support network providing ongoing advice, assistance and resources.

A comparison of Anglo and Latino cultural values and family structures reveals major differences. In the Anglo culture, the function of the family is to serve the development of the individuals who comprise it, whereas in the traditional Latino family, the individuals serve the development of the family. Family members are expected to actively work towards family unity and preservation. Members' accomplishments are viewed primarily as a reflection on the strength and caliber of the family, more so than the individual. Conversely, individual failures or transgressions can bring shame upon the family name.

Members' ongoing efforts towards unifying and preserving the family, in turn, allow the family to invest much energy in providing nurturance and support to its members. This is a critical function as it is usually the family which serves as a buffer between the Latina/o and the larger society which can often seem hostile towards Latinas/os (e.g. police brutality, anti-immigrant sentiment, increasingly stringent immigration laws, English only movement, etc.).[48]

However, social and economic forces have had a major impact on the unity and preservation of Latino families. Extreme poverty has forced many Latinas/os to leave their homelands and seek employment in the U.S., sometimes separating family members for many years, engendering a sense of loss and trauma for many Latino families. Similarly, for Latino families living in the U.S., seeking out better job opportunities has often meant relocating to other cities thereby diminishing ties to extended family members that stay behind.

It is important to note, that in domestic violence situations, batterers have often manipulated their partners' desire for family unity and preservation to justify their abusive behavior, imploring their partners to stay with them despite the violence. This is especially evident, during the "*honeymoon period"* in which the batterer shows remorse and often seeks forgiveness, only to begin the cycle of violence again. In these circumstances, extended families can serve as a very powerful influence and agent of change, serving as an important refuge and source for healing, with the potential to hold batterers accountable for changing their behavior and helping family members to heal from the domestic violence. Conversely, the family may collude with the batterer if not well informed about the dynamics and dangers of domestic violence. That is why community education is so important in working toward social transformation, since family and friends can often have a greater influence than organizations or institutions.

Gender Roles

At one end of the spectrum, traditional Latino culture is characterized by a patriarchal family structure and adherence to traditional sex role definitions (typical of earlier agrarian societies and colonized nations). At the other end of the spectrum, Latinas have often challenged those traditional sex roles. In fact, Latinas have played instrumental leadership roles in national liberation struggles throughout Latin America. For example, female soldiers known as "soldaderas" fought alongside men in the Mexican Revolution of 1910, and in 1993, the first uprising by the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) or Zapatista movement was led and won by women.[49]

As illustrated above, gender roles vary and continue to change rapidly, especially as more Latinas enter the workforce, achieve higher educational status and become economically and socially independent. Within more traditional families, the father or eldest male is considered the protector, provider and authority or primary decision maker. In accordance with the ideal of family unity and preservation, Latinas in traditional households are often groomed since childhood to become good wives and mothers, often placing the needs of the family over their own. For many Latinas, identity and self-esteem have been intertwined with the ability to fulfill the ideal of being a good daughter, wife and mother. As such, domestic violence and family disruption often engenders in Latinas a sense of failure and emptiness.

While remnants of traditional gender roles for women continue to exist, many Latinas have been fearless defenders of their families and communities, and Latino history is replete with examples of courageous Latina leaders revered not only for their accomplishments but also for defying conventional gender roles.

A few examples include Lolita Lebron, who took up arms in defense of the independence of Puerto Rico in 1950, and Dolores Huerta, mother of 11 children who together with Cesar Chavez, co-founded the United Farm Workers. Dolores was a principal leader of the historic National Grape Boycott. As leaders of the farmworkers union, after many years of difficult organizing, numerous marches and protests, massive voter registration drives, and successful boycotts, they were able to gain dignity and respect for farm workers and create safer working conditions. Moreover, spurred by the role of women's organizations and leaders in human rights struggles all across the Americas, Latin American feminism is thriving.[50] Presently Latinas play leadership roles in a variety of struggles, including anti-war, human rights, student, and workers' rights movements.

Male gender roles or concepts of masculinity within Latino culture have often been intertwined with the notion of machismo. One definition of machismo is a strong or exaggerated sense of masculinity stressing attributes such as physical strength, courage, virility, domination of women, and aggressiveness.[51]

However, Latino academics and service providers working in batterers' intervention programs note that the true meaning of being a macho was historically that of protector and provider for the family and community; someone who is responsible, hard working, honorable — a man of his word.[52]

Within the domestic violence field, particularly in the last decade, a new crop of progressive Latino men have been working in collaboration with women advocates to end intimate partner violence in Latino communities through the development of culturally based programs for Latino abusers (see section on batterer intervention programs). These new modalities help Latino men to understand, proactively address and heal from the multiple oppressions they and their communities encounter (e.g. racism, anti-immigrant sentiment, poverty and unemployment, etc.). Moreover, they employ cultural values and strengths to help men unlearn violent and abusive behaviors.

Personalismo

Latinas/os place utmost value on relationships with individuals rather than institutions. Latinas/os are more likely to trust and cooperate in situations where rapport has been established with an individual and tend to avoid interacting with institutions that are perceived to be impersonal, formalistic and bureaucratic.[53]

Domestic violence shelters with bureaucratic rules that close their doors to women who do not speak English or restrict eligibility based on the number, age and sex of the Latina's children will serve to breed distrust and deter many Latinas from seeking domestic violence services from mainstream institutions.

Respeto and Simpatía

Respeto or respect is manifested in many ways within Latino culture. First and foremost is the acknowledgement of the inherent value of all persons. Secondly, the belief that special consideration, deference and respect should be paid to elders and authority figures or leaders within and outside of the community.[54] Thirdly, respeto is conferred as an acknowledgement of the fulfillment of obligations and trustworthiness, such as when a man is respectful to his family, and serves as a good example to his children.

Simpatía is a preference for smooth social relations based on politeness and respect and the avoidance of confrontation and criticism, which is considered rude behavior.

Overt disagreement is not always considered appropriate behavior, which may sometimes lead to confusion and misunderstanding among non-Latinas/os. For example, out of politeness and respect for authority, a Latino/a may nod his/her head affirmatively but this does not necessarily signify agreement or that compliance will occur; silence may mean disagreement or failure to understand what is being said and embarrassment about asking for clarification.

These types of interactions are often incorrectly viewed by service providers and the criminal justice system as a form of passivity, submissiveness, manipulation or dishonesty rather than culturally driven, nuanced interactions holding several possible meanings which must be explored further.

The Role of Spirituality and Religion

Spirituality is a powerful and pervasive influence for many Latinas/os, and it takes many forms. About 70% of Latinas/os in the United States are Catholic, reflecting the colonization of Latin America by Catholic countries (Spain and Portugal).[55] Catholicism continues to play a central role in the lives of many Latinas/os. It is not uncommon for Latinas/os to be named after Catholic figures such as María (Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ), Guadalupe (the patron saint of Mexico), Jesús

(Jesus Christ) and José (Joseph, Mary's husband) as well as numerous Catholic saints. Latinas/os will often seek the advice of a priest or engage in *oraciones*, special prayers seeking guidance and divine intervention.[56]

Life transitions and resolutions to change are often accompanied by religious ceremonies. For example, at Caminar Latino, a program for Latinas/os who have a history of domestic violence, male participants of Mexican origin have been known to make a *Juramento* or solemn promise to Jesus or the Virgin of Guadalupe to give up alcohol or drugs which is often witnessed by a priest.[57]

However, Dr. Julia Perilla, a researcher and domestic violence survivor herself, points out that the church has played a central role in silencing Latinas' concerns about domestic violence:

> The emphasis placed on the family and the indissolubility of marriage, at whatever cost, is found in Catholic, as well as fundamentalist churches, the denominations to which most Latinas/os belong. Although it is slowly changing, the salient message that Latinas receive from many members of the clergy and religious representatives is that domestic violence is at best a miscommunication between the couple and at worse the fault of the woman who must amend her ways to safeguard the family. Using the Virgin Mary or biblical passages to support their assertions, church representatives often silence the voice of women who have taken the difficult first step to tell the truth regarding their relationships. For many Latinas who still subscribe to traditional beliefs and values regarding the church, the message they receive often has lasting and dangerous consequences.[58]

At the same time, recognizing the profound changes brought about by the theology of liberation movement, Latino service providers also point to the affirming role individual Catholic priests have played and can continue to play in helping individuals, families and communities to heal. Latino service providers have reported independent Catholic priests have welcomed unmarried couples to their church, blessed gay marriages and divorces and denounced sexual abuse and domestic violence, among many other progressive actions.[59]

The number of Protestants has also grown considerably reaching 23% in 2000, primarily due to the influx of missionaries in Latin America commencing in the 1950's - 1960's, as well as greater exposure to Protestants here in the United States. Christianity among some Latinas/os has also been influenced by the spiritual beliefs of Africans who were brought to Latin America and the Caribbean as slaves. *Santeria*, which ascribes names and traits of African gods to Catholic saints is one such example.

Other religious and spiritual practices observed by some Latinas/os include Espiritismo as well as Native American religious practices which continue to coexist in the United States and throughout the Caribbean, Mexico, Central and South America.

Santería and Espiritismo, are less familiar to many Americans and lack of information about these practices has sometimes generated misunderstanding and fear. For these reasons, a brief summary is provided.

A Brief Look at Santería and Espiritismo

Santería is an Afro-Caribbean religion derived from traditional beliefs of the Yoruba people of Nigeria, based on worship of nature. It is a syncretic religion based on West African religions brought by slaves taken to the Caribbean to work on sugar plantations. These slaves' religious traditions include possession trances for communicating with ancestors and deities, the use of animal sacrifice and the practice of sacred drumming and dance. Most slaves taken to the Caribbean, Central and South America were converted to Catholicism, but preserved some of their traditions by fusing together various elements of their own religion with Catholic beliefs. Specifically, they represented their dieties (strongly associated with the forces of nature) as Catholic saints. In Cuba this fusion evolved into what is now recognized as *Santería*. This fusion also gave way to the name Santería, originally a pejorative term based on the worshipers' seeming overdevotion to worshiping saints, rather than God.

Today hundreds of thousands of Americans participate in this religion. Many are of Hispanic and Caribbean descent but as the religion moves out of the inner cities and into the suburbs a growing number are of African American and European American heritage. Many practitioners of Santería, especially in Cuba, also consider themselves to be Catholics and have been baptized. People practice Santería throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, especially in Panama, Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Mexico, as well as the United States. A similar religion called *Candomble* is practiced in Brazil as well. Santería beliefs do not center around good and evil but see all things as having positive aspects and negative aspects. Nothing is completely good or evil; all things have components of both. Similarly no actions are completely wrong or right but must be judged within the context and circumstances in which they take place.

Espiritismo is the Latin American and Caribbean belief that good and evil spirits can affect health, luck and other elements of life. Many *Espiritistas* (Espiritismo practitioners) gather to communicate with spirits in misas, which are similar to the séances of American-style Spiritualism. However, many Espiritismo practices have elements of magic ritual which are not present in Spiritualism. A main tenet of Espiritismo is the a belief in an omnipotent God and creator of the universe. Espiritistas also believe in a spirit world inhabited by unembodied spiritual beings who gradually evolve intellectually and morally. These beings can influence the corporeal world in various ways. Espiritismo has never had a single leader or epicenter of practice, so practices vary among individuals and groups in different places. In all cases, Espiritismo has absorbed various practices from other religious and spiritual practices in Latin America and the Caribbean, such as Roman Catholicism, curanderismo or folk healing, Santería and Vodou.[60]

Designing Culturally Proficient Programs

Addressing the Intersectionality of Oppressions

Designing culturally proficient programs requires more than an understanding of cultural values. It also requires an understanding of the historic and contemporary social, economic and political forces that impact cultural groups and how these forces help to shape attitudes, behaviors and worldview. Therefore **domestic violence providers must not only become mindful of Latino cultural norms but also, must seek to understand the convergence of oppressions, as a daily occurrence in the lives of many Latinas/os**. Latinas and Latinos experience multiple and simultaneous forms of oppression based on class or socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and immigrant status. As such, domestic violence counselors and advocates need to understand how these multiple oppressions intersect in the lives of Latinas/os — in order to develop effective short and long term strategies to address Latinas' needs and circumstances and help Latinos who batter change their behavior.

Social Economic Stress (SES)

From an economic standpoint, Latinas/os are more likely to be concentrated in the lowest paying jobs,[61] and are disproportionately represented in sweatshops and workplaces where labor protections are violated on a routine basis.

It is estimated that Latinas earn 54 cents for every one dollar earned by White women. Latinas are exploited not only economically but also face sexual harassment in their place of employment, do not receive competitive wages, have limited opportunities for advancement and are forced to work longer hours trying to make ends meet (oftentimes unsuccessfully). Moreover, Latinas are the least likely of all workers to enjoy job related pension or health benefits,[62] and in fact, more than 52% of low income Latinas lack health insurance.[63] For undocumented Latinas who work in the informal economy (e.g. housecleaning, childcare, garment industry and other factories) labor protections are practically non-existent leading to inhumane treatment including failure to pay wages, unsafe working conditions and sexual exploitation.

The combined effects of gender and ethnic discrimination are made apparent by the fact that *a Latina with a college degree earns less than a white woman with a high school diploma*. In light of these glaring inequities and abuses, it should come as no surprise that Latino children account for almost one third of all children living in poverty in the U.S. As such, Latina battered women often feel they will not be able to earn enough money on their own to financially provide for their children and fear leading their families into homelessness.

Moreover, even when she earns enough to sustain her family, the option of leaving the batterer often requires the Latina to leave her existing job to avoid confrontations with and harassment by the batterer. Yet, factors such as the high Latina unemployment rate, lack of marketable skills, low literacy, poor English language proficiency and undocumented immigrant status or pending application for citizenship can make it difficult for Latinas to consider leaving.

Compounding this problem is the gender discrimination faced from within the culture. A leading Latina human rights scholar, Berta Esperanza Hernández-Truyol, has introduced the concept of *gendered underclass*. She argues that the centrality of family and traditional sex and gender roles within the Latino culture serve to create a Latina underclass in which Latinas' needs are continually subordinated to those of the men and family members in her life.[64]

Latino men are also discriminated in the workplace, earning 63.2 cents for every dollar earned by White men.[65] They earn only about 80% of what White men with the same level of educational attainment earn.[66] Latino men are more likely to be unemployed or out of the labor force than White men. They are also more likely to be concentrated in low-wage occupations that are physically demanding and/or lack pension coverage.[67]

Only 46% of Latino men have health insurance, less than any other ethnic group. Many are concentrated in jobs requiring physical labor and therefore prone to injuries, yet they are less likely to visit a physician than White men. In fact, 55% of Latino men do not have a doctor they see regularly.[68] Additionally, only 16% of Latino men receive private pensions, and are less likely than all Whites or Blacks to receive any type of pension support.[69]

Furthermore, it is estimated that 81% of undocumented workers in the U.S. are of Latin American origin and, of these, 59% are men,[70] many of whom earn minimum wage or less. Because of their undocumented status many mistakenly assume that workers' rights such as overtime pay, safety training and worker's compensation do not apply to them.

Homophobia

A recent report on domestic violence in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities, published by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) reported that Latinas/os had the second highest domestic violence report rate (15.1%) of any group.[71] Homosexuality remains a taboo subject within Latino communities, breeding isolation of LGBT members and rendering LGBT domestic violence survivors invisible. In a case reported by the National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Organization (LLEGO), a Latina lesbian, Juana Gloria Vega, was killed at the hands of her partner's brother who claimed Juana had turned his sister into a lesbian.[72]

Cultural norms that support strict gender roles, patriarchal family structures and religious teachings condemning homosexuality contribute to high levels of heterosexism and homophobia within Latino communities. Because of the intense homophobia encountered, many LGBT Latinos/as choose not to reveal their sexual orientation to family members. Even when Latinas/os do come "out" to their families, family members may be insensitive and unsupportive providing little or no acknowledgement or affirmation. Few programs for Latino/a LGBT domestic violence survivors exist and utilizing mainstream domestic violence services is often tantamount to being "outed." Latino LGBT communities tend to be smaller and close knit, thus, it can be hard to get away from the batterer and his/her friends and without family support LGBT domestic violence survivors can experience acute isolation.

Nativism and Anti-immigrant Sentiment

Since the 1980's, and accelerating in the 2000's, the United States has witnessed a resurgence of anti-immigrant sentiment and heightened xenophobia, defined as fear or contempt for strangers or foreigners.[73]

Many claims have been made against undocumented immigrants in particular, including claims that they place a drain on U.S. resources. However little attention has been paid to the fact that **undocumented immigrants contribute at least $300 billion to the U.S. gross national product annually.**[74] In fact, it is estimated that each new immigrant generates a positive contribution to the country of roughly $1800 annually.[75]

Moreover, the vast majority of Latino workers in the U.S. pay into the Social Security system, but are less likely than their White and Black counterparts to receive benefits. Many also work in the informal economy in positions such as domestics or childcare workers, and may not earn credits qualifying them for retirement benefits, particularly if their employers fail to pay into the social security system on their behalf.

For several decades now, Latino immigrants have been made to feel unwelcome; they have been discriminated against, maligned and attacked. In the mid-1980's, the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) sought to control "illegal" immigration by increasing border enforcement and making it illegal for an employer to knowingly hire an immigrant without permission to work in the United States.[76] In 1994, a fiscal crisis in California propelled the passage of Proposition 187, one of the most xenophobic ballot propositions ever introduced, in the state with the largest Latino population. The opening text of the Proposition 187 stated:

> The People of California find and declare as follows: That they have suffered and are suffering economic hardship caused by the presence of illegal aliens in this state. That they have suffered and are suffering personal injury and damage caused by criminal conduct of illegal aliens in this state. That they have the right to protection of their government from any person or persons entering this country unlawfully.[77]

Proposition 187 sought to prohibit local and state agencies from providing publicly funded social services, education, welfare and non-emergency health care to those who were not U.S. citizens or lawfully admitted to the United States. In fact, Proposition 187 would have resulted in the expulsion and exclusion of hundreds of thousands of undocumented children from schools. Despite its potentially devastating impact on immigrant communities, Proposition 187 was in fact passed by California voters by 75% of the vote, but was subsequently declared unconstitutional.

However, the attack on immigrants did not stop there. The very next year, the Senior Editor of *Forbes*, Peter Brimelow, authored a book entitled *Alien Nation* in which he argued for the sealing of America's borders, the issuance of national identity cards, the imprisonment and deportation of all unauthorized immigrants and the complete elimination of humanitarian categories such as refugees and asylees.[78]

Shortly thereafter, in 1996, Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), accomplishing on a national scale much of what Proposition 187 intended to do at the state level. After PRWORA, undocumented immigrants were barred from 31 DHHS programs they had been eligible for prior to PRWORA.

Moreover legal immigrants became ineligible to receive food stamps and non-refugee immigrants were banned from receiving Medicaid and TANF during their first five years of residency, among other prohibitions.

Other manifestations of anti-immigrant sentiment include the development of the English Only movement, the dismantling of bilingual education and the surge in community protests and hate crimes against immigrant laborers.[79] These attacks leave an indelible impression in the minds and hearts of immigrants throughout this country that many U.S. Americans neither welcome them nor value their contributions to this society.

Immigration policies mean that undocumented immigrants and legal permanent residents who are arrested for domestic violence offenses are easily deported. Consequently, Latina battered women are oftentimes reluctant to seek help outside of the family and community, fearing that disclosing the violence may reinforce stereotypes, jeopardize their immigration status or simply that they will be either denied services or mistreated.

Anti-immigrant sentiment has escalated at an unprecedented rate as evidenced by numerous beatings and murders of immigrant laborers in recent years and the **introduction of over 1400 immigration measures (almost all are anti-immigrant) before state legislatures in 2007 alone.**

Local governments are engaging in a new level of anti-immigration activism. For example, in Prince William County, Virginia, the County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution denying many public services to all undocumented immigrants.[80] Most recently, Republicans in the Virginia legislature also proposed legislation that would bar all undocumented immigrants from attending public universities in Virginia, even if they had attended public high school and lived most of their lives in the U.S.

Finally, in 2006, Congress passed legislation calling for the construction of 700 miles of new fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border. About 15 miles of fencing have been built, according to the Department of Homeland Security. **Sadly, it is estimated that since 1993, more than 3,800 Mexicans have died trying to cross the Mexico-U.S. border.**[81] Additionally many Mexicans caught attempting to cross the border suffer at the hands of Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Amnesty International has reported persons detained by ICE have been subjected to cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment, including beatings, sexual assault, and denial of food, water and medical attention.[82]

SECTION FOUR

Domestic Violence in Latino Communities: Dispelling Myths and Addressing Realities

In this section you will learn about:

- Service Barriers Encountered by Latinas/os
- The Need for Culturally and Linguistically Proficient Services
- The Role of Batterers' Programs
- Special Challenges Faced by Immigrant Battered Women

Domestic Violence in Latino Communities: Dispelling Myths and Addressing Realities

It is important to preface this section by noting that domestic violence occurs across all racial, ethnic and economic groups. In the United States, studies indicate that one in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime. [83] Prevalence studies of domestic violence in Latino communities within the United States have obtained contradictory results. Some research suggests that Latinas may experience domestic violence at rates higher than Anglo women and other studies have found no significant differences between women from these two groups. **The National Crime Victimization Survey, a leading source of data on domestic violence in the United States, reports no significant differences in the prevalence of domestic violence for Latinas/os as compared to other groups.[84]**

However, Latinas/os do face numerous obstacles and challenges to addressing domestic violence in their lives and to obtaining culturally responsive domestic violence services.

Oftentimes Latinas are simply unaware of their rights under the law and about the range of options available to them. Prior to the mid 1990's, many countries in Latin America (and throughout the world) did not have laws that protected women from domestic violence. Although such laws now exist in most countries of Latin America, enforcement is haphazard at best, due to inadequate infrastructures and financing.[85]

Why Do We Need Culturally Proficient Services?

When Latinas do attempt to access legal remedies they are often re-victimized. This is particularly evident in the case of the criminal justice system's treatment of Latinas. The "shortage of bilingual and bicultural personnel — prosecutors, judges, clerks and psychologists, all of whom are crucial to a Latina's case – creates a system unprepared for and unwilling to address claims by Latinas."[86] Lack of cultural sensitivity and class biases often preclude judges from understanding the cultural and economic factors that influence a Latina's choice to stay in an abusive relationship and attorneys often railroad Latinas with limited English proficiency during court proceedings.[87]

The lack of linguistically appropriate services threatens the safety of Latinas each day. For example, police officers responding to domestic violence complaints oftentimes will still rely on the batterer for interpretation. A Latina survivor featured in a Newsday article recounts, "[t]he day he cut me with the glass I was so frightened I called the police, but because I don't know any English they talked to him. He told the cops nothing happened. I was bleeding and bruised but they believed him."[88] Additionally, stereotypes that Latinos are more violent and that violence is a way of life in Latino communities contributes to the disregard encountered by Latinas at the hands of the police and court system.

Moreover, without the benefit of bilingual/bicultural staff at domestic violence shelters to address language and cultural issues that arise, Latinas often report feeling isolated, especially when they are placed in remote areas with little or no access to Latino support systems and helping professionals.[89] The sense of alienation and isolation Latinas experience in shelters is only exacerbated by expressions of racial and cultural intolerance on the part of shelter staff and residents.[90]

The lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate domestic violence services, insufficient outreach to Latino communities, discriminatory institutional policies and practices, as well as, low literacy levels make it difficult for Latinas/os to navigate "helping" institutions as well as learn and exercise their rights under the law.

Fear of being deported or jeopardizing one's legal status is also a primary concern for immigrants. In one study of undocumented immigrants, 64% of Latinas identified fear of deportation as a major barrier to seeking assistance from social service agencies.[91]

Lack of Bilingual/Bicultural Staff and Linguistically Appropriate Materials

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964[92] provides that recipients of Federal financial assistance are not allowed to discriminate based on race, color or national origin. Protection against national origin discrimination includes discrimination based on the inability to speak, read, write, or understand English. In 2000, the President signed **Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency."** The Executive Order requires Federal agencies to examine the services they provide, identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency (LEP), and develop and implement a system to provide those services so LEP persons can have meaningful access to them. Additionally, any states, localities and organizations receiving federal funding are required to provide meaningful access to LEP individuals. (A federal website has been developed focused on the issue of meeting the needs of those with Limited English proficiency, see www.LEP.gov.)

Despite the fact that shelters and other domestic violence programs that receive federal funding have this legal obligation, there are many reports of individuals facing language barriers that prevent meaningful access to services offered by domestic violence service providers, as well as police departments, the court system, and health care providers.

In 2003 Alianza conducted a national survey of domestic violence providers. Of 600 surveys that were sent out 92 agencies responded.[93] Twenty-five percent of the participating agencies reported having no bilingual/bicultural staff and another 57% had two or less bilingual/bicultural staff.[94]

Additionally, Alianza compiled and reviewed more than 215 sample materials, including brochures, posters, fliers and manuals from various Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) funded programs and other domestic violence organizations.

The review of sample domestic violence materials identified several major problems:

1. Some of the materials were poorly translated versions of English language materials rather than materials originally developed in Spanish and specifically tailored to Latina/o populations.
2. Many of the materials did not take into account the low literacy levels of the target audience.
3. The materials lacked the types of cultural images, symbols and messages likely to resonate with Latina/o communities.

Working with Latina Survivors

Working with Latina survivors requires domestic violence counselors and advocates to become cognizant of their own biases and internalized stereotypes, to refrain from making assumptions and to invest considerable time in building rapport and trust with the Latina domestic violence survivor. Providers must be willing to take the time to understand the cultural lens through which each individual Latina interprets and responds to her life situation. The service provider must be willing to work in partnership with her to develop an action plan that makes "cultural sense" from the individual Latina's perspective, drawing upon the cultural and community strengths and support systems available to her.

This is not to say that domestic violence advocates, Latinas and non-Latinas alike, should ignore the manner in which cultural norms can be utilized as a tool of oppression to subjugate or subordinate women (this occurs in all cultures) but rather to acknowledge that Latinas must determine the solutions that work best for them.

Moreover, providers and advocates must be willing to examine organizational policies and practices that make Latinas feel unwelcome, misunderstood, and disempowered and that discourage them from seeking assistance. These practices range from denying Latinas shelter on the basis of language, to demanding (through direct and indirect messages) that Latinas acculturate, supplanting Anglo or American values for their own. The demand to acculturate could take the form of asking her to leave the home, of requiring her to get a court order to get the batterer to leave and pressuring her to use the police/criminal justice system against him. It also takes the form of forbidding contact with the batterer or with her family once she is in shelter. For people who are family-centric, these practices are often deal breakers.

A first step in developing programs for Latinas is to listen to what Latinas have said about the barriers they face in addressing domestic violence. In 2002, the National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence (Alianza) conducted focus groups with 73 Latina domestic violence survivors in 9 cities across the nation. Participants' primary concerns are summarized below:

Barriers Faced by Latinas When Seeking Help:

- Lack of information about legal rights, options, and availability of domestic violence services;
- Immigrant Latinas feared that reporting domestic violence would result in their application for residency/ citizenship being denied or that reporting the violence would lead to deportation;
- Low literacy and lack of Spanish-speaking staff — making it difficult to access and utilize domestic violence services;
- Distrust and fear of the police, and when police assistance has been sought, a marked failure of police to adequately respond to domestic violence disputes; and
- Negative experiences with domestic violence shelter programs including long delays or failure to obtain a shelter bed, difficulty communicating with staff because of the lack of bilingual staff or interpreters, geographic inaccessibility and transportation difficulties.

As noted above one of the major barriers encountered by Latinas is the lack of linguistically accessible services. The following account serves to illustrate the **language discrimination** sometimes experienced by Latina battered women when seeking shelter services:

> The Hotline [New York State Spanish Domestic Violence Hotline], recently attempted to place an otherwise eligible Spanish-speaking Latina from New York City into a residence in Manhattan. At first the shelter representative said there was space, but upon learning that the woman did not speak English, the representative refused to accept her on the grounds that their policy prohibited placing roommates together who could not communicate with each other. The Hotline's several attempts to convince the shelter to accept the woman failed. There were no other residential programs available at the time. Eventually, the woman left and briefly stayed with a relative until the batterer found her and took her back home. [95]

Ursula Colon-Morales, a psychologist and battered women's advocate points out that most training received by service providers and mental health professionals in the United States is influenced by the social construction and ideologies of the dominant, Anglo culture. As such, little or no attention is paid to understanding the cultural values and social context that influence Latinas' understanding and response to domestic violence. She notes that service providers who fail to understand and respect Latinas' cultural perspectives perpetuate the alienation that Latinas often experience when seeking assistance from Anglo institutions.

> Latinas are separated from their beliefs, encouraged to assimilate to the new culture and, often forced to adapt and respond to their situation, according to the social expectations of a culture that is unfamiliar to them and which does not understand the interpretation the Latina client gives to the events in her life.[96]

Immigrant Battered Women

Service providers must also be mindful of the special challenges confronted by immigrant Latinas who are battered. Battered immigrant women often experience a deep sense of alienation and loneliness as a result of leaving their homelands, which is often exacerbated when they are confronted with anti-immigrant sentiment and discrimination that is now prevalent in the U.S.

Isolation, unfamiliarity with U.S culture, lack of family and social support systems all serve to heighten tensions within the family and often increase the woman's dependency on her partner, from both an economic and social standpoint.

Moreover, lack of knowledge about the legal system and their legal rights, fear of deportation and/or fear of losing her children to the child welfare system converge and act as major barriers to seeking out social and/or legal services of any kind.[97] Not surprisingly and as noted earlier, a recent study of undocumented immigrants found that 64% of Latinas reported the primary barrier to seeking help from social services was fear of deportation.[98] For this reason it is critically important that service providers fully understand the options available for immigrant battered women through VAWA self petition, cancellation of removal, and U-visas, facilitating referrals to the proper legal assistance programs.

Although organizations that receive federal funding for domestic violence services are not supposed to deny shelter services or related assistance based on immigration status, national origin, or language, nonetheless, Latinas and other immigrants continue to face barriers in accessing these services.

The welfare reform law passed in 1996 created new requirements affecting access to federally funded programs for immigrants. One vulnerable population specifically addressed in the legislation is battered immigrants and their children. In most cases, federally funded programs serving domestic violence victims are available to all immigrants who have been abused, regardless of their immigration status.

There are some programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) that may have income and immigrant eligibility restrictions. Programs which contain eligibility criteria, such as income, are considered "Federal public benefits" and as a general rule, are only available to "qualified aliens." While many battered immigrants meet the definition of "qualified alien," some do not.

Nonetheless, the Attorney General has designated certain services necessary for the protection of life and safety that are exempt from the immigration restrictions imposed by the welfare reform law when they are delivered at the community level without regard to an individual's income or resources. These include domestic violence services such as short-term shelter or housing assistance and other in-kind services.[99] "(See Appendix for a listing of resources regarding access to services for immigrants.)

As recipients of Federal financial assistance, shelters must comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and other civil rights laws. Recipients of Federal financial assistance are not allowed to discriminate based on race, color or national origin. Protection against national origin discrimination includes persons with limited English proficiency.[100]

Other emergency and transitional shelters receiving funding from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) that are not devoted to serving survivors of domestic violence may also be exempt from immigration verification imposed by the 1996 laws. They may be covered by the Attorney General's Order either because they are exempt as not-for-profit charitable organizations or because they provide assistance regardless of eligibility criteria.

At times the barriers faced by immigrant survivors are a result of misinformation in which service providers mistakenly assume that undocumented immigrants or those without citizenship are not entitled to access their shelter services. Other times it is caused by discrimination, due to the fact that some service providers do not want to address the challenges of providing services to those with limited English proficiency. Some service providers do not want to face the challenges of helping immigrant survivors who may not be able to access other federal public benefits or transitional housing programs that are not accessible to certain categories of immigrants.

Certainly, greater efforts must be made to ensure that domestic violence service providers do not deny shelter services or related assistance based on immigration status, national origin, or language. Beyond ensuring access to services, pursuant to federal law, formula grant-funded activities must proactively address ethnic, cultural and language-diversity issues.[101]

VAWA Protection of Battered and Trafficked Immigrants

Domestic violence advocates worked hard to help Congress understand that in order to stop domestic violence and other forms of violence, including sexual assault and trafficking, all victims regardless of their immigration status need protection and assistance. As such, Title VIII of the Violence Against Women Act of 2005 (VAWA)[102] sought to eliminate some of the major obstacles to safety that immigrant victims face by including the following provisions:

- Strengthening provisions included in VAWA 1994 and 2000 to stop the deportation of immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or trafficking;
- Extending immigration relief to a larger group of family violence victims, including victims of elder abuse and adolescent children of immigrant victims of domestic abuse and child abuse;
- Allowing child abuse and incest victims to self-petition up to age 25, so long as the child abuse was at least one central reason for the filing delay;
- Strengthening confidentiality enforcement and protecting the personal information of victims, including special immigrant juveniles;
- Providing more economic security for victims through increased access to employment authorization;
- Authorizing any Legal Services Corporation-funded program to use any source of funding, including LSC funding, to represent any victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, or other crime, regardless of the victim's immigration status;
- Improving the processing of VAWA self-petitioning cases and technical amendments; and
- Creating regulations for international marriage brokers for the purpose of preventing human trafficking.

As previously mentioned, growing anti-immigrant sentiment further isolates battered immigrant women and makes them fearful of seeking the help of police officers or the court system. While important protections have been written into law, it is critically important to help battered immigrant women learn about their rights and be able to access legal representation and court accompaniment in order to help them navigate the complexities of the court and immigration systems.

Providing a Continuum of Culturally Responsive Options

While Latina survivors certainly want to end the violence in their lives, many want to explore ways to address domestic violence while remaining in the community and keeping their families intact (or reuniting their families), an approach that will require a greater investment in holistic models and programs for Latino batterers. Consequently, interventions that may run counter to the survivor's cultural expectations, such as pressuring her to leave the batterer or to use the criminal justice system against the abuser can be counterproductive, if not entered into with the full consent of the individual involved. Not surprisingly, service providers' attempts to be "helpful" often lead to interventions that are likely to fail in the long run because the woman never owned or fully invested in the proposed solution. When "failure" occurs, the Latina may be labeled as "resistant", "uncooperative" or "passive-aggressive" allowing providers to *disinvest* in her and even terminate her from services.

The misguided "helping" dynamic described above illustrates the need to continue to develop more options and alternatives. Specifically, community and culturally based domestic violence prevention and services models that help women to stay safe while at the same time respecting the preferences of many women to keep their families together and remain in the community. However, this analysis should not be interpreted to undermine the importance of **keeping all options open for persons encountering intimate partner violence** including shelter services, law enforcement and court intervention. Without question, all possible options must be made available so as to ensure the individual's safety, well being and service preferences.

The challenge for service providers is to remain aware of their own biases and prevent those biases from interfering in the helping encounter. The desire of many Latinas to keep families together oftentimes has been misunderstood as denial and/or acceptance of the abuse, collusion with the batterer or being *acculturated* to violence. Advocates and service

providers must examine whether these perceptions are rooted in racist and prejudicial beliefs that Latinas are docile, passive or paralyzed from taking action by their culture and that Latino men are more violent than others and therefore less capable of changing their behavior.[103]

The ***cultural disconnects*** that can oftentimes occur between Latina survivors and domestic violence providers illustrate the need for the domestic violence providers to invest in developing culturally proficient practices and policies. Denying Latinas shelter on the basis of language or requiring Latinas to accept solutions that ignore or are disrespectful of the Latinas' cultural belief system are, respectively, examples of cultural destructiveness and cultural blindness.

A commitment to developing culturally proficient services must be made by the domestic violence movement in order for it to remain relevant to Latinas and women of color generally.

Cultural proficiency is the capacity to effectively communicate and interact with culturally diverse people, in a manner that is respectful and responsive to the cultural and linguistic needs of the population. As noted earlier, cultural proficiency is demonstrated not only by the integration of cultural elements in the design and delivery of services but also by the commitment to eliminating institutional barriers (e.g. racism, sexism, heterosexism and nativism) that hinder access and meaningful participation and/or use of services.

As noted in the diagram below, at present institutional responses to cultural differences run the gamut from demanding Latina "outsiders" acculturate to the mainstream cultural prescriptions and service delivery models to creating the institutional capacity to effectively communicate and serve culturally diverse constituencies by integrating elements of their culture (e.g. language, values, attitudes and norms) into service provision.

Cultural Proficiency Continuum

Cultural Destructiveness & Cultural Deficit Perspectives	Cultural Blindness	Cultural Awareness	Cultural Competency	Cultural Proficiency
• Making people fit the same cultural pattern. • Excluding those who don't fit. • Pressuring assimilation. • Emphasizing using differences to create barriers.	• Not seeing or believing there are cultural differences among people. • Everyone is the same.	• Being aware that we live & function within a culture of our own and that our identity is shaped by it.	• Knowing that there are cultural differences. • Understanding and accepting different cultural values, attitudes and behaviors.	• Having the capacity to communicate and interact effectively with culturally diverse people, integrating elements of their culture—vocabulary, values, attitudes, rules and norms. *Translating knowledge into action. • Understanding that culturally biased helping systems may have an oppressive impact; taking proactive steps to change biases and remove barriers.
Example: Bureaucratic rules and systems that bar access and require people to accept solutions or services that do not fit their cultural background	**Example:** *One size fits all* services	**Example:** Outreach to communities of color	**Example:** Development of culturally and linguistically appropriate educational materials	**Example:** Customized, culturally responsive services and organizational practices

Adapted from, Terry Cross. 1989. *Towards a Culturally Competent System of Care.* Volume 1. CAASP Technical Assistance Center. Georgetown University Child Development Center. Washington, DC.

Working with Latino Men

Latino Men and the Criminal Justice System

The reluctance of communities of color to utilize the criminal justice system for recourse is well founded. Institutional racism and oppression continues to flourish within the ranks of law enforcement and criminal justice institutions. In fact, there is abundant and incontrovertible evidence indicating that men of color are disproportionately represented in prisons, on death row and are more likely to be falsely arrested, become victims of police brutality, and receive harsher sentences for the same offense as compared to Whites.

In large urban jurisdictions, there are wide incarceration disparities among racial/ethnic groups. On average for all crimes, the incarceration rate for White defendants is 69.1% as compared to 82.7% for Hispanic defendants. Black defendants' likelihood of incarceration is 75.7 %.

While as in 1985, 55,000 Latinas/os were imprisoned in the United States; over the last twenty years, the number has increased by more than 700%. There are currently more than 450,000 Latinas/os in U.S. prisons or jails[104] accounting for more than 20% of the prison population.[105] Rather than investing in social reform to strengthen communities and provide meaningful alternatives, many social change activists believe the U.S. has created a prison industrial complex producing cheap labor and that incarceration has become the new social policy.

As such, it is not surprising that many Latino men have trouble trusting batterers' intervention programs to which they are referred to by the courts, making it that much more important that community based, culturally responsive programs for Latino abusers become readily available.

Moreover, batterers' programs that lack cultural proficiency miss critical opportunities to help men connect with those cultural values and strengths that can help them make lasting change and become violence free.

> "The mostly European-American criminal justice system and the batterer intervention establishment have not prioritized the development of holistic and culturally based programs. However, to move in this direction would be a matter of respect and would offer an opportunity to enhance program effectiveness."
>
> —Dr. Fernando Mederos

Latino men working to end domestic violence point out that intimate partner violence cannot be disassociated from the violence of colonization, racism and oppression. Participants in Alianza's Forum on Latinos Who Batter[106] noted:

> Patterns of violence in Latino families need to be understood — though not excused — within the historical context of the violence and slaughter committed 500 years ago by the Spanish invaders and the expanding imposition of colonial and imperialist structures throughout the continent. Races and cultures were mixed in great part through rape and violent coercion, creating today's Latino *mestizaje or* people of mixed race…this violent historical process of conquering by violence and oppression left a legacy of trauma and alienation…transforming the sacredness of relationships to relationships that are steeped in the political and personal violence of internalized oppression.

Thus efforts to create behavioral change among Latino abusers must include helping batterers to heal from the systematic, multigenerational process of internalized oppression that can contribute to the cycle of intimate partner violence.[107]

Over the past 15 years, Latino/a activists, service providers and researchers have been developing new conceptual frameworks and program models that are more responsive to Latino cultural experiences and values including programs for Latino abusers. CECEVIM, the Compadres Network and Caminar Latino are examples of pioneering programs that help

Latino abusers deconstruct the reasons why they resort to violence and utilize cultural values to support behavioral change (see Section Five: Identifying Promising Practices in the Field).

Limitations of the Criminal Justice Response to Domestic Violence

Since the passage of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), billions of dollars have been allocated to improve the criminal justice response to intimate partner violence with lesser amounts directed toward enhancing services to survivors.[108] Yet, many advocates point out that racism and discrimination operating within the law enforcement and criminal justice systems make over-reliance on these systems an ineffective strategy and will further disenfranchise Latino communities.

As noted earlier, many Latino men and women distrust the law enforcement and criminal justice systems because of their historically oppressive role in Latin America as well as within Latino communities in the U.S. (e.g. police brutality and illegal arrests, racial/ethnic profiling, raids by the INS (now known as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) located within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and social policies leading to the disproportionate number of Latino/as in prisons, etc.). Moreover, many Latina battered women have complained that upon seeking the assistance of the law enforcement and criminal justice systems, their own views and desires about how to remedy the violence were completely ignored, thus reinforcing their sense of victimization and disenfranchisement.[109] The data suggests that Latinas are not alone in their concerns, **according to the 2000 National Violence Against Women Survey, 75% of intimate partner assaults were not reported to authorities and the vast majority of women whose partners are arrested for assault do not pursue charges.**[110]

There is no doubt that law enforcement and criminal justice protections are important elements in an overall strategy to combat domestic violence. However, it is equally true that the longstanding reluctance on the part of domestic violence survivors to utilize these systems demands closer examination and the continued development of more comprehensive solutions. These solutions must include community centered programs premised on a cultural and community strengths framework including batterer intervention programs specifically tailored to Latino men.

SECTION FIVE

Promising Practices

In this section you will learn about:

- Community-Based Domestic Violence Programs
- Batterers Programs for Latino Males
- Domestic Violence Coalition Models
- Community Organizing & Leadership Development Models

Promising Practices for Working with Latinas and Latinos

Innovation is perhaps one of the most valuable tools we can take with us on the road to social transformation. This section identifies promising practices for working with Latino populations, providing valuable insights about how we can move away from cultural destructiveness or cultural blindness in programming to the development of culturally proficient approaches, programs and services.

Working with Latinas

The Violence Intervention Program

A Look at Community Based Services

Established in 1984, the Violence Intervention Program (VIP) is the oldest community based, bilingual and bicultural domestic violence program in New York State. VIP is located in the community of East Harlem in New York City and employs a three prong approach to addressing domestic violence in Latino communities; these are: direct services, community education and community organizing.[111]

Direct Services. At the direct service level, VIP provides bilingual/bicultural individual and group counseling, hotline services, children's programs, information and referral services, court accompaniment, know your rights and other advocacy training, job readiness counseling, safe apartments and transitional housing assistance. The many strengths of Latino culture, families and communities are incorporated and celebrated in culturally sensitive programming, foods and celebrations, thus enabling new program participants to feel welcomed, accepted and empowered. Whenever possible, formerly battered women and women from the community are hired. These women are then trained to become program counselors and advocates thus creating a new cadre of Latina leaders committed to ending domestic violence. On a daily basis, this cadre of women transmits anti-violence messages and critical information about resources to their neighbors, families and friends.

VIP uses a cultural filter in developing its programming. Understanding the centrality of family and community in the lives of Latinas, VIP staff are cognizant that many clients will not consider leaving their homes as an option, and that it may take some Latinas a much longer period of time to address the violence in their lives. As such, VIP has developed a full range of non-residential services aimed at helping the Latina stay safe, as well as providing her with educational and employment opportunities so that she may achieve self sufficiency and her own empowerment.

Communty Education. VIP's community education strategies draw upon a rich legacy of popular education strategies developed by Paulo Freire and utilized throughout Latin America.[112] At the most fundamental level, VIP's community education program is premised on the understanding that without family and community support, the Latina may either stay or return to a violent relationship for the sake of family unity. As noted earlier, Latinas/os belong to a collectivist culture where interdependence rather than independence is highly valued and where family and community play a central role in Latinas' lives.

VIP's extensive and ongoing community education campaign is designed to develop community consciousness about **how domestic violence not only hurts Latino families and children but is a betrayal of the cultural values Latinas/os hold dear** (e.g. well-being of the family, respeto, etc.). For example, entry level education efforts for survivors emphasize the harmful effects of domestic violence on the children and family and the potential for a multi-generational cycle of abuse to take root, harming new generations of Latino families and communities for decades to come.

Through these efforts, VIP's intended strategy is to orchestrate a "tipping point," in other words, building broad-based community intolerance to domestic violence that will erode the often well-intentioned but misguided messages on the part of family members, friends and neighbors to tolerate the violence " for the sake of the children or family."

Community education presentations are seen as a precursor to the process of developing community solutions and, therefore, they are an ongoing aspect of VIP's work. VIP conducts community forums and charlas (chats/discussion groups) at community centers, churches and schools. Outreach takes place anywhere that Latinas/os congregate (street corners, bodegas, child care centers, laundromats, beauty parlors, cultural centers, etc.) and through the Spanish language press, television, and radio. Understanding the importance of interpersonal relationships to building trust and creating change, VIP staff also participate in all aspects of community life including: local health fairs, community improvement projects, cultural festivals and social events.

Community Organizing. Building community-wide intolerance to domestic violence is only the first step. Effecting change also requires holding community institutions accountable for actively working to end domestic violence and providing appropriate services to domestic violence survivors. At the time of VIP's founding (1984), local police precincts tended to ignore the complaints of battered women or at best walked the batterer around the block and left the battered woman alone to deal with the aftermath of "police intervention." Community health institutions often failed to recognize the signs of domestic abuse and mental health providers tended to blame the survivor for accepting and/or perpetuating the violence.

Against this backdrop, VIP formed the first community-wide, domestic violence coalition in the history of New York City. Comprised of a wide array of community agencies and advocates (e.g. police, health and mental health providers, child welfare and women and family service groups, etc.) the East Harlem Coalition Against Domestic Violence works to hold community institutions accountable for working to end domestic violence, improving services and coordination, as well as, advocating for additional resources and funding to address domestic violence within the community.

For more information about VIP visit www.vipmujeres.org**.**

Casa de Esperanza, Saint Paul, Minnesota

Community Engagement and Technical Assistance

Casa de Esperanza was founded in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1982 by Latina activists seeking to shelter and support Latinas who were experiencing domestic violence. Today it is recognized locally and nationally because of its distinctive work and mission: "Mobilize Latinas and Latino communities to end domestic violence."

Believing deeply in the strengths of Latinas, their families, and communities, Casa de Esperanza facilitates community-driven solutions and provides resources to support families in achieving their hopes and goals. One of Casa de Esperanza's operating premises is that the work of ending domestic violence must become a community priority and thus its programs are designed to maximize community engagement and leadership.

Community Engagement. Casa de Esperanza believes community and *familia* (family) are the fabric of Latino life, and that strong communities enhance social capital and decrease domestic violence. Through its ***Fuerza Unida*** (United Force) program it has heard the voices of Latinas in hundreds of listening sessions that serve to inform its work and also brings information and support into communities. Additionally, bilingual volunteers operate two neighborhood Information and Resource Centers—in St. Paul and Minneapolis—providing access to technology and information about accessing resources that are critical for daily life. *Fuerza Unida* currently focuses on St. Paul's East Side, convening community leaders to create action agendas and utilizing natural, culturally based communications networks for information sharing and community organizing.

Training and Technical Assistance. Casa de Esperanza provides support and training at the local and national level. Its **Peer Education Program** trains adult Latinas and Latino youth in leadership and presentation skills to support and educate their peers. Women present workshops in community settings on topics vital to Latinas' personal and family lives. Youth gain leadership skills and offer workshops in school and community environments on healthy relationships and other topics of interest to young Latinas/os.

Systems Change Training and Consultation. Funded by a grant from the U.S. Office on Violence Against Women, Casa de Esperanza works to increase access to services for Latinas/os by providing culturally appropriate tools and training to more than 100 organizations in 34 states. Through technical assistance Casa de Esperanza has assisted mainstream domestic violence organizations in working with Latinas and Latino domestic violence organizations—often small or newly formed agencies—to build and strengthen their outreach and services to Latinas/os.

Family Advocacy. The Family Advocacy program provides direct services to Latinas who have experienced domestic violence and their families. Casa de Esperanza's bilingual and bicultural Family Advocates work with women and children who find safety at Casa de Esperanza's shelter. Their 24/7 bilingual crisis line receives and responds to thousands of calls each year from individuals as well as other agencies working with Latino communities.

Casa de Esperanza has also developed a range of educational materials on domestic violence in Spanish and English, including books, manuals and videos addressing the needs of children and other special populations. (A list of these resources is included in the resource section of the appendix),

For more information, visit www.casadeesperanza.org.

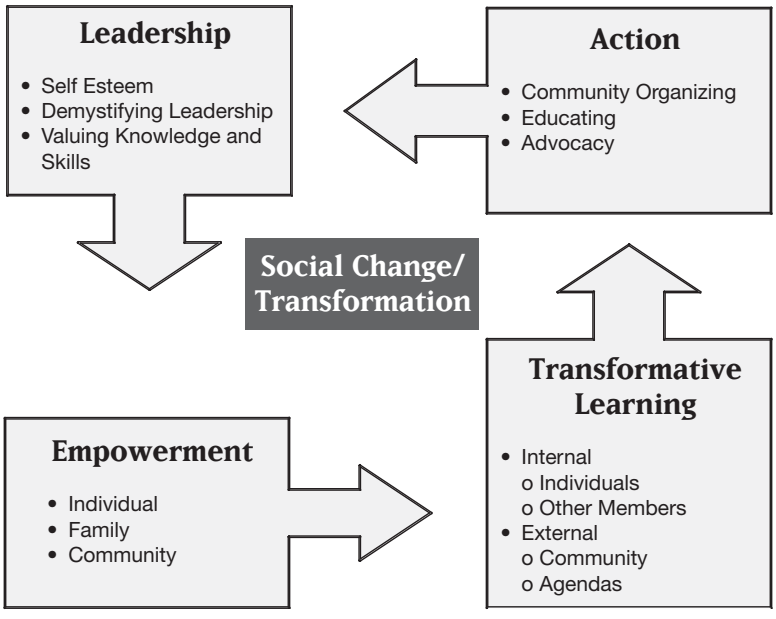
Lideres Campesinas, Pomona, California

Community Organizing and Leadership Development

Incorporated in 1997, the mission of Lideres Campesinas is to develop the leadership skills of Latina farmworkers so that they can become catalysts for social, political and economic change and be able to advance human rights. Lideres Campesinas works to improve the dismal and dangerous working conditions of Latina farmworkers in the fields and packing houses and conducts education on issues such as pesticides, domestic violence, sexual harassment and assault, HIV/AIDS and other health issues.

Lideres Campesinas has created a grassroots, gendered leadership model based on collectivist or cooperative leadership principles. As noted by ethnographer, Maylei Blackwell,[113] Lideres Campesinas' concepts of leadership center on both individual and community empowerment. Lideres Campesinas employs a radical or transformative learning approach where the process of learning and the acquisition of knowledge plays a central role in collective action and empowerment.

The Lideres Campesinas Leadership Model



Lideres Campesinas helps women to demystify the notion of leadership and works to promote empowerment, assisting women to recognize and further develop their own leadership skills in service to themselves, their families and communities. At a house meeting for example, a Lideres Campesina worker may ask, *Who here considers themselves a leader?* Few if any hands are normally raised. However that changes when the worker asks who has organized a quinceañera (similar to a very large sweet sixteen party). A discussion ensues about the many specific leadership skills women employed to organize a quinceañera and other family, church or community events, helping women to recognize and celebrate their intrinsic leadership skills.

Members continue to develop their capacity, skills and knowledge through education programs on topics such as domestic violence and immigrant rights. The learning is then shared by the women through the process of teaching other community members, organizing campaigns and training service providers to be more effective in working with campesinas. Other popular education techniques used include participatory action theater, consisting of skits or dramatizations about issues impacting campesinas.

For more information visit www.liderescampesinas.org.

The Nuevo Amanecer Program, Dominican Women's Development Center

The Special Role of Latino Community Based Organizations

A valuable resource that has often been overlooked within the domestic violence movement is the role Latino community based organizations (CBOs) can play in raising community awareness and mobilizing communities to end domestic violence. Latino CBOs with a long standing history of providing culturally proficient, multi-services to Latino communities are uniquely positioned to offer community based domestic violence services. Founded in 1988, the Dominican Women's Development Center has provided a wide range of services to residents of Washington Heights/Inwood sections of Manhattan, including family counseling services, literacy classes, technology and job training. In 1998 it launched a comprehensive domestic violence program named Nuevo Amanecer.

The Nuevo Amanecer program has been well received within the community, in part due to the respect and trust the parent organization has garnered over the years. Nuevo Amanecer receives considerable support from the parent agency and is thus able to operate a comprehensive program which includes: information and referral services, individual counseling and safety planning, support groups for survivors, advocacy and court accompaniment, a 24 hour bilingual, domestic violence hotline and a counseling and support program for children and youth who are victims or witnesses of domestic violence.

Nuevo Amanecer receives referrals from all agency programs and is able to rapidly connect its own program clients to the many services offered by the parent agency. Moreover because the parent agency has a full complement of bilingual workers and delivers culturally proficient services, clients feel understood and supported, and remain fully engaged.

For more information visit www.dwdc.org.

Working with Latino Men

CECEVIM

Challenging Patriarchal Attitudes Among Latino Men

Founded in 1996, CECEVIM or Centro de Capacitación para Erradicar la Violencia Intrafamiliar Masculina (Training Center to Eradicate Masculine Intrafamily Violence) is a culturally appropriate intervention model for Latino men who are abusive to their partners.

CECEVIM's theoretical foundation is based on three major constructs: 1) the application of feminist gender analysis which views patriarchal systems as destructive, oppressive, alienating and perpetuating inequality between men and women; 2) the adoption of an ecological framework for addressing domestic violence that takes into account the social, political and cultural forces that allow domestic violence to perpetuate, and 3) utilization of ancient native spiritual concepts to help men connect with each other, their families and communities and build healthier concepts of masculinity.[114]

Using gender analysis, the program helps men to examine and change the ***patriarchal pacts*** that teach them to believe they are superior to their partners, and then to use violence to enforce that superiority.

The CECEVIM program is divided into four phases of seventeen sessions each and classes are two hours long. Participants must pass a test before they can move on to the next phase of the program, and whether an individual has successfully passed the test is determined by the group rather than a staff member. CECEVIM is completely funded by participants' fees, one of many vehicles by which the men learn to take responsibility for their violent behavior.

Throughout the program, participants learn to:

- Identify the ways in which they are violent in their homes, why they become violent and strategies to stop being abusive; and

- Create intimate, cooperative, supportive, democratic, and nonviolent relationships that are more consistent with a Latino collectivist cultural framework and far more satisfactory than relationships based on abuse of power.

The program is intended to be easily replicated and is not dependent on professionals but rather utilizes a **peer education collective** modality. Participants take primary responsibility for facilitating classes by presenting educational materials to newcomers, all **group members provide testimony** of past violent acts in class and help each other deconstruct old masculine identities that are based on patriarchal cultural mandates. As participants progress through the program they are offered opportunities to become class facilitators and peer educators so that the program can be replicated in other locations and communities.

The CECEVIM model resonates strongly with Latino men because it takes into account the impact of colonization, internalized oppression and racism, among other forms of oppression experienced by men of color. The program has been replicated in Mexico, Latin America and various U.S. cities.

For more information visit www.cecevim.org.

The National Compadres Network

A Look at Mentoring, Fatherhood and Community Building Programs

Founded in 1988, the National Compadres Network (NCN) operates Men's Circles (Círculos) in more than twenty cities throughout the nation extending from California to Washington, DC, providing a variety of mentorship, fatherhood and community building programs. NCN aims to help build safe and secure communities understanding that violence is a learned behavior (rooted in systems of oppression) that is passed on from one generation to the next and that violence can be unlearned. Drawing upon the values and traditions of the varied and rich cultures of Latin America, including pre-Columbian cultures, NCN helps men to understand and value the *sacredness of all relations*.

NCN's main focus is the reinforcement of the positive involvement of Latino males in the lives of their families, communities, and society. Based on the principles of "Un Hombre Noble" (A Noble Man), the mission of NCN is to strengthen, rebalance, and/or redevelop the traditional "Compadre" extended family system. Through this process the program encourages and supports the positive involvement of Latino males as fathers, sons, grandfathers, brothers, compadres, partners, and mentors in their families and community. NCN believes that increasing the positive support and influence of Latino males in their family and society, will help reduce the incidence of substance abuse, domestic violence, child abuse, teen pregnancy, gang violence, and other family and community problems.

This ethno-cultural model addresses risk factors for intimate partner violence at multiple levels, taking into account: 1) the effects of centuries of violence rooted in racism, colonization, and oppression which continues to impact families, communities and societies as a whole; 2) sexist values and social rules that perpetuate violence and oppression against women; 3) emotional distress and mental health problems; 4) socio-economic stressors such as poverty, unemployment and discrimination; 5) the impact of acculturation and acculturative stress; 6) substance use; and 7) societal norms that continue to treat intimate partner violence as a private family matter, veiled in secrecy and shame.

Culturally responsive strategies are employed from the very onset. For example, a comprehensive assessment is conducted for each individual entering the program including **assessing levels of acculturation and sources of acculturative stress.**

The 36-week program has four distinct phases described as follows:

1. **Knowledge** ("Conocimiento"): Participants examine their attitudes, fears and the violent techniques they employ to maintain power in their relationships and the consequences of abuse for their victims and themselves.
2. **Comprehension** ("Comprensión"): Participants gain a deeper understanding of the causes and risk factors associated with their use of violence.
3. **Integration** ("Integración"): Participants employ newly acquired knowledge, tools and resources to stop violent behavior and begin to adopt alternative, more productive behaviors.
4. **Movement** ("Movimiento"): Participants internalize and consistently display non-violent behaviors to resolve conflict in their daily lives.

A central tenet of the National Compadres Network model is the idea that *la cultural cura* (culture cures). In other words, culture can be used as a tool for healing and making positive changes in one's life. Based on this principle the National Compadres Network helps men reclaim and honor the cultural values of *familismo* (the centrality of family), *respeto* (respect) and *confianza* (trust), building blocks for constructing non-violent relationships. The National Compadres Network also incorporates aspects of spirituality and traditional healing practices throughout its programming.

The National Compadres Network also works collaboratively with the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute and has tailored programs for Latino young men, called "Joven Noble." Through this program young men participate in rites of passage into manhood ceremonies, learn the true sense of honorable manhood, and develop a sense of security through

their association with honorable men. The National Compadres Network also offers fatherhood programs, mentoring and conducts the "Respetar y Leer" (Respect and Read) campaign. In this campaign, grandfathers, fathers, uncles and other male role models are encouraged to take time to read and talk with the children in their families, using reading materials that emphasize respectful relationships and nonviolence.

For more information visit www.nationalcompadresnetwork.com

Working with Latino Families

Caminar Latino, Atlanta, Georgia

An Ecological Approach to Addressing Domestic Violence

Caminar Latino, Inc. emerged in response to the needs of abused Latinas in Georgia. It began in 1990 as the first support group for Spanish speaking battered women in the state. The children's groups, first started in 1993, as a babysitting service offered to the women and has evolved into a comprehensive youth program over time. In 1995 a male batterers intervention group was added to the program at the request of the women. Participants argued that their lives would not change in significant ways unless their partner, with whom most of them continued to live, could also get help.

Since 1990 the program has worked with women, men and youth from over a thousand Latino families affected by domestic violence. Since its inception, Caminar Latino has partnered with faith communities, who have provided space and resources for the program. Due to the deep respect the overwhelming majority of immigrant Latinas/os have for the church (regardless of their denomination), the location within a church building has an added element of safety for women and children.

Caminar Latino uses a human rights and social justice approach and its philosophy is informed by the ideas of *concientización*, liberation, and transformation. Incorporating Paulo Freire's popular education concepts, the support groups for survivors, the intervention groups for men who have used violence, the groups for adolescents and children, and the supervision of volunteers, team members, and students are all conducted in a non-hierarchical manner.

Women's Program

The women's support and reflection groups provide survivors the opportunity to explore the meaning of their abuse from a social and cultural perspective that takes into account their status as immigrants as well as their gender, economic, ethnic and class membership. In addition to support, the groups provide awareness and information regarding topics such as the dynamics of and types of domestic violence, safety plans, legal issues, self-esteem, parenting, educational opportunities, child development, health topics, and sexuality, among others. Women are accompanied to court appointments, assisted in obtaining temporary protective orders, and referred to other community resources, as needed. Group members play an active role in the ongoing development and evaluation of the program and are encouraged to provide input regarding new education topics and ways to improve services. The women's program is a good example of the potential that exists within ethnic communities to develop core groups of trained individuals. Two of the current group facilitators are former members of the survivors' group.

Men's Program

The men's education and *concientización* program is a 24-session intervention certified by the state of Georgia. The two-level group format utilizes a modified version of Antonio Ramirez's CECEVIM model. The first level group consists of 10 sessions that follow a structured class format. The second level group is comprised of individuals who have not used physical violence against their partners for 10 weeks and pass an oral exam of the material covered in the first level. This group has a thematic structure and focuses more specifically on sexual, emotional, and verbal abuse. The program does not utilize reading assignments, given the limited reading ability of many Latino immigrants, the significance of the oral tradition in Latino culture, and very importantly, to respect the dignity of the men who may not know how to read. Because

of the high co-occurrence of domestic violence and substance abuse in the Latino community, the men's program includes a weekly substance abuse education component.

The idea of ***concientización*** requires that former batterers refrain from committing future acts of violence not only because of the legal and economic consequences that could ensue, but because in their new understanding of themselves and their place in the world, new acts of violence would compromise their integrity as human beings who are struggling toward non-violence. The remarkably high program completion rates and negligible recidivism suggests that this approach is relevant and appropriate for Latino participants.

Youth Program

Currently the youth program includes three sharing groups (ages 4-7, 8-11, and adolescents), as well as a playgroup for infants and toddlers. The program curriculum contains common topics that are tailored for each age level (family/self, feelings, anger, relationships, bullying, violence, drugs and alcohol, safety planning, self-esteem, dreams/options, etc.). In the safe space provided by the groups, children are encouraged to explore the experience of violence in their families through a series of exercises, games, discussions, role-play, etc. The curriculum also includes opportunities to access their cultural roots through dance, music, songs, stories, crafts, presentations, and other similar means.

Because of the disruption and chaos that is often present in many of their families, children find the stability and safety of the weekly group a very positive part of their lives. Their enthusiasm about participating in the program may be a key factor in the number of families that continue to participate beyond the completion of the men's court-mandated time. For children needing additional help, the program offers referrals to other community agencies and resources, as well as tutoring and individual and parent-child counseling. In collaboration with academic researchers, youth participants are currently conducting participatory action research to explore different aspects of violence of relevance to them, and have been invited to present their findings at local, state, and national meetings.

Identifying itself as a social change agent rather than a service provider, Caminar Latino walks with each family and individual in their personal and collective journey towards non-violence. Their hope is that the changes that take place during the intervention will be the first steps in breaking the intergenerational cycle of violence and thus serve to begin the task of true social transformation.

For more information visit www.caminarlatino.org.

Promising Practices for Coalition Building

The Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Addressing the Legacy of Racism Head-on

Founded in 1985, the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) conducts domestic violence training, counseling, community outreach, program management and technical support.

ICADV has distinguished itself as a leader in anti-racism work among statewide domestic violence coalitions. ICADV took a courageous action acknowledging racism within its institution and making public its commitment to work towards building an anti-racist, inclusive organization with diverse women in positions of leadership.

The following is the ICADV Statement of Admission that appears on their website:

> The Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence, which is a coalition made up of domestic violence programs in Iowa, admits that it s a primarily white coalition dominated by white women. We recognized that the combination of racial prejudice and the power that enforces that prejudice exists in all facets of ICADV on an individual, as well as an institutional level. We know that European Americans

> benefit from privileges that are not available to people of color. We acknowledge that the voices of women of color have not been heard. The institutionalization of white feminist thinking and values creates and maintains an environment within the Coalition that prevents the full participation of women of color as leaders, advocates and women seeking services. We acknowledge that white women in the anti-domestic violence movement individually and collectively share the responsibility for creating this environment. We acknowledge that it is the responsibility of white women in the movement to change this environment.[115]

ICADV found that putting the admission of racism in writing actually opened doors to working with organizations serving women of color, which were previously distrustful of the Coalition and became more willing to work with ICADV.

Over the past five years, ICADV has worked to develop culturally competent programs and practices and continue its anti-racism and community organizing work. One of its program initiatives is the **Leadership Institute for Tomorrow (LIFT) aimed at increasing the leadership of women of color within the domestic violence movement.** Half of the Board of the LIFT program is comprised of white women program directors, many of them nearing retirement age, bringing attention to the fact that succession planning is an important issue for the movement. It is anticipated that through the training and mentoring offered by LIFT, women of color will be afforded many more opportunities to assume leadership positions in domestic violence service organizations throughout the state.

ICADV also helped to establish **MUNA**, a unique program that provides comprehensive services to immigrant survivors of domestic violence. ICADV understood the importance of having women from immigrant communities serve as an active part of the agency. Community members were hired, trained and mentored to provide services to their own communities, encouraging them to develop services that truly addressed cultural needs. ICADV recognized the importance of flexibility in the hiring process in order not to shut the door to community members by over professionalizing the job requirements.

After a few years, ICADV realized that it was necessary to create a more formal program that could expand the work with, and for immigrant women – making it more visible and more stable - including securing additional funding for the program. The Coalition then made the determination to utilize its resources and seek funding for the MUNA (Mujeres Unidas Por Un Nuevo Amanecer) Legal Clinic.

MUNA works to empower immigrant survivors of domestic violence and helps them develop their skills. Clients are invited to participate, on a voluntary basis, in a community organizing group that educates immigrant women on economic issues and immigrant rights, as well as addressing survival issues such as finding employment. Clients attend the first round of sessions and then they are asked to teach the next cycle of classes. They receive a stipend for teaching classes and educational child care services are provided during the meetings.

ICADV has also demonstrated its organizational commitment to this initiative by having all non-Spanish speaking staff take Spanish classes paid by the agency. Additionally, all immigrant staff attend English classes paid for by the coalition.

For more information about ICADV visit www.icadv.org.

The Indiana Latino Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

Creating Latino-Specific Coalitions

Founded in 2004, the Indiana Latino Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (ILCADSV) is the first statewide Latino coalition on domestic and sexual violence in the U.S. This unique coalition has enjoyed substantial success in galvanizing broad sectors of the Latino community to support domestic violence awareness campaigns and advocacy to increase funding for culturally proficient domestic violence services. ILCADSV has pioneered numerous programs and utilizes a four prong approach that includes public education, training and technical assistance, advocacy and data collection to accomplish its goals:

Public Education: Recognizing that Spanish language radio and television are principal sources of information for Latinas/os, ILCADSV organizes bilingual media campaigns followed by regional events with cultural programming to educate Latino youth and adults about interpersonal violence.

Training and Technical Assistance: Through one of its principal programs named ENLACE (Encouraging Non-violence through Legal Assistance and Community Education), ILCADSV provides training across the state on cultural competency as well as immigration and family law provisions impacting survivors of domestic and sexual violence. ILCADSV also provides direct technical assistance to organizations seeking to create or enhance services to Latinas/os impacted by domestic and sexual violence. Technical assistance includes helping organizations to develop appropriate outreach strategies and culturally competent services and organizational practices, including practices to support the recruitment and retention of bilingual staff, volunteers and board members.

Advocacy: ILCADSV also advocates for better policies and more funding to increase the availability of culturally responsive services to meet the needs of Indiana's rapidly growing and diverse Latino population.

Data Collection: Understanding that research and data collection is critically important in documenting unmet needs, identifying access barriers, and improving service efficacy, ILCADSV conducts its own research and data collection activities in order to increase its knowledge base and to offer recommendations to improve services for Latinas/os in Indiana.

For more information about ILCADSV visit www.Indianalatinocoalition.org.

SECTION SIX

Recommendations for Building Culturally Proficient Anti-Violence Organizations

In this section you will find recommendations on:

- Community Engagement
- Leadership Development
- Culturally Proficient Programming
- Coalition Building
- Funding and Policy Advocacy

Building Culturally Proficient Anti-Violence Organizations: Recommendations for Domestic Violence Service Providers

As noted in the beginning of this document, by the year 2050, Latinas/os will account for one in four U.S. residents and people of color will comprise one half of the total U.S. population. Consequently**, the future prosperity and well-being of our nation rests on our ability to embrace diversity, build cross cultural understanding, and protect the human rights of all individuals. What is required is nothing less than social transformation and the anti-violence movement has an important role to play by recognizing that cultural and community strengths can be powerful aids in the struggle to end interpersonal violence.**

To accomplish this transformation, we must be willing to build 21st century, culturally proficient organizations and social policies that meet the needs of an increasingly diverse constituency.

Building cultural proficiency does not end with hiring a few bilingual workers and conducting occasional outreach in Latino communities. It must be an ongoing process aimed at integrating cultural proficiency principles and practices in all aspects of organizational life from program design and staffing to board governance and strategic planning.

The following recommendations delineate the many action steps that can be taken towards developing culturally proficient anti-violence strategies, programs and policies.

Community Engagement and Outreach

Organizations that seek to provide domestic violence services for Latino communities must actively work towards garnering the trust and respect of community leaders and residents. Many communities of color have experienced decades of neglect, abuse and exploitation. Police brutality, economic disinvestment policies, gentrification leading to displacement of many families and illegal dumping of pollutants causing environmental degradation and large scale health problems, are just a few of the assaults encountered by communities of color in this country. Against this backdrop, many residents may become suspicious and reluctant to welcome an organization that has not taken the time to consult with community leaders and residents before arriving at the community's doorstep.

Thus community ownership is an important principle to embrace; programs are more likely to be successful when they are directly initiated by community members or based on demonstrated community needs and operate with a sense of accountability to the Latino community, providing ongoing mechanisms for meaningful community input.

Organizations planning to locate programs or conduct outreach in Latino neighborhoods need to foster good will and actively seek community acceptance. There are many steps that can be taken towards this aim including the following:

Community Engagement and Ownership

- Conduct a needs assessment to gain a more comprehensive understanding of community demographics, including social and economic indicators and needs.
- Meet with community leaders and gatekeepers to better understand the community's history with service providers and current needs.
- Conduct focus groups and/or community forums to better understand the community's perspectives on domestic violence and culturally appropriate strategies.
- Meet with trusted, community based service providers to explore opportunities for collaboration as well as to promote coordination of services in order to maximize resources and avoid duplication of services.

- Develop avenues for community residents and leaders to provide ongoing input about community needs and trends as well as provide feedback on your organizational performance. This may include recruiting community residents and Latino experts from various fields for your board of directors and establishing advisory committees or working groups with structured, meaningful opportunities to provide input and recommendations.

Community Outreach

- Before conducting outreach, assess your ability to serve the population you intend to target via your outreach. Ask yourselves, do we have sufficient knowledge, capacity and resources to help the particular group? If the answer is no, then focus on developing the necessary knowledge and resources first so as to avoid frustration and distrust that can ensue when individuals do reach out but are unable to receive the services they truly need.

- Ask community leaders and organizations to promote your services by disseminating your literature, brokering introductions with other gatekeepers and stakeholders and inviting you to speak or disseminate educational materials at meetings and events.

- Recruit and train community residents as outreach workers, community organizers and peer educators.

- Become part of the community fabric by participating in community and cultural events.

- Conduct outreach in places where residents naturally congregate such as bodegas (small grocery stores), supermarkets, schools, churches, health clinics, parks, beauty parlors/barbershops, laundromats, day care centers, community centers, music stores, social, sports and cultural clubs, etc.

Organizational Learning

Organizations are dynamic entities that must adapt to changes in the environment if they are to survive and thrive. Domestic violence providers interested in developing culturally responsive services for emerging Latino populations must be willing to invest in ongoing cultural learning in order to develop a working knowledge of cultural norms and integrate these into program design and service delivery.

Organizations must be willing to:

- Invest the time and resources needed to develop an organization-wide cultural proficiency learning agenda and goals focusing on increasing the cultural knowledge and skills building of all staff members.

- Develop a Cultural Proficiency Task Force to recommend learning activities and oversee follow-up. Activities may include dissemination of readings and monthly discussions at staff and team meetings regarding promising practices, ongoing research on community trends, the use of guest speakers, educational videos and agency wide workshops and trainings on cultural issues and community concerns.

- Ensure that each Individual staff development plan also includes opportunities for increasing cultural knowledge and skills with incentives such as attendance at outside conferences and training programs.

Domestic Violence Prevention and Public Education

Organizations seeking to raise awareness about domestic violence in Latino communities must make efforts to develop culturally responsive prevention messages, educational materials and campaigns that are grounded in the values and life circumstances of the particular group. Messages that incorporate cultural symbols and themes and affirm cultural and community strengths and values can become important and memorable sources of inspiration for change. Towards this aim, the following recommendations are offered:

- Promote positive and empowering images of Latinas/os in all materials as opposed to stigmatizing images of Latinas with black eyes or Latino men in prison, for example (for more in depth guidance, see *Developing Linguistically and Culturally Responsive Materials for Latina Survivors of Domestic Violence (2004)*, listed in the resources section).

- Utilize peer educators to promote anti-violence messages including Latina survivors and former batterers who are now violence free and who resemble the target audience.

- Utilize multimedia approaches to prevention and public education campaigns. This is especially important given low literacy levels among some sectors of the Latino population. Consider utilizing popular education methods including house meetings or discussion circles, participant centered theater and role playing, short graphic novels (telenovelas), murals, as well as art and music, to convey messages.

- Understand and effectively utilize the principal media outlets (radio, newspapers and television) used by Latinas/os in your area. Local Spanish language radio and television stations with talk shows or community news bulletins are especially effective communication channels for Latinas/os.

- Recruit Spanish language writers, interpreters and designers to help develop linguistically and culturally responsive educational materials.

- Utilize images that reflect the diversity of Latinas/os (e.g. younger and older women and men, families, Latinos/as of different racial and national origin groups, same sex couples, persons with disabilities, etc.).

- Develop materials that help educate Latinas/os about the many manifestations of domestic violence (e.g. checklist of abusive behaviors) as many Latinas/os do not immediately associate emotional, psychological and economic abuse with domestic violence.

- Develop specific educational campaigns to inform Latina immigrants of their rights under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and other laws.

- Ensure bilingual information is easily accessible within Latino communities (e.g. distribute brochures, fliers, posters in churches, doctor's offices, WIC centers and schools). Whenever possible, ensure that the language reflects Spanish idioms and phrases that are used by the particular Spanish-speaking groups in the community.

Program Design, Planning and Evaluation

Culturally responsive programming requires domestic violence providers to understand and actively incorporate cultural and community knowledge and strengths in all aspects of the helping relationship. It also requires service providers to understand and systematically address the interplay of multiple oppressions in Latinas/os' lives and the resulting barriers they face.

Program Design

- Domestic violence organizations must be sure to incorporate direct advocacy assistance in their program design to help clients address survival issues arising from the intersection of oppressions described throughout this document. These include services such as securing employment, job training and/or economic assistance, housing assistance, literacy and ESL classes, immigration assistance, translation and court accompaniment and transportation assistance particularly in rural areas, etc.

- All educational materials, participant rules and forms should be available in Spanish and other languages commonly spoken in that specific geographic area and delivered orally to participants with limited literacy capability. Every effort should be made to deliver counseling and other services in the primary language of the client.

- Programs should take affirmative steps to hire and retain bilingual workers including setting aside funds to develop aggressive advertising and recruitment plans (including incentives) and creating strategies to ensure retention. Staff training and development opportunities should also be provided.

- Peer education and advocacy training programs can play a pivotal role in building the cultural knowledge and capacity of domestic violence service providers and should be encouraged, especially given widespread success of peer models in other service areas such as HIV/AIDS.

- Recognizing that not all victims will choose shelter services, develop community based programs that help individuals encountering intimate partner violence to remain safe while staying connected to their natural support systems.

- Recognizing the historical distrust of law enforcement and the criminal justice systems within communities of color, foster the development of voluntary Latino-specific batterers' intervention programs that emphasize cultural values and community strengths as a source for healing and change.

- Design programs that include tailored outreach and enhanced services for underserved Latino populations including immigrants, LGBTQ, the elderly, and the disabled.

Assessment and Counseling

- All service providers must become aware of their own individual biases and internalized stereotypes, refrain from making assumptions and instead ask many clarifying questions.

- Employ a cultural assets approach to counseling and overall program development that builds upon cultural, community and individual strengths rather than relying on deficit or pathology focused models.

- Recognize that assimilation and/or acculturation models that seek to "Americanize" Latinas/os can also be destructive. Instead, create safe spaces where Latinas/os feel welcomed and accepted and can critically examine the cultural, social and institutional factors that perpetuate domestic violence and other forms of oppression in their lives. Creating a safe space for Latinas/os will allow for a mutual support system to evolve and for Latinas/os to craft life strategies to combat domestic violence and other forms of subjugation they encounter on a daily basis, in a manner that makes "cultural sense."

- Actively incorporate Latino cultural values in helping situations. Be mindful of *personalismo* and invest considerable time in building rapport and trust with the Latina domestic violence survivor or Latino batterer seeking help.

- Gain an understanding of the individual's socio-cultural experiences and worldview. Remember that Latinas/os are a heterogeneous group. Work to understand the cultural subtleties particular to the individual's country of origin,

and where appropriate, the circumstances leading to the decision to migrate (e.g. economic opportunity, civil war, reunification of the family, education, etc.).

- After trust has been established and confidentiality has been explained, assess whether the individual is experiencing any acculturative stress or has concerns about his/her immigration status.

- Gaining a basic knowledge of Latino cultural norms and values is just the first step. Take the time to understand the cultural lens through which each individual person interprets and responds to his/her life situation. Ask the individual to share how his/her cultural values and beliefs influence the way she or he approaches the domestic violence in his/her life.

- Acknowledge and respect the resiliency, resources and strengths of disenfranchised communities; explore extended family and community support systems that can aid the individual seeking help.

- Work in partnership with the client to develop an action plan that makes "cultural sense" from his or her perspective.

- Recognize and respect the various pathways to healing including the arts, spirituality and culturally based, traditional healing practices and incorporate these in an authentic manner wherever possible.

- Advise the Latina immigrant survivor to keep copies of important papers in a safe place (e.g. passports, visas, green cards and other immigration related documents) related to herself and her children that she may need in the future and that are oftentimes very difficult to replace.

Information, Referral and Advocacy

- Provide *Know Your Right*s and other forms of advocacy training that enable Latinas/os to better navigate institutions and demand the services to which they are entitled, as well as, facilitating educational, employment and training opportunities that enable Latinas/os to widen their life options and increase self efficacy.

- Build collaborations and partnerships with key institutions in the Latino community that can serve as important allies in seeking solutions to immigration, housing and other problems your clients may encounter.

- Build seamless referral mechanisms and wherever possible broker initial meetings with other service providers and the client, making every effort to help clients access culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

- Develop and disseminate bilingual resources directories, social service information sheets, know your rights handouts, and bilingual social service referral letters, etc.

Use of Interpreters

- The use of interpreters should be a measure of last resort. In light of the growing Latino population, organizations should invest considerable resources in recruiting, training and retaining bilingual workers.

- Be mindful that the use of an interpreter can be experienced as an invasion of the client's safe space and may have a chilling effect on the therapeutic process. The use of an interpreter can also impede a counselor's ability to empathize and establish the necessary rapport that enables clients to share their intimate thoughts and feelings.[116]

- When interpreters must be used, the interpreter should have an understanding of the culture as well as language and be trained on issues of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

- The use of children or family members as interpreters should be avoided because of the disempowering impact it may have on the client and potentially traumatizing impact on the interpreter-relative.

- Trained interpreters should be used who are familiar with, and abide by the *National Code of Ethics for Interpreters in Health Care.*[117]

Planning and Evaluation

- Develop a community advisory council and conduct client focus groups and stakeholder interviews on an ongoing basis to continually assess progress made towards achieving cultural proficiency, fine tune modalities and improve program planning.

- Retain capacity building consultants with expertise in multicultural organizational development and evaluators familiar with culturally proficient evaluation techniques and measures.

Staff Development, Leadership Development and Succession Planning

Many Latinas/os complain of a glass ceiling even within the nonprofit sector, noting that Latinas/os are still concentrated in entry-level jobs with limited opportunities for training and advancement. Culturally proficient organizations recognize the value of developing diverse leadership and promote the authentic involvement and equitable representation of Latinas/os in the design and delivery of services and in decision making and policy setting roles within the organization. Lack of a diverse, skilled workforce and leadership structure hinders the efficacy of organizations, and to address this concern the following recommendations are offered:

- Develop peer education, community organizing and advocacy training programs that can help Latinas/os prepare for and access job opportunities, while at the same time helping to address the gap in bilingual/bicultural workers.

- Develop mentoring initiatives, on the job training programs and tuition assistance incentives that will enable Latinas/os in entry level positions to advance within the organization, thereby maximizing retention and reducing costs associated with bringing on new hires.

- Collaborate with other organizations to create leadership opportunities and leadership training initiatives that will enable Latinas/os to lead efforts to better address domestic violence and other social problems affecting their communities.

- Show flexibility in hiring criteria. Recognize and value the strengths of diverse applicants (e.g. leadership skills, community organizing skills, bilingual skills, etc.) and be mindful of not "over-professionalizing" job requirements.

- Prevent burnout by setting realistic expectations about workload. It is not uncommon for organizations to hire one or two bilingual workers and have them shoulder the responsibility of all Spanish-speaking clients. Agencies seldom factor in the extra time spent translating and educating clients about systems, which is required to appropriately serve immigrant and limited English proficiency clients. On the contrary, it is not uncommon for bilingual workers to have much higher caseloads than monolingual workers, along with many additional outreach and translation responsibilities, yet they are expected to, and held responsible for, providing the same quality of service.

- As baby boomers in leadership positions retire, it will be necessary to replace them with culturally diverse, 21st century leaders reflective of the communities served. Therefore, organizations should begin succession planning early including identifying and grooming potential Executive Director candidates from within the organization. When executive search firms or executive transition consultants are employed to assist the organization, screening and selection criteria should include familiarity with diversity issues and cultural competency.

Board Governance

A recent study of the nonprofit sector indicated that Latinas/os are woefully under-represented on nonprofit boards. In fact, Latinas/os account for only 3% of nonprofit board members nationwide although they represent 14% of the U.S. population.[118] To address this issue the following recommendations are offered:

- A commitment to diverse leadership and cultural proficiency should be reflected in the membership of the organization's board of directors. Diverse representation not only sends a powerful message to the community and other stakeholders that cultural diversity is a priority but also is likely to increase the board's focus on ensuring culturally responsive policies and practices are adopted throughout the organization. This also applies to Latino-led organizations that serve clients from diverse Latino groups. Boards with little diversity should establish a Board committee that can research and recommend affirmative steps to increase board diversity.

- When recruiting community members to serve on the board of directors it will be important to provide training on board governance and mentoring to ensure new members are fully engaged and prepared to exercise their duties and leadership role.

- Forging a board of directors that operates in a manner consistent with the principles of cultural proficiency also implies a duty to the community served. Boards of directors should therefore strive to be transparent in their decision-making and consider themselves accountable to constituents and the community, providing progress reports and creating avenues to establish community dialogue and secure feedback.

Organizational Policies and Practices

Building a culturally proficient organization requires members to pay ongoing attention to how organizational policies and practices can be improved so as to promote diversity, inclusiveness and cultural responsiveness. Culturally proficient organizations strive to:

- Adopt intentional, purposeful practices to eliminate institutional racism and oppression as well as other barriers to services.

- Work to build non-hierarchical, egalitarian organizational practices where clients or constituents have a sense of ownership and are fully incorporated in organizational planning, decision-making, service delivery design and programming.

- Allocate sufficient financial resources and staffing time to build cultural proficiency within the organization reflected in the organization's budget priorities, annual operating plan and staff development plans.

- Actively recruit staff, board members and volunteers from diverse backgrounds - becoming familiar with culturally diverse networks and strategies for recruiting individuals from diverse backgrounds.

- Develop respectful, transparent and democratic processes for addressing cross-cultural tensions and differences of opinion.

- Demonstrate respect for the community served by creating multiple avenues for community consultation and participating in community building activities and partnerships.

- Design and implement programs in a manner that does not address the issue of domestic violence in isolation, but also helps constituents/clients address the interplay of oppressions in their lives.

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is an important vehicle used by organizations to analyze trends, examine community needs, develop a vision, articulate priorities and develop a strategy for action. Cultural proficiency principles should be incorporated throughout the strategic plan; towards this aim the following recommendations are offered:

- ➲ Ensure the ample representation of community residents and leaders throughout the process, including representation in the committee overseeing the strategic planning process.

- ➲ Seek to incorporate fundamental human rights principles such as respect, dignity and self determination as part of the organization's stated mission, vision and values.

- ➲ Conduct extensive research and data analysis to help identify new trends within the community and among clients/constituents including changing demographics, potential threats to the community/constituents such as growing anti-immigrant sentiment and anti-immigrant legislation, discriminatory practices by local institutions, gentrification, etc.

- ➲ Ensure that proactive strategies to increase diversity and cultural proficiency are incorporated in all segments of the strategic plan including:

    - recruitment and hiring practices;
    - staff development;
    - board membership;
    - multicultural organizational learning strategies;
    - program design, development and evaluation;
    - leadership development initiatives and structures;
    - community building strategies;
    - strategic planning priorities;
    - collaborations, partnerships, key alliances; and
    - organizational resource allocation decisions.

Collaborations, Partnerships and Coalition Building

Collaborations can serve as an important vehicle by which to increase cultural knowledge and to coalesce resources and strategies to address unmet community needs, improve service coordination and delivery. Towards this aim the following recommendations are offered:

- ➲ Consider establishing joint ventures, partnerships or subcontracting agreements with Latino community based organizations that can provide technical expertise and resources for building culturally responsive programs and organizational practices. Recognizing that Latino organizations are often extremely under-funded, ensure that there is adequate financial support for Latino community based organizations that enter into joint projects with mainstream institutions.

- ➲ Acknowledging the interplay of oppressions impacting Latinas/os on a daily basis, consider joining cross issue coalitions or establishing partnerships that address key issues relevant to your constituents such as immigration, economic development and housing. Sharing of information and expertise across these different sectors will increase awareness of domestic violence, help facilitate referrals for needed services, as well as improve community planning processes aimed at addressing unmet needs.

- ➲ Develop memoranda of understanding or partnership agreements which specify the cultural proficiency principles and practices that should guide the collaboration.

Recommendations for Domestic Violence Coalitions, Policy Makers and Funders

Domestic Violence Coalitions: Leading by Example

Domestic violence coalitions at the state and national level play an important role in promoting domestic violence education and training, articulating standards and best practices, educating legislators and promoting progressive policies that serve to increase access and quality of services. They are an essential partner in the quest to advance culturally proficient practices, as described below:

- **Promoting Capacity Building.** Coalitions can undertake many action steps to promote cultural diversity and culturally responsive programming including: sponsoring cultural proficiency trainings and capacity building services, developing bilingual materials and education campaigns, publishing bilingual resource directories, and incubating cultural proficiency projects/initiatives.

- **Developing Women of Color Leadership and Mentoring Programs.** Coalitions should promote leadership and mentoring programs that will enable Latinas to gain entree into positions of influence and leadership including policy making groups, legislative drafting committees, boards of directors, and peer review committees of national and state governmental agencies, etc.

- **Advancing a Human Rights Framework.** Domestic violence coalitions should seek to broaden their policy agendas to encompass issues impacting disenfranchised groups including racism, anti-immigrant legislation, homophobia, discrimination based on disabilities, as well as addressing issues critical to well-being such as access to health care, educational and employment opportunities and housing.

- **Establishing Cultural Proficiency Standards and Practices:** State and national domestic violence coalitions should set an example by incorporating cultural proficiency principles in their mission statements, articulating specific cultural proficiency goals in their strategic plans and advocating for the adoption of cultural proficiency standards.

- **Documenting Need and Advocating for Funding.** Domestic violence coalitions should periodically survey member agencies to determine gaps in the provision of culturally responsive services and advocate for capacity building funding to help local domestic services providers develop or enhance culturally responsive programming.

- **Fostering Partnerships with Latino Community-Based Organizations.** Coalitions should support the efforts of Latino community-based organizations that seek to address domestic violence issues but may not have the necessary experience and could benefit from partnering with an existing domestic violence program. Partnering organizations may consider applying jointly for new VAWA funding that is available to support initiatives of culturally specific organizations in underserved communities within communities of color.

- **Improving the State Planning Process**. Coalitions should assist VAWA and FVPSA State Administrators to engage in comprehensive state planning processes that take into account the needs of communities of color and other underserved populations, providing meaningful access and actively engaging representatives of these diverse groups in all aspects of the state planning processes.

- **Leadership and Alliance Building.** Domestic violence coalitions should take a leadership role in promoting research and dialogue about the use of new and different models of delivering domestic violence services that may work more effectively with specific cultural groups. Additionally, domestic violence coalitions must seek to forge stronger alliances with national Latino policy groups and Latino community-based organizations in order to develop common agendas for action.

Recommendations for Policy Makers and Funders

Overview of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA 2005)

VAWA 2005 was reauthorized and signed into law in January 2006 (Public Law 109-162). One of the goals of VAWA 2005 was to ensure that victim services are culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate in order to overcome obstacles to accessing services commonly experienced by communities of color. VAWA 2005 added some important provisions to help protect the rights of immigrant women, as well as to support the development of more culturally and linguistically specific services for underserved populations. Additionally, it included a number of new programs specifically focused on preventing violence.

Important changes to the STOP Grant programs included emphasizing the need to improve services to communities of color. Of significance is the establishment of a **10% set-aside** of the victim services money in the STOP grant formula in each state, to be distributed to "**Culturally Specific Community-Based Organizations"** providing services to address violence against women.

VAWA 2005 also requires State plans to specifically address the needs of **underserved communities** and mandates that funds to address underserved populations be **distributed equitably** among those populations. These changes in the VAWA legislation serve to recognize the importance of affording communities of color the opportunities and resources to develop culturally appropriate services and work on prevention initiatives in their own language and for their own communities.

Additionally, the definition of a **Community-based Organization** in the VAWA legislation presents a significant change by broadening the kinds of entities that are eligible to apply for VAWA funds. This is especially significant given that many victim services programs and criminal justice agencies have not been able to adequately respond to the needs of individuals encountering domestic violence and sexual assault from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Moreover, there are many community-based, culturally specific organizations interested in reducing domestic violence, dating violence and sexual assault that previously have been unable to access VAWA funding because they could not show that their primary work was violence against women. This includes immigrants' rights groups and culturally specific agencies that offer services to diverse communities.

This new definition of *Community-based Organization* in VAWA 2005 allows such organizations to apply if they have a culturally specific program addressing violence against women (even if that is not their primary work) or if they are creating a new program to address violence against women and they are able to effectively collaborate with others organizations who are more experienced in addressing violence against women.

In addition to the funding available, at the state level through the STOP grants, VAWA 2005 also includes newly authorized programs which will be administered by OVW to address the unmet needs of communities of color including:

a) Grants to Enhance Culturally and Linguistically Specific Services for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking;

b) Grants to Culturally Specific Programs Addressing Sexual Assault; and

c) Grants for Outreach to Underserved Populations.

It is important to note that culturally specific organizations are not limited to accessing resources through these specific programs; they can also apply for any of the funding streams in VAWA.

However, enhanced legislation such as VAWA 2005 is only the first step. Funders and policy makers can and should play a pivotal role in ensuring the provision of additional funding incentives and capacity building assistance to help anti-violence groups to re-tool their organizations, programs and core strategies in order to become more culturally responsive.

Policy makers should work cooperatively to:

- Promote the development of standards for the provision of culturally and linguistically proficient services for victims of intimate partner violence, similar to the standards adopted by the health care field, promulgated by the Office of Minority Health.[119]

- Enhance policies to prevent discrimination based on language or immigration status and enable broader access to services beyond traditional models.

- Promote legislation to create educational and training incentives that can be utilized to increase the number of bilingual workers in the anti-violence field.

- Promote public policy reforms at the local, state, and national levels that benefit immigrant women facing violence, particularly undocumented immigrants and their children.

- Ensure access to resources for culturally and linguistically specific community-based organizations serving communities of color.

Funders should work cooperatively to:

- Fund efforts to improve cultural and linguistic proficiency in the areas of domestic violence prevention and intervention by supporting initiatives that provide training and technical assistance to local groups, enhance community education, conduct research, disseminate findings on promising practices, and develop culturally proficient evaluation methodologies.

- Fund independent research and evaluation projects to study the efficacy of culturally specific and nontraditional models for delivering prevention, education and services to survivors of domestic and sexual violence, batterers, affected children and youth as well as specific underserved communities within communities of color, such as immigrants, LGBTQ, the elderly and the disabled.

- Invest in transforming the field by funding a wide array of cultural proficiency training and technical assistance services, supporting conferences, publications and tool kits that can be adapted by local groups with limited resources.

- Fund partnerships and coalition building efforts between domestic violence and Latino community based organizations in order to bridge understanding and expand culturally proficient prevention, education and services.

- Fund efforts of Latino community based organizations to establish domestic violence programs; this is particularly important given that **currently only 2% of all funding distributed by foundations in the U.S. is directed to Latino organizations.**[120]

Conclusion

As illustrated by the above recommendations, there are many proactive steps service providers, policy makers and funders can take to build culturally proficient domestic violence programs and organizations. To end violence, we must remind ourselves that *one size does not fit all*. What is required is a diversity of approaches that fully engage underserved communities and maximize cultural and community strengths as a fundamental strategy for change.

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- Latinas and Domestic Violence: El Pasado, El Presente y Mirando Hacia el Futuro
- Guidelines for Developing Linguistically and Culturally Responsive Materials for Latina Survivors of Domestic Violence
- Position Paper on Working with Men and Boys to End Domestic Violence
- On the Road to Social Transformation: Utilizing Cultural and Community Strengths to End Domestic Violence

Brochures (English and Spanish)

- Homes Free of Violence: Options and Help for Abused Women
- Homes Free of Violence: Options and Help for Immigrant or Refugee Women
- Safety Plan for Abused Women
- Dating Violence: Find Out What You Can Do
- Hogares Libres de Violencia: Opciones y Ayuda para la Mujer Maltratada
- No Tienes Que Aguantar El Abuso En Tu Vida: Opciones para Mujeres Inmigrantes o Refugiadas
- Un Plan de Seguridad Para la Mujer Maltratada
- Entre Parejas: La Violencia en la Relación de Adolescentes y Jóvenes
- Domestic Violence Affect Families of all Racial, Ethnic and Economic Backgrounds; It is a Widespread and Destructive Problem in Latino Communities (Fact sheet)

Manuals

- Defensa y Promoción de la Mujer Latina: Trabajando con Comunidades Latinas para Eliminar la Violencia Familiar: Un Manual Para Profesionales Y Trabajadoras de la Comunidad
- Curriculum and Supplemental Guide for Conducting Support and Empowerment Groups for Latina Surviors of Domestic Violence/ Currículo y Guía para Facilitar Grupos de Apoyo y Empoderamiento con Mujeres Latinas Sobrevivientes de Violencia Doméstica. (note: technical assistance consultation a prerequisite for obtaining a copy of the curriculum).

Video Resources for Spanish-Speaking Audiences

The Day You Love Me. Takes us into the daily life of policewomen and social workers in one of the Police Commissaries for Women and Children in Nicaragua's capital city of Managua. Women of different ages, as well as children and young adults, come there seeking help against abusive husbands, lovers and parents. They also talk freely about their experiences and their sometimes conflicting desires for change. The men in their lives come to the station to respond to the charges against them by defending themselves, justifying their actions, arguing their own grievances, or even admitting their wrongs. (Spanish with English subtitles: 61 minutes) Distributed by: Women Make Movies, www.wmm.com

Dolores. Award-winning drama about domestic violence and how it affects members of a Latino family. Demonstrates social and cultural forces that make it difficult for Latina battered women to break silence and seek help. (Spanish with English subtitles) (1992). Distributed by:Committee for Hispanic Children and Families
www.chcfinc.org

MACHO. Video documentary produced by the BBC and chronicles the work that the Men's Group of Managua (Grupo de Hombres Contra la Violencia de Managua (GHCV)) has been doing to combat violence against women. The GHCV is made up of grassroots activists in Nicaragua who have been involved in innovative community education work as well as a national media campaign that call upon men to take responsibility for male violence and work to end it. (Spanish with English subtitles: 26 minutes) (1999). Distributed by: Men Overcoming Violence (MOVE) Phone: (415) 626-6683

Mujer Valorate. Domestic violence tactics and dynamics, obstacles for leaving, and how to access help, are examined through the experiences of battered Latina women and advocates working with them. (Spanish: 35 minutes); Distributed by AYUDA, www.ayudainc.org

Nunca Mas/Never Again. Drama which depicts a Latina woman being abused by her husband, and the process she goes through to get help from a battered women's program and break free from abuse. (Spanish or English: 50 minutes). Distributed by: Mujeres Latinas en Acción, www.mujereslatinasenaccion.org

¿Por Que Lloras Juanita? (Why Are You Crying Juanita?). Docu-drama about a Hispanic family's struggle with domestic violence. It depicts an assault on the victim by her husband, in front of their 3 young children. One of the children phones 9-1-1 and the police come. The husband subsequently enrolls in a batterers' treatment program. Distributed by: KOCT-Oceanside Community Television; Phone: 760-722-4433

Promesas Quebrantadas: Perspectivas Religiosas acerca de la Violencia Doméstica (Broken Vows: Religious Perspectives on Domestic Violence). This video is directed toward clergy, congregations, religious educators and employees of shelters and other programs that seek to end domestic violence. It comes with a moderator's guidebook and pamphlets for the audience. The video is in two parts and each part is intended to be used in a two-hour workshop. (Spanish: Part I is 37 minutes; Part II is 22 minutes) (1999). Distributed by: Faith Trust Institute, www.cpsdv.org

Stepping into Latino Realities. This training video is an excellent tool for groups interested in learning more about communicating and working with Latino individuals and families. Divided into eight vignettes, the film highlights situations that service providers may encounter while working with Latino clients and their families. Each scene provides insight that helps viewers understand Latino cultures and prevent communication breakdowns. With its Facilitator's Guide, *Stepping Into Latino Realities* is ideal for launching group discussions. (English, 25 minutes) Distributed by: Casa de Esperanza, www.casadeesperanza.org

A Survivor's Story. Olga Trujillo's powerful first hand and insightful documentary of the impact of violence in her life. Presented in four ten-minute segments (Witnessing. Childhood. Adolescence and Healing*).* This insightful documentary has proven a powerful training tool and a lifeline for those beginning their own journey towards survival. Available in DVD or VHS in English and Spanish at http://www.ortsolutions.org/pages/resources.htm

¡Ubícate! Haz la Diferencia. Video for young Latinos, educators, and community leaders. It is drama based on information, relationships, and is inspired by the reality of youth. (Spanish and English versions: 17 minutes) (2003). Distributed by: Casa de Esperanza, www.casadeesperanza.org

Un Nuevo Amanecer. Portrays the life of a Latina woman and the progression of domestic violence in her everyday life (family, friends, workplace and other systems). The video was made especially for public education, outreach and training, and support groups. (Spanish: 25 minutes). Distributed by: Texas Council on Family Violence, www.tcfv.org

Vidas Golpeadas, Esperanzas Destruidas: Cuando el hombre maltrata a la mujer (Battered Lives, Broken Trust: When Men Abuse Women). Video has been broadcast nationally in 11 Latin American countries, along with televised debates on the issue. The objective of the video is to increase the visibility in society of the problem of domestic violence, bring the consequences and magnitude of the problem into public debate, and encourage governments to design policies and invest in programs that address this problem. (Spanish and English versions: 21 minutes) (1997). Distributed by: Inter-American Development Bank, www.iadb.org

La Vida Mia. Video produced by Lideres Campesinas and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It chronicles the life of a farm worker who is a survivor of domestic violence. (Spanish: 11 minutes); Distributed by: Migrant Clinicians Network, www.migrantclinician.org

A View from the Shadows: Child Sexual Abuse in the Hispanic Community. *Una Visión desde las Sombras: Abuse Sexual Infantil en la Communidad Hispana* (18 minutes, Spanish, English subtitles). Carmen and Soledad were both sexually abused as children by family members. Now, as adults, they share their stories. A therapist with the Nashville Child Advocacy Center talks about tactics offenders use with victims, how abuse can be prevented, why children don't tell, and the healing process. An attorney and Hispanic advocate discusses why the Hispanic community is hesitant to report. She emphasizes that reporting is important and encourages viewers to learn about their local laws so they will be able to get help for both the victim and offender. Distributed by: You Have the Power, www.yhtp.org

Violencia Familiar (Family Violence: A Male Perspective). Spanish video that tells the stories of four men who overcame their need to abuse and control their partners. In powerful and compelling stories, they talk about the effect their violence had on their children, the handful legacy handed down from father to son that promoted their violence toward their partners, and the effects a "macho" culture had on them. Experts in family violence also offer their perspective on the hand of violence, and discuss ways for abusers to change so they can live productive and peaceful lives with their families. Includes study guide. (Spanish, with or without English subtitles: 26 minutes) (2000). Distributed by: Intermedia, Inc., www.intermedia-inc.com

¡Ya No Mas! Spanish-language video about emotional and physical violence against women. Designed for use in self-help groups and public forums, the video workshop uses dramatic reenactments and on-camera interviews to educate and initiate discussion about the various forms of domestic abuse suffered by millions of women. (Spanish: 28 minutes) (1996). Distributed by: Intermedia, Inc., www.intermedia-inc.com

Additional Video Resources

Insuring Equal Access: Addressing the Issues of LEP (Limited English Proficiency) Clients. (2007) Full video with two segments and comprehensive language plan tools to help service providers be able to provide meaningful access to clients with limited English proficiency. Distributed by Rose Brooks Center, www.rosebrooks.org

Making Domestic Violence Services Accessible to Immigrant Women and Children (2007 Edition). Distributed by Rose Brooks Center, www.rosebrooks.org

Resources for Children

Elena and the Magic Beans/**Elena y los frijoles mágicos:** This bilingual storybook is a colorful portrayal of Elena, who learns about feelings, changes, and challenges when her family moves from Mexico City to the USA. She has a special gift that helps her along the way — magic beans! Any child will identify with Elena's story. Its message, which encourages children to express their feelings, is communicated in Spanish and English. The book is filled with beautiful, original illustrations. Order at Casa de Esperanza, www.casadeesperanza.org

What Are You Feeling? ¿Qué sientes ahora? These bilingual spiral-bound flashcards are designed to be used alone or with *Elena and the Magic Beans*. They encourage children, ages 4-12, to talk about their emotions. Order at Casa de Esperanza: www.casadeesperanza.org

I Want to Tell You Something/Te Quiero Contar Algo This fully bilingual workbook is created for children, ages 6-11, who have witnessed domestic violence. It is designed to guide a child and an advocate, social worker, therapist, or other caring adult through activities and conversation. Children write and draw in the books, making them "their own." The workbook is divided into four sessions to support the healing process. Order at Casa de Esperanza: www.casadeesperanza.org

Organizational Websites

National Organizations	
American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence	www.abanet.org/domviol
American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists (ACOG) violence against women issues section/web page	www.acog.org/goto/noviolence
Amnesty International USA, Women's Human Rights Program	www.amnestyusa.org/women
Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence	www.apiahf.org/apidvinstitute
Arte Sana	www.arte-sana.com
Battered Women's Justice Project	www.bwjp.org
The Black Church and Domestic Violence Institute	www.bcdvi.org
Break the Cycle	www.breakthecycle.org
Child Abuse Prevention Network	www.child-abuse.com
Coalición Puertorriquena Contra La Violencia Domestica	www.pazparalamujer.org
Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras	www.coalitionforjustice.net
Faith Trust Institute	www.faithtrustinstitute.org
Family Violence and Sexual Assault Institute	www.fvsai.org
Family Violence Prevention Fund	www.endabuse.org
INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence	www.incite-national.org
Indigenous Women's Network	www.indigenouswomen.org
Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community	www.dvinstitute.org
Jewish Women International	www.jewishwomen.org
LAMBDA GLBT Community Services	www.lambda.org
Legal Momentum	iwp@legalmomentum.org
Mending the Sacred Hoop - Technical Assistance Project	www.msh-ta.org
Mujeres en Red (España)	www.nodo50.org/mujeresred/violencia.htm
National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence	www.ncdsv.org
National Center for Elder Abuse	www.elderabusecenter.org

National Center for Victims of Crime	www.ncvc.org
National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence	www.ncdsv.org
National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life	www.ncall.us
National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information	www.calib.com
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence	www.ncadv.org
National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs	www.ncavp.org
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges	www.ncjfcj.org
National Council of La Raza	www.nclr.org
National Domestic Violence Hotline	www.ndvh.org
National Electronic Network on Violence Against Women (VAWnet)	www.vawnet.org
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force	www.ngltf.org
National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence	www.endabuse.org/health
National Immigration Forum	www.immigrationforum.org
National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute	www.nlffi.org
National Lawyers Guild/National Immigration Project	www.nlg.org
National Network to End Violence Against Immigrant Women	www.immigrantwomennetwork.org
National Network to End Domestic Violence	www.nnedv.org
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence	www.nrcdv.org
National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC)	www.nsvrc.org
Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)	www.rainn.org
Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody	www.nationalcouncilfvd.org
Sacred Circle: National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women	www.sacred-circle.com
Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault	www.sisterslead.org
The Network/La Red	www.thenetworklared.org
Women of Color Network	www.womenofcolornetwork.org
WomensLaw.org	www.womenslaw.org

Government Agencies

Bureau of Justice Statistics U.S. Department of Justice	www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/
Federal Agency Working Group on Limited English Proficiency	www.lep.gov
United States Department of Health and Human Services	www.hhs.gov
Violence Against Women Office at U.S. Department of Justice	www.usdoj.gov/ovw/

Men's Organizations	
Caminar Latino	www.tapestri.org/members1.html
A Call to Men	www. acalltomen.org
CECEVIM-POCOVI	www.cecevim.org
Men Can Stop Rape	www.mencanstoprape.org
Men's Resource Center of Northern New Mexico Supporting Men and Healing Violence	www.mensresource.org
Men Stopping Violence	www.menstoppingviolence.org
National Compadres Network	www.nationalcompadresnetwork.com
National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute	www.nlffi.org
Teen Programs	
Adopt-A-School Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP")	www.nyc.gov/html/ocdv/html/issues/teenagers.shtml
Break the Cycle	www.breakthecycle.org
Casa de Esperanza	www.casadeesperanza.org
Love is not Abuse	www.Teenrelationships.com
National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline	www.loveisrespect.org
National Runaway Switchboard	www.nrscrisisline.org
New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)	www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/
Related Links	
Lifetime Television	www.lifetimetv.com

Resources for Ensuring Meaningful Access to Services for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency and for Immigrants

Fact Sheet on Access to HHS-Funded Services for Immigrant Survivors of Domestic Violence. (Last revised Sept. 14, 2007). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Available from http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/nationalorigin/bifsltr.html.

- This document clarifies that all immigrants who are victims of domestic violence are eligible for battered women's shelter services and related assistance, regardless of their immigration status, if the shelter receives federal funding.
- The Attorney General has designated certain services necessary for the protection of life and safety that are exempt from the immigration restrictions imposed by the welfare reform law when they are delivered at the community level without regard to an individual's income or resources. These include domestic violence services such as short-term shelter or housing assistance and other in-kind services. See AG Order No. 2353-2001, 66 Fed. Reg. 3613 (January 16, 2001).
- The document also states that as recipients of Federal financial assistance, shelters must comply with Title VI and other civil rights laws, stating the following: "Recipients of Federal financial assistance are not allowed to discriminate based on race, color, or national origin. 42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq., 45 CFR Part 80. Protection against national origin discrimination includes persons with limited English proficiency."

Policy Guidance: Regarding Inquiries into Citizenship, Immigration Status and Social Security Numbers in State Applications for Medicaid, State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Food Stamp Benefits. (January 2003). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights. Available from http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/nationalorigin/triagency.html.

- accompanying "Questions and Answers" available at http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/immigration/finalqa.html

Policy Guidance: Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination as It Affects Persons with Limited English Proficiency. 65 Fed. Reg. 52762 (August 30, 2000). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights. Available from http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/lep/guide.html.

- This document provides the background, legal basis, including relevant caselaw, and policy guidance as to how recipients of federal funding should ensure that those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP persons) have "meaningful access" to those services in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency" (signed by the President Aug. 11, 2000). Available from the U.S. Department of Justice at http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/cor/13166.htm

- This Executive Order requires Federal agencies to examine the services they provide, identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency (LEP), and develop and implement a system to provide those services so LEP persons can have meaningful access to them.
- The Executive Order also requires that Federal agencies work to ensure that recipients of Federal financial assistance provide meaningful access to their LEP applicants and benficiaries.

Commonly Asked Questions and Answers Regarding Executive Order 13166: Providing Meaningful Access to Individuals Who Are Limited English Proficient to Federally Assisted and Federally Conducted Programs and Activities. Available from http://www.lep.gov/13166/lepqa.htm.

Language Assistance Self-Assessment and Planning Tool for Recipients of Federal Financial Assistance. Available from http://www.lep.gov/resources/selfassesstool.htm.

Demographic Data to assist with Self-Assessment and Planning Tool is available from http://www.lep.gov/demog_data.html.

Limited English Proficiency: What Federal Agencies and Federally Assisted Programs Should Know About Providing Services to LEP Individuals. Available from http://www.lep.gov/resources/lep_aug2005.pdf.

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