Cultural Factors Influence Mental Health-Related Experiences and Behaviors of Latinx Youth

Student: Ehliyhan Eslava-Deanda

Department: Psychological Sciences

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Steven Berkley

University of San Diego®

OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Project Abstract:

Recent studies reveal that Latinx youth are more prone to mental health issues and are less inclined to seek professional help when compared to other ethnic-racial groups (Galvan & Gudiño, 2021; Varela & Hensley-Maloney, 2009). This thematic review covers themes that include self and public stigma, traditional cultural roles (i.e., marianismo, machismo, familismo), and cultural orientations (i.e., ethnic-racial socialization, acculturation/enculturation), all of which influence the mental health and mental-health-seeking behaviors of Latinx youth. Findings suggest that certain beliefs and attitudes prevalent in Latinx families, such as traditional gender roles, can prevent children and youths' abilities to seek appropriate care for their mental health and to cope with related issues. Results further identified *familismo* as a cultural factor that contributes to more positive mental health outcomes and general well-being (Ayón et al., 2010).

mental health in the latinx community
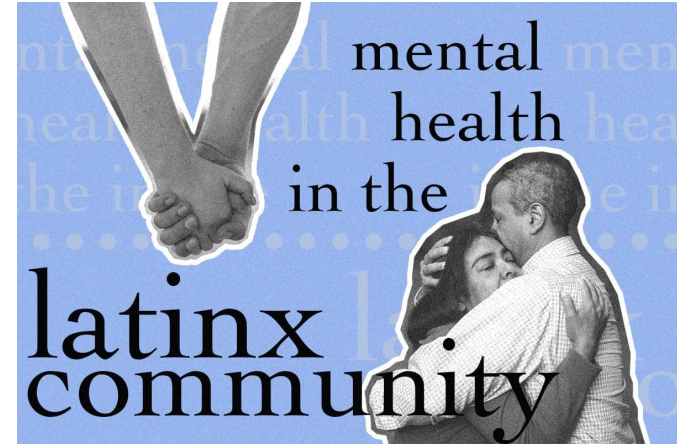
Background/ Purpose

Background

- Latinx youth exhibit higher rates of internalizing symptoms

- Mental health is often unmet, due to US values embedded in the system

Purpose

- Cultural sensitivity and awareness

- Developing therapeutic frameworks and psychotherapy approaches tailored to the specific needs of racial-ethnic minority groups

Research Question: ***How is the role of culture influential to the mental health and mental health-seeking behaviors of Latinx children?***

Gendered Cultural Socialization: Marianismo

Background
- Ideal female standards in Latino households

Findings:
- Symptoms of Depression
  - 'Family Pillar' (family's primary source of strength)
  - Suppressing their personal thoughts and worthlessness

- High levels of depression & anxiety
  - 'Subordinate to Others'
 - 'Silencing Self to Maintain Harmony'

Gendered Cultural Socialization: Machismo

Background
- Male standards in Latino households

Findings:
- Linked to adverse emotional well- being

- Avoid showing any manifestation of vulnerability
  - Suppress emotional expression
  - Weakness
  - Taught not to recognize emotions as real

- Dominance, sexism, and emotional restrictiveness were associated with anxiety and cynical mistrust of others (Nuñez et al., 2016)
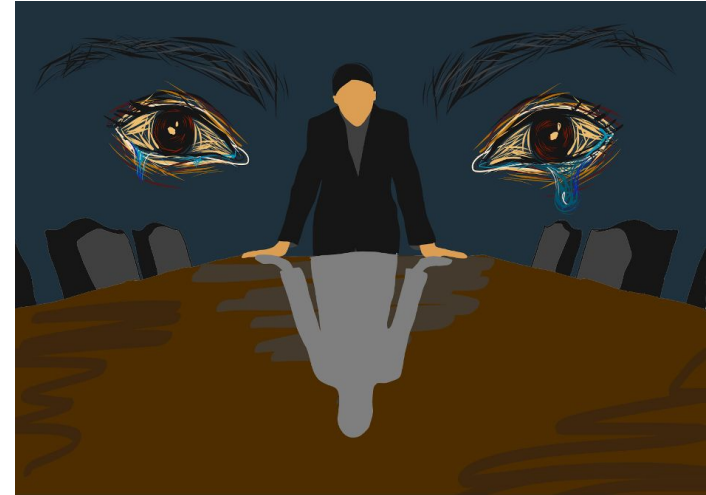
Self-Stigma/ Public Stigma

Findings:

Self-Stigma
- Stigmatizing attitude towards antidepressants

- Lead to negative emotions, due to cultural emphasis on independence

- Family Stigma on mental health treatment

Public Stigma
- Support from family more socially acceptable

- Expect children to "suck it up" or "grow out of it" without support

- Somatic complaints unmet

Conclusion

Research Project:

- Self-stigma and public stigma
    - Foster the belief that mental health issues indicate weakness

- Expectations of Marianismo and Machismo
    - Negative perception of mental health
    - Discourage seeking help

Future Research:

REMP Lab

'Cultural Factors and Mental Health-Related Behaviors of Hispanic/Latinx College Students '