Latinos & Trauma

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Learning Objectives

You will learn the following about Trauma in Latinos:

1. **Trauma Experience**: trauma events common to the Latino experience

2. **Trauma Expression**: how Latinos tend to express distress of trauma events

3. **Trauma Effect**: the impact of trauma on the Latino Family System
   - Caregiver
   - Child
   - PCIT Assessment
   - PCIT Treatment

**NOTE:** The experience, expression, & effect of trauma is individual and not uniform across cultural/ethnic, racial, or linguistic groups.

Shinn, M. M. (2017, September). Latinos & Trauma, UC Davis Children's Hospital, PCIT Training Center, 17th Annual PCIT Conference
Video: What is Trauma?

Conference Only Video Demonstration
Trauma Experience in Latinos

- **17.8%** or 57 million Americans are Latino (2016, U.S. Census Estimate)
- **70%** of U.S. adults report a traumatic life event (2016, CDC)
- **67%** of adults report Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES): abuse, neglect, household challenges (CDC, 2017)
- **11%** of adults with ACES are Latino (CDC, 2017)
- **General Trauma Categories:** natural disasters, accidents, violence, abuse, terrorism, & war.
- **Latino-specific categories:**
  - Pre-resettlement Trauma
  - Resettlement Trauma
  - Post-resettlement Trauma

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Trauma Experience in Latinos

- **Resettlement**: process of moving to a different place, by “choice” (e.g. financial, employment), circumstance (e.g. war), or displacement (e.g. not allowed to stay).

- **Pre-resettlement Trauma**: traumatic events occurring before moving.
  - violence
  - natural/human disaster
  - political unrest
  - war
Trauma Experience in Latinos

**Resettlement Trauma:** traumatic events during the move.
- physical abuse
- rape/trafficking
- gang violence
- harsh weather
- shelter/sleep conditions
- neglect (food insufficiency)
- death (of others in immigration journey)
- Loss of family (non-resettlers)

**Post-resettlement Trauma:** traumatic events occurring after moving.
- mistreatment/rejection due to political, cultural/ethnic, religious, racial, linguistic, or other difference.
- First generation trauma
- Transgenerational trauma
Latinos who resettle to U.S. & Canada are *ten times more* likely to develop PTSD compared to the general population (Kim, 2016).

It is *not* the pre-settlement or resettlement trauma that most affects Latinos (Kim, 2016).

Latino’s distress is based on *present psychosocial stressors* (post-resettlement) that affect their immediate quality of life (Kim, 2016).
First Generation Trauma: when a first generation immigrant experiences resettlement trauma.

12% of Latinos report ongoing post-resettlement experience of terror, which is operationally defined as mistreatment due to cultural/ethnic, linguistic, racial, religious, political factors (Kim, 2016)

Transgenerational or Intergenerational Trauma: When the effects of resettlement trauma extend beyond the first generation person who experienced the trauma (Phipps & Degges-White, 2013)

Familismo (strong loyalty & collective experiences with immediate & extended family) makes Latinos more prone to transgenerational trauma (Phipps & Degges-White, 2013).
Three Cultural Concepts of Distress
(APA, 2013; DeSilva et. al., 2015; Lewis-Fernandez, 2010; GLADP, 2004)

1. **Cultural Syndromes:** group of symptoms that tend to co-occur in people of the same cultural group or community.

2. **Cultural Idioms of distress:** shared ways of experiencing and expressing about personal or social problems.

3. **Cultural Explanations:** common cultural explanations about perceived causes, explanatory models that have cultural meaning or etiologies for the symptoms.
Video: Trauma Expression

Conference Only Video Demonstration
Trauma Expression in Latinos


1. **Cultural Syndromes**: group of symptoms that tend to co-occur in people of the same cultural group or community.

   - **Ataque de Nervios** (“attack of nerves”): Following stressful life circumstances a person experiences a general sense of being out of control that can include the following symptoms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intense emotional upset</th>
<th>Acute anger</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grief</td>
<td>Screaming/yelling uncontrollable</td>
<td>Crying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trembling</td>
<td>Heat in chest rising to head</td>
<td>Verbal aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical aggression</td>
<td>Seizures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fainting</td>
<td>Dissociative symptoms (de-realization, de-personalization)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Cultural Syndromes continued: group of symptoms that tend to co-occur in people of the same cultural group or community.

- **Susto or Espanto** (“fright”): A frightening event that causes the soul to leave the body resulting in unhappiness and sickness. In extreme cases susto can end in death. Common symptoms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appetite disturbance</th>
<th>Sleep disturbance</th>
<th>Problematic dreams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mal de Aire</td>
<td>Low self-worth</td>
<td>Interpersonal sensitivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malos Vientos</td>
<td>Somatic symptoms</td>
<td>Suicide ideation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Mal de Aire** or **Malos Vientos**: A malady caused by suddenly encountering bad air. This can involve a change in air temperature or a spiritual encounter that is felt through a change in the air.

- **List of all syndromes compiled by apal**: Guía Latinoamericana de Diagnóstico Psiquiátrico (GLADP):
  

2. **Cultural Idioms of distress:** shared ways of experiencing and expressing about personal or social problems.

- **Nervios** (”nerves”): adjustment anxiety, depression, dissociative experiences, somatic disturbances such as headaches & stomachaches, sleep problems, irritability, difficulty concentrating, psychosis, general loss of control.

- **Mareos** (“dizziness”): experience of dizziness, vertigo, nausea, headache

- **Aires** or **Vientos:** reporting that you have encountered ”bad air” that is responsible for your malady.

- **(malas vibras):** negative vibes or vibrations

3. **Cultural Explanations**: common cultural explanations about perceived causes, explanatory models that have cultural meaning or etiologies for the symptoms.

- These explanations influence *coping strategies* used and *help seeking behaviors*.
- **Mal De Ojo** ("evil eye"): belief that interpersonal jealousy and malice cause illness and even death with one look.
- **Mal por Envidia** ("malady by envy"): belief that maladies are the result of envy
  - Any person can give “*mal de ojo*” or cause “ojamiento”
- Previously **Brujas** ("witches") were believed to use ”*mal de ojo*” on their victims.
- **Brujería/hechicería**: belief that maladies are the result of witchcraft or spells
Trauma Effect in Latinos

Effect on Caregivers

- **Emotional Availability**: parent’s unresolved grief, depression, anxiety, & hypervigilence hinders their availability for bonding & attainment of healthy attachment (Phipps & Degges-White, 2013).

- **Impaired Parenting Effectiveness**: Caregivers with their own psychological distress due to resettlement trauma may have significantly impaired parenting effectiveness (Phipps & Degges-White, 2013).
Effect on Children

- **Transgenerational or Intergenerational Trauma**: Effects of resettlement trauma on later generations (e.g. children, grandchildren) including anxiety/hypervigilance & increased physical & psychological arousal in response to trauma reminders (Phipps & Degges-White, 2013).

- **Attachment**: Parenting inconsistency makes it difficult for children to feel sure of their parent’s ability to meet their needs (Phipps & Degges-White, 2013).
Trauma Effect in Latinos

Effect on **PCIT Assessment** (Scores & Responses)

- **PSI-SF 4** (parenting stress index – short form, 4th ed.)
  - Parental Distress (PD), Parent-Child Dysfunctional Interaction (P-CDI)
- **TSCYC** (trauma symptom checklist checklist young children)
  - Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) intrusion, avoidance, arousal, total
- **Achenbach** (e.g. CBCL 1.5/6-18, TRF)
  - emotional reactivity, anxious/depressed, somatic complaints withdrawn
- **DSM-5 Cultural Formulation Interview** (CFI & CFI Informant, 4 domains)
  - Cultural definition of the problem
  - Cultural perceptions of cause, context, & support
  - Cultural factors affecting self-coping & past help seeking
  - Cultural factors affecting current help seeking
Trauma Effect in Latinos

Effect on **PCIT Treatment** for Caregiver & Child

- **Coaching:**
  - Re-experiencing, reactivity to reminders affecting ability to listen & follow directions.
  - Dissociation, affect focusing on the present moment

- **Teaching/Learning:**
  - May struggle to grasp concepts & meet mastery.
  - May need extra rehearsal.

- **Home Practice/Daily Care (AKA: homework):**
  - May struggle to complete homework/Daily Care on a regular basis.
Summary: Latinos & Trauma

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