

## Working with Latina Women Who have been Exposed to Domestic Violence

Vanessa Berens  
New Mexico State University

Encuentro Latino  
National Institute on Family Violence

www.latinodv.org 1-888-743-7545 mail@latinodv.org



“Latina women reflect a multidimensionality and multicultural roots that are in a constant state of translations, existing in the interstices of language, gender, cultures, and ethnicities”

Hernandez-Truyol, 2001, P. 122



### Goals

- Explore the needs of the Latina population exposed to domestic violence
- Focus on ethnic identity, cultural variables, domestic violence services, and the community
- Creating a training program



### Research Questions

- How do cultural variables affect the way a Latina woman receives domestic violence services?
- What can domestic violence shelters do to provide more culturally sensitive services to ensure Latina women are provided with the resources to choose the direction they want to follow?



### Latino Critical Theory (LatCrit)

Hernandez-Truyol, 1999; Solorzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J., 2001

- Examines the ways in which race and racism explicitly and implicitly impact process and experience
- Explores the Latina experience by looking through the lenses of culture
- Helps recognize, embrace, and articulate the multiplicity of Latina's identities



### Literature Review

- Domestic violence is indiscriminate; shelter workers need to meet the needs of the diverse women
- Latino population is on the rise; therefore more culturally sensitive programs are needed
- Experience with racism has been shown to hinder Latina women from trusting institutions
- Workers need to have a basic understanding of the Latino cultural background, as well as their own, to be able to become competent service providers



## Common Values among Latino Groups

Meredyth Goldberg Edelson, M. G., Hokoda, A., & Ramos-Lira, Luciana, 2007

Familismo

Respeto

Religion/ Spirituality

Machismo/Marianismo



## Research Design

- Qualitative research study
- LatCrit theoretical foundation
- Semi-structured interviews



## Participants

- Recruiting Participants: 2 women from a local domestic violence shelter

Bella



Josie



## Data Collection Procedures

- Interviews were voice recorded
- Moderator notes were taken and reviewed by both interviewers
- Participants provided a reflection entry the following day
- Follow-up interview conducted 3 days later



## Data Analysis

Kasturirangan, A., & Williams, E. N., 2003

- The interviews were transcribed verbatim
- The researcher and research assistant listened to the recordings and made any needed corrections to the transcripts
- Data analysis proceeded using these written transcripts, reflection papers, and field notes made by the researcher at the time of the interview
- Transcripts were coded according to themes related to the specific research questions
- Each transcript, process notes, and follow-up reflections were read and coded by the researcher and the research assistant



## Method of Soundness

Kasturirangan, A., & Williams, E. N., 2003; Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B., 2006

- Three coworkers discussed implications and goals of the research project, came up with the research questions, and outlined the structure of data collection
- I discussed my subjectivities from my prior experience and the preconceived expectations of the results
- Created and discussed reflections with research assistant
- Participants created reflection paper
- Followed up with the participants in an informal interview
- Classmates processed through data, codes, and themes



## Role as a Researcher:

Kasturirangan, A., & Williams, E. N., 2003

- Translating the Latina women's experiences
- Facilitate the individual interviews
- Understanding my white, middle class, educated, privileged background; which could hinder the women's ability to fully disclose information in regards to their cultural experiences
- My role is to be aware of my differences and otherness; while working to cater to rapport building opportunities
- My role as an employee of the domestic violence shelter
- I plan on giving back to the shelter by providing focus groups to non-residential women who have been exposed to domestic violence and providing training to shelter staff



## Theme: Cultural Values and Traditions

### • *Respect-Bella*

"We have a lot of respect, respect goes a long way in our family, you know, honor your mother and father regardless of how they treat you, love them, you know, just respect to the utmost. They are your mother and father and same thing for your grandparents, same things for your siblings, aunts and uncles, you give them the utmost respect."



## Theme: Cultural Values and Traditions

### • *Avoiding Disrespect- Josie*

Discussed that there is a throat clearing process where a person "clears their throat, straightens their neck, and straightens their back. You straighten up and kind of regroup in a second, but it pretty much means lets go forward." She explained that she and her family will do that if they are offended rather than confront or disrespect the person.



## Theme: Cultural Values and Traditions

### • *Family: Both women went to their families first.*

- "Bella" disclosed that her family took his side and still has a relationship with her abusive partner. "Bella" feels that she can still call on her family for support, but feels she cannot go to them for this, because "they feel that the abuse is ok and that the family unit is more important."
- "Josie explained that the only way her family will accept her leaving is if it all works out; but if she fails they will not accept her leaving."
- Both women explained that they have great respect for their parents and will always love them.



## Theme: Gender Roles

- Both women follow traditional gender roles.
- "Bella" believes that "a male role would be to, he would be the protector, he would be the provider, he would be someone to lean on, because a woman is not always, a woman was not made like a man was. A man's role would also be a father and successful."
- "Josie" explains her view as "he should lift all of the heavy stuff, he should work hard, and then be able to come home and do whatever he wants to". "Josie" stated that she is raising her son to be "the dominant one" and explains that this will make him "a good husband, but a difficult son."



## Theme: The Shelter

### • *"Bella"*

*Liked* the counseling, being around others that are in the same situation as her, and having friends.

*Disliked* the conflicts between the women, unsupervised children, and mean and unmotivated caseworkers and RA's (residential assistants).

*Needs* more community resources, child care, new beds, new carpets, mandatory groups, parenting groups, and loving workers.

### • *"Josie"*

*Liked* that she felt welcomed and loved, the rules that everyone follows, and that people listened to her.

*Disliked* being told what to do when she was in a hurry.

*Needs* of the shelter are realistic transitional plans, access to their own food, community resources, mandatory groups, transportation, and caseworkers with more time.



## Implications

Hernandez-Truyol, B. E., 2001; Kasturirangan, A., & Williams, E. N., 2003

- Latina women can be marginalized within and outside the Latino community
- Help the Latina women recognize their multiple identities and how oppression plays a role
- Understanding the worldview of an individual Latina woman and providing individualized, culturally appropriate services
- Provide more concrete and socially relevant transitional plans



## References

- Edelson, M. G., Hokoda, A., & Ramos-Lira, L. (2007). Differences in effects of domestic violence between Latina and Non-Latina women. *Journal of Family Violence, 22*(1), 1-10.
- Hernandez-Truyol, B. E. (2001). Multidimensionality and LatCrit possibilities: Culture, Gender, and Sex. *LatCrit Primer, 2*, 120-136.
- Huges, D., & DuMont, K. (1993). Using focus groups to facilitate culturally anchored research. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 21*(6), 775-806.
- Kasturirangan, A., & Williams, E. N. (2003). Counseling Latina battered women: A qualitative study of the Latina perspective. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 31*, 162-178.
- Madriz, E. I. (1998). Using focus groups with lower socioeconomic status Latina women. *Qualitative Inquiry, 114*(15), 1-15.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2006). *Designing qualitative research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Solorzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2001). Critical race and LatCrit theory and method: Counter-storytelling. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 14*(4), 471-495.

