



Analysis of Depression in Hispanic American Women

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Critical ideologies & history relevant to the therapeutic context

Terminology

- The term Hispanic was first adopted by the United States government in the early 1970s, and has since been used in local and federal employment, mass media, academia, and business market research. It has been used in the U.S. Census since 1980.
- Because of the popularity of "Latino" in the western portion of the United States, the government adopted this term as well in 1997, and used it in the 2000 census.
- We use Latinx in this presentation as a gender-neutral term for anyone of Latin-American descent

Latin American Diversity



- Hispanics are not a monolithic group. In reality, some Hispanic subgroups have remarkably few characteristics in common.
- Various subgroups reflect great differences in ethnicity, culture, origin and can cover the racial spectrum, from white, African American, Asian, Pacific Islander and Native American.
- Hispanics are a mix of European, African and Native American people.
- Latinx in the United States are typically treated as if they are one large, relatively homogeneous group. However, the typical Latino remains as elusive as the typical American.
- Latinx have come into the United States from various countries, each with their unique historical and cultural traditions.

Latina Americans

- The traditional female role for Latinas, *Marianismo* (“Virgin Mary” or Madonna”), is a custom that calls for women to be devoted to its entirety for their family which entails taking care of their children and the household.
- *Marianismo*, based on the Catholic ideal of the Virgin Mary, emphasizes the woman's role as mother and celebrates the mother's self-sacrifice and suffering for her children.
- Family dynamics is greatly valued in the Hispanic culture and they strive to keep it like that generation after generation.
- It has become evident that women value family as referred as *Familismo* as a priority in their lives and they have a deep desire to always center their lives on immediate and extended family.

Latina Americans

- Another aspect of important values in Hispanic women are the gender roles and most women take them really seriously. They value the man as the head of household, the protector and provider of the family.
- Marianismo suggests, the mother-child bond was often seen as stronger than the husband-wife bond.
- The author states “Within Mexican American culture, female gender role norms are captured in the notion of marianismo, which is a cultural value that denotes the gender role expectations of Latina women (Oliveira et al., 2016). For instance, a study of the marianismo construct showed that it encompasses expectations that a Latina is dedicated to one’s family, be subordinate to others, and self- silencing in order to maintain harmonious relationships (Oliveira et al., 2016)”

Latina American Roles

- Many of the most salient and important contributions to the understanding of Latinx families come from feminist reinterpretations and critiques in the last decade.
- They note that a woman's role within the family has traditionally been a strong one and they also note the positive aspects of machismo, men acting as providers, protectors, and representatives of their families to the outside world. (Oliveira et al., 2016)
- Feminist interpretations notes that to the degree that rigid gender roles may have characterized Mexican's in the past, urbanization, migration, and industrialization have transformed these more patriarchal arrangements in the Mexican society.

Latina American Values

- Often what has propelled women into these roles has been their increasing participation in the workforce. While this has not always decreased women's domestic responsibilities, it has expanded their spatial mobility.
- In the United States, Latinas, who typically work outside the home, likewise report less rigid gender roles than may have traditionally been the case. Ethnographic work suggests that while employed Latinas often espoused the ideology of patriarchy and machismo, their employment challenged their husband's dominance.
- Whether Hispanic American farm-working women, or high-achieving, highly educated Hispanic women, gender roles in Hispanic families are becoming less rigid and more egalitarian. (Fernandes et al., 2005)

Latina Americans

- Nonetheless, these moves toward more egalitarian gender roles within the family comes with a struggle. For example, Latinas have had a difficult time with culturally prescribed manners to express emotions. Hispanic society discourages assertive expressions of emotion among women.
- Latinas are attaining increasingly egalitarian relationships within the families, but this change in role is not accompanied by a change in ideology. Latinas show some reluctance to let go of the notion that males should have the prominent role as breadwinners and as family representatives to the outside world. (Fernandes et al., 2005)

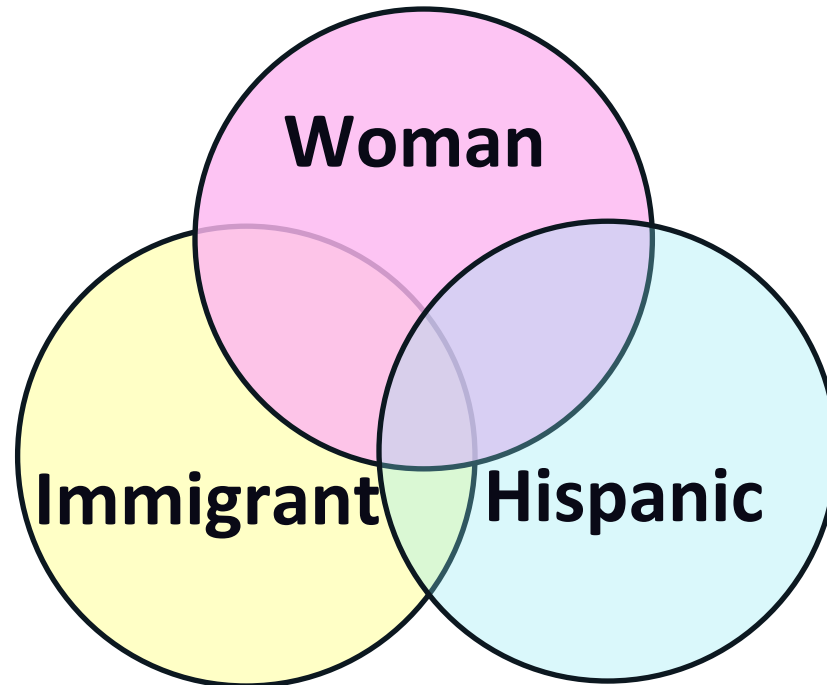
Intersecting identities of being a Latina American with depression

Stats: Latinas & Depression

- Depression is the **number one** cause of disability in the world, affecting 350M people worldwide (De Oliveira et al., 2017)
- Hispanic women are at a **higher risk** for depression than Caucasian and African American women. 14% of Latinas, 12% of African American women, and 7% of White women report poor mental health (Shattell et al., 2008) and Latinas are **twice as likely** as Hispanic men to suffer from depression (De Oliveira et al., 2017).
 - They are also **less likely** to receive mental health support than their Caucasian and African American counterparts: 36% of Hispanics versus 60% of Whites (APA, 2015)
- Latinas with lower education, poverty, and unemployment are at highest risk for developing depression
- Mental health is not a widely discussed topic in the Hispanic/Latinx community
 - *"I'm Cuban and Dominican, and we don't have time to be depressed — those are rich-people problems."*
 - *"I don't have time to be sad; I just have to get over it"*

Trifecta of Race, Gender and Nationality

The social determinants of health are defined by the WHO (2014) as “conditions in which people are born, live, grow, work, and age.”



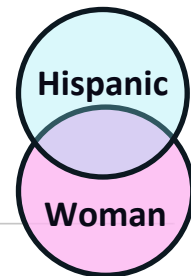
Why are Latina American Women Depressed?

- **Being an immigrant: process of acculturation and associated stressors**
 - Separation from family (parents, spouse, children)
 - Family roles and responsibility/caretaker
 - Unmet economic needs – socioeconomic stressors
 - Harmful interpersonal relationships (prior or current) or persecution
 - Generational conflicts – following old traditions versus acclimating to new culture; sending aid back home
 - Lower education levels
 - Isolation (loss of guidance from extended family, cultural continuity, and familiar supports)
 - Language barrier
 - Health insurance/access to healthcare
 - Legal status concerns/opportunity for work
 - Navigating social systems (school, resources, etc)



Immigrant

Why are Latina American Women Depressed?

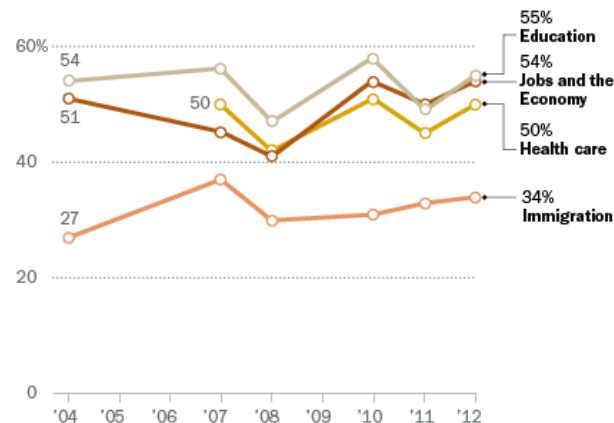


• Concerns Facing Latinas

- The National Center for Education Statistics reports that between 1990 and 2014, the percentage of Latinx ages 25 to 29 who obtained a bachelor's degree grew from 8% to 15%. The graduation rate for Latinas has improved faster than it has for women in any other racial or ethnic group.
- However, Latinas are still **severely underrepresented** in college, holding only 7.4% of degrees earned by women, even though they represent 16% of the female population, and they make up only 3% of women in STEM fields (Center for American Progress, 2017).
- Latinas are more likely than the general population to be obese, have diabetes, and be diagnosed with cervical or breast cancer, but they're also less likely than their peers to have insurance, with 38% reporting that they're uninsured (CAP, 2017)

For Latinos, Economy and Education More Important Than Immigration

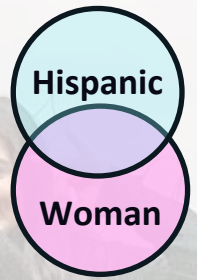
Percent of Hispanic registered voters saying issue is "extremely important" to them personally



Note: The "jobs and the economy" item has slightly different wording in earlier surveys: The 2004, 2007 and 2012 surveys asked about "the economy and jobs"; the 2008, 2010 and 2011 surveys asked about "jobs."
Source: National Survey of Latinos, 2004 and 2007-2012.

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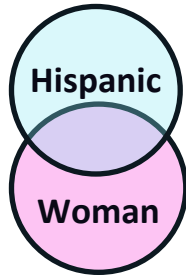
Why are Latina American Women Depressed?



- **Violence & Sexual Aggression**

- 1 in 3 Latinas experience domestic violence during their lifetime (National Latina Network, 2018)
- Married Latinas were less likely than other women to immediately define their experiences of forced sex by their spouses as “rape” and terminate their relationships; some viewed sex as a marital obligation (OVC, 2012).
- Rape has become so prevalent for women that journey across the Mexico-U.S. border that many women take birth control pills or get shots before setting out to ensure that they won’t get pregnant (OVC, 2012)
- 77% of Latinas said that sexual harassment was a major problem in the workplace.
 - Immigrant Latina domestic workers are especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation because they depend on their employers for their livelihood
- *Campesinas* or female farmworkers are 10 times more vulnerable than others to sexual assault and harassment at work (ACLU, 2018).

Why are Latina American Women Depressed?



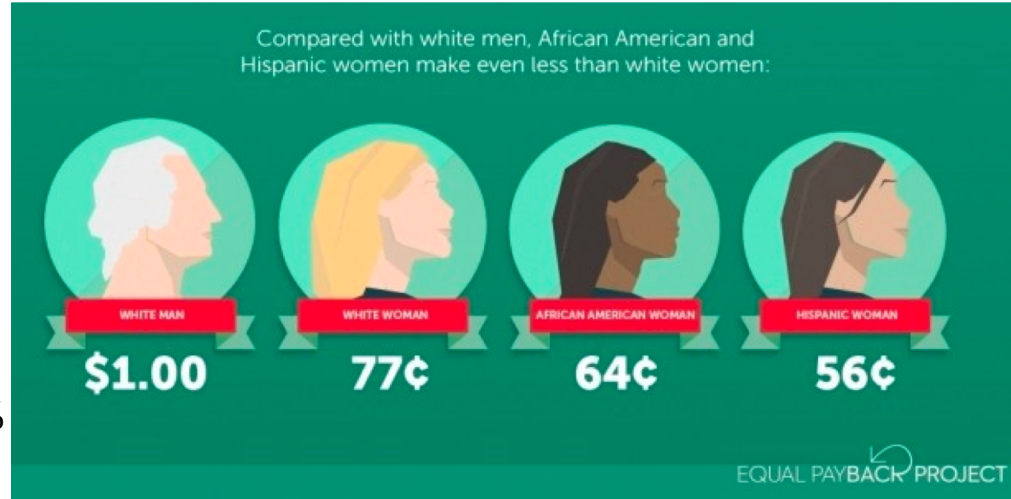
• Societal Pressures & Expectations

- Latina teenagers have a rate of suicide attempts 14% higher than their non-Hispanic White female and Hispanic male peers (De Oliveira et al., 2017).
 - Generational stresses/cultural conflicts and high expectations from family but with less opportunity to achieve
- Latinas may not seek mental health treatment because of conflicting cultural values that place family goals before individual goals (Shattell et al., 2008)
 - Sense of self-reliance among families coping with mental health problems as well as a sense of shame for the family when personal problems are disclosed
- Of top 100 grossing movies: 33% of all speaking or named characters were girls/women; 9% of the movies gender-balanced casts. (Women & Hollywood, 2018)
- When women are included they are often sexualized, as measured by sexy attire or nudity (Women & Hollywood, 2018):
 - Women in general were 25x more likely to be shown sexually revealing attire/nudity versus men
 - Latinas were the most likely to be hypersexualized versus white, Black, Asian, other females
 - Teenage females were just as likely to be sexualized as females 21-39 years of age.

Why are Latina American Women Depressed?

- **Foreigners in Their Own Land**

- Gerrymandering (drawing of electoral district lines to keep particular groups together) has packed growing Hispanic populations into fewer districts, diluting their voting strength
- Hate crimes against Latinx grew 24% between 2016 and 2017 (FBI, 2017), mostly attributed to Trump's rhetoric
- Wealth gap: 25% of Hispanics live in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018)
 - Latinx denied home loans 4x more often than whites, biggest disparity in country
 - Pay disparities

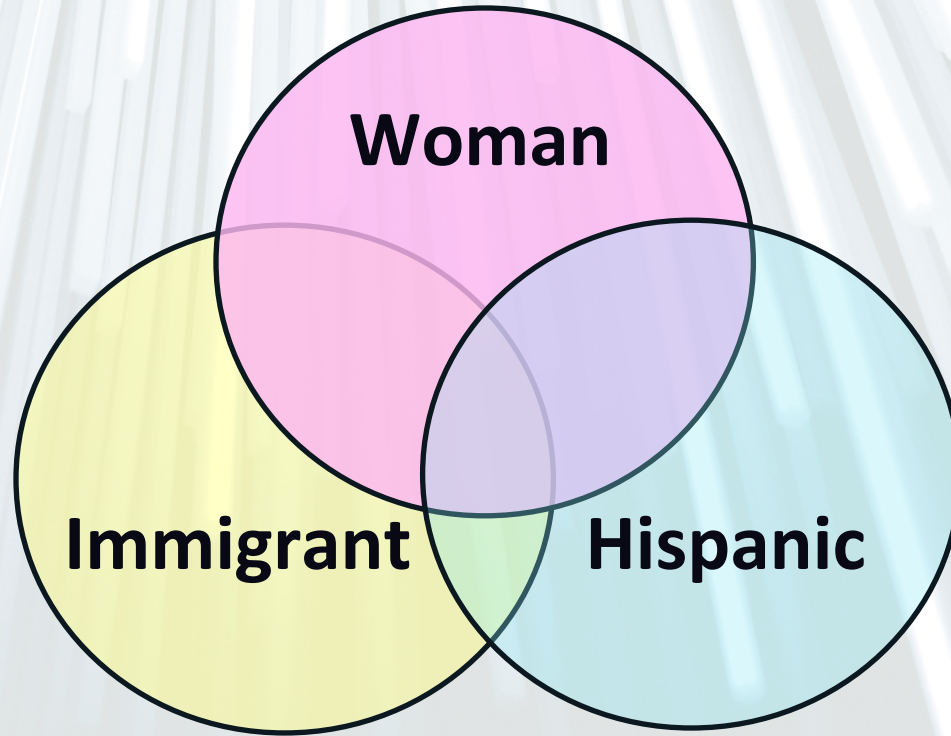


Why are Latina American Women Depressed?

- **Religious Influences**

- 57% of Hispanic Americans identify as Catholic (Cara, 2013)
- Catholicism can influence a person's internal schema in two different ways:
 - **Positive interpretations:**
 - Belief that suffering has meaning and there is a purpose in what at the moment appears only as misfortune
 - Comfort in identifying with Christ's suffering and resurrection
 - **Negative interpretations:**
 - Suffering is tied to personal failing and/or retribution for sinfulness
 - Hardship may be attributed to be the consequence of moral failure and is viewed as a form of just punishment (Shafranske, 2014).
- In latter case, Latinas may attack themselves and spiral into a deepening depression and spiritual struggle filled with guilt and self-condemnation.

Trifecta of Race, Gender and Nationality



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GDAm52zvdg





Culturally responsive treatments

View of mental health care

- It is thought that Latinx do not seek mental health care due to negative connotations towards mental health, this is not the case: In 2009 it was reported in Psychiatry Online that Latinx or Hispanics may have more positive attitude in seeking mental health treatment than non-Hispanic whites
- Lifetime prevalence rates among Latinx Americans born in the U.S. are lower than those for non-Latinx whites, vary among ethnic groups, and are higher among U.S.-born Latinx than they are among foreign-born Latinx (mhanational.org)
- Reports on the use of mental health services in Puerto Rico, in a particular survey ($N = 1,551$ adults) found that 85% of those with diagnosable disorders reported using mental health care specialists/health providers (Office of Surgeon, , Center for Mental Health Services, & National Institute of Mental Health, 2001)

SOURCES

¹<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST120216>

²<http://www.samhsa.gov/specific-populations/racial-ethnic-minority>

³<https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>

Obstacles to overcome when accessing care

The uninsured rate for Latinx, is three times higher (33-35%) than whites (11-12%) and more than African American and Asian/Pacific Islanders (19-20%)

- Cost of service
- Lack of health insurance
- Little public assistance available/having to pay out of pocket
- 1% of psychologist identified as Hispanic (2005)
 - Language and value barriers
 - 50% of Hispanics do not return after an initial visit
 - 36% with depression received care (2014)

There is a link between immigration status and insurance

- Immigrants are less likely to have medical insurance
- 53% of non-citizen Latinx youth (age birth to 17) were uninsured compared to 29% of citizen Latinx children of immigrant families and 16% of children of American-born Latinx parents
- Approximately 30% of Hispanic children are uninsured, compared to about 20% of African American children and 10% of non-Hispanic white children. (Office of Surgeon General et. al, 2001; mentalhealth.org)

Who are Latinx reaching out to and what are the differing therapeutic methods

- Folk medicine practitioner/Herbalist
 - Friends
 - Family
 - Church
 - Therapy (when accessible)
-
- Ecological structural family therapy- emphasizing the interaction between external environmental factors on family dynamics during acculturation process and internal factors. From an ecological systems perspective, Hispanic clients benefit from receiving help in learning to speak English, navigating complex social systems, accessing community resources, and other new job skills.
 - Bicultural effectiveness training- Developed by the University of Miami and found to be effective in resolving conflict within Cuban Americans following reunification.
 - Psychoeducation treatment approach: Based on the structural family theory- designed to reduce acculturation stress in immigrant families of two-generations.
 - Social/environmental change agent model- Emphasizes the importance of mental health practitioners acting as an advisor or consultant in strengthening support systems and promoting development among ethnic minority clients and psychological growth. (Office of Surgeon General et. al, 2001)

Who are Latinx reaching out to and what are the differing therapeutic methods cont.

*Mattie Rhodes Center philosophy and Treatment Model: Use of client-centered, holistic approach to treatment that goes beyond the family and individual to include the entire ecological field in which a client functions.

- Strives for linguistic and cultural competence
- Family systems approach
- Solutions focused treatment
- Strengths base approach
- Bicultural/bilingual emphasis

Jose 16 yr old: Suffered from stress, panic attacks, and anxiety from witnessing domestic abuse against his mother. Took on father role due to honor and familismo; taking care of younger siblings paying bills.

- Therapy: Bilingual therapist that met with Jose at the school once a week
- Results: Gains of security, confidence, balancing positive Latinx beliefs, and American culture as a teen. Continued support of mother in a detached way to not feel continuously responsible (Caldwell, Couture, & Nowotny).



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End

Why are Latina American Women Depressed?

Woman

- **Being a Woman: Male = dominant/superior; Female = inferior**
 - Girls who have traditionally boys name = cool (i.e.: Sawyer, Charlie, Noah); Boys who have girls names = uncool (i.e.: Ashley, Lauren) (The Atlantic, 2018)
 - Girls who are tomboys = cool; Boys who like princesses = not cool
 - Blue = cool; Pink = lame (ironically red used to be the color for boys and blue was for girls)
 - Women who take on traditionally male careers are celebrated; men taking on traditionally female careers stigmatized (at home caregivers, nurses)
 - Of top 100 grossing movies: 33% of all speaking or named characters were girls/women; 9% of the movies gender-balanced casts. (Women & Hollywood, 2018)
 - When women are included they are often sexualized, as measured by sexy attire or nudity (Women & Hollywood, 2018):
 - Women in general were 25x more likely to be shown sexually revealing attire/nudity versus men
 - Latinas were the most likely to be hypersexualized versus white, Black, Asian, other females
 - Teenage females were just as likely to be sexualized as females 21-39 years of age. Middle aged women were the least likely to be shown in a sexualized light.

Why are Latina American Women Depressed?

- **Being a Woman: Language & Its Subtexts**
 - Women defined through the lens of men, specially in Spanish language where male ending (“o”) is used for groups of people
 - Muted Group Theory: marginalized groups (*a*) do not to have a voice in the culture and (*b*) tend to develop alternative ways of communicating (Zhu, 2011). Women speak less and with less authority:
 - “Women’s Speech”: tend to interrupt less, to speak with less certainty using hedges (*I think that maybe*) and tags (*don't you think*).
 - Use of “just” indicating subordination and deference “*I just wanted to check in on ...*” or “*Just wondering if you'd decided between ...*” and “*If you can just give me an answer, then ...*”
 - Men and Women have internalized that being male is superior, smarter, cooler, better
 - This has led to a culture of microagressions & mansplaining (at best) and male dominance and female subordination (typical)