

Latinos and Suicide: A Clinician's Guide to Suicide Prevention and Treatment

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Module 3: Risk and Protective Factors
Presenter: Jesse Rocky Romero, PhD, LMSW

September 20th, 2021

1pm EDT



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Author Disclose Conflicts of Interest

- The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Suicide Prevention Awareness Month



NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Hispanic Heritage Month



NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH 2021
CELEBRATING SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH PERSONNEL AS
THEY ARE THE LINK BETWEEN LATINX COMMUNITIES,
FAMILIES, AND CHILDREN
#SMHPLINKINGTHEGAP



Modular Overview

Module 1: Introduction/Latinos in the US- September 9th, 2021

Module 2: Suicide Related Terms- September 9th, 2021

Module 3: Risk and Protective Factors- September 20th, 2021

Module 4: Assessment/Prevention/Intervention

Module 5: When Suicide Happens In Schools

Module 3

• Risk and Protective Factors

Objectives

- Identify risk factors for suicidal behaviors among Latino populations
- Discuss protective factors for suicidal behaviors in Latino communities
- Address the role of cultural values in relation to risk and protective factors for suicidal behaviors

Risk Factor

A clearly defined behavior or constitutional (e.g., genetic), psychological, environmental, or other characteristic that is associated with an increased possibility or likelihood that a disease or disorder will subsequently develop in an individual.

Source: APA, 2021

Risk Factors



Family History of Suicide: family secrets/shame

Previous Attempt: One attempt may beget another, may increase lethality.

Loss and Grief

Grief and Loss: unresolved grief and loss, possibly from losing a significant person



Risk Factors

- Child Maltreatment and Neglect
- trauma can place the person at risk for suicide. It is well known that the accumulation of adversity across the lifespan raises the risk of chronic illness and mental illness. Suicide can also result from the effects of a long history of trauma.

- Source: Zayas et al., (2005)

Mental Health Disorders and Symptoms

- Impulsive or aggressive tendencies that reflect problems in *emotional and behavioral self-regulation* are often associated with suicides and attempts. There may be indication that the individual has carried a diagnosis of a personality disorder (such as borderline or antisocial).
- Major Depression Disorder
- Feelings of hopelessness

Stigma

Stigma related to mental health may lead to apprehension and reluctance to seek services which may increase propensity to attempt or complete a suicide.

In Latino communities, stigma related to mental health conditions and mental health services is prevalent.

Acculturative Stress

Latino youths acculturate at a faster rate than their parents/grandparents. This may result in acculturation gaps. These differences in behaviors, practices and values may increase the level of conflicts between parents and adolescents, resulting in such difficulties as suicide attempts and psychological maladjustment.

Protective Factors

A clearly defined behavior or constitutional (e.g., genetic), psychological, environmental, or other characteristic that is associated with a decreased probability that a particular disease or disorder will develop in an individual, that reduces the severity of an existing pathological condition, or that mitigates the effects of stress generally.

Source: APA, 2021

Protective Factors

Mental Health Care

This begins with a clear assessment of underlying mental health and substance use/misuse disorders.

Connectedness

Being connected to others—family, friends, communities of others who share common interests and purpose—is an important protective factor.

<https://www.sprc.org/comprehensive-approach/social-connectedness>



Protective Factors

- Problem Solving and Life Skills
- Possessing useful *life skills* including problem solving skills, coping skills, and the ability to adapt to change is a protective factor. Coping abilities and problem-solving skills are highly protective.

Self-Esteem

- Self-esteem is defined as the level of confidence that person has for her or his abilities and value.
- Meaning and purpose

Religion and spirituality



- In Latino cultures, religious participation plays a significant role in Hispanic culture and is hypothesized to decrease rates of suicide among Hispanics, serving as a protective factor.

Culture as a Protective Factor

Culture can provide beliefs, values, behaviors, and teachings that can be protective.



Culture-related Protective Factors

- Familismo: Family cohesion acts as a protective factor for behavioral difficulties among Latino adolescents.
 - Enhances the level of connection
 - Increases a sense of safety and perceived understanding
- Within Latino families, those with lower levels of acculturation show increased cohesion.

Family-related protective factors

- Mother-daughter reciprocity (mutuality)



Recommendations

- Culture and cultural values should be considered when assessing suicidal risk in Latino adolescents.
- Acculturation and acculturative stress may play a role in suicidal risk.
- Consideration of risk and protective risk is part of a more comprehensive evaluation that will be discussed in the next sessions.





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Next Session

Module 4: Assessment/ Prevention/Intervention

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September 27th, 2021

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM ET



* Certificates of participation will be distributed to participants upon completion of the last session on October 4, 2021*

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