



Family Voices Inc.

Working with First Generation Latino Families: Overcoming Common Barriers, Part 2

Distrust of authority is a significant barrier to working with first generation Latino families. This is not a concern unique to Latinos, since most families coming into the US are wary of initial attempts at various types of intervention. Individuals can overcome this barrier the same way they overcome it with other families—by being open, warm, and clear about their objectives. Letting families know that mistakes may occur but that you are very open to gaining knowledge of and comfort with the Latino culture will be helpful in continuing to work with them.

Lack of Cultural Awareness. Not knowing about Latino cultural norms and values can be an obstacle to networking, outreach, services and intervention. For example, personal rapport and relationship to others, especially family members, is cherished among Latinos. Yet, someone unfamiliar with the culture might look at Latino families and label their relationships as co-dependent or enmeshed (Grayson, 2001). A service provider might see reluctance to discuss family matters with an outsider as guilt or resistance rather than as an expression of “familismo.” If one remains unfamiliar with a culture, miscommunication and misunderstandings can occur. Self-education is key to overcoming this barrier. Asking Hispanic coworkers, friends, and clients for information about the culture is one way individuals can familiarize themselves with the Latino culture. As a secondary approach, they should seek out books, music, movies, and cultural and community events.

Language is another significant hurdle for working with first generation Latino families. To overcome this barrier, certain resources are needed including:

- **Translators.** These professionals translate documents, can write families materials in Spanish, and read materials from different countries. Translators must be well-trained in the nuances of the language, culture, particular Hispanic country, etc.
- **Interpreters.** These individuals communicate verbally with the families. Their job is to convey information without changing what the interviewer says. Interpreters unfamiliar with the discipline of interpreting or not familiar in working with a variety of services may interfere by interjecting their own biases and observations into discussions.
- **Bilingual staff.** If they are fluent, bilingual staff have a clear advantage over interpreters in that they have a much better understanding of their agencies work and the agency’s role in the family’s life.
- **Bicultural staff.** These are agency employees of Spanish-speaking heritage, individuals who bring with them an understanding of the homes of the Latinos in the community—what their experiences are, what they feel when an outsider knocks on their door.

Look for Part III of this series in an upcoming edition of Friday’s Child.

Adapted from Jordan Institute for Families/Children’s Services Practice Notes articles.

Network Spotlight

Family Voices of Maine has worked with the Passamaquoddy tribe and their youth over the last few years to establish and nurture their relationship. One of the regional committees, the Calais Family Support advisory committee, met with the Passamaquoddy Cultural director and planned a day long event which was held last winter. Families and elders of the Passamaquoddy tribe opened their doors to non-native families. Adults and youth participated in a variety of Passamaquoddy planned activities including crafts, snowshoeing, and learning about the oral history, traditional dances and rituals of the tribe. Non-native youth were enthusiastic at the end of the day, and were charged with sharing what they had learned in their communities. Businesses and families donated prizes and publicity. Differences were explored, commonalities discovered, and a partnership grew!

WEB SPOTLIGHT

The Latino Health Institute (LHI), New England’s premier community based public health organization, promotes the health of the community, its institutions, families, and individuals through effective interventions that are culturally competent and technologically appropriate. LHI serves annually over 30,000 Latin American families and individuals through more than 60 direct care programs, and an additional 5,000 healthcare professionals, para-professionals, and institutions through education, technical assistance, fiscal sponsorship, program oversight, and consulting. For more information, please visit <http://www.lhi.org>



ReCap of FV Talk

This information is a summary collected from Family Voices Talk listserv

Resources, News, & Stories

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/28/AR2005102802449.html?sub=AR>

The other movement that Rosa Parks inspired.

http://ppc.mchtraining.net/custom_pages/national_ccce/

An interactive learning module that includes core concepts of and cross cultural health care case studies, each accompanied by a lecture and learning activities. The purpose of these case studies is to familiarize the learner with the many issues that may arise while working in a pediatric setting with people from different cultures.

<http://www.delawareonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20051022/NEWS/510220334/1006>

Stranded students unsettle parents.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/30/health/30patient.html>

For a retainer, lavish care by 'boutique doctors.'

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/29/business/businessspecial2/29health.html>

Wal-Mart's health care struggle is corporate America's, too.

<http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2005/Oct/27/In/FP510270350.html>

Deaf player separated from his interpreter.

amazon.com

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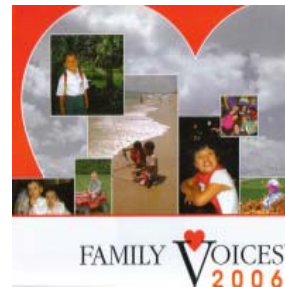
Family Voices continues to earn money from purchases made through our web site link to Amazon.com this year. Continue to purchase items for the Holidays online through our website www.familyvoices.org. Look for the Amazon link on our home page. Amazon carries hundreds of Holiday gift ideas. Thank you so much for your support!

As long as the differences and diversities of mankind exist, democracy must allow for compromise, for accommodation, and for the recognition of differences.

--Eugene McCarthy

OF NOTE:

Grace Pushparany Williams (FV MD) was recently elected as Regional Coordinator for FV Region III (DE, MD, DC, PA, WV, VA)! A member of Family Voices for four years, Grace brings much insight, talent, drive, and a fresh perspective to her work with families and professionals alike. Grace is a passionate advocate for children, youth and adults with special health care needs and disabilities. She actively participates on many boards, advisory councils, and committees in several federal, state and local organizations related to SHCN and disabilities. Congratulations, Grace!



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The Family Voices Calendar is ready for you to purchase. What a great gift for your family! Family Voices Calendar is a must have for the holidays.

To receive "Friday's Child" on e-mail:
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To become a member of our family and for more information please visit our website: www.familyvoices.org

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