

# **Latino Culture and Communication: More Than Just Translation**

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# Goals

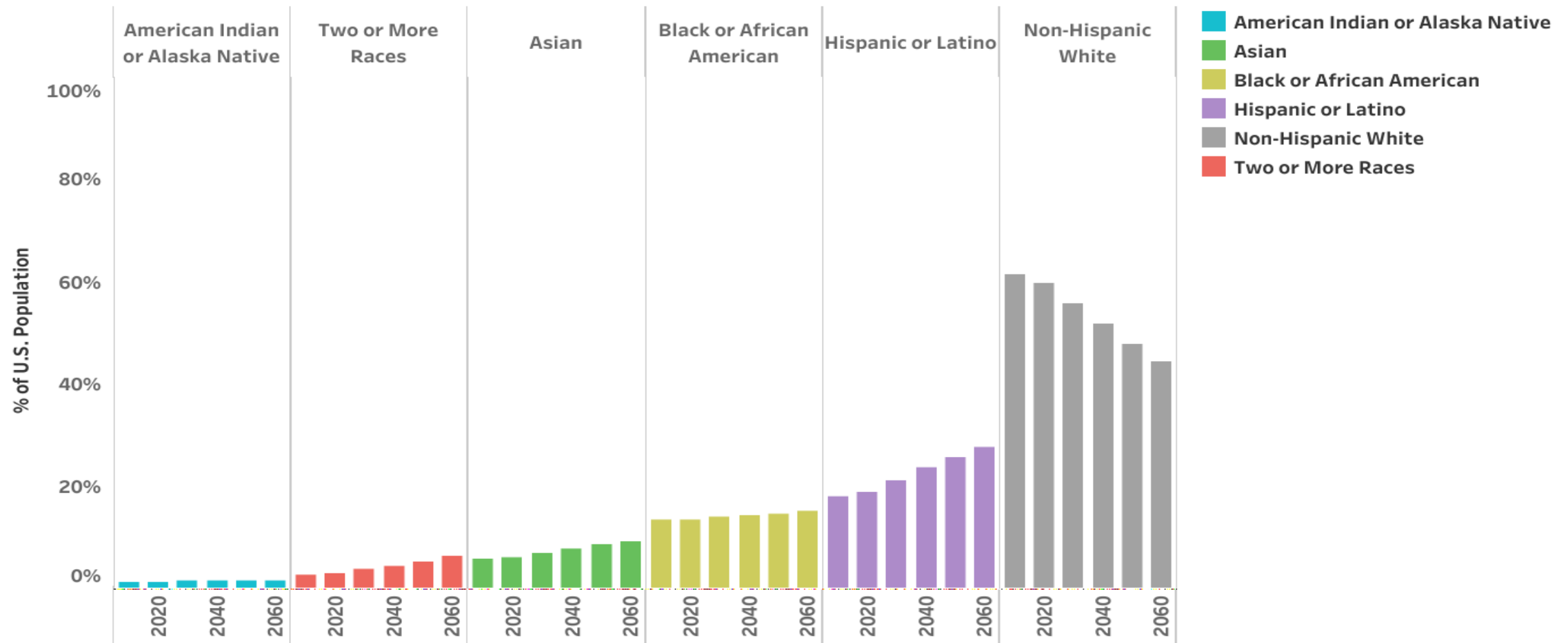
- Inform on Latino cultural dynamics that frame the program participant and practitioner dialogue and interactions.
- Review strength-based strategies for effective communication with Hispanic and Latinx communities.

**Hispanic:** usually refers to language and those whose ancestry comes from Spain or Spanish speaking countries.

**Latino:** usually refers to geography and specifically, to Latin America which includes individuals from the Caribbean, South America, and Central America.

**Latinx and Latine:** a gender-neutral term that persons use instead of or alongside “Latino” and “Latina,” and refers to a person of Latin American origin or descent, more likely evolving.

# Population Projection by Race/Ethnicity 2020 to 2060



# 10 Key Components

**Drug courts provide access to a continuum of alcohol, drug, and other related treatment and rehabilitation services.**


- An assessment at treatment entry, while useful as a baseline, provides a time specific “snapshot” of a person’s needs and may be based on limited or unreliable information.
- If various levels of treatment are available, participants are matched to programs according to their specific needs. Guidelines for placement at various levels should be developed.
- Services should be available to meet the needs of each participant.

# How We Tend to Define Culture

- **Culture** is an umbrella term which encompasses the social behavior, institutions, and norms found in human societies.
- Further includes the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities, and habits of the individuals in these groups.



# High Context Culture



Hispanics belong to a high-context culture which focuses on collectivism, non-verbal communication, emphasis on visual, contextual elements and maintaining harmony (simpatía) in relationships.

- **Anglo Culture:** The most highly prized style of communication is assertive, direct, and of low context.
- **Latino culture:** Tend to use a style that is passive, is indirect, and provides high context.

# Scenario

A doctor asks a Latina patient if she agrees to cut back her hours at work until her back injury is resolved. Patient seems hesitant and eventually says “yes”. However, the patient is illegally employed and is afraid of losing her job if she cannot be there every day.

The provider finds the patient to be shy and a bit guarded but believes the patient agreed. The patient does not decrease her hours and when she comes back for the one month follow up appointment, her injury has worsened significantly.

*Provider pays attention to how things are said, not only to what is being said. For example, a tentative “yes” in Spanish is equivalent to a “NO (but-I-am-too-polite-to-tell-you)” in English.*

*It is best to fully **explore** any hint of hesitations by a Latino patient before moving on to the next topic or question.*

# Reported Language Barriers

- Hispanics are more likely to report poor communication with community providers.
- 57% of Hispanic adults surveyed experienced a language or cultural barrier in the healthcare system.
  - 44% experienced a cultural barrier
  - 49% experienced a language barrier
  - 57% experienced either a language or cultural barrier

# Other Communication Barriers Include...

- The use of jargon
- Lack of attention, interest, distractions, or irrelevance to the receiver
- Differences in perception and viewpoint
- Physical barriers to non-verbal communication
- Language differences and the difficulty in understanding unfamiliar accents
- Expectations and prejudices which may lead to false assumptions or stereotyping
- Cultural differences

# Interpreter Services

- 26% of Hispanic adults surveyed reported communicating through an interpreter, 52% family member acted as the interpreter.
- When both the individual's English and the examiner's Spanish were poor, an interpreter was not called 34% of the time.
- ***What are challenges of using a 'family' interpreter?***
- ***What are challenges of using a phone line interpreter?***

# Un-interactive Dialogue

- Nearly 6 in 10 Hispanic adults have had a difficult time communicating with a provider because of a language or cultural barrier.

*“When I tell them I don’t understand them, they’ll bring someone over to speak to me in Spanish and I don’t understand them either,”* said Torres, who is Puerto Rican and was raised in New York.

*“We didn’t grow up speaking that formal Spanish, so I have no idea what they are saying.”*



# What Is Actually Conveyed?



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Miscommunication often stems from a misalignment of explicit and implicit meaning between the sender and receiver.

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Explicit characteristics of culture are the observable behaviors, rituals, symbols and heroes of a culture.

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The implicit characteristics of a culture are the underlying values, the unwritten norms of behavior that guide people regarding which are considered appropriate or inappropriate.



# Language Differences



## Vocabulary

- Mexican word for “car” is **carro**
- Spanish word is **coche**
- Argentinian word is **auto**

## Pronunciation


In Latin American Spanish, the letter "c" is often pronounced as an "s" in a pronunciation called "seseo"

## Grammar

In Spain, the pronoun "vosotros" is used to address a group of friends, while "ustedes" is used to show formality. In most of Latin America, "ustedes" is used instead of "vosotros", even when addressing close friends and family.



# Embrace the Differences




Language and culture are intertwined. When you interact with another language, it means that you are also interacting with the culture that speaks the language.

# First Impressions and Rapport Building

- Introduce yourself in a respectful, warm manner, provide your pronouns.
- Explain confidentiality and elicit their understanding.
- Have the client state in their own words the problem or problems as they see it.



# Family – Familism

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- May include grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, long time close friends, and godparents of the family's children.
  - Central to identity, source of support

# Male Role Expectations

## Machismo

- Power role as head of the family.
- Refers to a man's expected responsibility to provide for and protect his family.
- Value can influence behavior and attitudes of adolescent males during time of identity formation.

# Female Role Expectations

- **Marianism** – self-sacrificing and submissive to the male
- **Hembrism** – head of household, Latinas tend to maintain multiple roles in their families
  - Quinceañera, rite of passage
- **Familism** – hierarchical priority

# Spirituality and Religion

- Religions: Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, Evangelical
- **3 MAIN HEALING/SPIRITUAL SYSTEMS**
  - ***Curanderismo*** – Mexican American
  - ***Espiritismo*** – Puerto Rican
  - ***Santeria*** – Cuban
- Hispanic and Latino patients may combine respect for the benefits of mainstream medicine, tradition, and traditional healing, with a strong religious component.
- Spirituality, bound by common cause.



# Immigration & Migration

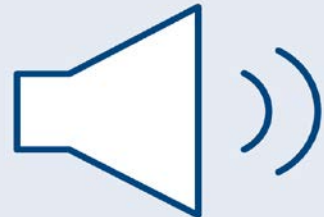
- Immigrants
  - Permanent residents (family dislocation, fragmentation, and reconstruction)
  - Work, Student, Visitor visas
  - Undocumented
- Family dislocation, fragmentation, and reconstruction
- Culture change for individuals and across generations

# Cultural Humility as a Process

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) defines cultural humility as “***a lifelong process of self-reflection and self-critique whereby the individual not only learns about another’s culture, but one starts with an examination of her/his own beliefs and cultural identities.***”

1. Self-reflection and life-long learning
2. Patient focused interviewing and care
3. Cultural humility requires historical awareness
4. Community based care and advocacy

# Language



*“Tengo un problema y necesito información, me gustaría hablar con alguien pero no puedo hablar inglés muy bien. ¿Quien puede ayudarme? Levanten la mano por favor si pueden ayudar.”*


# Questions to Consider



- How do community demographics compare to your program Latino participant representation?
- Does staff elicit patient's preferred language? If so, when?
- Does the agency have a method of notifying program participants of the right to have an interpreter at no cost to them?
- How does the court team ensure staff are appropriately trained in language access services?
- What protocols are engaged to update literature in program participant languages?



# Recommendations

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- Identify Hispanic communities, their backgrounds and preferences.
  - Many Latinx, Latina/o, Latine, Hispanics, have strong preferences about how they identify.
  - Build on the respect Hispanic communities have for family.
  - Direct person-to-person contact is best when communicating with Latino families.

# Thank you!

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