

**14<sup>th</sup> Annual National Association of Drug Court  
Professionals**

***Engaging the Latina Client to Successfully  
Complete the Drug Court Program***

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**National Development & Research Institutes, Inc**



# What We'll Cover

- List issues of societal, familial and environmental factors for Latina clients
- Recognize how cultural and gender issues affect the Latina client's ability to adhere to the Drug Court Program.
- Identify strategies that will engage the Latina client in the Drug Court experience.

# Latina Women in Prison for Drug Crimes

*Minority women represent a disproportionate share of the women sentenced to prison for drug offenses.*

- Hispanic women are twice as likely as white women to be incarcerated.
- Hispanic women are three times as likely to go to prison in their lifetime as compared to white women.
- Hispanic women account for about 1 in 7 women in State prisons but nearly 1 in 3 female prisoners in Federal custody.

# Characteristics of Women in Drug Treatment

- Unstable housing situations
- Fewer educational and job related skills
- Primary care of children (usually head of household)
- High rates of mental illness
- Ethnic, cultural and language issues



# Activity (handout #1)

**When you have problems who do you go to for help?**

- **Do you stay within the family?**
- **Do you go outside the family?**
- **How did you learn this?**
- **Who taught it to you?**



# Latina Women:

## *Cultural Issues and Values*

### **Familism (Familismo)**

Family is the basis of the Latino culture. It provides identity, a sense of security, esteem.



# Latina Women:

## *Cultural Issues and Values (cont...)*

### Familism (Familismo)

**Challenge:** At times, this can exacerbate drug use when the substance abuser is being 'helped' by the family.

# Latina Women:

## *Cultural Issues and Values (cont...)*

### Familism (Familismo)

**From a cultural 'lens':.....**this perspective runs contrary to the construct of enabling. While the function of supporting and supplying substances may be similar, it needs to be viewed within a cultural context and provides a strength based approach option.



# Latina Women:

## *Cultural Issues and Values (cont...)*

### Personalism (Personalismo)

This cultural value is complimentary to 'familismo'. Individual's self worth and dignity is essential and based on her own degree of personalism.



# Latina Women:

## *Cultural Issues and Values (cont...)*

### Personalism (Personalismo)

**Challenge:** Latinas who support, protect and encourages her family, would be more highly valued than someone who owns material goods and/or has high societal standing.

# Latina Women:

## *Cultural Issues and Values (cont...)*

### Personalism (Personalismo)

**From a cultural 'lens'.....**the value of self sufficiency and resourcefulness, having the role of the family provider can be looked as strengths and incorporated into a treatment plan.

# Latina Women:

## *Cultural Issues and Values (cont...)*

### **Marianism (Marianismo)**

This is the cultural value that women are expected to embrace the veneration of the Virgin Mary, in which Latinas are capable of enduring the suffering inflicted by men.

# Latina Women:

## *Cultural Issues and Values (cont...)*

### **Marianism (Marianismo)**

**Challenge:** This can result in Latinas experiencing emotional problems such as anxiety and depression and play a part in mental illnesses such as PTSD'.



# Latina Women:

## *Cultural Issues and Values (cont...)*

### **Marianism (Marianismo)**

**From a cultural 'lens'**.....these cultural values connote strength, perseverance and an ability to survive.

# Latina Women:

## *Cultural Issues and Values (cont...)*

### **Hembrism (Hembrismo)**

Latinas are expected to fulfill the multiple roles of mother and wife, work in and out of the house.

# Latina Women:

## *Cultural Issues and Values (cont...)*

### Hembrism (Hembrismo)

**Challenge:** Latina clients take these values of multiple family roles and responsibility with them through the drug court program.

# Latina Women:

## *Cultural Issues and Values (cont...)*

### Hembrism (Hembrismo)

**From a cultural 'lens'**.....Activities and directives (incentives & sanctions) that promote and encourage family solidarity, while being respectful of roles and cultural choices are appropriate.



# Latina Women:

## *Cultural Issues and Values (cont...)*

### **Shame (Verguenza)**

When substance abuse occurs, the family will often move or isolate themselves to prevent shame or public recognition of the issue.

# Latina Women:

## *Cultural Issues and Values (cont...)*

### Shame (Verguenza)

**Challenge:** Latinas often will not openly disclose about their substance use to someone they don't know for fear of bringing disgrace to the family.

# Latina Women:

## *Cultural Issues and Values (cont...)*

### Shame (Verguenza)

**From a cultural 'lens'**.....shame of being in treatment should not be seen as resistance or lack motivation but as an opportunity to learn new ways of coping with non drug use and self sufficiency.



# **Latina Women:**

## *Cultural Issues and Values (cont...)*

**Spiritualism** – Most Latinos are Roman Catholic

### **3 MAIN HEALING/SPIRITUAL SYSTEMS**

- **Curanderismo** – Mexican American
- **Espiritismo** – Puerto Rican
- **Santeria** - Cuban

*.....the effectiveness of drug treatment depends on both the individual and the program, and on whether interventions and treatment services are available and appropriate for the individual's needs.*

*"Principles of Drug Abuse Treatment for Criminal Justice Populations", NIDA, September, 2006*

# Drug Court Teams Can Help by:

- Conducting better assessments that will help in making better treatment matches (see handout #2)
- Remaining non-judgmental and incorporating cultural issues and values will individualize treatment plans for clients.
- Recognize that a strength based approach can be beneficial to examining culturally specific incentives and sanctions.

# Cultural Incentives

- Beauty Salon/Supply Stores
- Music Stores
- Children's Amusement Centers
- Health food Stores
- Restaurants

# Program Alternatives

- Volunteer at a homeless shelter, soup kitchen
- Organize a talent show featuring an anti-drug theme
- Mentor a young person
- Volunteer at a local nursing/extended care facility

# Services Recommended for Latina Clients

- **Family Therapy** that includes emphasis on family solidarity and interdependence.
- **Mental Health Services** provided by bilingual and culturally competent mental health practitioners as well as those trained in the co morbidity of addiction and mental illness.
- **Substance Abuse Treatment Programs** promoting family reunification through facilities that allow children to live in the program with their mothers.

# Culturally Proficient Outcomes

*“Where day care, special women’s groups and other special services are offered, females are graduating at a higher rate than their male counterparts.”*