



14th Annual National Association of Drug Court
Professionals

Cultural Issues to Consider when Working with Latinos

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Incarceration and Latinos

- Just over 3.7 percent of Hispanic males between ages of twenty and twenty-nine were in prison in 2003 compared to 1.6 percent of white males.
- In 2005, Hispanics comprised 20% of the state and federal prison population, a rise of 43% since 1990
- Hispanics are incarcerated at nearly double (1.8) the rate of whites



What We Know About Drug Courts

- The more individualized you make the treatment plan the more likely the participant is to succeed and client retention.
- The longer a client stays in treatment the better he/she does. Key markers are 90 days and Graduation.



Why Cultural Competency Matters

- Individuals from minority groups can be a significant, even majority sector of potential clients.
- Understanding and appreciating a client's cultural background expand treatment opportunities.
- Enhancing the sensitivity and capacity to treat clients from other cultures improves a program's ability to treat all clients.
- Cultural competence is increasingly a requirement of funding and accreditation bodies.
- The ability to attract and serve ethnic clients is a financial issue.



Latino Cultural Issues and Values

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

Congeniality – is a value that promote smooth and pleasant social relationships.

Personalism - Inner qualities that constitute dignity of self and others, self-worth and showing and receiving respect.

Latino Cultural Issues and Values


(cont...)

Machismo - The Latino male is traditionally expected to be strong and provide for the family.

Shame -. Latinos view substance use/abuse as an issue of moral weakness .

Spiritualism – Good and evil spirits who can protect, cause illness or influence one's behaviors.

- *Cuarenderismo*
- *Espiritismo*
- *Santeria*



Clients Culture shapes His/Her Belief System about:

- Individual vs Family Well-being
- Gender
- Treatment

Perceptions of Motivation Influenced by:

- Client's *cultural* perception of the Criminal Justice System
- Client's *cultural* perception of the Drug Treatment System
- Practitioner's *cultural* perception of the client's behavior



Practitioner's Perception of Client Behavior/Attitudes

- Disagreeing with practitioner
- Questions actions
- Late or no show for appointments
- Refusal to look in the eyes

Program Alternatives

Vouchers/Discount Coupons to the following Latino or community resources:

- Barber shops
- Sporting Events (Tournaments/Games)
- Music Stores
- Mentor a young person
- Interpreter
- Organize a sober/clean party

Individualizing Treatment

- “...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 individuals needs”.

NIDA, “ *Principles of Drug Abuse Treatment for Criminal Justice Populations*”, NIH Publication No. 06-5316, September 2006

Enhancing Treatment Plans

- To effect behavior change, the more descriptive information we can obtain, the better. (*Sample assessment handout*)
- Staff backgrounds similar to those of the client population.
- Treatment methods that reflect the culture-specific values and treatment needs of clients.

Cultural Issues in Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT 1999a)

Guidelines

Drug Court professionals bring their own cultural perspectives into the job

- Become aware of our own mental filters and avoid assumptions based on what we see or past experience
- Seek information that identifies Latino client's cultural issues that affect recovery
- Incorporate Latino client's family values into treatment plan

Case Study

- A Latino (Mexican) client from Southern California makes bail. After the PD explains the conditions of his bail, the client leaves and does not return to court on the appointed date. The court finds him to have jumped bail and a warrant is issued for his arrest.
- What do you think happened here?