Successful Strategies for Working with Latino Families

Tuesday, July 30, 2013; 2pm ET

Webinar Transcript Provided by PGi Global

WELCOME

Operator: Please stand by. Good day and welcome to the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families Successful Strategies for Working with Latino Families Webinar. Just a reminder today's program is being recorded. At this time I would like to hand things over to Andrea Strahan. Please go ahead ma'am.

Andrea Strahan: Thank you so much and hello everyone. I want to welcome you to the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families Webinar entitled, "Successful Strategies for Working with Latino Families." My name is Andrea Strahan and I'm part of the Resource Center team. I'd like to thank everyone for joining us today.

WEBINAR INSTRUCTIONS

Andrea Strahan: So before we get started with the presentation there's a few housekeeping items I'd like to go over. The audio for today's webinar will be broadcast through your computer speakers. Please make sure that the volume on your computer speakers is turned up so that you can hear the presentation.

New featured resources that will be discussed in today's webinar are available for you to download from the pod in the top right corner of your screen, designated with the word “File.” Please click the name of the file you wish to view and then the download button to open or save a copy of the resource to your computer. These resources and the videos shown today will also be available on our website www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org. To visit our website click the link in the middle pod on your right designated with the word “Weblink.”

We will be taking questions at the end of the presentation, but we encourage you to submit any questions that you have throughout the duration of the webinar. To do this, find the question and answer pod, designated by the letters “Q” and “A” at the bottom right portion of your screen. Type your questions into the open field at the bottom and then click the send question button or press “Enter.” You'll receive an automatic reply thanking you for your question and your question will be forwarded to the moderator.

A recording of this presentation, the slides, a transcript, and a Question and Answer document will be posted in the Past Events Archive of our website, www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org, under the Training, Technical Assistance, and Events tab.
PRESENTERS

**Andrea Strahan:** Our speakers are today are Robyn Cenizal from the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families, Alicia La Hoz, Executive Director of Family Bridges, and Rodrigo Manjarres from Family Bridges. So with that I'll turn the call over to Robyn Cenizal, Project Director here at the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families. Robyn?

WEBINAR AGENDA

**Robyn Cenizal:** Thanks Andrea. And also just for the rest of you Andrea Strahan is our supporting person handling all the technical components behind the scenes for us today so thank you Andrea. So let's talk about today's agenda. We already had the introductions and I'm very excited to welcome you today to hear more about our toolkit on working with Latino families.

Alicia and her team at Family Bridges not only serve families directly, but also worked with the Resource Center to develop this toolkit and we're looking forward to hearing more about it today. We're also going to talk about what is cultural awareness and why it's important when working with Latino families.

We're also going to hear strategies for integrating healthy marriage and relationship services. And then I'll come back after we hear from Alicia and Rodrigo Manjarres and I'll talk to you more about how the Resource Center can help you in integrating some of this information that you've heard today and, then as Andrea mentioned, we will open it up for Q&A.

RESOURCE CENTER FOR HEALTHY MARRIAGE AND FAMILIES

**Robyn Cenizal:** So first I want to just tell you a little bit about the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families and then as I said I'll come back and talk a little bit more at the end. The Resource Center's mission is to connect healthy marriage education skills and safety net services as an integrated approach to strengthening families. The two keys here are healthy marriage education skills and safety net services.

We'll talk a little more about that as we move along but right now I want to go ahead and turn it over to Alicia. Thanks Alicia.

FAMILY BRIDGES

**Alicia La Hoz:** Thank you and good afternoon everyone. I'm really excited to speak about this topic because Family Bridges has been an organization that really burst as a grassroots entity about seven years ago. Our mission is to promote communities by delivering services to strengthen family relationships while embracing cultural and spiritual values.
Our model is pretty simple in the sense that we go where people are at and provide services, promote our vision for strengthening families and driving communities, and provide different opportunities for growth. And since we know where people are at, that means in the educational arena we have a plethora of different resources that we use to go into the schools including parenting programs and high school programs; family strengthening programs that include everything from family camps, family retreats and conferences; and workshops and economic development programs, community development with leadership programs.

We partner a lot with the faith community and we also partner with a professional community in terms of businesses. And so our service is to go where individuals are at and meet their needs there. We partner with 14 organizations that provide our services directly. We train them and they in turn go out and deliver services in eight counties in the Chicagoland region. And so our partners vary widely from libraries to government entities to high schools and universities, again going where people are at.

And today I'm joined by Rodrigo Manjarres who's been - him and his wife Yolanda - have been leading workshops for Family Bridges for the last several years. Each year they serve a good 150 couples in the community, predominantly Latino couples, and Rodrigo Manjarres also is a licensed mental health counselor. And so definitely he has a passion for serving couples and helping them.

So he's going to be joining us. We have a conversation today about how we can best reach Latino families that we're serving. So we're going to go ahead and watch a video before we begin that will really paint the picture of the constituency that we're trying to serve.

[Video can be viewed at http://www.youtube.com/familybridgeschicago]

**Alicia La Hoz:** Great, so that video I think shows a beautiful picture of the work that we're trying to do with Latino families, and ultimately the impact that it has for generations for the children and for the community.

**WORKING WITH LATINO INDIVIDUALS, COUPLES, AND FAMILIES: A TOOLKIT FOR STAKEHOLDERS**

**Alicia La Hoz:** And so we really are excited about partnering with the National Resource Center and developing this toolkit, this Working with Latino Individuals, Couples, and Families toolkit, that is a comprehensive “how-to” to really just be able to launch different programs that we're trying to serve with the Latino community. And so that's available for download for free and as was mentioned earlier you can see in the pod above how to do that.

But the purpose of the toolkit was really just to help safety-net providers and individuals that are working with Latino families to increase recruitment and retention in the services that we provide to really be able to maximize the impact on the Latino families that we serve. So the information we're conveying is relevant and meaningful to be able to
encourage the integration of the healthy marriage components in the delivery of systems.

A lot of providers we work with may not necessarily be doing healthy marriage and so there’s always the question, “how does this fit with my program?” And so we really try to make an effort to make a case for that and integrate that piece. There are just a lot of values in terms of the Latino culture that are important for us to value and understand.

We all know the statistics in terms of the minority group of Latinos and how we’re growing exponentially. And so it’s just so important to be culturally aware of the different components that make up the Latino family, as well as many other families of color here in the United States.

And so when we think about cultural awareness and cultural competence it’s so important to first know who we are as individuals: what are our individual cultural strengths, what do we bring to the table, what are our experiences, and how does that form our world view. And then look at that in contrast to those we serve and their world view - what are the different cultural components that they bring to the table - so that we can then come together and collaborate and be able to bridge services that are very meaningful and make sense to those we serve.

And so it improves outreach, it improves engagement when we have that cultural awareness. Certainly not everyone fits in a box, there is no recipe book that is specific to the different components: there’s variability, there’s individual personality, there’s temperament that obviously makes a difference from person to person. But we want to be able to understand some broad cultural components that we should be aware of and use that as a measurement, or a guide, as we go forward and answer different questions and concerns that we have in the delivery of services.

All of this information that we’re going to be sharing with you is extremely documented in the Latino toolkit, so we would definitely encourage you to download that as you’ll find that it’s very detailed and comprehensive.

WORKING WITH LATINO INDIVIDUALS, COUPLES, AND FAMILIES: A TOOLKIT FOR STAKEHOLDERS

Alicia La Hoz: The toolkit is divided into four sections. The first section looks as culture and values. There are a lot of different components in culture and values and we’ll speak about that briefly. In the second section, it looks at how does immigration and acculturation impact our services. So in the third section, it looks at how we engage and retain Latino families in programs that we serve and answers some questions about retention, nutrition, marketing and all of that good stuff to make sure that folks really attend and maximize the services that we’re trying to reach to them. And then [in the fourth section] how do we integrate healthy marriage and relationship education in existing programs that we may already have lined up. So we definitely would encourage you to download that and look through that.
CULTURAL AWARENESS

Alicia La Hoz: So today Rodrigo and I are going to spend some time looking at the dynamics of Latino marriages and fatherhood and we'll look at some of the components that we want to consider in providing programs for Latinos with reference to that.

JUAN AND SUSANA

Alicia La Hoz: As we do that, it's always helpful to keep in mind the families that we serve. It makes some of these abstract concepts a little bit more tangible and understandable. And so we have a family here - pretty common in terms of the different issues that we see happening.

We've got Juan, who's 35 years old, and Susana, 31. They have four children (one passed away) who are 10, 9, and 3 years old. Susana has three sisters: they all live in Mexico with her mother, who's 67. Her father passed away.

Juan, who's 35, his parents passed away. Susana has learned that her mother recently became legally blind due to diabetes, which means she's got that additional stress. She's working. She's sending funds back home to try to support the family. And Juan lost his job about seven months ago, so they have a lot of financial problems. Because of that he's just feeling a little bit depressed. He's not feeling as motivated and you see that Susana complains because there's just too much TV watching and disapproves.

So this family comes to seek help because they get a call from their school social worker talking about their 10-year-old son is having a lot of academic problems at school. So usually we end up seeing all the dynamics that play out in the family because of their concern for the children. So as we speak about the different cultural components, we're going to look and refer a lot to this case to give it some context.

DYNAMICS OF LATINO MARRIAGES

Alicia La Hoz: So we're looking at Latino marriages. One core issues that is important for us to keep in mind is acculturation. When we speak about acculturation we are talking about an individual's adaptability as they come to the United States: how is it that they assimilate to the United States. And there are different stages of acculturation and different individual rates.

There's family structure. Latinos are very strongly rooted in family and while we may be providing a service that's specific to marriages, it's important to consider the whole family within the intervention. There are also gender issues that are very clearly delineated and there's some interesting research about that and so we'll speak about that. And there are attitudes about marriage: what are the attitudes that the individuals have about marriage, cohabitation, and fatherhood?
ACCULTURATION

**Alicia La Hoz:** And so when we look specifically at acculturation there's two models I'd like for everyone to keep in mind. There's one model that says that as immigrants come to the United States we basically incorporate beliefs and practices of the dominant society - the American society - and those beliefs and practices influence the whole society. So we perpetually influence each other. And so you go to different neighborhoods, and now you've got North Americans eating tacos and vice-versa. So there's influence of each other, of those values.

The second model is one that's more linear in nature and that's the belief that as individuals come to this country they have their culture of origin, they have their belief system, their world views, and they adopt those beliefs to the dominant culture, leaving behind who they are, basically. So there are a couple different models out there, in the research that speaks to acculturation. So that's the linear one and then we've got the reciprocal model.

ACCULTURATION MODEL BY BERRY

**Alicia La Hoz:** There's another piece of stages - information about assimilation and acculturation and those are the stages of acculturation. There are four different components to that. There are individuals who when we say “they assimilate” we basically are talking about a process where they withdraw from the old culture - the culture that they're coming from - and they adopt (sometimes pretty quickly and sometimes longer - it depends on the individual) to the ideas of the dominant culture that they live.

There's the process of assimilation, just really believe in that. So you've got individuals that will assimilate at different stages of acculturation. You've got marginalization. Marginalization is more the concept of separation, where individuals don’t feel comfortable with where they come from and they just can't seem to understand their culture of origin, as well as the dominant culture - where they live.

This happens a lot when we look studies, adolescents that engage in gangs or different not favorable conditions socially, and that's because there's a sense of lack of identity in terms of who they are. They're not sure where they belong, whether Latino or North American. And as they try to navigate both of those words there's a sense of marginalization, a sense of loneliness in that, and that's where it's pretty easy for them to end up being - end up in gangs and that type of situation.

And you've got separation and that's a concept where for some people it's really just very hard to adapt to the culture that we live in and so they choose to isolate themselves from it. Just avoid contact with any culture, making no attempt to interact or acculturate within a group.

Then you've got integration. And that's the idea that the individual is able to really overcome their sense of inferiority in being part of this country - of the United States - and they're able to really assume a bicultural family that maintains certain traditions, that
appreciates their heritage, while at the same time also appreciating the new culture in which they live.

And so these are your processes and we see families that we're working with in these different stages. Where one spouse, perhaps, feels fully integrated. A son or a daughter may be under that marginalization and thus the other spouse, the husband, may be feeling more separated. And so because of those different stages of acculturation that they are the usual complex that we see, feel a little bit more complicated because of those interactions.

So in the case of the case study we looked at earlier with Susana and Juan, Susana, for example, could be someone that's fully integrated. She has a full-time job, speaks English, feels comfortable and let's say her husband feels separated, feels isolated, doesn't feel very comfortable where he lives and has a hard time perhaps navigating in English and getting a job. So that creates some tension because she might be coming in with a world view that's more accepting of some of the dominant cultural beliefs and he might be more hesitant. And so we'll look a little bit more. I'm going to ask Rodrigo Manjarres to speak a little bit about what that would look like when we're thinking about gender issues.

Rodrigo Manjarres: Sure. When we're talking about gender issues we need to consider that the Latino family has three roles about what's expected. They're clearly delineated within the family. Typically the father is the prime authority figure and the children are expected to be obedient and not to be involved in family decisions. Parents expect their daughters and sons to work and to help them with the financial needs.

So we are typically going to hear about the term 'machismo' which is something that's very familiar to many of us. However, one thing to consider is that machismo has positive and negative components that can be expressed or can be exhibited by the individual. Typically in the United States we see the idea about machismo as being aggressive, physical strength, emotionally insensitive, and womanizing behavior by the male. However, when we look machismo also is typically somewhat the asset of a good 'varon' meaning by it's the man who's caring, decisive, and has a strong direction in character and he's the protector of the family. What we find out is particular circumstances can steer the person to move in one direction. But it's important to keep in mind that this is some of the values that person has brought to when they're living here in the United States.

On the other hand the female gender typically is being influenced by what we call 'marianismo' which is a behavior pattern in which the traditional Latin female will see herself as spiritually more superior to the male. And this is important to consider because this is going to impact how the view of the community has been considered and is based on image of the Virgin Mary. Therefore, it's suspected that females have traditionally been socialized to be passive, submissive following the direction of the male in the house.

All of these things are important because this also is going to impact how the kids are going to grow up in that family. We know that particularly in the Latino family, the
females particularly in their teenage years, are more restricted about sexual behavior, where the males are getting a little bit more freedom in that area. So those are some important aspects to be considered when working with Latino families.

Alicia La Hoz: And just to add to that with regards to the gender aspect you'll have, for example in the case of Susana, she might be integrated. She might be working at home and she might hear her coworkers say, “Hey, your husband should help out in the house, why isn't he helping out?” and all of a sudden she's adopting that. She's believing that. She comes home. She starts nagging her husband - which may be common, in a lot of families we know nagging is very common - but that is aggravated because he might feel a sense of, “I should be providing for the family. I should be out there protecting my family, but somehow I'm not.” So that exacerbates his sense of insecurity creating a lot more depression and anxiety because it's so important for him to be protective and a provider. Yet that's clashing with the expectations that she might be bringing in.

And so whereas perhaps traditionally in the past her original role adaptation might be just to say, “It's okay, this is how things are,” all of a sudden her acculturation - because she's moving through the years - is clashing with her husband who may be more separated or who simply is in a different stage of that acculturation.

So as we look at the different concerns that we're having, as we're addressing different programs, it's important to - just as we unpacked this case study - look at how is it that this acculturation, the family, the children, the couple, the different people in the family are adapting or assimilating to the United States? And how is it that as they each are in different stages they're interacting? And how is that impacting this decision or this problem that we have? Within that, it's important to understand there's first generation, second generation, and so considering the different generational components.

CORE CULTURAL COMPONENTS

Alicia La Hoz: So we're going to go ahead and move on just to make sure we have enough time to cover all the components, but we're going to go ahead and look at core cultural beliefs. And these are also components that are important to think about. These are really principal component pieces of what the Latino family is.

You'll see that, and they're listed here, but you'll see a lot of the Latino families and individuals are very amiable, very warm. And that may mean that as you're doing a group it's important for you to walk around the group and give everybody a hug or say hello and shake hands, that kind of a thing is very much expected.

There's a strong family orientation, like we mentioned earlier, and there's time perspective. And that time perspective is the idea that a lot of individuals are thinking about today. So if you're offering workshops about financial planning and thinking about the future - decision making about the future - it's important for you to take a step back and consider that some individuals are thinking about “let me survive today.” And it's a little bit challenging not naturally easy for them to think about the future. Rodrigo you want to talk a little bit about the other three components?
Rodrigo Manjarres: I guess. Religion and spirituality are critical in Latino families. We need to take into consideration that when Latinos have been asked about what religion do they endorse, 68% are Roman Catholics and 15% are born again Evangelical, which means most of the Latinos that we’re going to be working has a strong attachment to religious beliefs. Therefore we need to consider working with them to partner maybe with the priests and pastors and know where they’re standing regarding the services that we’re providing, because we want to make this as effective as possible and knowing where they’re coming from, who is in their support system, is critical to get this to happen.

In addition to this we also have the concept about fate and suffering, ‘fataslismo,’ which is the idea that bad things are going to happen and it’s out of our control. This has positive and negative aspects. The positive aspect about this is when Latinos are encountered with a negative situation which there’s nothing to do, they rely on the idea that, “I have to accept it and somewhat I have to cope with this” and move on. On the other hand, with some individuals it can go to an extreme that might paralyze them and keep them from implementing the strategies that they typically would use to cope the situation. And there's an idea about some Latino women might embrace the idea that “this is my life, I just have to stand it” and in those cases we need to help a person to identify other venues to resolve the issue, as well as resources that might be available to them that they might not know either because they're not aware about the resources in their community or because they're limited in their ability due to a language limitation.

One important concept for sure is authority. The authority in the Latino family is significant, as well as how they see authority outside of the house. And typically, we as a provider, we have a significant amount of authority. How do we use it? How they see us is important, making the balance between having the authority, but as well as providing the opportunity to share with them and to embrace those individuals in the process of growing as a family member, as a husband, as a wife, it'll be critical.

Alicia La Hoz: So these core cultural beliefs, and those again are listed in the Latino toolkit and described at length, are really important when we're creating programs and we're intervening in the families, just considering them in terms of how - what the implications are again. With something like amiability, important to walk into a room and really recognize the husband, the male and the female gives them respect and take the time to just connect and join with them, instead of just automatically starting the group or the program that you’re providing.

JUAN AND SUSANA FACE...

Alicia La Hoz: So really thinking through each of these core cultural beliefs and considering how they make sense with the intervention that we’re providing improves our ability to retain individuals and to provide quality programs to them. So let's go back to Juan and Susana and we see that Juan and Susana have a myriad of problems.
They’re facing financial stress, perhaps immigration concerns with a son or with her family that's in Mexico. Susana would like for her mom to come and visit, but that's difficult. We see that there's intergenerational parental conflict. Perhaps the mom does eventually come visit and, like we’ve seen with a lot of families, she comes in and gives opinions about how the children should be disciplined and there are all sorts of issues with that.

And of course those are issues we see with lots of families, but you see that very commonly in a lot of Latino families as well. You see that they're looking at employment instability and perhaps they're having anger issues because they're just so upset and their situation is so overwhelmingly stressful.

**AT GREATER RISK FOR...**

_Alicia La Hoz_: So in light of all these concerns what we see is there are fights, there are battles, there are all sorts of problems and it's creating an overwhelming tension in the relationship leading to these mental health concerns that we commonly see, such as depression and anxiety. Perhaps domestic violence might be a presence, substance abuse, and we can go on in terms of all sorts of issues that we commonly see as a result of these ongoing stressors and lack of social support. A lot of times Latino families come to the United States and they leave behind their core social support system and not having someone else they could turn to for guidance exacerbates these problems.

**ACCULTURATION AND CONFLICT STRESS**

_Alicia La Hoz_: And so we see that there are all sorts of acculturation and conflict stress. These are just normal things that we see in all couples we serve, whether it's Latino or anyone. For many types of our couples that we serve, we see that there's insecurity, there's fear, there's control issues, there's shame issues, there's pride, power, blame, complacency, and lack of social support oftentimes. So all of these issues we commonly see in couples but if we look at them individually we consider how is it that acculturation and the level of acculturation within that family and the Latino cultural values that we speak about, how is it that we see them interplay with these principles?

So for example, fear. So look at fear. Fear is something that a lot of people have: fear of speaking up and a lot of our relationship educational programs speak about, “this is how you communicate, you say what you want, you become assertive.” A lot of people are fearful about speaking up because of all sorts of things or fearful how the other person will respond, that they might get angry, they're not comfortable. Yet we know that here in North America we tend to be a little bit more assertive and using eye messages as something that's clearly communicated.

Well we’d love to add the cultural values for example and we look at fear as we look at women and we look at marianismo. There's already an inherent sense of submissiveness and the fear may be just augmented by the sense of, “if I speak up I'm
going against these roles that are defined.” If I say, “I need something,” there's the fear that I'm being selfish and I'm not necessarily looking after the well being of the family.

So as you're looking at each of these components that are very common in family and in conflict these components, these issues can be integrated with these core cultural values and thought through as we provide an intervention that makes sense. Rodrigo would you like to give another example?

Rodrigo Manjarres: Yes, I think one more value that's important is machismo. In many individuals, when they feel they have to protect their family, when they need to get help for the family, they feel like, “I won't do that, it'll be embarrassing to me if I show up with these types of services.” So what happens is that they don't access services that might be available to them.

So that also taps into the security of the individual. How in order to save face they still state the idea, “everything is in my family, everything is fine,” and that can be a challenge for us to provide services. We need to come on and say how do we tap into those individuals while at the same time helping them to feel like they're in charge and they're in power. Helping them to realize that there are resources and that they're not trying to take away the power that they might have, but also try to work with him, within the family, for the benefit of the family.

Alicia La Hoz: Thank you. So as you see again each of these can impact different couples and different families, this one issue may be more predominant than the other. But looking at it in light of the cultural components helps shed a little bit more light and makes an intervention a little more specific and to be able to meet the need.

SEPERATION

Alicia La Hoz: And so if we don’t have any help and we don’t do that the risk is that this couple will either separate emotionally or separate physically as is the common case.

BARRIERS THAT LIMIT ACCESS

Alicia La Hoz: And so we see couples that have limited access to several different resources, including like we just mentioned, because of stigma and fear. A lot of men we know sometimes don’t necessarily want to call because there's that pride, “if I call and I try to ask for help that might be a sense of weakness.” And so what we do is make sure we're respectful. And we actually sometimes call the men and ask to speak to them or if we're providing a resource we try to get that resource first to the man. It just gives them that respect, that authority that respects the family structure.

There are transportation concerns that we understand are real and legitimate. Language; being able to offer programs in that primary language. Child care, we notice a lot that our programs when we offer child programs that it's quality based so that they
feel their children are being taken care of increases those access to services. Obviously lack of insurance. Perceptions of being disrespected. And as a program they're not relevant if we are talking to a Latino family and we're giving an example of someone from Ireland. That's going to be a different reality from what they are living. That's going to be difficult for them to connect to and then they might not follow up. So being able to look at these barriers and have specific interventions that address them is extremely helpful.

INTEGRATING HEALTHY MARRIAGE AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION

Alicia La Hoz: We're making sure that the programs we offer are relevant, are accessible, are affordable, and are applicable. And so we've found that going where people are at within the neighborhood makes it much more accessible, instead of having them come to a building in the middle of downtown where they have to pay expensive transportation costs. Where we provide child care programming, refreshments, programs that either are free - because obviously they're subsidized by grant funds - or at a rate that's reasonable for them. And it's culturally sound; that we're speaking about the issues that are relevant to them.

Throughout the toolkit, what we've done in order to make the concepts applicable is that we've provided case studies and program implications for these different components so we can be really thoughtful about the issues that are happening in the community.

LEVELS OF INTEGRATION

Alicia La Hoz: And so there are different levels of integrating all of this within the services that we provide. And the first level is this idea of basic engagement and that's referrals, information, being able to provide other services in the community. For example, this weekend we were five days in this huge fair in the city of Chicago with about a million people going and we had shifts with our staff giving out information and speaking out about our programs. And so being able to be in the community fairs, being able to have resources in the waiting area for the Spanish-speaking, being able to have pictures in the waiting area that represents those families you're serving, those are ways that you can be engaged with serving Latino families. And that's helpful because you're really bridging those areas of need, the lack of awareness, for example, of these services and programs.

The second way to really integrate programming for the Latino family is to really partnerships and there's a wide variety of partnerships that are really just healthy where we can leverage resources. One example, for example, was a few months ago. We did a conference with a school district - school district 300 here in the Chicagoland area - and basically the school came in, offered their place, they offered to volunteer. They really worked in having a conference. We came in. We did the program aspect for it, children's program and the parents' program and the youth program. And together we put together this program that included healthy relationship programs as well as engagements in the school systems, active engagement programs for the schools to be - for the parents to
be engaged in the schools, for the children and youth served - and that was promoted throughout that district in that region. So there are a lot of different ways that we can partner with schools, with churches, with communities, with universities where you as an institution don’t have to have all the plethora of resources at your disposal. You're able to go on and partner with those that are your neighbors and be able to work together to build a program that has broader outreach to the communities that we’re trying to serve.

And then level three is full integration and here we do this with Family Bridges and that’s where we work with stakeholders to strengthen couples and families by fully integrating healthy marriage and relationship education into existing social service delivery systems. So one of our providers, for example, which is an institution that we’ve worked with in the last seven years, they deliver healthy relationships programs within their population. They've integrated it and their population is prisoner, re-entry, as well as women in the correctional system. So they - it's completely integrated within their program. And so there's definitely different variability and different ways that we can participate as we provide resources and consider how we can work and reach the Latino community. Now I'm going to go ahead and pass it Robyn Cenizal.

WHAT ARE STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATION AND HOW CAN THE RESOURCE CENTER HELP?

Robyn Cenizal: Thanks Alicia and thank you both for that wonderful presentation and thank you very much for the work that you put into the toolkit. It's a tremendous resource. As a reminder folks it can be downloaded from the webinar or it's also available on our Resource Center website.

So talking about the couple that we talked about and some of the issues that we're dealing with, relationship education skills are a great way to work with these families and to help them as they move along the path to self sufficiency and become more comfortable in this new country.

So thinking about healthy relationship education skills, the Resource Center really focuses on communication skills, conflict resolution skills, and critical skills like parenting and financial education. So we're going to talk a little bit more about integration and what that can look like.

EXAMPLES OF INTEGRATION: STRATEGIES AT HEAD START

Robyn Cenizal: So here's an example of integration and I use Head Start because it's really simple because they can actually integrate based on all of the levels we heard Alicia talk about. When you think about a Head Start organization they have the opportunity to do basic engagement. They have waiting rooms and they can create family resource spaces where they might have handouts for parents on various tips related to healthy relationship skills or they may have brochures about resources in their community.

This is a particularly useful strategy for organizations like Head Start that might serve multiple cultures because these brochures and handouts will be in a variety of languages
and offer resources that are specific to a variety of cultural groups. So then thinking about level two partnerships, a Head Start organization could identify community partners who might provide some of the other skills that are not already being provided, things like financial literacy, healthy marriage education, parenting, or other workshops that support healthy relationships.

Even programs like ESAW (English As A Second Language) or other programs that might be beneficial to the families they serve and particularly helpful in again a community that has multiple cultures because then you could bring in Spanish speaking or other culturally competent folks on it.

The other -- level three, full integration - again Head Start is unique because they already have parent liaisons who are supposed to take responsibility for engaging family. And through that they can be trained, they can be trained to teach healthy relationship education skills or financial literacy or parenting or any of those other skills and they can incorporate that based on the cultures that they work with predominantly within their Head Start agency.

SAFETY-NET SERVICE PROVIDERS

Robyn Cenizal: So I mentioned earlier that we work with safety-net service providers. And when we think about safety-net service providers it's important to think about all of these agencies that are depicted here. All of these agencies work with culturally diverse families who are either working to gain, maintain, or regain self-sufficiency and healthy relationship skills, the ones that I mentioned, communication, conflict resolution, parenting, and financial literacy - are critical to these families in assisting them on that path.

So these are all the different organizations and each of these agencies represented have different service delivery systems and that's where the different levels of integration become important because if you think about those service delivery systems that they work one on one with families, then their strategies to integrate relationship education skills would be different than if they work in a group environment. If they work in a meeting a family in the home or if they meet the family in the office, all those different service delivery systems play a role in how they can more appropriately integrate these education skills.

So what does the Resource Center offer? Well as you've heard we have the Latino toolkit which is fabulous. It's become one of our most popular resources, but we also have some other resources that will be helpful to use, particularly when working with culturally diverse populations. One of the tip sheets that we offer - Cultural Collisions - talks about how the power balance in families can be upset when the children acculturate faster than their parents do and children become the translator for the family.

So we offer a lot of different resources like that, as well as some resources that are common across various cultures. One of the interesting things that I heard recently in a presentation from a variety of programs who work with culturally diverse populations, was that they talked about how of the key ingredients within each of their programs, food was number one. Everybody likes food. The food may vary from culture to culture but
food is still key in terms of recruiting and retaining and getting folks to participate in the programs.

The other thing that I thought was most important is that people don’t really care what you know until they know that you care. And that really is across all the cultures. So one of the challenges is making sure that you’re coming across as genuine and concerned about the individual and whatever issues are specific to them and their family and what's important to them. And I think that's one of them, that understanding the cultural nuances is so important.

So the Resource Center offers resources that support and promote the integration healthy marriage and relationship education skills, tips and tools you can use and share with the families that we serve, and we also provide training and technical assistance to support you in whatever efforts that you'd like to do to implement and integrate healthy relationship skills into the programs that you have.

EXPERTISE BEHIND THE CENTER

Robyn Cenizal: Behind the Resource Center is a tremendous amount of expertise. We do have a fabulous website and you're going to see the video in just a minute that tells you a little bit more about what all is available through the Resource Center. But I want you to know that behind the scenes we have a wealth of expertise and experience that can support you in the work that you're trying to do, so with that I’m going to turn it over to Andrea for the video. And this is just going to be a short video that tells you all about the Resource Center.

[Strong Families, Strong Communities: National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families video can be viewed at www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org/media-gallery]

Robyn Cenizal: And so before I turn you over to Andrea to facilitate our question and answer, you have the instructions on your screen now so that you'll know how to ask your questions. Please feel free to go ahead and start typing them in. I want to once again thank our presenters and thank you all for joining us today. Robyn Cenizal: I also want to mention please take advantage of the resources on the website but also we will be at the Child Support Conference in Baltimore the first week of August and we’ll also be at the NARME Conference in California the last week of August. So if you happen to be at either of those conferences, please stop by and visit with us and with that I'll turn it over to Andrea.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Andrea Strahan: Thanks Robyn and I'd like to once again thank all of our presenters today for their wonderful presentations. At this time we’re going to transition to our question and answer period. We've had a few great questions submitted. I'm about to start proposing them to our presenters but I'd like to encourage everyone to feel free to continue to submit your questions using the question and answer function on your screen.
So our first question, Alicia, is going to be for you and it’s from Randolph Portugal and he says El Centro of Catholic Charities is trying to engage our Latino community to do Healthy Marriages. However, not a lot of people seem to want to participate. Through our grant we provide transportation, babysitting, food, and also a $50 check for completing the program, yet they still do not want to come. All they request is ESL and immigration consultation which we do offer. However, how do we get them to engage fully and want to participate in the program?

Alicia La Hoz: Thank you for that question. I know that one of the things that we do is we partner with institutions that are trusted within the community and so working with the long standing church down the street that really has a close connection with the families engaged or the Head Start or the different partners within the community and working with them to engage the families. That’s one aspect of what we do.

The second piece is that connection, that initial connection where we have individuals that are intake at the beginning that are Spanish speaking that engage the individuals and the couples we serve as well as the facilitators being able to be facilitators that speak the language that really understand what’s happening with the community and there’s that strong sense of connection and so individuals seem to then want to attend.

So again partnering with trusted institutions is one thing, having bicultural staff that both facilitate in-service and initial intake is really helpful. And then the third piece is we have a lot of videos and testimonials. Feel free to go to our YouTube page to Family Bridges website that’s up there on the pod on the website of www.familybridgeschicago.org and there’s a plethora of different types of videos like that that we often use as an intro whenever we have an orientation to speak for maybe an hour, half-hour, 15 minutes, whatever the opportunity and the community is and sometimes we’ll use that as a bridge in terms of making the case, why this is important. Rodrigo you want to add anything to that question?

Rodrigo Manjarres: I think it talks about the fact that we’re using Latino families ‘personalismo.’ I think being able to be there at the office - says somebody goes to Catholic Charities and they talk to someone there and they receive a flyer - the personalismo factor has not been tapped into. So typically what I try to do when I partner with any organization is anytime different people come as a group and they welcome the whole group to the program.

So doing that I can present either - or to do a presentation about what it would be the benefits for them. Some people are more willing to embrace it that way. That might be my suggestion.

Andrea Strahan: Okay great, thank you so much. My next question, Robyn, is for you and it’s do you have a curriculum on healthy marriages and the associated topics and that’s from Keisha Connor.
Robyn Cenizal: Do we have a curriculum?

Andrea Strahan: Yes, on healthy marriages and the associated topics.

Robyn Cenizal: We do have actually on the Resource Center website, we have a curriculum in our virtual training center that our folks can access and it focuses on setting key research based - seven key research based concepts of healthy relationship and also include some conversation starters, activities and information on handouts that can be used with families directly. I would suggest if you're interested in going through the virtual training that you started with module 1 which really gives you a lot of the background on helping relationship education skills, what they are, why they matter and what they could look like integrated and then take advantage of module 2 which is the curriculum.

In addition on the website we also have a curriculum guide that's available that gives you information about a variety of free and low-cost curriculum. And when I say low-cost we cap at it $300 for whatever it would take to actually hold a workshop with at least 20 folks. We had to have some sort of variable, so that was kind of the way we determined it, but yes we take advantage of both of those.

Andrea Strahan: Great, thank you Robyn. Our next question is for Alicia and it's from Joel Gomez Bossio and the question is, is your organization Chicago-based only or do you have a presence in other parts of the United States?

Alicia La Hoz: That's a great question. Our program here in Chicago has long deep roots. We've been here for a while and it's quite wide and we're just in the process of scaling some of those programs in some of the other states. We have programs or resources that obviously can be scaled or used at any center. For example we have mini workshops via apps and so if people go to our website the link is there in the second pod. It says web links 2 and there's the link. And so that makes it accessible anywhere because obviously with global technology people can download that anywhere and that's available. We've got content in Spanish and content in English, as well as a resource manual for couples that's available in Spanish. And so we're just bridging some programs that we're working with, some organizations in other states, but the wide breadth of programs are here in the Chicago area.

Andrea Strahan: Great thank you. And our next question will be for you as well. It's from Balvina Balistrieri and it's that we’re located in Minnesota and have an established well-organized program for parents, but we’re missing out on male participation. Any ideas how to reach out to males?
Alicia La Hoz: Yeah, I think that's great that there's a program out there and one of the things that we do is we call the men, so speaking to the men when we invite them is really important for our workshops to do that. Rodrigo do you want to add a little bit more because I know you do a lot of outreach with families and couples with men?

Rodrigo Manjarres: Sure, I think I had seen that happening in many organizations across my years working here in the United States. One of the things that I would suggest is in addition to making it kind of open to the males, it also would benefit by facing facilitators who are males who will encourage other males to attend. I have seen that when there’s a male facilitator that goes into the community with male or female it opens the door for, “this is not something about females that is important for females.” So I think something to consider strongly when they are tapping into the community is that by having facilitators, male and female engaging the people to attend, they can model behavior for participants.

Alicia La Hoz: Yeah, one of the things that we do again is we make a lot of phone calls on a lot of outreach and we make that outreach. We make a really strong effort to not just speak to the female of the household, but to the male and that personal invitation is a sign of respect and goes a long way.

Andrea Strahan: Okay great, thank you. Alicia and Rodrigo the next two questions are going to be for you as well. They’re on very similar topics so I'll read both of them together. The first is from David Cozart and he asks do you serve documented and non-documented persons of the Latino community. We’re having a hard time getting non-documented persons involved. And then the next question is from Ron Jackson who asks, what is the best practice in terms of addressing documentation issues?

Alicia La Hoz: We open our groups to the community, to everyone, and so we do serve undocumented and documented individuals in a lot of our programs. But what we do is we need to be really careful in terms of asking lots of questions and helping them understand how that identifying information will be used, because obviously there’s a lot of anxiety in the communities that we serve. Is my information going to be shared with the government? All these questions are being asked. So while we’re collecting and intake data and information we’re pretty sensitive about that. Rodrigo you want to add anything to that?

Rodrigo Manjarres: I think the critical piece here is that people in the community will attend those places where they feel safe. So I’ll really encourage any organization who’s trying to provide services in the community to identify what are the individuals. Do they feel safe going there because yes, if we are a new facilitator about a particular program they don’t have a relationship with us. However, if we’ve been working with those organizations in the community then the relationship's already established.
I see, particularly in the north side of Illinois, we have established relationships with many organizations. We also make a presence into the community to a volunteer presentation about different issues that would be relevant to the family. So the family somewhat feels this is a safe place. They provide services I need. I think that’s a critical thing when working with documented and undocumented individuals.

Andrea Strahan: Okay thank you. Our next question Alicia is for you and it's do you have some - it's from Catherine Emmanuelle - and she asks do you have any materials for same-sex Latina or Latino couples and families?

Alicia La Hoz: Unfortunately, we as an organization don’t. I do know of other marriage relationship and education organizations nationally that have been working towards that. I know the Gottman Institute has been working on that. I'm not sure particularly the Latino community, but we haven't developed those curriculums in-house. I just know that there are other providers that are healthy marriage providers nationally that do have that. The Gottman Institute, I think they were working on a curriculum specifically addressing.

Andrea Strahan: Okay thank you and then Robyn this next one is for you. It's asking can you recommend any evidence based practice curriculum such as Nurturing Parent?

Robyn Cenizal: Well first of all I would say if you visit the Resource Center in our resource library there are a number of reports that relate to a variety of curriculum. The Resource Center isn't really in a position to recommend curriculum. As I mentioned earlier we do have the curriculum guide that focuses on free and low cost curriculum and it gives you some information about them and they’re all research-based but I would suggest that would check the library.

For example, one curriculum comes to mind, the p.a.p.a. curriculum that's being used with high school students in Texas and there’s some documented outcomes associated with that. The report is in the Resource Center library, so I'd check that, but we're not really in the position to make recommendations in curriculum.

Robyn Cenizal: I'd also like to follow up to the question that Alicia just responded to. There are a number of curricula out there that are designed to work with individuals, and curricula that's usually designed to work with individuals is typically gender neutral. And so for those who are concerned about working with same-sex couples I'd consider looking at some of the curricula that's designed to work with individuals and consider how that might be helpful as a starting point until the field catches up with new direction.

Andrea Strahan: Okay thank you. This next question is for Alicia and Rodrigo. It's from David Cozart, and it's can you suggest any best practices for entry points in the Latino community?
Alicia La Hoz: Good question. So entry points meaning - I'd suspect that they mean ways for us to begin to connect with the Latino community and make headway. One of the pieces that we speak about in the Latino toolkit is a strong influence of religion and faith in the Latino community. And so overwhelmingly we find that our programs - about 60% of our programs, we serve about 10,000 individuals, couples and families a year and 72% of them are of Latino origin. Of those a good portion of them are running the programs within church community because that's such a strong part of Latinos and there's a strong sense of trust. So being able to partner with the faith community is a great way to make that transition and entry way. And again you might be going to a community where you're not known. People don't know you. They're not going to trust you. They're not going to go to a program that you offer but they will if their local school teacher or their priest that they trust to offer that program. And so we've been able to offer our non-faith based programs in faith institutions and that seems to be an effective entry way.

Alicia La Hoz: The other thing is we're constantly doing radio programs and with the media outlets for the Latino constituency but also in things like health fairs, parent open houses in schools, just all the health fairs out there, community fairs, those kinds of things where we're out there just really trying to bring awareness of our programs and connect. Of course those - when we're out there we definitely have volunteers and individuals that speak the language, that have gone to the programs so that sense of connection occurs and then people actually follow up with those referrals that we provide. So I don't know Rodrigo if you want to add a little bit more to that.

Rodrigo Manjarres: One of the things that I've found that's very effective is trying to identify what organizations are in the community. For example, we're part of what's called Best Organizations in Lake County Area as well as Coalición Latinos Unidos de Lake County, and as part of that we volunteer to do presentations about different issues. So when we are looking for places to go we already have that relationship with them and they're more than welcome to accept us so I'll say identify what are the community agencies in the community and I ask them in which way can we be supportive. Thank you.

Andrea Strahan: Thanks. Okay Alicia and Rodrigo this next one is for you as well. This next one is from Pamela Bonnett and she said how do you find funds for programs and services engaging Latino community members?

Alicia La Hoz: Great question, fund raising and funds. There's obviously grants.gov just like all these - that has all the different grants. You can look at that. There's different foundations within your community, being able to research that is helpful. A lot of libraries have free - librarians that are able to help you access their donor databases and their foundation databases. And you're able to visit with them they can pull a list of the different
foundations for you or someone that's designated within your institution that can help with that.

So there's definitely different strategies. And more and more a lot of the RFPs for proposals are asking for diversity of services to be included within the constituency that's being served. So it does take some research, it takes some work, it takes some patience. There's a lot of look at your state. Maybe Robyn you can speak to this but a lot of states have grant workshops in terms of how to write grants effectively and build that capacity within institutions to help within the framework. So it's kind of a very broad answer to the question, but certainly there's resources out there. There's databases that can be tapped into that can help with those efforts with regards to grants and foundations.

Robyn Cenizal: This is Robyn. I would just add to that a lot of the local United Way also offer grant writing and also offer some funding opportunities. The one thing that I would discourage is there are a lot of organizations out there that want to sell you lists of foundations and lists of grant opportunities. Don't pay for that stuff. Like Alicia mentioned grants.gov, fabulous resource and checking out a lot of those local foundations through your library. Most of them do have that information on hand for you and your local United Way. But I would discourage anyone from getting caught up in having to pay for information that quite frankly is available for free.

Andrea Strahan: Great thank you. All right we have two more questions here. One of them is from Balvina Balistrieri and the question is do you hold workshops for your families in Spanish and do you train your staff in Spanish as well?

Alicia La Hoz: Yes certainly we do that. We try to actually match the culture of the community that we're going to with facilitators that tend to be bilingual just because we have such - that's our biggest constituency and it just makes a lot more sense for us to have instead of using translators and things like that. It just makes it a little more cumbersome. So our facilitators that are delivering programs to the Latino community are Spanish speaking and bicultural and completely understand. So it's easier for them to adapt the content and speak to all these values that we speak to out with the curriculum pieces. So that's a huge part of what we do. Rodrigo I know that you lead a lot of groups.

Rodrigo Manjarres: Yes. I think the critical piece about delivering the services in the language of the individuals that are attending, but also I think looking to when you're working with the Latino community you need to find individuals who have the ability to adapt to the language because Spanish is the same language in every country. However, there are so many idioms so be aware that whoever is going to be taking the lead to the community needs to identify to whom am I addressing this. It's more of a Puerto Rican community, a Mexican community, a South American community because it'll be much
better if you can tap into examples that directly touch their life. But yes the training being in the Spanish language is the most effective to the leader of the Latino community.

**Andrea Strahan:** Okay great, thank you. And then for our last question, also from Balvina, the question is you work closely with different denominations church leaders. Does your work involve spiritual guidance?

**Alicia La Hoz:** Thank you for your question. With our grant based information we stick to our evidence based curriculum and it's specific to skills. We're talking about communication, problem solving, conflict resolution. And when we tend to speak about spirituality, it tends to be in the context of the roles of religion and family and life of the families, but we're not integrating the practice. Now we do have on staff a faith program with a pastor that's not funded by grant funds. And with that regard just some church or community wants something to be integrated they can go through that, but that's obviously with private funds and that's independent of the grant funds that we're working with. And obviously there's variability in how that's laid out from organization to organization. So for us a lot of our programs are sponsored with public dollars. We want to be careful of that.

**Andrea Strahan:** All right, well thank you so much. Thank you again to Alicia and Rodrigo and Robyn for your presentations today. I want to remind everyone on the webinar that a recording of this presentation, the slides, a transcript, and a question answer document will be posted to Past Events archive of our website which is www.HealthyMarriageandFamilies.org under the Training and Technical Assistance and Events tab.

**Andrea Strahan:** Right now a feedback survey should be opening up in your browser and we'd like to ask you to take just a few moments to fill out this brief evaluation. And as a reminder all of your responses are anonymous and this is really just to help us plan our future webinars and make them more useful for you. So again I'd like to thank everyone for joining and have a great afternoon.

**Operator:** Again ladies and gentlemen that does conclude today's program. Thank you for your participation.

**END**