LATINA REPUBLIC IMPACT PLAN
Mental Health Resources for Latinx Immigrants and Youth in Los Angeles

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Introduction

Of all counties in the United States, Los Angeles has the largest population of Latinx at 4.8 million people, or 48% of the city's population. By the year 2060, it is projected that Latinx will make up 54% of the total Los Angeles population. Considering the growing rates of Latinx in Los Angeles, it is imperative to consider the accessibility and quality of the treatment available to them.

Current research suggests that Latinx are accessing mental health treatments at lower rates than other Americans due to barriers, such as lack of cultural-competency, stigma, acculturation, immigration status, and health insurance coverage. Approximately 34% of Latinx adults with a diagnosed mental illness receive treatment each year, compared to the U.S. average of 45%. On the other hand, while rates of mental illness among Latinx Americans are lower than those for non-Latinx whites, rates of mental illness are higher among U.S.-born Latinx than those who are foreign-born.

It is essential to acknowledge the diverse needs within the Latinx community. This guide will address the unique needs and challenges of certain members of the Latinx community may face, and provide mental health resources that are committed to treating and supporting these community members.

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2 Ibid.
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Section 1: Overview of mental health
Definition of mental health & mental illness

**Mental health** is defined as the emotional, psychological, and social-wellbeing of a person. Mental health allows us to deal with stress, work productively, and contribute to our communities. Mental health may also have an influence on different aspects of our lives, such as how we feel, think, and act.

**Mental illness**, also called mental health disorders, refer to a wide range of mental health conditions that affect a person’s mood, thinking, and behavior. There is no single cause for mental illness, and they may develop due to a number of factors such as genetic risk, brain chemistry, childhood trauma or abuse, and/or the environment.

Although the terms “mental health” and “mental illness” are often swapped for one another, it is important to note that **they are not the same**. Any person can experience poor mental health, and that does not necessarily mean they have a mental illness. Similarly, those with a diagnosed mental illness can have days when they have positive emotional, psychological, and social experiences. Examples of poor mental health can be occasionally feeling sad or stressed because of a difficult day at work, whereas, an example of mental illness would be being diagnosed with major depressive disorder by a clinician and being affected by feelings of sadness every day for an extended amount of time.

As stated by the American Psychiatric Association, “Mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of. It is a medical problem, just like heart disease or diabetes”.

Additionally, some mental illnesses are preventable, and all mental illnesses are treatable. **Improvement is possible with the right help.**

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7 Ibid.


10 Ibid.


12 “What Is Mental Illness?” American Psychiatric Association. American Psychiatric Association, August 2018. [https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/what-is-mental-illness#text=Mental%20health%20condition%20are%20treatable%20and%20improvement%20is%20possible%20be%20a%20mental%20health%20concern](https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/what-is-mental-illness#text=Mental%20health%20condition%20are%20treatable%20and%20improvement%20is%20possible%20be%20a%20mental%20health%20concern).
Mental health profile: Latinx immigrants

Demographics

According to the 2020 Census, Hispanic and Latinx make up the largest ethnic group in Los Angeles County, totaling 48% of the population.  

In 2019, the Los Angeles Census estimated that its Latinx population is primarily composed of Mexican and Central American descendants.  

- 75.84% are of Mexican descent  
- 16.60% are of Central American descent  
  - 8.71% Salvadoran  
  - 5.54% Guatemalan  
  - 1.05% Honduran  
  - 0.80% Nicaraguan  

The majority of California’s immigrant population is made up of Latinos (50%) with approximately 3.9 million originating from Mexico.  

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14 Ibid.
Mental Illness

Some Latinx immigrants are especially predisposed to certain mental health disorders because of the possible traumatic and perilous paths of immigration.

Research suggests that some Latinx immigrants are susceptible to mental illness due to traumatic exposure before, during, and after the migration process.¹⁶

- Traumatic experiences before migration such as war, extreme poverty, and abuse are linked to psychological distress years after settling into a new country.¹⁷
- Trauma during the migration process such as forced labor, violence, and family separation are similarly linked to psychological distress.¹⁸
- After the migration process, some immigrants face stress when adapting to a new culture, facing unemployment, and harsh living conditions.¹⁹

These exposures may increase the risk for depression, anxiety, Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, and homelessness, especially among Central American refugees and migrants.²⁰

According to the National Institute of Mental Health in 2020, among all U.S. adults, 18.4% of Latinx were diagnosed with a mental health disorder in comparison to 22.6% of non-Latinx white Americans.²¹

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https://doi.org/10.1037/0002-9432.71.2.153.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.


https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness#:~:text=Mental%20illnesses%20are%20common%20in.(52.9%20million%20in%202020).
While the rate of mental illness among Latinx Americans are lower than those for non-Latinx white Americans, they are higher among U.S.-born Latinx than those who are foreign-born. This phenomenon is known as the “Hispanic Paradox.”

The Hispanic Paradox suggests that Immigrants, who, despite migration stressors, appear healthier than their more Americanized Latinx counterparts, become more exposed to discrimination and institutional barriers, causing mental health issues to become more prevalent.

Some possible explanations for this phenomenon include lifestyle differences in the United States, such as a focus on economic success, higher rates of smoking and drinking, as well as disconnection from family networks among Latinx Americans.

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Help-Seeking and Barriers to Treatment

Among those diagnosed with any mental health disorder,

- 35.1% of Latinx received mental health services in 2020 in comparison to 51.8% of white American adults. ²⁵

The underutilization of mental health treatments has been linked to a number of barriers such as

- **Stigma**
- **Lack of health insurance**
- **Language barriers**
- **Lack of culturally conscious care**

**Stigma** refers to the negative beliefs surrounding mental health, including shame about mental illness and mental health treatment. There are three identified types of stigma: ²⁶

- **Public stigma** refers to the negative beliefs those around us have about mental health ²⁷
- **Self-stigma** refers to the negative beliefs or shame we hold about our own mental health ²⁸
- **Institutional stigma** refers to the intentional or unintentional barriers that limit the access to mental health resources, e.g. government policies that lower funding for mental health services ²⁹

Lack of **insurance coverage** can make receiving mental health treatments in a clinic expensive and inaccessible.

- About 18% of Latinx in the U.S. do not have health insurance ³⁰

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²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

• Among Latinx, Honduran and Guatemalans have the highest rates of being uninsured.  

Research has found that Latinx are more likely to seek mental health services from a primary care provider than a mental health specialist. This may be due to a focus on the physical symptoms of mental distress, rather than discussions of emotions during doctor visits.  

Language barriers with health care providers is often an issue. A lack of access to materials in accessible language, as well as in Spanish, can lead to miscommunication or lack of understanding between clients and providers.  

• Among all U.S. Psychologists, about 5,000 are Latinx, which represents 5% of the total population of American Psychologists.  
• Among all U.S. psychologists, only 5.5% reported that they can provide services in Spanish, far fewer than the demand for bilingual services.  

Culturally-conscious mental health treatments take into consideration the patient’s cultural identities, such as their race and ethnicity, and consider how it may affect their mental health. Research has shown that mental health interventions that are specifically adapted to the cultural group of the client and provided in their native language were often more effective than treatment that was not conscious of culture and in English.  

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37 https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-3204.43.4.531.
These disparities highlight the necessity for specific interventions focused on the needs of subgroups of Latinx.

- **Latinx men** could benefit from mental health services that address **mental health stigma and machismo** to combat negative social gender norms.\(^{37}\)
- Research suggest that Latinx men’s mental health is especially affected by employment and earnings-related experiences, while Latinx women are more commonly affected by family-related factors.\(^{38}\)
- From 2011-2020, the suicide death rate was higher for Latinx men than for Latinx women.\(^{39}\)

![Suicide Rates for Latinx by Sex, United States 2011-2020](image)

- Members of the **LGBT+ community** could benefit from mental health services that address their unique experiences with discrimination and culturally sensitive mental health providers.

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\(^{38}\) Ibid.


• LGBT+ individuals experience higher levels of stress, depression, anxiety, and substance use.\(^{41}\)
• A study found that 33% of Latinx LGBTQ+ reported experiencing some form of negative or discriminatory treatment from a doctor or health care provider in 2020.\(^{42}\)
• It was also found that 63% of Latinx LGBTQ+ report feeling so sad that nothing could cheer them up to some degree.\(^{43}\)

**Telehealth** is a promising virtual alternative to traditional in-person mental health services

• It has been found to potentially overcome some barriers to accessibility by reducing healthcare and transportation costs, and limits lost income due to time away from work.\(^{44}\)
• Telehealth visits can look like an online therapy session over Zoom with a mental healthcare provider or an app-based mental health intervention such as mindfulness meditation.\(^{45}\)
• According to an Anthem, Inc. State of the Nation's Mental Health special report, Latinx were the most engaged in telehealth mental healthcare visits in 2020.\(^{46}\)

In the “**Resources**” section of this guide, we will provide lists of mental health resources that are relevant to Latinx and their unique identities.

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\(^{43}\) Ibid.


\(^{45}\) Ibid.

Mental health profile of Latino Youth

Demographics
There are many undocumented children and young adults in the United States, who live every day in fear of deportation and separation from their families.

- **1 million** of the estimated 11.1 million undocumented immigrants living in America are children **under the age of 18** 47
- Almost half of all Latinx immigrants have young children, the majority of whom are American citizens 48
- Approximately 5.5 million children have **at least one undocumented parent** 49
- It is estimated that 9 million people live in homes with at least one undocumented adult and one citizen child 50
- A recent study found that among 11,000 kids who **lost their primary caregiver to COVID-19**, 67% identified as Latinx youth 51
- A 2021 study revealed that in the prior 30 days, Latinx teens were **60% more likely to report having experienced poor or reduced mental health** in comparison to white teens 52

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48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
52 Ibid.
**Youth Mental Illness**

Mental health is a crucial component of youth’s overall well-being, and includes their mental, emotional, and behavioral health. Mental disorders affect how children generally learn, behave, or handle their emotions, often times resulting in unhappiness and difficulties completing tasks.

There are various methods of assessing a child’s mental health issues. The CDC employs surveys, such as the National Survey of Children’s Health, to describe the presence of positive signs of children’s mental health and to determine the number of children with identified mental disorders and whether they got treatment.\(^5^3\)

Research has shown a direct link between trauma and mental health. A CDC study explored the relationship between trauma experienced before, during, and after migration, as well as the current mental health status among Latino youth aged 12–17 years old who had lived in the United States for three years. Participants who were interviewed described traumatic incidents that occurred in their native country, throughout their migration, and upon arrival in the United States.

- Two-thirds of these adolescents reported witnessing at least one traumatic occurrence
- 44% have witnessed a traumatic event once
- 23% have witnessed two or more traumatic events during migration.

Studies show that over time, exposure to trauma during childhood is more likely to lead to anxiety, depression, frustration and social isolation.

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Those children who have witnessed their parents get jailed or deported may experience many negative emotions that initially seem like short term problems that will later develop into more serious issues such as PTSD, difficulty building relationships, distrust in authority as well as institutions and academic challenges. Immigrant Latinx exposure to violence and other stressful life events is likely to be different from that of American-born Latinx in the United States.

Among high school youth, Latinx youth report lower rates of seriously considering attempting suicide or making a suicide plan in the past year than the overall U.S. population, and the percentage of youth who attempt suicide is similar to the overall U.S. population. Despite this, a higher percentage of

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have required treatment after attempting suicide, suggesting more dangerous and injurious attempts.  

Past-Year Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors for High School Youth in Latinx Populations, United States 2019

CDC, 2020

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58 Ibid.
Youth Help-Seeking and Barriers to Treatment

Due to social and institutional barriers, Latinx living in the United States are more likely to experience poverty, which has been linked to psychological distress and the underutilization of mental health care services.

- According to research from the Clinical Child & Family Psychology Review, Latinx youth are less likely to obtain formal mental health care in comparison to white youth.  
- In 2019, a study revealed that 1 in 10 Latinx youth sought out help from a mental health professional.
- It was also found that 1 in 5 Latinx youth with psychological symptoms sees a doctor to address them.
- When Latinx adolescents and their families seek help, they are more likely to receive insufficient care, which decreases their likelihood of receiving extensive help.
- This may result in an increased likelihood of having a stigma towards health care and providers due to communication difficulties, cultural differences, stereotypes, and stigmatized attitudes.

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61 Ibid.


63 Ibid.
Section 2: Resources
MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING TOOLS

Herramientas de exploración de salud mental

MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA

Su sitio web (enlace aquí) ofrece un test de ansiedad y prueba de depresión en español y pruebas de detección para PRST, salud mental juvenil, trastornos alimentarios y otras en inglés.

TAKING ACTION FOR OUR HEALTH

Tomando medidas por nuestra salud

Su sitio web (enlace aquí) es un sitio web interactivo desarrollado para brindar a las personas latinas información sobre su riesgo de algunas de las afecciones de salud más graves que enfrentan los latinos, incluyendo la depresión y la ansiedad.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE ADMINISTRATION

Administración de servicios de abuso de sustancias y salud mental

Puede llamar a la Línea de ayuda nacional de SAMHSA (1-800-662-4357[HELP]) es un servicio gratuito, confidencial, de referencia e información 24/7, 365 días al año para individuos y familias que enfrentan trastornos mentales y/o de uso de sustancias. Ofrecido en español e inglés.

POSTPARTUM SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL

Apoyo posparto internacional

La Línea de Ayuda de PSI es un número de teléfono gratuito (971-203-7773) al que cualquier persona puede llamar para obtener información básica, apoyo y recursos. No son una línea de crisis. Las personas pueden dejar mensajes confidenciales y los voluntarios devolverán su llamada en un momento para volver a contactarse.
SUPPORT GROUP AND HEALTH EDUCATION
Grupo de apoyo y eventos educativos sobre la salud mental

NAMI URBAN LOS ANGELES
Alianza nacional de enfermedades mentales de LA
Their website [link here] organizes mental health services, mental health education events, and group support group for latinos. Personalized by age, language, or sexual orientation.

Su sitio web [enlace aquí] organiza servicios de salud mental, eventos de educación en salud mental y grupos de apoyo grupal para latinos. Personalizado por edad, idioma u orientación sexual.

SHARE! THE SELF-HELP & RECOVERY EXCHANGE
Share! El intercambio de autoayuda y recuperación
Locations in Culver City and Downtown LA. Their website [link here] organizes group sessions to address topics such as anger management, depression, and substance abuse.

Ubicación en Culver City y Downtown LA. Su sitio [enlace aquí] organiza sesiones grupales para abordar temas como el manejo de la ira, la depresión y el abuso de sustancias.

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE OF LA
Servicio familiar judío de LA
This agency offers support groups for Spanish Speaking mothers of children 10 years and younger with childcare provided for free for participants. Additionally, they offer Family Life Education and New Moms Connect Programs.

Esta agencia ofrece grupos de apoyo para madres hispanohablantes de niños de 10 años o menos con cuidado infantil proporcionado de forma gratuita para los participantes. Además, ofrecen educación para la vida familiar y programas de conexión para nuevas mamás.

COMPARTIENDO ESPERANZA SERIES
Sharing Hope Series
This is a 90 minute presentation provided by the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) which aims to increase mental health awareness in Latino communities. It guides a conversation on the symptoms of mental health disorders like depression or anxiety disorders.

Esta es una presentación de 90 minutos proporcionada por la Alianza Nacional de Enfermedades Mentales (NAMI) que tiene como objetivo aumentar la conciencia sobre la salud mental en las comunidades latinas. Guía una conversación sobre los síntomas de los trastornos de salud mental como la depresión o los trastornos de ansiedad.
THERAPY FOR LATINOS BY LATINOS
Terapia para latinos, con latinos

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HISPANIC PSYCHIATRY
Sociedad americana de psiquiatría hispánica

Their website [link here] connects you to Latin physicians who are a part of this organization in LA and across the country.

Su sitio web [enlace aquí] lo/la conecta con médicos quien son miembros de esta organización latina en Los Ángeles y en todo el país.

THERAPY FOR LATINX
Terapia para latinx

Their website [link here] allows you to search for Latinx therapists by keyword and postal code. They offer individual, group, couple, and family therapy and offer sliding scale choices.

Su sitio web [enlace aquí] le permite buscar terapeutas Latinx por palabra clave y código postal. Ofrecen terapia individual, grupal, de pareja y familiar y ofrecen una escala proporcional a su salario.

PSYCHOLOGY TODAY
Psicología hoy

This website allows you to search for Latin/Hispanic-serving therapists by post code, religion, language, sexuality, and price. You will be able to find in person or teletherapy (virtual). This website offers a broader selection as physicians upload their own services to the site.

Este sitio web le permite buscar terapeutas especializados en servidores a la comunidad latina/tespana por código postal, religión, idioma, sexualidad y precio. Podrá encontrar en persona o terapia (virtual). Ofrecen una selección más amplia que los médicos cargan sus propios servicios. Ellos ofrecen una selección más amplia a medida que los médicos cargan sus propios servicios en el sitio.

INCLUSIVE THERAPISTS
Terapeutas inclusivos

Their website [link here] allows you to search for Latina therapists by keyword and postal code. They include filters based on insurance, specialties, services as well as having a resource page.

Su sitio web [enlace aquí] le permite buscar terapeutas Latinx por palabra clave y código postal. Incluyen filtros basados en seguros, especialidades, servicios, además de tener una página de recursos.

LA SITE / SITO EN LA
ONLINE RESOURCES/ RECURSO EN LÍNEA
RESOURCES FOR OUR LGBTQ COMMUNITY
Recursos para la comunidad LGBTQ

LOS ANGELES GENDER CENTER
Centro de género de los Ángeles

Their website (link here) provides a network of mental health providers serving the transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary communities and their families.

Su sitio web (enlace aquí) proporciona una red de proveedores de salud mental que atienden a las comunidades transgénero, no conformes con el género y no binarias y sus familias.

LA LGBT CENTER
LA LGBT centro

This center offers individual, couples, family, and group therapy. They run programs to combat substance abuse and to assistance LGBT people involved in domestic or intimate partner abuse. You can contact them through their website (link here).

Este centro ofrece terapia individual, de pareja, familiar y grupal. Realizan programas para combatir el abuso de sustancias y para ayudar a las personas LGBT involucradas en el abuso doméstico o de pareja. Puede ponerse en contacto con ellos a través de su sitio web (enlace aquí).

THE TREVOR PROJECT
El proyecto Trevor

This website creates a virtual space for LGBT and nonbinary youth to connect and is the world’s largest suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning) young people.

Este sitio web crea un espacio virtual para que los jóvenes LGBT y no binarios se conecten y es la organización de prevención del suicidio e intervención en crisis más grande del mundo para jóvenes LGBTQ (lesbianas, gays, bisexuales, transgénero, queer y cuestionadores).

TRANSLATINA® COALITION
TransLatina coalición

This organization was formed by Trans Latins® Leaders who wanted to organize and advocate for the needs of Trans Latins® immigrants in the US. They provide critical services such as telehealth, ESL Classes, and legal services with more information found on their website.

Esta organización fue formada por Líderes trans Latin@ que querían organizarse y abogar por las necesidades de los inmigrantes trans Latin@s en los estados unidos. Proporcionan servicios críticos como telesalud, clases de ESL y servicios legales. Más información se encuentra en su sitio web.
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