

Together Our Resources Can Help

The Latino And Immigrant Communities

In abusive relationships, power and control are the central motivating factors for a man's decision to be violent, and victims experience a range of abuse from the mental and psychological to the emotional and physical. Latina and immigrant women, however, often face specific abusive behaviors based on their cultural backgrounds. Working to alleviate barriers to receiving services for Latina and immigrant women and offering culturally appropriate intervention strategies can help domestic violence in our community.

Barriers to Receiving Services for Latinas and Immigrants

- Lack of bilingual/bicultural materials and providers.
- Lack of community support and intervention as many family and friends remain in country of origin.
- Fear of deportation and/or misinformation about immigration laws.
- Legal status in U.S.
- Fear of authority figures based on experiences in their country of origin; history of violence as accepted norm.
- Lack of trust based on U.S. activity in their country of origin; feelings of being "set up", experiences of racism.
- Heightened sense of shame and self-blame for abuse.
- Cultural issues: family, rather than individual, is often a priority; loyalty to one's culture is often a predominant value.
- Religious issues.
- Economic issues.
- Lack of transportation and safe, affordable housing.
- Less comfort in report; unfamiliarity with how the legal system may treat perpetrator and victim.
- Fear of international kidnapping of children.
- Lack of information/misinformation about laws, resources, and services for domestic violence.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO BE AN ALLY IN LATINO/IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES:

- Acknowledge the layers of oppression that many Latinos and immigrants have experienced such as poverty, colonization, racism, discrimination, and war in their country of origin.
- Educate yourself about the history, arts, traditions, politics, and social customs of cultures other than your own.
- Make friends with people from cultures other than your own.
- Hire bilingual and bicultural workers and provide staff trainings on cultural issues.
- Provide culturally appropriate services and documents.
- Provide correct information on laws and options.
- Help maintain safe connections and a sense of a community.
- Be creative, respectful, and open-minded.

*Beliefs that may contribute to violence in
our Latino/Immigrant community...*

"They should go back where they came from."
"She needs to learn to speak better English"
"He understands what I'm saying better than
he seems."

TACTICS OF ABUSE AGAINST LATINAS AND IMMIGRANTS

Isolation

Isolating her from friends, family, or anyone who speaks her language. Not allowing her to learn English. Taking her books or canceling subscriptions for publications printed in her language.

Emotional Abuse

Lying about her immigration status. Writing or telling lies to her family about her. Calling her racist names. Accusing her of abandoning her culture.

Economic Abuse

Threatening to report her if she works "under the table." Not letting her get job training or schooling. Taking money she was saving to send to her family in her country of origin.

Sexual Abuse

Calling her a prostitute or "mail order bride." Alleging she has a history of prostitution. Telling her she is required to have sex whenever he wants.

Using Children

Threatening to take her children out of the U.S. or report children to Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS). Raising victim's immigration status during custody hearings to divert attention away from abuse. Using visitation to harass her. Telling children that she will be deported.

Threats

Threatening to report her to INS to get her deported. Threatening to withdraw the petition to legalize her immigration status. Threats to her extended family.

Using Citizenship or Residency Privilege

Failing to file papers to legalize her immigration status, withdrawing or threatening to withdraw papers filed for her residency. Forcing her to sign papers she doesn't understand.

Intimidation

Hiding or destroying important papers, ID cards, health care card, etc. Destroying her property or personal possessions.