



The Future of School-Based Mental Health

School Mental Health Services for Latinos

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The Center for
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What is different now?

Dramatically changing demographics

- In 2000, over 31 million individuals in the US were foreign-born (an increase of 57% since 1990) and 15% are Hispanic
- According to the 2000 Census, 1 of every 5 children in the US is an immigrant or child of immigrants, and almost 1 in 4 of those younger than 5 in US are Hispanic
- Hispanics are the fastest growing minority group
- US ranks 2nd in Hispanic population, second only to Mexico
- 19% of children 5-17 speak a foreign language at home and 5% of all children have difficulty speaking English
- 12% of US residents are Spanish speakers & 78% of Hispanics 5 and older speak Spanish at home



Challenges Faced

- Poverty rates are much higher for children in immigrant and refugee families than children in native-born families
- Pre-migration, migration, and post-migration exposure to traumatic events creates vulnerabilities
- People with limited English proficiency (LEP) are less likely to seek care and receive needed services (even when economic factors and ethnicity are accounted for)



Early Lessons Learned

- **Schools as Hub**
- **Language Access is Key**
- **Family Engagement**
- **Need More Latino Practitioners**



Utilize a School Base

- Value
 - Important resources at hand, familiarity, legal rights
- Challenge
 - Unprepared systems, Still denied access in some parts
- Solutions
 - Know your rights





Language Access

- Value
 - Facilitates relationship and info
- Challenge
 - Shortage of bilingual/bicultural professionals
 - No national certification for MH interpreting
- Solutions
 - Use Trained Interpreters
 - Partnership Development



Family Engagement

- Value
 - Leads to positive outcomes
- Challenge
 - Stigma
 - Poor Training of Professionals
- Solutions
 - Education
 - Go where families are
 - Form relationships

Cultural Competence



- How do we know that our constructs around mental health mean the same thing to our clients?
- Are we sure all aspects of service delivery are language accessible?
- Are our evidence-based practices really appropriate for the families and children from other countries of origin?
- What adaptations are necessary to make sure our treatment programs are effective?



Training and Capacity Building

- Start young
- Start in the Community
- Start broad
- Start with Universities
- Start Mentoring
- **START NOW**

The Somali Social Work Training Program at CHOB



- Two scholarships offered by Boston University School of Social Work
 - Fully funded to attend 3-year part-time MSW program
 - Provided with \$8,000 stipend/year
- **Requirements:** Applicants must be Somalis with a BA or BS, be bilingual (Somali and English), and have an interest in becoming a clinical SW