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LIVING AUTHENTICALLY: LGBTQ+ LATINX

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FROM THE PRESIDENT:

ADVOCACY IN THE TIME OF STRESS

"History will judge societies and governments — and their institutions — not by how big they are or how well they serve the rich and the powerful, but by how effectively they respond to the needs of the poor and the helpless." ~ César Chávez

According to the *Stress in America* survey released November 1, 2017 by the American Psychological Association, average stress levels for Americans are about the same as they were in 2016 (4.8 on a scale from 1-10) but more Americans in 2017 report that they are feeling the effects of stress. Specifically, the majority of Americans (59%) across generational cohorts reported increased uncertainty about the future and a belief that the United States is at an historical low point. Hate crimes (60%), terrorism (55%), and gun violence (52%) are among the safety concerns reported. Cost of health insurance (66%) and policy changes and insurance quality (60%) represented considerable sources of stress. Finally, 30% are concerned about the economy with 33% reporting stress about tax increases, and 26% concerned that they may not be able to thrive in today's economy.

Survey information (APA, 2017) gathered from ethnic/racial respondents indicated that Latinx individuals reported stress levels of 5.2 (on a scale from 1-10), higher than the national average and slightly increased from 5.0 in 2016. Latinx respondents were 13-14% more likely than White, Black and Asian respondents to report staying awake at night due to stress. In addition, 61% of Latinx respondents disagreed that the country is headed toward being stronger than ever. More than one third of Latinx respondents (37%) reported feeling stressed about hate crimes. In addition to stresses explored in the survey, 2017 hurricanes in Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico have taken a heavy toll on Latinx communities, as did the earthquake in neighboring Mexico.

Although not broken down by ethnicity or race, the (mostly) good news is that survey responses (APA 2017) indicated that exercise (53%), listening to music (47%), yoga and meditation (12%), prayer (29%), and spending time with loved ones (57%) are healthy methods used by many respondents to manage stress levels.

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A large number of respondents (42%) indicated a belief that psychologists could offer significant assistance in dealing with stress. Unhealthy strategies for dealing with stress included smoking, reported by 14% of respondents.

Taking some sort of action was a strategy supported by more than half of the overall survey respondents. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of respondents reported that they dealt with stress by taking action consistent with their values, such as signing a petition or boycotting a company with whose values they disagree. Fifty-one percent (51%) of respondents volunteered for organizations or otherwise supported causes important to them.

Natural disasters and sociopolitical events in 2017, including the elimination of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) provisions, increased xenophobia, and overt hostility toward immigrants, have provided ample opportunities for NLPA members to address the impact of stressors by taking action to advocate for their communities. Steele (2008) defined *social justice advocacy* as “professional practice, research, or scholarship intended to identify and intervene in social policies and practices that have a negative impact on the mental health of clients who are marginalized on the basis of their social status” (pp. 75-76).

In response to the growing impact of stressors, NLPA has increased social justice advocacy activities this year by building coalitions with other groups in order to combine resources to effect broader changes that alleviate stress in Latinx communities across the country. For example, we have become a member organization of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda that collectively advocates at federal and state levels regarding discrimination, equal pay, fair resource distribution following natural disasters, safe working conditions, adequate health insurance, violence prevention and other stressors that take a toll on Latinx mental health. We have developed a working alliance with the Red Cross for disaster relief efforts. The NLPA Leadership Council recently voted to establish a Disaster Coordinator position within NLPA to increase the nimbleness of our response to natural and human-caused events that increase stress in our communities. Most recently, we have partnered with United We Dream to develop coping resources and state-by-state mental health resource lists that are DREAMer and immigrant friendly. NLPA is continuing to develop resources to assist the advocacy efforts of our members. Please visit the new Advocacy in Action webpage which provides resources regarding advocacy in the areas of government relations and policies, immigration, and disaster resources. The page is meant to be dynamic so please send additional advocacy information and updates to President@nlpa.ws.

NLPA seeks to improve accessibility to resources that aid our members and the public in dealing with today’s stresses. We are working on website upgrades that will include a directory of NLPA members that is also searchable by the public who are looking for providers of culturally and linguistically effective mental health services. The new website will launch early in 2018.

In closing, I want to thank our members who work so hard to address stressors in Latinx communities and advocate for social justice in all of its forms.

Y. Evie Garcia, Ph.D.

2017 President

Associate Professor of Educational Psychology

Northern Arizona University

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To advance psychological education and training, science, practice, and organizational change to enhance the health, mental health, and well-being of Hispanic/Latina/o populations.

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QUEER LATINXS LIVING AUTHENTICALLY

HECTOR Y. ADAMES^{1,2}

Editorial

It is with great enthusiasm that we bring you the Fall/Winter 2017 issue of *Latina/o Psychology Today* (LPT). The open access format continues to make the content in LPT free to countless individuals, organizations, and institutions all over the world. LPT's unrestricted access and unrestricted reuse increases the publication's impact and reach, allowing countless communities and individuals to read and use the writings of clinicians, researchers, educators, and graduate students to enhance the health, mental health, and well-being of Latinx populations. According to metrics from NLPA's website, each issue of LPT is downloaded approximately 2,500 to 3,000 times. As of date, 6 issues have been published with a total of 15,000 to 18,000 downloads of the publication. We welcome you to visit previous issues of LPT to read the many powerful and timely articles on timely topics related to Latinxs including: (1) Dreamers, Immigration, & Social Justice, (2) Ending Violence Against La Mujer: Uniting Nuestras Voces, (3), Envisioning Latina/o Families in the 21st Century, (4) Advocating for Social Justice, Liberation, and Equality, (5), Resistance, Spirituality, and Liberation, and (6) Between Hope and Resistance. You can visit previous issue of LPT by visiting: <http://www.nlpa.ws/lpt>

The current issue centers on the theme: *Living Authentically: LGBTQ+ Latinxs*. Dr. Carlos E. Santos, NLPA Lifetime Member and Assistant Professor at Arizona State University authored the invited article which

centers on the use of the term Latinx (pronounced La-teen-ex). In the article, Dr. Santos describes and explains how heteronormative linguistic practices can be a form of oppression for many Latinxs along the gender identity and gender expression spectrum. Dr. Santos seamlessly weaves research, theory, and history to help us critically think about language, inclusion, and justice. The *Voces del Pueblo* article, which provides a space for lay individuals from the community to become active participants in the construction and dissemination of knowledge regarding Latinxs, centers on the unique experiences many Queer Latinxs encounter when coming out. The other three articles in the issue focus on Queer Latinxs in academic spaces, a powerful and healing support group for Queer Latinx youth, and ten psychotherapeutic considerations to assist young undocumented Latinx.

We hope that this issue motivates and keeps us all actively connected and caring for each other as we collectively continue to engage in social justice work. As always, *mil gracias* to the contributors, reviewers, editorial board, leadership council, and all of our vibrant membership community for continuing to make LPT the success that it is. A special thank you to the *Orgullo Latinx: Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity Special Interest Group* for making this issue possible! *Como siempre digo, sin ustedes, no hay LPT. ¡Gracias!* [Without you there is no LPT. Thank you!] Happy reading!

¡ Juntxs Podemos !
Hector Y. Adames
Editor

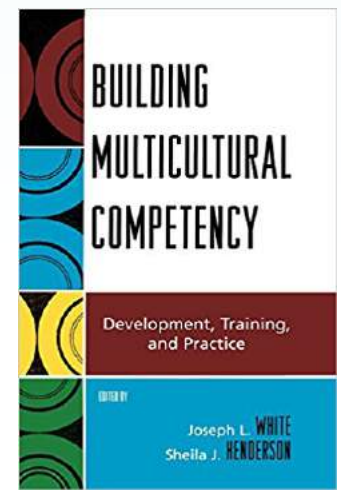
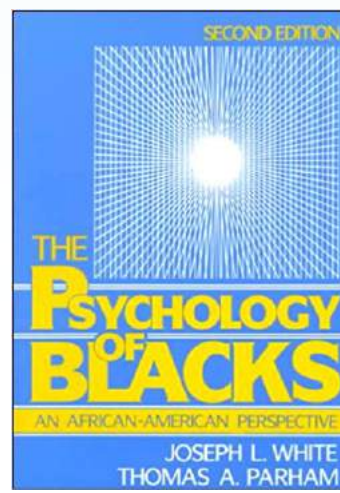
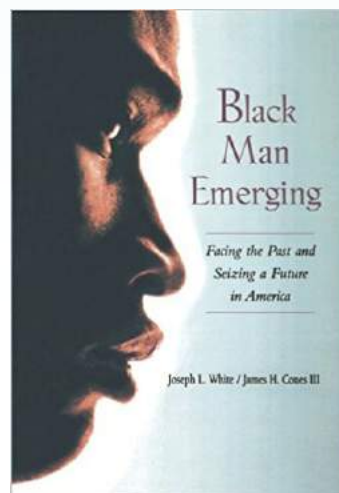
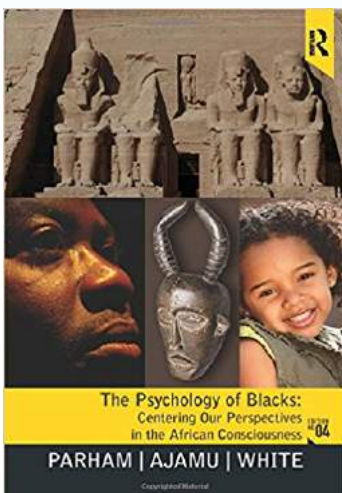
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CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF
Dr. Joseph L. White
THE GODFATHER OF BLACK PSYCHOLOGY
1932-2017



Dr. Joseph L. White. . .

a loving father, husband, and friend, a master teacher, mentor, psychologist, and author, has now made his transition into the realm of the Ancestors. He will be remembered by the thousands of people whose lives were touched by his academic instruction, his personal mentoring, his writings, his informal conversation, his generosity, and his love of the human spirit and human potential.





NAVIGATING THE MOSAIC OF LATINX CULTURE:

Advocating for growth,
intersectionality & resilience

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THE HISTORY, STRUGGLES, AND POTENTIAL OF THE TERM LATINX

DR. CARLOS E. SANTOS^{1,2}

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INVITED ARTICLE

“Vuela vuela vuela, vuela sin tardanza, mientras que la vida dure, lugar tiene la esperanza [Fly fly fly, fly without delays, while life lasts, there is always room for hope.]”

~ La Guacamaya, Mexican Folk Song

The above quote is from a popular Mexican folk song that originates from Veracruz, Mexico, and is part of a musical genre called *son jarocho* [sound jarocho]. *Son jarocho*'s history is rooted in the merging of indigenous and African traditions—traditions that stem from communities that have been systemically marginalized throughout the American continent. *Son jarocho* has grown in popularity in the last few decades, first in Mexico, and later in the U.S., as a mobilizing form of social and political resistance (Díaz-Sánchez & Hernández, 2013). The *jarana*, a small sized guitar-like instrument easy to transport to events like protests, is the primary instrument used in *son jarocho*. Its joyful sound can be heard today in protests related to, for example, immigrant rights in the United States (U.S.). Given *son jarocho*'s roots in merging traditions and bringing together communities that experience diverse, yet interrelated sources of oppression (e.g., colonization, slavery, etc.) (see Díaz-Sánchez & Hernández, 2013), one could argue that the *jarana* takes on symbolic meaning as either a *tool* in the fight against intersecting forms of oppression, or a

form of *symbolic representation* of this fight, the latter being a more passive framing of the *jarana*'s symbolic potential in the promotion of social change. While not a musical instrument, the term *Latinx*, like the *jarana*, may also carry symbolic qualities as either a tool in, or representation of, the fight against intersecting forms of oppression affecting diverse members of the Latinx community.

A direct interpretation of the term Latinx is that it aims to bring attention to how heteronormative linguistic practices can be oppressive and exclusionary to members of the Latinx community whose gender identity and expression does not fit traditional binary representations. Given that other oppressive forces such as racism and nativism already prominently feature in the history of organizing within the Latinx community in the U.S., Latinx might center how heterosexism is implicated in the ways in which these various others isms are created and reinforced. Will Latinx achieve the potential some view in the *jarana*, either as a tool or symbolic representation of the fight against intersecting oppressive forces affecting diverse Latinx individuals? Will individuals view Latinx as an opportunity to build coalitions within the Latinx community in the ways that the *jarana* is perceived to have the power to promote coalitions among the oppressed? Or will the term, as some suggest, disappear overtime only to be remembered as a form of linguistic transgression with no meaning or potential? In this paper, my aim is *not* to provide direct answers to these complex questions. Rather, my aim is to clarify issues pertaining to use of this term, as well as to bring attention to the history, challenges and potential inherent in its use.

The term Latinx (pronounced *La-teen-ex*), and reasons for adopting or rejecting it, have made its way in greater frequency and intensity across scholarly and public forums (Salinas & Lozano, 2017; Scharrón-del Rio & Aja, 2015). When I first heard the term, I suspect my initial

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response was similar to the response of others: “How do I pronounce it?” My second reaction was to consider the history and logic applied to past and current use of this term, as well its potential. Latinx, similar to Latino/a, is a pan-ethnic label typically used to describe individuals in the U.S. who are descendants of, or direct immigrants coming from, Latin America. While both terms share a comprehensive geographic reach, Latinx is distinct from Latina/o because it replaces the “o” and “a” articles with “x” as a means of bringing attention to diverse forms of gender identity and expression that fall outside of the gender binary inherent in the terms Latino or Latina.

In contrast to definitions of Latina/o as well as Latinx, the term Hispanic has been defined as including individuals from Spain and is at times used as an identifier almost synonymous with Spanish language skills (Delgado-Romero et al., 2016). Of note, usage of the term “Latino” has increased prior and since it was first entered in official U.S. government definitions in the late 90s (see Marrow, 2003). More recently, the term Latinx has also entered our lexicon of pan-ethnic labels that refer to Latin Americans in the U.S., and has gained popularity in recent years (Google Trends, n.d.). In this paper, I outline what I see as critical points of reflection that may aid more fruitful engagement with the merits, limitations and potential of the term Latinx.

Pan-ethnic labels are at once complex constructs that do not always have clear boundaries and whose definitions evolve over time while also carrying consequences not only along social, political and economic lines but also in terms of psychological development and well-being. Identifying with an ethnic or racial group in a multiracial, multiethnic, multicultural society such as the U.S. is a shared lifespan developmental process (Erikson, 1968) with consequences for our feelings about ourselves and attitudes towards others. For example, a commonly theorized phenomenon in psychology concerns the notion that one of the ways individuals buffer the negative health consequences associated with experiences of for example racial or ethnic discrimination, is to draw on internal resources like having a positive sense of ethnic-racial identity (e.g., García Coll et al., 1996). Empirically, we know that the harmful effects of discrimination and the ways in which positive identities might buffer these negative consequences likely depends on a host of factors such as the contexts in which one is embedded (e.g., occupying spaces that are more or less hostile towards one’s ethnic group), or the positions one occupy (e.g., having access to information about one’s group that can counter negative stereotypes) to name some (see Rivas-Drake et al., 2014 and Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014, for reviews).

While variation exists in the extent to which identity labels and our feelings and attitudes associated with these labels become influential in our lives, it is in the best interest of a diverse society like the U.S. to work towards promotion of healthy identities. In part, the struggle for recognition of individuals whose gender identity and expression are not represented in mainstream terms like Latina/o is largely a driving force behind the Latinx movement, but unique in that it articulates intersecting facets of identification across ethnic and gender identity/expression lines. This intersecting facet is not only unique in characterization, it is also unique in its potential: an understanding of the struggles and forces driving usage of the term Latinx could serve a role (even if limited) in the promotion of solidarity in the Latinx community and beyond with individuals of diverse gender identity and expression. I argue that the potential for this is likely strengthened if individuals and organizations use Latinx as an opportunity to reflect and engage with overlapping oppressive forces of heterosexism and other isms, such as racism.

In the sections that follow, I present points of reflection with implication for our understanding and interpretation of Latinx. Some of these points of reflection are broad and simple in nature. For example, I start with basic assertions concerning racial/ethnic histories and dynamics in the U.S. related to pan-ethnic labels, and progressively these points move towards a more complex reflection of the potential, as well as limitations, of the term Latinx. This choice is intentional because some of the critiques presented in response to the term Latinx in scholarly and popular realms seem to reflect a lack of awareness or reflection of the histories and basic principles driving U.S. racial/ethnic dynamics and pan-ethnic labeling. I argue that these misunderstandings are important to address as it bears weight on a discussion of the merits and limitations of Latinx.

THE TERMS LATINX, LATINA/O, OR HISPANIC ARE ALL SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED. THERE IS NO SINGLE DEFINITION THAT GUIDE ITS USE OR INTERPRETATION.

Latinx, Latina/o, or Hispanic are socially constructed terms, and thus are not static, and are likely to evolve over time. This may seem obvious to most, but some of the scholarly and public reaction concerning the pros and cons of adopting the term Latinx take on such a deterministic tone that one wonders if certain individuals would agree with the fundamental truth that racial or ethnic labels like Latinx or Latina/a are socially constructed terms that are not static and definitions of it

have and will continue to evolve over time. A clear example of how pan-ethnic labels and definitions of who is included/excluded within these group identifiers evolve can be traced in the U.S. Census which defines and re-defines racial/ethnic labels and categories with relative frequency since its inception in 1790 (Nobles, 200; Racebox, n.d.).¹ The social construction inherent in any of these terms, including Latinx, has implications for individuals or organizations that are considering adopting a term like Latinx in that there is no single time proven definition of the existing, more common, terms like Latina/o or Hispanic (Racebox, n.d.). Instead, there is potential for defining and using these terms intentionally in ways that are consistent with an individual's perspective or an organization's mission. If one agrees that Latinx confers greater inclusivity of diverse forms of gender identity and expression, then adopting Latinx might offer one opportunity to articulate such vision.

THE LOGIC BEHIND WHY INDIVIDUALS SELF-IDENTIFY WITH, OR USE TERMS SUCH AS LATINA/O, HISPANIC OR LATINX VARY GREATLY ACROSS INDIVIDUALS.

The logic informing why individuals self-identify or use the terms Latina/o, Hispanic and/or Latinx can vary greatly across individuals, extending well beyond just inclusion of diversity in gender identity and expression in the case of Latinx. Reasons for usage of Latinx/Hispanic/Latina/o can include one or more of the following logics: a geographic logic, a linguistic logic, or a racialized logic (see Marrow, 2003). A racialized logic, perhaps the least common, emphasizes the 'mixed', 'mestizo', 'brown' and/or multiracial races present throughout Latin America as a defining feature of who is or isn't included. The characterization of individuals in the U.S. from Latin America as constituting an ethnic group, not a racial one, might serve as one indication or byproduct of this logic being progressively less common. A linguistic logic often emphasizes shared Spanish colonial histories in Latin America, and sometimes fluency in the Spanish language. The linguistic logic appears to be more consistently applied to definitions of the term Hispanic (Delgado-Romero et al., 2016; Salinas & Lozano, 2017).

A geographic logic, on the other hand, is often applied to popular definitions of the term Latina/o, and

refers to individuals with ancestry in any or most countries within the sub-continent of Latin America (Marrow, 2003). The geographic logic tends to be viewed as more inclusive, has grown in popularity, and popular definitions include large groups of individuals in Latin America that might otherwise be excluded from definitions of the term Hispanic such as Portuguese-speaking Brazilians (What's the difference between Hispanic, Latino, and Spanish?, n.d.). This means a significant shift in who is included and excluded from these terms as Brazilians account for just about half of the population in South America (List of South American countries by population, n.d.). Additionally, in everyday use, one of these logics may be applied, and at the same time violated. For example, a monolingual non-Spanish speaking person of indigenous descent from Mexico can be categorized as Hispanic in the U.S. but this inclusion violates the common emphasis of fluency in Spanish often alluded to in popular definitions of the word Hispanic. Given that there are hundreds, if not thousands, of languages spoken across countries in Latin America, including countries that are former colonies of Spain such as Mexico or Peru, the linguistic logic might seem especially exclusionary in contrast with the geographic logic often applied to Latina/o or Latinx. Somewhere between 8 to 10 million individuals speak variations of Quechuan in the Andes and high lands of South America alone (Adelaar, 2004). These logics can also be articulated alone or they can co-exist. Importantly, whatever single or combination of these logics are applied, it will have consequences for whom is included and whom is excluded. For example, at least two of these logics may co-exist in definitions or interpretations of a term like Latinx because it likely combines a gender identity and expression diversity logic with a geographic logic common in definitions of the term Latina/o, thus carrying greater geographical inclusivity of groups of individuals throughout Latin American relative to Hispanic.

THE PRACTICE OF VIEWING LATINX, LATINA/O, OR HISPANIC AS AN ETHNIC GROUP AND NOT A RACIAL ONE IS COMPLEX, AND MAY NOT BE AS CLEAR CUT AS MIGHT BE SUGGESTED IN POPULAR AND SCHOLARLY USE.

A critique of the claim that Latinx, Latina/o, or Hispanic reflect an ethnicity and not a race could be that such framing renders racialized experiences of discrimination within this group to those outside of this group less visible because race is categorized as distinct from Latinx identity. Importantly, racial categories are also socially constructed. What constitutes whiteness and

¹ The linked website contains images of the race/ethnicity question in the U.S. Census since 1790. With the exception of the last two Census, a quick glance suggests virtually every time the Census occurred, the race/ethnicity question was modified in some way."

blackness (and corresponding classifications) can vary across geographic boundaries and racial histories. Though systemic inequalities according to race are very real and persist across nations, the ‘one drop rule’ commonly applied to actual or perceived racial categorizations in the U.S., for example, may not apply in the same ways in settings like Brazil (see Daniel, 2006, for a discussion of how longstanding distinctions in racial dynamics within Brazil relative to the U.S. may be converging). On the other hand, singling out descriptors such as Latinx as an ethnicity not a race because it constitutes many races may have value in bringing attention to the diversity of races contained within the Latinx umbrella, facilitating discussions of colorism for example in ways that a racially homogenous framing might not. The issue of categorizing Latinx as either a race or ethnicity (or both) is complex and requires much attention beyond the scope of this contribution. Certainly, racial discrimination is very real for many Latinx individual and Latinx identities intersect with other identities and oppressive forces (e.g., colorism) to produce varying conditions and susceptibility to experiences of discrimination (for a detailed discussion of issues pertaining to colorism in the Latinx community, please refer to Chavez-Dueñas, Adames, & Organista, 2014). With regards to the discussion of the merits of Latinx, I briefly note this issue to articulate that straddling complex social and historical forces, which could include heterosexism, is already a fundamental aspect of the Latinx experience.

SELF-IDENTIFICATION WITH LATINA/O, LATINX OR HISPANIC MAY CHANGE WITHIN INDIVIDUALS OVER TIME, AND VARY ACROSS GENERATIONS.

Self-identification with a group can vary within an individual across the life span and differ among individuals within the same family. Various processes are at play that may inform these differences, including (but not limited to) (1) developmental shifts and transitions, (2) formal exposure to U.S. racial/ethnic schemas, and (3) exposure to diversity in gender identity and expression. Scholars have shown that recent immigrants who arrive as adults tend to favor their national identities over U.S. racial or pan-ethnic labels, but their children, especially during adolescence, a period of increased exploration of identity (Erikson, 1968), are more likely to identify with U.S. racialized categories and pan-ethnic labels through increased exposure to U.S. racial/ethnic schemas, especially when they are exposed to formal U.S. institutions like public schools (Marrow, 2003). In this scenario, developmental differences as well as exposure to

U.S. racial/ethnic histories and racial/ethnic categories are likely at play. The shifts and transitions of identity development during adolescence coupled with greater openness to diversity in terms of gender identity and expression reported among younger Americans of all racial/ethnic groups (Baunach, 2012) might suggest that usage of the term Latinx may continue to increase in popularity as younger generations of U.S. Latin Americans are increasingly exposed to the term, and as they grow older.

THE USE OF “X” TO SIGNIFY DIVERSITY IN GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION IS NOT A ‘FAD’ OF THE LAST FEW YEARS. IT HAS BEEN IN USE FOR MANY YEARS THROUGHOUT THE U.S. AND LATIN AMERICA.

Although widespread use of the pan-ethnic label Latinx is likely more common in the U.S. because seldom would individuals in Latin America identify themselves with a U.S. pan-ethnic label, the use of “x” in languages like Spanish to signify non-binary forms of gender identification and expression is neither just a U.S. phenomenon nor restricted to the last few years. This is perhaps one of the most apparent inaccurate assertions concerning the use of “x” making its way in scholarly and public venues. According to Google Trends (n.d.), searches for the term Latinx date back to 2004, but a cursory search of “lxs” (in lieu of “las” in Spanish) and “género” [gender] in Google Scholar reveals that the use of “x” in Latin America dates back to approximately 15 years, likely much more² (Espinosa Miñoso, 2004, written in 2003; Silvestri, 2004). Arguments suggesting that the use of “x” to signify non-binary forms of identification and expression is a U.S. phenomenon or a recent fad restricted to the last few years are simply inaccurate. The use of “x” already has a historical precedence, dating to at least one decade and a half, possibly longer, and evidence suggests the term Latinx is quickly growing in popularity in the U.S. (Google Trends, n.d.).

²The letter “x” has also been used as a way to affirm Chicana feminist identity, see Castillo’s (1995) use of “x” in Xicanisma. There is also evidence of use of “x” in words like “*nosotrxs*” in Spain dating to the late 90s (Sau, n.d.).

THE USE OF “X” IN LATINX DOES NOT NECESSARILY COME WITH A REQUIREMENT THAT “X” BE ADOPTED IN ALL GENDERED ARTICLES AND PRONOUNS IN LATIN LANGUAGES SUCH AS SPANISH OR PORTUGUESE.

Some have criticized the use of “x” in Latinx as impossible or too challenging to pronounce (de Onís, 2017). It is not necessary to view pronunciation of this one word with extreme frustration. The word is pronounced as Latin + the letter “x,” just as you normally pronounce the word Latin, plus how you normally pronounce the letter “x.” In addition, assertions that imply that the logic in using “x” in Latinx must be applied to all heteronormative linguistic practices in Spanish in order for Latinx to be used (Hernandez, 2017) are akin to suggesting that progress towards equality must be attained in full in order for efforts with that goal to matter. For one, nobody I know of is advocating being gender inclusive in use of words or terms that do not refer to humans. Contrary to how some have presented the matter (Hernandez, 2017), one does not have to convert “auto” (“car” in Spanish) into “autx” to use Latinx. Similarly, claims that one must now figure out how to pronounce words like “amigxs,” instead of “amigos” or “amigas” (“friends” in Spanish) (Hernandez, 2017) are equally misguided. One may use the pan-ethnic identifier Latinx, pronounced *La-teen-ex*, if one wishes to be inclusive of individuals whose gender identity and expression is non-binary within the Latinx umbrella. Striving towards sensible and respectful linguistic practices with individuals who do not identify within the gender binary is an important goal in any language. Latinx as a term was never intended as a solution to all of the heteronormative linguistic practices in languages like Spanish. And as I later note, use of the term will be especially meaningful if one considers the potential in joining others in solidarity (or as actors, depending on one’s position) in the fight against intersecting oppressions stemming from heterosexism and other isms, such as racism. Without such an understanding, using the term Latinx will have limited value, similar to using the term Latin, Latina/o, Hispanic, etc., as purely an identifier, void of an understanding of the potential in organizing in the fight against inequities and ills that affect our communities.

In addition, the use of “x” in Latinx does not imply that “x” is the *only* solution applicable to other gendered articles and pronouns in languages like Spanish or Portuguese. Although as noted earlier, the use of “x” in gendered articles and pronouns likely precedes its use in Latinx—with evidence of “x” being used to signify

diversity in gender identity and expression before it was applied to Latinx—alternatives have been proposed but have not yielded the same traction as the use of “x” in Latinx. For example, it has been suggested that a more accessible way to pronounce gendered articles, pronouns and words might be accomplished via use of “e” (e.g., “*le*” instead of “*la*” or “*lx*”) (de Onís, 2017). Indeed, one option could be to use “e” instead of “x” altogether, but lack of familiarity which is a common reaction to the term Latinx would equally apply to use of a term like “*Latine*.” In addition, some might argue that there is a precedence for use of “x” given its use throughout Latin America and increase in popularity in the U.S. (Google Trends, n.d.).

THE USE OF “X” IS PROMOTED BY A WIDE RANGE OF INDIVIDUALS.

Critiques suggesting that the use of “x” in Latinx reflects a form of *intellectual imperialism* perpetuated by liberal, presumably queer, intellectual elites (Guerra & Orbea, 2015) and that the term is “definitely not used by working-class immigrant adults” according to Hernandez (2017), are simply inaccurate. I personally know multiple working-class immigrant adults who use it. These individuals tend to have some degree of exposure to issues affecting Latinx queer immigrants, some through their children’s involvement in community organizations that serve queer migrants, but they are nonetheless working-class immigrant adults. The term Latinx or “x” used to signify diversity in gender identity and expression is used by a wide range of individuals and organizations including: community activists, grass-roots organizations that engage in a wide range of causes, organizations that provide services to a wide range of individuals, to name some outside of academia. For instance, *United We Dream*, the largest youth-led immigrant rights organization in the U.S., and thus an organization that is not primarily focused on advocating queer rights, uses “x” in their mission language (About UWD, n.d.). To imply that this term is used by intellectual elites only and that it represents a form of linguistic imperialism (Guerra & Orbea, 2015) is problematic on multiple levels. First, it is dismissive of the hard work diverse individuals have done within themselves and in their organizations to promote inclusivity of diverse forms of gender identity and expression. Second, it is deeply problematic to use language that suggests that the use of Latinx is oppressive without offering a solution when the reasons for using the term itself are related to fighting oppressive forces like heterosexism. Third, just as ethnic labels are not static and evolve over time so do languages. Fourth, as Scharrón-del Río and Aja (2015) eloquently note, terms such as ‘linguistic imperialism’

attributed to the application of “x” in Spanish are deeply problematic because the real form of linguistic imperialism was the colonization and mass extermination of indigenous communities, languages and customs by the Spanish, Portuguese and other colonial forces in Latin America.

USING LATINX AS A PAN-ETHNIC LABEL DOES NOT PRECLUDE ONE’S PREFERENCE FOR SELF-IDENTIFIERS LIKE LATINA OR LATINO.

In discussions about the term Latinx, one that stuck with me was a conversation I had with a scholar I respect who articulated that she has fought her whole life to be accepted and respected as a Latina scholar, and that she has a special and important relationship to the term Latina. In her narrative, I could hear a sense of loss, more than frustration, perhaps driven in part by the assumption that she must now adopt a new identity label. I appreciated her honesty and I have thought a lot about this exchange. My perspective at the moment is that using a term like Latinx to refer to others or to Latinx individuals as a group does not preclude one’s preference for the terms Latino or Latina to refer to oneself. In other words, using Latinx as a group descriptor that allows for diversity in gender identity and expression within that group does not preclude one’s choice to self-identity as Latino or Latina.

THE USE OF “X” IN LATINX IS NOT EQUIVALENT TO A THIRD ARTICLE – “A” FOR WOMEN, “O” FOR MEN, “X” FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT IDENTIFY AS EITHER MEN OR WOMEN. IT CAN REPRESENT MUCH MORE THAN THIS.

The use of “x” in a term like Latinx need not be reduced to just inclusion of diverse forms of gender identity and expression. Usage of the term could also reflect a form of solidarity in the fight against the intersecting forces of heterosexism and other isms. Organizations considering terms like “*Latina/o/x*” in which “x” is presented following “a” and “o” might want to be mindful of the potential for the interpretation of “x” as a third article of sorts. At the same time, adopting the word Latinx with no reflection on its potential, will likely yield little social change. Individuals and organizations might want to consider the extent to which they wish to be inclusive of diverse individuals on one hand, and be inclusive while also standing in solidarity in the fight against oppressive forces affecting individuals of diverse gender identities and expression. Relative to a term like “*Latina/o/x*,” I suspect the term Latinx and the centering of “x” not just as an alternative to the “a” and “o” articles, likely yields greater perception of solidarity with the

critical battles being fought by individuals who by virtue of their gender identity or expression must contend with heterosexism and other isms, such as racism.

SYNTHESIZING THOUGHTS

Definitions of Latinx vary and in reflecting on the various issues and factors associated with usage and interpretation of this term, I present the following definition:

Latinx, often pronounced as “La-teen-ex,” is a descriptor for individuals in the U.S. who have roots in Latin America which explicitly acknowledges diversity in forms of gender identity and expression via use of “x” in lieu of the gendered articles “a” or “o.” Use of Latinx, coupled with an understanding of the reasons for adopting it, may be viewed as a form of solidarity with individuals whose gender identity and expression might differ from binary classifications of men and women and who must navigate spaces of heteronormativity, or social settings that normalize heterosexuality. Given the history and potential of ethnic and racial categories to foster organizing and build coalitions in the fight for social, political and economic justice, application of the principles that led to use of the term, may also reflect solidarity with others in the struggle to fight intersecting oppressive forces of heterosexism, and other forces that fuel discrimination towards individuals whose gender identity and expression is non-binary, as well as other isms, such as racism, that affect members of the Latinx community.

This definition aims to accomplish the following: (1) aid pronunciation and avoid confusion concerning how to pronounce it (de Onís, 2017); (2) provide a readily apparent definition (i.e., replacing “a” and “o” articles with “x”); (3) and to note the potential in promoting solidarity and social change via reflection in usage of the term. This definition does not cover all of the issues concerning usage of Latinx noted here or elsewhere. For parsimony, I picked some I felt were especially important to articulate. Others may choose to modify or edit this definition.

It is my hope that individuals and organizations consider the various issues presented here in their evaluation of the term Latinx. I join others in calling those who do work in Latinx psychology to reflect on the need for greater inclusivity within our communities, and to consider the potential of building coalitions in promoting social change and the well-being of diverse members of the Latinx community.

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QUEER LATINXS COMING OUT: THE DANCE BETWEEN FAMILY LOVE AND AUTHENTICITY

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VOCES DEL PUEBLO ARTICLE

Voces Del Pueblo is a new & ongoing section of LPT, which provides a space for individuals from the community to become active participants in the construction and dissemination of knowledge regarding Latinxs.

“I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood” (Audre Lorde, 1984, p. 40).

Within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Latinx* community there is a lot of diversity in the histories, experiences, and the identities (e.g., ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, gender) each individual holds. Because of this, LGBTQ Latinxs must navigate multiple borders related to their race and ethnicity, as well as their sexual orientation and gender identities (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017). They must do this in both society and within their families. As individuals navigate these borders, they must decide how and with whom to share their authentic selves.

According to the Human Rights Campaign and League of United Latin American Citizens (2012), more than half of LGBTQ Latinx youth’s families accept LGBTQ people; however, there is “still, about one third [that] report a lack of family acceptance” (p. 4). Despite the large number of

Latinx families accepting LGBTQ people it is most common to hear about the one third whom are not accepting. This amplified negative perception of Latinx families rejecting LGBTQ people can hold back LGBTQ Latinx family members from coming out to their loved ones.

However, there may also be trepidation from LGBTQ Latinxs in coming out to their family because of the Latinx cultural value of *familismo*. When LGBTQ Latinxs have strong values of *familismo*, their needs are secondary to those of their family’s; thus, coming out to their family may pose some challenges. A common worry among LGBTQ youth is rejection from their family members, which can be devastating because family is often their main support (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017; Human Rights Campaign & League of United Latin American Citizens, 2012). Because of this, some individuals may choose to not come out to their families. However, for some LGBTQ Latinxs, coming out to their family is an important process that is connected to living authentically.

In this issue of *Voces del Pueblo*, we highlight two individuals who identify as Gay Latinxs. They share how they came out to their families, the reasons why they did so, and their family’s reactions to the news. They also examine the challenges and hopes of living authentically with their families and loved ones. Though their views on living authentically differ, they share a common value of *familismo*.

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**COMING OUT TO AVOID REGRETS:
MELISSA'S STORY**

We first spoke to Melissa, who was born and raised in the East Coast and whose family is from South America. Melissa identifies as female/gender Queer, - meaning, “not adhering to the feminine construct” in terms of her gender presentation - Brown, and Gay, often interchanging Queer for Gay; she indicated that at times she identifies differently depending on the context. The close relationships Melissa had with her extended family are what encouraged her to come out to her parents about 3 years ago. She explained how her *tía y tío* (aunt and uncle) were the only people in her extended family that she felt close to when she was growing up. Unfortunately, they both passed away within a year of each other, which left her, her sisters, and her parents devastated. Specifically, for Melissa, these deaths weighed heavily on her.

It bothered me that my aunt never had a chance to find out about my gayness because she was ... like a second mom. There's a sadness that she never knew this; that I didn't want to carry with my own mom.

Not having had the opportunity to share who she truly was with her aunt and uncle left her with a sense of regret and sadness. These feelings propelled her to come out to her parents, even though she felt hesitant about it. She explained that her parents "never said anything negative about gay people," so it was not that she had a fear that they would reject her for being Gay. For Melissa, her fear was rooted in Latinx cultural traditions that are centered around gender norms. "My mom still doesn't tell people from [her homeland] that her daughters don't live with her. Because if you're girls, daughters, you should be living at home until you're married," she said. Thus, for Melissa, coming out as Gay meant defying her mother's idea of how a daughter can respectfully gain her independence from her family (e.g., leave the house).

Part of Melissa's fear stemmed from not wanting to disrespect or dishonor her family, a key component of *familismo*. However, after the death of her loved ones, Melissa felt it was crucial to come out to her family, despite the potential resistance she may experience. She wanted to let her parents know who she truly is and wanted to be open about her relationship with her girlfriend. Melissa had grown tired of not being able to share that part of her life with her family. She decided to tell her mother first,

although when doing so she was not explicit; she would drop hints that were “impossible to ignore.” When her mother finally asked her if she was Gay, Melissa told her the truth. At that point, her older sisters already knew and her mother was able to reach out to them for support. Melissa remembered that her mother responded in a very calm and accepting way. Later, however, she found out from her sister that their mother felt distressed. Although her mom was able to keep her composure when learning about her daughter's Queer identity, it was still difficult for her to process and she relied on her other daughters for emotional support.

Melissa refrained from telling her father about her sexual orientation until she felt it was necessary – namely, when she decided to move in with her girlfriend. Initially, Melissa's reasoning stemmed from a preconceived notion that her father would be a “Latino dad; you know, overbearing...I was afraid to confront that.” She stated that despite the lack of conversations she and her father share, they do have a close relationship and they know each other very well. However, she still had a lingering fear that he would “freak out” because it would be so much change all at once. When Melissa finally came out to her father, he was very “chill” about it and “he gave relationship advice, ‘you're a team now; you're partners. You guys need to know when you guys get home, just like I know when your mom gets home.’” Not only was Melissa able to tell her father that she was moving out, but she was able to come out to him at the same time. She was relieved for her father's positive reaction and his support for her relationship.

Although Melissa's coming out was received with an acceptance from her parents, her relationship and her being Gay is something that she does not bring up often when she is with her family. Melissa is in a place where she is content enough that they know she is Gay. Similar to Melissa's story, our second interviewee was also asked about his sexual orientation; however, he received reluctance from his family.

**THE TRUTH IS A RELIEF:
MARCOS' STORY**

Marcos, who identifies as a Gay male, was born in Central America and immigrated to the U.S. at the age of 3 to live with his parents on the West Coast; they moved once before settling down in a Southern state. Marcos grew up in a place where sexual orientation was not talked about as much, but later in his life he moved to a city where the LGBTQ

community was very visible. Marcos described the relief of not having to come out to his family because his cousin outed him. He acknowledged that being outed usually has a negative connotation, but for him it was a positive thing because it took the pressure off of him. When his mother asked if it was true, Marcos had the courage to confirm his Gay identity, "it was an opportunity to say the truth." He reflected on the possibility that he may never have told his parents had his cousin not outed him. He also mentioned that when his family did find out, they did not cast him out or disown him in any way.

Although his family did not directly reject him for this identity, he indicated that they were not fully accepting, specifically, Marcos' mother who he described as being religious. His mother revealed to him that her "testimony" would be for him not to be Gay. A testimony, or *testimonio*, Marcos shared, is a concept often used within various religions to narrate a personal experience or story of salvation and/or of having been cured. Thus, in saying this, Marcos' mother continues to hope that one day, her son will change his sexual orientation to heterosexual. This leaves Marcos feeling like he cannot fully share this part of who he is with his mother because she is actively praying for him to not be Gay.

Despite his mother's lack of acceptance of his sexual orientation, Marcos described, "we are pretty close, we talk 3 to 4 times a week." Marcos' mother currently knows that he has a partner, but she does not know that Marcos recently married him. Marcos hopes that one day his mother will care about his partner and accept him into the family. Marcos decided to keep his marriage a secret because he does not want to hurt his mom's feelings, contribute to her getting sick, or make her lose sleep over him. He also wondered whether his mother and her beliefs are "ready to be challenged." It was obvious from our conversation that Marcos deeply cares for and loves his mother. He mentioned that in some ways he understands the reasons why it may be difficult for her to accept his sexual orientation. He shared:

She is worried about me. She is worried that I am not going to be happy or that I will end up alone. She worries other people are going to say things, or be mean, and be violent or get physical because that's probably what she is used to. So part of it is that she religiously thinks that it is wrong, and another part of her, like the mother side of her, is worried that I am going to have all these negative experiences.

He explained how in his native country, those who are openly Gay are victims of violence due to their sexual orientation. This then, according to him, creates a violent cycle where individuals do not want to come out; according to him, this invisibility perpetuates two beliefs: 1) there are no individuals who are Gay, and 2) being gay is wrong. He tries to empathize with his mother and attempts to understand where she may be coming from. He recognizes that it is not just her religion but also the violence that is associated against those who are openly gay that make it difficult for her to accept his sexual orientation.

These considerations have led to the reason why Marcos has not yet introduced his husband to his mother and why he does not want to tell her that he is married. For him, this is a way of protecting her by not bringing more worry to her. However, Marcos has realized that this is no longer working for him. Because his family is such a big part of his life, he wants to share his happiness and wants them to meet and get to know his husband. Secondly, he wants his mother to understand and see that his sexual orientation is not malleable. He hopes to ease his mother into this realization by bringing his husband home for the holidays. He does not plan to tell his family that he is married, but does want them to know who he is. He acknowledges that her acceptance may take more than one family dinner.

A FAMILIAL VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Reflecting on his marriage, Marcos thinks about the cultural and gender norms that he is deviating from. For instance, his mother has a particular vision of the life she had pictured for him. He imagines his mother's vision of his future, including marriage, having children, and his mother living with his family. He notes that his vision is not very different from his mother's; the only thing that differentiates them is the gender of the person he marries. He stressed the fact that he does want his mother to be present and active in his life and his future children's lives. It is this vision that has made him feel better about his decision to introduce his husband to his family.

ON LIVING AUTHENTICALLY

Coming out can be a very daunting and exhausting process; however, it can also be an exceptionally uplifting experience for some due to the liberating feeling that you are no longer withholding information from those you love (Human Rights Campaign & League of United Latin American Citizens, 2012). This allows LGBTQ Latinxs a step toward living authentically. Melissa and Marcos both expressed living authentically in different ways and in different spaces. For Melissa, it means, “being comfortable where you are and who you’re with without feeling like you’re hiding something.” In Marcos’ case, his living authentically has been and continues to be an ongoing process. Additionally, it is connected to being who he is with those whom he loves. Overall, his authentic self-centers around his family’s acceptance of his gay identity.

IN THE END, IT IS ABOUT FAMILY

Through Melissa’s and Marcos’ stories, we begin to understand the significance of the Latinx cultural value of *familismo* among Gay Latinxs in the U.S. Melissa, having taken her time to come out to her parents, found it important to tell them the truth; she wanted them to know her whole self before it was too late. In her efforts to live authentically, she wants to be comfortable in her surroundings without having to hide anything. Marcos’ empathy for his mother allows him to understand her perspective and draw on the complexities of how she views his sexuality.

At the same time, he acknowledges that in order for his mother to truly know his whole self and accept him, he will have to be more openly gay around her; this will also allow him to live a more authentic life. We see in Melissa and Marcos that coming out is not just about living true to yourself but also about finding acceptance and support within their family. For them, living authentically is an ongoing process that included the disclosure of their sexual orientation. By hearing and telling the stories of these two individuals, we hope to shed some light on the impacts of *familismo* on LGBTQ Latinxs and hope more will share their stories.

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IT IS TIME FOR ACADEMIA TO TAKE A SERIOUS LOOK IN THE MIRROR: CRITICAL REFLECTIONS FROM A GAY, CISGENDER, IMMIGRANT LATINO GRADUATE STUDENT

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While there has been empirical work on the microaggressions experienced by Latinx undergraduate students (e.g., Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2010), Chicana graduate students (e.g., Solórzano, 1998), and LGBTQ+ graduate students (e.g., Solórzano, 2010), to the author's knowledge, there is no empirical work explicitly focusing on the microaggressions experienced by LGBTQ+ Latinx graduate students in clinical psychology graduate programs. This represents a significant gap in the literature. According to intersectionality theory, individuals do not belong to single-axis categories that can be "added," as identities are interdependent and mutually constitutive (May, 2015). Thus, one cannot fully understand LGBTQ+ Latinx graduate student experiences by merely understanding their race/ethnicity as separate from their sexual orientation (Bowleg, 2012). Given that research has demonstrated that LGBTQ+ people of color simultaneously experience microaggressions related to their race/ethnicity from LGBTQ+ communities, as well as to their sexual orientation and gender identities from their own racial/ethnic minority peers, and that these experiences are correlated with psychological distress (Balsam, Molina, Beadnell, Simoni, & Walter, 2011), it is imperative that conversation, research, and change regarding the microaggressions that LGBTQ+ Latinx graduate students experience be initiated.

In response to this dearth of empirical work, the main goal of the present critical reflection is to present personal accounts of the microaggressions I have experienced as an openly gay, cisgender, and immigrant Latinx graduate student in clinical psychology – with the ultimate goal of urging academia to start examining the experiences of gay Latino graduate students and other members of the LGBTQ+ graduate student community. Using Sue's (2010) research on microaggressions as a framework, I briefly describe some of the microaggressions I experienced during admissions interviews and during research training as a graduate student, as well as their impact. I highlight that, being at the intersection of racial and sexual minority identities, gay, immigrant Latino graduate students can be, knowingly or unknowingly, oppressed even from those who claim to be culturally informed in race/ethnicity or affirming of different sexual orientations. I then offer preliminary suggestions for beginning to enact change in the way that gay, immigrant Latino graduate students are treated in graduate programs.

Before I begin, I would like to emphasize that the present critical reflection is *not* intended to provide a comprehensive account of the experiences of LGBTQ+ Latinx graduate students, *nor* of all gay Latino graduate students. From an intersectionality perspective, all individuals are "ontologically plural, not only in terms of multiple identities, but also in terms of locational and relational power" (May, 2015). This means that while I am, broadly speaking, part of a marginalized community, it is *also* true that I benefit from privileges that stem from the fact that I am a cis-gender male. Thus, my experiences are qualitatively different from those of other LGBTQ+ Latinx graduate students. With this in mind, I urge members of academia to start to investigate the experiences of other marginalized graduate students in the LGBTQ+ Latinx community. While I use the term Latino to identify myself given my cisgender, gay man identity, in the present paper, I use the term Latinx as opposed to Latina/o or Latin@ when referring to others. Latinx is an inclusive umbrella term to refer to individuals living in the U.S. who are of

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Latin American descent in a manner that does not reinforce the gender binary. This is similar to how other scholars have used the term in the field of higher education (Salinas & Lozano, 2017).

Sue's (2010) work on microaggressions provides a useful framework for speaking about my experiences. Microaggressions are "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership." These can be delivered verbally, nonverbally, or through environmental cues. Importantly, microaggressions are often dismissed because, on the surface, they appear to be innocuous and part of everyday life. However, research has demonstrated that they impair performance in those who experience them, as they lead to inequities in opportunities and to the depletion of psychic and spiritual energy (Sue et al., 2007).

MICROASSAULTS

Sue and colleagues (2007) have identified three types of microaggressions in their taxonomy. The first type is *microassault*, or "conscious, deliberate, and either subtle or explicit...biased attitudes, beliefs or behaviors" that are meant to attack or to hurt a person (Sue, 2010). To my surprise, I have experienced microassaults even in training programs with a purported commitment to diversity. For instance, while participating in a research training program aimed at training researchers from underrepresented backgrounds, I often raised concerns about how some professors in the program tended to unintentionally perpetuate stereotypes about women and sexual minorities in their work. In response to this, a self-identified Latino professor from the program, who knew my racial/ethnic and sexual identities, told me that he "understood" where I was coming from, but that I had a bad attitude, that I was aggressive and abrasive when raising my concerns, and that I would not make allies with heterosexual Latinx scholars for "my cause" in the field if I did not tone "it" down. This professor's microassault not only communicated to me that my critical skills as a graduate student committed to social justice were not appreciated, but also that *I* was not appreciated in the field.

MICROINSULTS

The second type of microaggression is *microinsult*, which is defined as "interpersonal or environmental communications that convey stereotypes, rudeness, and insensitivity," that are intended to demean a person (Sue, 2010). During admissions interviews, it was common for professors to gloss over the struggles that I have faced due to my identities. For example, a professor

told me during an interview that I *should* be thankful for my parents' high socioeconomic status and for the "fact" that I attended a private high school, as they were the reasons for my academic success as an undergraduate. This was perplexing, because I neither came from a high socioeconomic background nor attended a private high school. Experiences like this highlight the fact that professors may unknowingly (or knowingly) discredit the resilience that many racial/ethnic and sexual minorities such as myself demonstrate in the face of adversity by appealing to external circumstances as the reasons for success – a highly stressful situation when being considered for admissions, when one's work ethic is being assessed.

Unfortunately, fellow graduate students have also been the sources of numerous microinsults, including those who identify as Latinx. During admissions interviews and training experiences, I have been accused of being interested in conducting "me-search;" that the reason I want to conduct research with LGBTQ+ Latinxs is to understand myself and not primarily for scientific purposes. Interestingly, research on non-minority populations by non-minority graduate students is usually never considered "me-search" or less "scientific." Even before beginning my graduate education, these microinsults lead to me expect potential colleagues to denigrate my academic work based on my identity as an openly gay, immigrant Latino rather on the actual intellectual merit of my work.

MICROINVALIDATIONS

The third and final type of microaggression that has been identified in the literature is *microinvalidation*, or "communications or environmental cues that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality" of a person (Sue, 2010). A perfect example of this is when professors explicitly deny or minimize the existence of (LGBTQ+) Latinxs in the U.S. (it has been estimated that 1.4 million adults in the U.S. identify as LGBTQ Latinx; Kastanis & Gates, 2013). Surprisingly, this has come from professors who identify as racial/ethnic and/or sexual minorities themselves. At one admissions interview, I was told by a self-identified racial minority professor that there were no LGBTQ+ Latinxs in the area with whom to work. Perhaps this professor might have truly not been aware. However, even when presented with evidence of our existence, some professors were quick to minimize the verity of the evidence. For instance, anticipating a similar reaction at my next admissions interview, I researched the number of Latinx adults living in the area beforehand and learned that there were significant numbers as reported by the U.S.

Census Bureau. To my dismay, the professor with whom I was interviewing, who openly identified as a sexual minority, dismissed the data by saying that it was “not accurate.”

One particularly insidious form of microinvalidation has to do with the dismissal of my reporting of microaggressions themselves. A significant portion of those with whom I have shared the experiences that I have described thus far have overtly questioned their validity – including self-identified Latinxs. From seemingly innocent questions such as “are you *sure* that *that* is how it happened?” to more explicitly, incising questions such as “you *must* not be remembering right,” sharing these experiences has been such a herculean task that I have strategically decided *not* to do in order conserve mental resources. It is particularly concerning that experiences of microaggressions are constantly questioned, even in academic settings – research suggests that microinvalidations may be the most damaging type of microaggression given that they are intended to erase the reality that minorities experience (Sue, 2010).

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Experiences of microaggressions in academia have had an undeniably profound impact on me as a graduate student in clinical psychology. By the time I completed my admissions interviews, I felt disillusioned by the potential artificiality of diversity “commitments.” Having been silenced, belittled, and alienated by professors and other graduate students, I began graduate school feeling stressed and disempowered. To keep me sane in the face of these microaggressions, I have learned to live unauthentically; I have learned to modify my accent to avoid being exoticized, to suppress my opinions to avoid being categorized as angry, to conceal my sexual identity to avoid being tokenized, and by laughing *with* those who mock me. Clearly, microaggressions are powerful forces that have an impact on a graduate student’s morale.

In thinking about how we in the clinical psychology academic field can battle oppression towards LGBTQ+ Latinx graduate students, first, we need to *acknowledge* that the intersection of sexism, racism, heterosexism, and cisgenderism (among others) exist in academia, and *recognize* the different ways they are exercised in the form of microaggressions. For this to occur, the academic community needs to explicitly pay attention to how LGBTQ+ Latinx graduate students experience microaggressions in graduate school³.

Second, we should pay attention to the intersectionality of racial/ethnic and gender and sexual minority identities. Specifically, we should eschew the assumption that heterosexual Latinx faculty are aware, sensitive, or affirming of issues related to gender and sexuality merely because of their racial/ethnic identities, even if they have a commitment to issues on culture, race, and ethnicity. Although views toward the LGBTQ+ community are changing for the better in some Latin American countries, a significant proportion of people in some Latin American countries still view non-heterosexual individuals as socially unacceptable (Pew Research Center, 2013). The situation is worse regarding gender minorities; a 2016 annual report on violence against the LGBTQ+ community found that Central and South America have the *highest* reports of murdered trans and gender-diverse individuals in the world (Balzer, LaGata & Berredo, 2016). It is thus not implausible that Latinx faculty may unknowingly hold oppressive views or behave in oppressive ways towards LGBTQ+ Latinx graduate students. Similarly, we should eschew the assumption that non-Latinx White gender and sexual minority faculty are aware and sensitive of issues related to race/ethnicity merely because of their minority identities. Finally, although outside the scope of the present critical reflection, we should reject the assumption that LGBTQ+ Latinxs are a homogenous group of individuals that are not susceptible to perpetrating oppression within their own community, particularly toward those who identify as women and trans. As hard and painful eschewing these assumptions may be, this will allow for a better understanding of *who* perpetrates oppression and *how* it is perpetrated, thus allowing for the identification of points of potential change.

As an academic psychology community, we are committed to alleviating human suffering. Being trained as clinical psychologists, being Latinx and/or LGBTQ+ does not necessarily mean that we have overcome our biases and oppressive practices. The aim of the present critical reflection is not merely to point out problems in academia. Rather, it is my hope that I have made some of the ways in which I have been pushed to the margins by some members of the greater (heterosexual) academic community, including some members of the (heterosexual) Latinx and (non-Latinx) sexual minority academic community, more visible, with the hope that this can spark conversation, research, and change. Importantly, given that the present critical reflection was from the point of view of a cisgender man, it is my hope that I have also urged training and Ph.D. programs to seek, actively, to

³ As stated earlier, given that I identify as cisgender and as a gay man, my critical reflection does not give an account of how other LGBTQ+ Latinx graduate students

experience the intersection of sexism, racism, heterosexism, and cisgenderism.

understand the experiences of other members of the LGBTQ+ Latinx community.

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DE COLORES: A LATINX LGBTQ+ ADOLESCENT GRUPO DE APOYO

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Adolescence is an interesting moment for exploring sexual development because it is most associated with sexual awakening. During that process, adolescents who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or queer (LGBTQ+) may have a difficult experience with identifying and/or disclosing their sexual orientation (Horn, Kosciw, & Russell, 2009; Kosciw, Palmer, & Kull, 2015). For LGBTQ+ racial and ethnic minorities, the decision to come out is often impacted by their cultural beliefs (Ryan et al., 2010), religion and socioeconomic status (Rowatt et al., 2009), and homophobic school-related aggressions (Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012). Regarding LGBTQ+ Latinxs, the possibility of experiencing rejection by their loved ones also impacts their decision to come out (Perez-Chavez, Cruz, & Sajwani, 2015). To complicate matters further, Latinx adolescents who withhold their LGBTQ+ identity may experience high rates of suicide attempts and increased risk for substance use and abuse (Meyer, Dietrich, & Schwartz, 2008; McCabe, Hughes, Bostwick, West, & Boyd, 2009). And, in the midst of acknowledging their sexual orientation, Latinx adolescents who struggle to come out or identify as LGBTQ+, also face a sense of isolation especially when the support of peers, parents, or other family members is lacking (Gray, Mendlshon, & Omoto, 2015).

LGBTQ+ Latinx adolescents experience complex cultural conflicts throughout their coming out process (Perez-Chavez et al., 2015). Understanding the potential stressors that arise when coming out as LGBTQ+, implications suggest that school-based support groups reduce experiences of isolation, aggressive harassment, and suicidal ideation (Hatzenbuehler, 2011). In relation to

my role as a social justice advocate and clinician in training within *la frontera* (the physical United States-Mexico borderland region), I noticed that there was a need to create a bilingual support group for Latinx adolescents who identified as LGBTQ+. Thus, the *De Colores* support group was created to provide a safe space for Latinx adolescents who wished to learn more about the LGBTQ+ community. During our weekly didactic discussions, the students made meaningful connections to their personal experiences of identifying and/or coming out as LGBTQ+. Adolescents also created LGBTQ+ art themed messages of solidarity to empower themselves and others who are at various stages in their coming out process. To promote the need to create school-based LGBTQ+ support groups for Latinx adolescents, this article provides illustrative quotes that describes: 1) how being a member of *De Colores* has helped them explore their sexual orientation and become allies to those who are in the process of coming out and; 2) how their social justice art pieces advocate to honor and respect the diverse Latinx LGBTQ+ community.

LOS DE COLORES

The *De Colores* support group was comprised of six self-identified Latinx adolescents who currently attend a local charter middle school *en la frontera*. The narratives of each participant illustrate how being part of the support group has helped them understand the intersectionality of LGBTQ+ identities. Since the use of bilingualism was a salient form of expression in *De Colores*, Spanish narratives were preserved in their original context and translated into English. Lastly, the participants were provided pseudonyms, which are used throughout this article to identify their narratives. Table 1 provides a graph of the participants' demographics.

Based on their narratives, the *De Colores* participants engaged in awareness building discussions to learn about the Latinx LGBTQ+ community. The student narratives revealed a collective sense of understanding themselves as sexual minorities and their desire to advocate for the LGBTQ+ community. For Sage, being part of this group helped her explore her bisexuality, as evidenced by her reflection:

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Table 1
Characteristics of Participants

Name	Age	Gender	Sexual Orientation	Ethnicity
Sage	13	Cisgender Female	Bisexual	Mexican American
Rebecca	13	Cisgender Female	Bisexual	Mexican American
Alejandra	14	Cisgender Female	Heterosexual	Mexican
Alba	14	Cisgender Female	Heterosexual	Mexican
Luis	13	Cisgender Male	Gay	Mexican
Brittany	15	Transgender Female	Gay	Mexican

Being in the group helps accept myself more, by my sexuality, I am bisexual. It helped me understand why I feel this way about both genders. I feel better about how I am as a person because I know that I am not the only person. I am like others and knowing that there are others who are allies and others that do have a different sexuality. It made me feel equal it didn't make me feel alone. I also like how I am able to learn about different sexualities and genders and instead of calling him or her I can say they or them when referring to LGBTQ+.

In a like manner, Rebecca expressed that being a member of *De Colores* increased her awareness to learn about the diversity of sexual orientation. Applying this awareness to her experiences, she feels that it is important for all LGBTQ+ Latinxs to live authentically. She states:

This group helps me because I get to learn about different people and their sexual orientation and how they feel. I feel the Latinx people who are gay are beautiful persons and should not be afraid of what others say about them, Que a ellos no les importa lo que piensen de ellos (That to them it should not be important what others think of them). This group has also helped me see me as a bi person, I like boys and girls and I did not know what that meant and know I know what that means so I feel like all Latinx LGBTQ+ people should be who they are.

As a sister, Alejandra felt that being part of this group helped her understand how to best support her Transgender (MtoF) sister. Being a straight Latina ally, Alejandra also felt that she could challenge the negative stereotypes and judgements that often plague the Latinx LGBTQ+ community. In her narrative, Alejandra takes a strong stance to promote equality:

This group helps me to understand who the LGBTQ+ community is and to see who they really are and to understand who they like and know that they are not different. It also helps me to realize that they are all

humans just like others and why we shouldn't judge. We shouldn't be judging them especially since straights don't get judged. I have family members and loved ones that are

gay and me being in this group helps me love them. I also try to bring positive vibes to the group and be someone who supports others who are LGBTQ+. I think that to me it is important as a Latina to show them that they are loved.

In Alba's perspective, being part of this group allowed her to self-reflect on her experiences of being a straight Latina ally. Although she identifies to be religious and acknowledges the bible's stance on same-sex relationships, Alba believes that it is more important to listen to what the heart desires to avoid living an unauthentic life.

Este grupo me ayuda a dar valor para ayudar a las personas a expresarse, como en saber que tienen a alguien en quien confiar y que no tienen que pasar por lo que sienten solos. Siento que este grupo me ayuda a entender LGBTQ+ y saber que no debería juzgarlos porque, a pesar de que soy una persona religiosa, no es su culpa que tengan la misma atracción sexual. Por ejemplo, en la Biblia dice que hombres y mujeres deben estar juntos, pero para mí es más importante sentir lo que sus corazones desean para que no tengan que vivir una mentira. Creo que es importante ser un aliado porque sé que puedo ser alguien en quien puedan confiar y puedan ser quienes quieran al estar conmigo. [This group helps me give courage to help people express themselves, like they know they have someone to rely on and not have to go through it by themselves. I feel like this group helps me understand LGBTQ+ and to know that I should not judge them because, even though I am a religious person, it is not their fault that they have a same sex attraction. For example, in the bible it says it was meant for male and female to be together, but to me it is more important to feel what their heart desires so they do not have to live a lie. I believe it's important to be an ally because I know that I can be someone they can rely on and can be who they want to be around me.]

Next, Luis expressed that being part of *De Colores* helped him come out as a self-identified gay Latinx male. In doing so, he mentioned that another member in this group helped him come to terms with his sexual orientation, as evidenced by his disclosure:

I had a friend in this group who helped me accept me for who I am and it was good. I feel like this group helps me know more about me and who I want to be in the future. I

also feel safe here with others in my group because they do not judge me but help me be me.

Lastly, Brittany identified that being part of *De Colores* made her feel a sense of liberation after coming out as transgender to her family and friends. This was an important step for her, which ultimately allowed her to feel confident and holistically loved by others. Brittany states:

The De Colores group has helped me in so many ways, by knowing and being confident in who I am and who I want to become in my future. I hated not coming out to a lot of people, not exploring who I am and not telling my friends how I felt. This group has helped me tell my friends, family, and even my teachers. It's great to feel confident. I also think that in Mexican culture it is sad that there are not a lot of us who are LGBTQ+ because we are afraid of what others might say. We depend a lot on our families and how they are going to treat us. In my case, it was just all in my head. My family loves me even more. They said, "Quien seas te quiero igual" (whoever you are, I love you the same). I hear this from my mother and that makes me happy and gives me life and to not care what others think of me. I am a beautiful, I am a Trans person!

As evidenced by their narratives, *Los De Colores* members offer a collective experience of what it means to be an advocate for equity within the Latinx LGBTQ+ community. Although the students have been personally impacted in different ways, they affirm that LGBTQ+ individuals deserve to love who they want and authentically express who they are in all aspects of their lives. Most importantly, experiencing a sense of connection to each other has allowed them to build *comunidad* among their LGBTQ+ peers and allies.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTINUOUS LGBTQ+ ADVOCACY

The narratives of *Los De Colores* provides an opportunity to expand on LGBTQ+ advocacy for all sexual minorities within school-based settings. In my work with Latinx LGBTQ+ adolescents, I experienced their voices and support of one another to be an important factor that helped them understand their peers' coming out process. In addition, creating a safe space for adolescents to explore their sexual identity allowed them to share their narratives without fear. Thus, it is imperative that practitioners promote culturally responsive interventions for Latinx LGBTQ+ adolescents that can foster and validate Latinx cultural values such as *familismo* and *comunidad* within school-based support groups. To effectively apply the aforementioned, it is essential that practitioners integrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities to introspectively evaluate personal levels of multicultural competency

(Torres-Rivera & Torres Fernández, 2015). For the purposes of training and expanding self-awareness on the LGBTQ+ community's needs, practitioners may enhance social justice advocacy through collaborative support and continuous engagement to create safe environments for all sexual minorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the abovementioned implications, the following recommendations are offered to those who want to support LGBTQ+ adolescents through culturally congruent interventions:

1. According to the charter school's counselor, it is important to provide a safe place for all LGBTQ+ students to express what they are going through and feel part of a community who is willing to listen, support, and advocate for them. As a licensed professional, she explains, "*This is a very difficult situation because we know that family rejection is a very important factor that can have a serious impact on the student's mental and emotional well-being. LGBTQ+ groups can offer the guidance, education and support to help the student decide when is right time for them to talk to their families as well as help them to develop culturally responsive coping strategies.*" Thus, it is also recommended that school officials and leaders engage in LGBTQ+ training to support students who identify as sexual minorities. Gaining knowledge from national organizations (i.e., GLSEN) can help school officials advocate for diversity inclusion, safe spaces in schools, develop educator resources to use in curriculum and instruction, and promote overall freedom of expression (Kosciw et al., 2012).
2. Exploring the intersectionality of LGBTQ+ identities by engaging in therapeutic exercises such as expressive arts (i.e., artwork), adolescents can scrutinize their cultural values to promote social justice advocacy for all sexual minorities. For instance, in doing so, participants of *De Colores* were able to create meaningful art pieces to express solidarity with the Latinx LGBTQ+ community.

Sage: "This art means we can love whoever we want to love and it doesn't matter your sexuality and gender because as long as you love, you will feel accepted in life. This fits with me in that we are human and equal because we all deserve equal rights!"



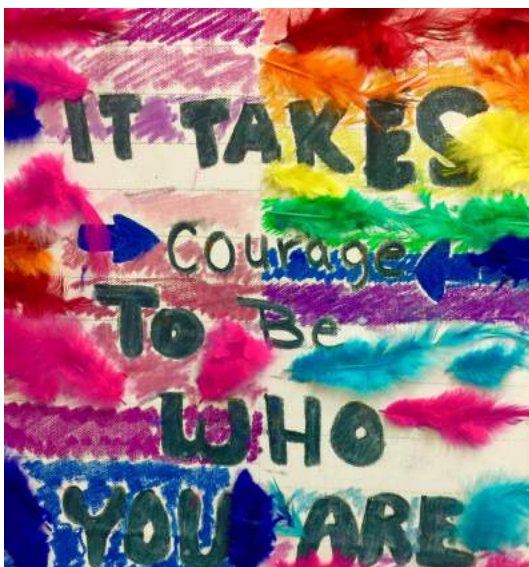
Rebecca: “This art piece means that Latinx people shine. They should embrace who they are they should not be afraid of who they are and shine like glitter. The flag in this art piece represents me because I am a bisexual Latinx which makes me feel confident about who I am and that I am like everyone else just different in sexual orientation. This art piece is beautiful just like the LGBTQ+ Latinx community.”



Alba: “My art piece means being LGBTQ+ is not a bad thing because you are expressing your true self and not what society wants you to be. If you lie to yourself you end up hurting more than one person and not just yourself. Young allies see society different and want people to leave each other just the way they are. I hope that when others see my art there isn't any bad vibes towards people who are LGBTQ+.”



Alejandra: “I hope this art helps encourage people to love one another and that it takes time to realize who you are and that it takes time to love and accept yourself. Some straight people like me understand them and we can accept them for who they are and not judge them by who they are. I hope this art piece makes people understand what LGBTQ+ means by promoting less negativity and less judgement.”



3. Future directions for integrating Latinx LGBTQ+ support groups must also be guided and developed by the current literature in the field of counseling psychology. For those who seek to amplify the voices and experiences of the Latinx LGBTQ+ community, qualitative and quantitative research studies should be conducted to acknowledge the need to implement support groups in school-based settings and to measure the effectiveness of these groups.
4. Lastly, it is important to understand how cultural core values (i.e., *familismo*, *espiritualidad*, *marianismo*, *machismo*) impact an adolescents' coming out process. Thus, providing adolescents with a place free of judgment and being with others who are going through similar experiences of coming out is necessary for their psychological well-being.

In moving forward, clinicians and allies must continue to empower LGBTQ+ minorities by advocating for equality and recognizing their enriching multicultural legacy that they have dispersed throughout our communities. We must also hold each other accountable to empower and embrace the beautiful *De Colores* LGBTQ+ Latinxs who ultimately teach us what it means to live authentically. *En la union esta la fuerza* [In unity, there is strength].

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TEN PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC CONSIDERATIONS TO ASSIST YOUNG UNDOCUMENTED LATINX

MARTIN J. LA ROCHE, PH.D.^{1,4}

ALICE S. LOWY, M.A.²

CARLOS E. RIVERA, M.S.³

Currently there are over 11 million undocumented Latinx in the U.S., with more than 9 million living in mixed-status families, in which at least one family member is undocumented (Taylor, Lopez, Passel & Motel, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Undocumented Latinx face a myriad of severe stressors that range from inappropriate medical services to the risk for deportation. Furthermore, approximately 800,000 undocumented youth who were previously protected under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program are likely to face similar threats, as well as 300,000 more that were eligible for DACA benefits (Krogstad, 2017). Despite the large number of undocumented Latinx and the significant mental health stressors they face (Garcini et al, 2016) many clinicians are ill-prepared to address these issues. The main aim of this paper is to outline ten psychotherapeutic considerations that can assist mental health clinicians effectively treat young undocumented Latinx. Although these ten psychotherapeutic recommendations may also be useful with non-Latinx immigrant communities, we specifically focus on young Latinxs because much of our experience is with this group in particular.

1. CLINICIANS CANNOT BE NEUTRAL IN THE FACE OF INJUSTICE

As soon as clients start narrating their experiences of injustice with the immigration system, it is helpful for clinicians to validate them. In sharp contrast to many traditional psychotherapy models, in which the therapist's political views are not articulated, it is helpful that these beliefs be shared with clients. This not only legitimizes clients' concerns, but also allows them to feel safe and examine these issues further. It is often difficult for clients to trust their therapists if the relationship does not rest on these common beliefs. Thus, clinicians who share similar political views may be more effective with undocumented clients.

2. CLINICIANS CAN INQUIRE ABOUT FAMILY MEMBERS' IMMIGRATION STATUS

If families do not share their immigration status, clinicians can inquire about it but only after reassuring them that what is said will remain confidential. Many families have had negative experiences with different American institutions and may not readily disclose their immigration status because of past experiences. Consequently, clinicians need to be informed on how clients' immigration status will be protected (e.g., information will not be documented in the medical chart) and accurately convey this information to them. Furthermore, before asking about immigration status, it is helpful to normalize families' experiences of mistrust and share examples of how psychotherapy has been more effective when this information is disclosed. By inquiring about immigration status, the message is conveyed that this is not only a significant issue that can be discussed within the session, but also that it is not insurmountable. However, it is also imperative to underscore that families can refuse to answer any questions. Otherwise, clinicians may replicate the oppressive power dynamics that many undocumented immigrants have repeatedly experienced in the United States. As families begin to realize that they

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can decide what to address in session, they may start to feel empowered.

3. CLINICIANS MUST HELP FAMILIES TO ESTABLISH SAFETY PLANS

It is important that families with undocumented members and children develop and rehearse safety plans in the event of detainment or deportation. Safety plans should, for example, include appointed guardianship for the children, which may also help them feel less fearful of the process. In addition, clinicians can refer families to recently developed toolkits, such as *Defending DACA: A Toolkit for DREAMERS* (Chavez-Dueñas & Adames, 2017) to address additional concerns. Although rehearsing safety plans can initially increase anxiety levels in many family members it may ultimately help families gain an enhanced sense of control. Furthermore, the way in which they respond to confrontations may have a significant effect on the outcome. Frequent rehearsals of the safety plan can allow families to remain calm in dealing with provocations from officials. By collaborating with families on their safety plans, clinicians are reinforcing the families' sense of power over the situation and helping clients use these plans as coping strategies when they begin to feel more anxious or concerned about the future.

4. CLINICIANS MUST LEARN ABOUT THE FAMILY AND ITS STRENGTHS

Before intervening with the family, it is vital that clinicians learn about the family and its dynamics. In contrast to the traditional White American nuclear family, the Latinx family often extends to individuals who are not blood relatives (e.g., *compadres*, neighbors), who can become central in developing safety plans. It is possible, for example, that a Latinx family would rather leave their children with a *compadre* instead of an aunt or uncle. Relatedly, clinicians should explore levels of family communication and conflict rather than assuming that the family will provide emotional support. Unfortunately, the enduring socioeconomic conditions associated with being undocumented (e.g., lack of economic opportunities, limited health care access, workplace exploitation) are frequently correlated with distress and additional negative mental health outcomes (Garcini et al, 2016), which could hinder the possibility of supportive immigration discussions within the family. Although the high levels of family distress may make it more difficult for youth to receive support from family members, these high stress levels also underscore the need to include the family in the treatment process.

5. CLINICIANS SHOULD HELP FAMILIES MANAGE FEARS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS

Collective anxiety is growing within the Latinx community as reports on raids and deportations increase (e.g., Gomez, 2017) and as alarming executive orders are signed (e.g., rescinding DACA or pardoning Joe Arpaio) (Rhodan, 2017). These fears combined with ongoing socioeconomic limitations and experiences of discrimination can retrigger symptoms of post-traumatic stress, particularly among undocumented immigrants who have often experienced traumas in their birth countries or through their journey to the United States (Rasmussen, Rosenfeld, Reeves, & Keller, 2007). For example, Amnesty International (2013) estimated that 60% of women and girls are raped or experience sexual violence during their journey crossing the border. Similarly, LGBTQ youth are often bullied more frequently than other adolescents (Crothers et al, 2017), and the worry of being deported to countries in which they could be mistreated even more severely can generate much fear and anxiety.

It is imperative that clinicians help families understand how their emotional responses to current events are affecting them. Establishing links between adverse events and psychological symptoms helps families understand, validate, and gradually manage their distress rather than blaming themselves for these difficulties (La Roche, 2013; Martin-Baró, 1994). Understanding that their distress is aggravated by unjust immigration conditions gradually allows families to feel more in control. Just as psychoeducation is helpful in the psychotherapeutic session, it is also important that factual immigration information be discussed in the session. If clinicians are not knowledgeable about this information, they should refer families to someone who is. Families can also use recently developed apps that monitor if a raid is in process in real time/place (e.g., Migrawatch). As information is presented to families, some of their fears may start to dispel. Similarly, many Latinx are prone to express anxiety and depression through somatic symptoms (Falicov, 2014), and it is beneficial to provide them with psychoeducation about how their symptoms are exacerbated by immigration stress. It is also helpful to teach them coping strategies (e.g., relaxation techniques, diaphragmatic breathing, prayers, mindfulness) to manage symptoms more effectively. Psychotherapy strategies are more effective if they are congruent with the families' beliefs and coping strategies (La Roche, 2013). Some clients, for example, may prefer praying rather than visualization techniques.

6. FAMILIES AND CLINICIANS NEED TO QUESTION IMMIGRATION POLICIES

It is important that families and clinicians examine and question the sociopolitical meaning of current immigration policies. Clinicians can help families question why immigration policies are currently being enforced more strongly, why undocumented immigrants are being portrayed as “others,” or why prominent public figures are depicting undocumented Latinx as rapists, criminals, and burdens to the American economy. These dehumanizing messages can diminish feelings of ethnic pride, agency, and hopefulness (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2017) which can be particularly damaging for children and adolescents’ emotional development. However, as families deconstruct the meaning of immigration policies, they may realize that there is nothing “bad” with them and that, instead, there is something wrong with current American immigration policies. As children and their families question the existing immigration discourse, they can start inoculating themselves from dehumanizing messages.

7. CLINICIANS SHOULD HELP FAMILIES IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Weekly psychotherapy may be insufficient to help families cope with ongoing and severe immigration stressors. Families may feel isolated as well as fearful of discussing their immigration status with others. Children and adolescents may be especially confused about their family’s situation, and informal social support groups (e.g., religious or school groups) can provide them with additional and timely aid. LGBTQ support groups for undocumented youth may be particularly useful for adolescents whose concerns may not be acknowledged in other settings. In addition, support groups can be enriched by inviting professionals (e.g., attorneys, social workers, or psychologists) to provide education around policies and legal representation.

8. CLINICIANS MUST BECOME INFORMED OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Mental health providers need to know their institutions’ policies towards the assistance and treatment of undocumented families. These policies have important treatment implications, such as who can access mental health services, how undocumented families are billed, confidentiality issues, or even what services are available for them. If the provider’s institution has not developed a policy for undocumented immigrants, providers should encourage the development of such policies. Consistent with APA guidelines (2012), psychologists should

advocate for the well-being of all clients, documented or not, within their workplace.

9. CLINICIANS MUST PRACTICE SELF-CARE AND ADVOCACY TO BE EFFECTIVE

Working with undocumented immigrants may be emotionally fulfilling as families start to bloom under the right conditions; however, it can also be distressing. Many clinicians experience painful emotional responses as they repeatedly hear stories of injustice that also need to be processed in supervision and consultation. Given these stressors, the need for providers to engage in self-care activities and not to overextend themselves cannot be emphasized enough. To avoid burn-out, it is also encouraged to work within multidisciplinary and multiethnic teams that include psychologists, social workers, attorneys, and physicians that have access to different types of information, experiences, and skills. Similarly, these teams can be a source of emotional support for providers. Through these teams, clinicians can organize training seminars to educate and support co-workers or colleagues, as well as provide general consultation regarding challenging cases. In addition, it is useful for clinicians to exercise their rights as citizens and condemn deportation policies through political marches, rallies, calling elected officials, or through our publications. It is important that mental health providers and researchers have an active role in informing the public of the benefits of sharing cultures and learning from differences.

10. FAMILIES AND CLINICIANS CAN START TRANSFORMING THE SOCIOPOLITICAL CONTEXT THROUGH CULTURALLY INFORMED DIALOGUES AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

An enhanced understanding of social injustices (e.g., unjust immigration policies, racial profiling, etc.) is a first step to empower communities to struggle against them (Freire, 1970; La Roche, 2013; Martin-Baró, 1994). Consistent with this idea, we are finding that as people discuss and identify these injustices in psychotherapy, they can effectively organize themselves and respond to them. In fact, we are finding that many undocumented families are starting to assist others and share information, which not only buffers them against negative mental health outcomes and strengthens their support network, but also empowers them to advocate for their needs. Furthermore, we should not only focus on assisting undocumented Latinx immigrants, but all. As we discuss the current sociopolitical context within the psychotherapy session, we are creating a space for clients

and families to start questioning and challenging it within their communities.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Diversity has opened and broadened our economic, intellectual, and personal possibilities. Unfortunately, during many periods of our country's history immigrants have not been welcomed and have been criminalized and traumatized (e.g., deporting or separating them from their families). A rise of tribal narrow views is not only harmful for undocumented immigrants, but also questions our moral ground and can limit our growth as a country. It is critical to counter these toxic narratives and policies by acknowledging the needs of all people, resisting racist policies and empowering communities to struggle for justice. It is also important to note that many Latinx are striving despite much adversity, which is a testament to our strength and resilience. Our hope is that as we truly hear each other, going beyond racism, heterosexism, and socioeconomic injustices, we will reclaim the humanity of all individuals, irrespective of race, gender orientation or immigration status.

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National Latina/o
Psychological Association

Asociación Nacional de Psicología Latina

#HereToStay

NLPA STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ELECTION OF DONALD J. TRUMP, 45TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Following the results from the 2016 presidential election, and as the nation prepares for an uncertain path forward; there is an overwhelming sentiment of discontent, shock, fear, and rejection of the president-elect among many historically marginalized communities and their allies. The one undeniable conclusion is that the United States is deeply divided, even more so than most would have ever predicted. One area that has greatly contributed to the division and of particular relevance to our membership is that of immigration; especially as it pertains to immigration from Mexico and Central and South America. The following are some of President-elect Trump's campaign promises to be enacted during his first 100 days in office:

1. **TERMINATE** the *Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals* (DACA) of which approximately 740,000 individuals have received approval.
2. **ELIMINATE** the *Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents* (DAPA). This program is currently awaiting disposition in the Supreme Court, and has the potential to affect 5 million individuals.
3. **INTRODUCE** the *End Illegal Immigration Act*, which includes his promise to "build a great, great wall on our southern border" and "have Mexico pay for that wall", and a series of penalties for immigration violations.

The US has long been recognized as a safe refuge for diverse immigrant communities fleeing economic, political, and social unrest. We are gravely concerned that the proposed anti-immigrant actions will negatively impact individuals currently in the US as well as those who in the future would seek to contribute to the vitality of our country. Additionally, the harm caused by this xenophobic, racist, and discriminatory sentiment only serves to isolate and marginalize, impacting the mental health of untold numbers. We are a country built on the hopes, dreams, sacrifices, and hard work of millions of immigrants who have played a significant role in making this country a beacon of prosperity and humanity across the world. This includes the immense intellectual and economic contributions made throughout the decades. We are proud of this legacy and must preserve this long-standing tradition of ours.

We, at the NLPA are ready to assist the Trump Administration in crafting sensible immigration legislation that is grounded in the principles of dignity and respect. As an organization guided by social justice as our moral compass, we are also prepared to stand up in one unified voice and challenge any attempts by President-elect Trump to implement divisive, racist, and anti-immigration promises made during the campaign. We recognize that healing needs to occur and that it will take time, but are confident that it can begin if our leaders join in a spirit of mutual respect and with recognition and understanding for the humanity and dignity of all people.

FELICIDADES COLEGAS !

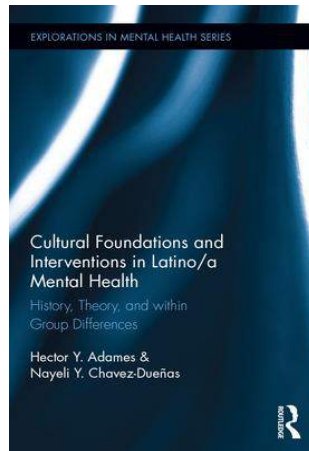
RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY NLPA MEMBERS

The recent publications of NLPA members are listed in this section as a service to the membership, and with the intent of facilitating the exchange of new information among Latina/o professionals and individuals interested in Latina/o mental health.

It is LPT's policy to include in this section all submissions by members that (1) have been published since the last issue of the bulletin, and; (2) can be best described as books, full chapters in edited books, or articles in peer-reviewed publications.

BOOKS

Adames, H.Y., & Chavez-Dueñas, N.Y. (2017). *Cultural foundations and interventions in Latino/a mental health: History, theory, and within group differences*. New York, NY: Routledge Press.
*New Paperback Edition.



JOURNAL ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

- Acevedo-Polakovich, I. D., Kassab, V. A., Boress, K. S. J., Clements, K. V., Stout, S., Alfaro, M., Brookins-Fisher, J., & Guerra-Morales, A. (2017). When context matters: Adaptation for high-risk U.S. Latina/o subgroups. *Journal of Latina/o Psychology*, 5(4), 306-322.
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CONGRATULATIONS

APPOINTMENTS, AWARDS, TRANSITIONS, PROMOTIONS,
OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS BY OUR MEMBERS




Dr. Hector Y. Adames

Has been selected to serve a three-year term on the Committee of Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA) of the American Psychological Association (APA).



Dr. Lisa Edwards



And members of the Culture and Well-being Research Lab received a Marquette University Women and Girls of Color Grant to conduct a community assessment about perinatal mental health among Latina mothers. This study, titled *Proyecto Mamá*, will involve understanding the resources and needs that exist in the greater Milwaukee area regarding Latina mental health during pregnancy and postpartum. For more information please visit: www.proyectomamake.com



Dr. Anna Flores Locke

Has been appointed as the Director of Clinical Training and Assistant Professor of mental health counseling at Nyack College in New York City.




Dr. James J. García

Has completed his first semester as a new Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of La Verne.



Dr. Alfonso Mercado



Has earned several awards including: The 2017 Texas Psychological Association Outstanding Contribution Education Award; Knowledge Award for Excellence in Education and Research Award from the Texas Chapter of the Association of Intellectual Development Disabilities; Teaching Excellence Award in Sustainability Education at the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley.

Dr. Karina Ramos

Has recently been appointed to serve on the 2018 Division-17 Leadership Academy as an Early Career Professional.



NAVIGATING THE MOSAIC OF LATINX CULTURE:

Advocating for growth,
intersectionality & resilience

#2018NLPA Awards

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2018 NLPA Awards. These awards will be presented at the 2018 NLPA Conference, scheduled for:

October 18 - October 21, 2018
San Diego, California

The NLPA Awards will be Presented During the

NOCHE DE GALA: AWARDS, DINNER, & DANCE

On the evening of Saturday, October 20, 2018 in Orlando, Florida.

AWARDS DEADLINE:

The deadline for the 2016 NLPA awards is
January 15, 2018.

*For more specific information about each award
and how to apply, please visit:*

www.nlpa.ws

AWARDS COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS:

Please contact Awards Committee Co-Chairs by email if you have any questions:

Eduardo Morales, Ph.D.
DrEMorales@aol.com

Brandy Piña-Watson, Ph.D.
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WHAT'S THE 411?

**Prepared By: Dr. Regina Jean-van Hell,
SIG & Information Column Coordinator**

ORGULLO SIG:

Members of Orgullo leadership have volunteered to review LGBTQ+ specific submissions for the NLPA conference. They have also successfully secured a special issue in the Journal of Latina/o Psychology that covers LGBTQ+ scholarship. The special issue is expected to go to print in 2019. In addition, Orgullo leadership have submitted symposium proposal for the 2018 APA convention.

NLPA MENTORING PROGRAM

NLPA Mentoring Program

It has been a year since we started the “NLPA Mentoring Program, in Orlando. We are very excited to hear some of our NLPA members have benefited from this program and we want to thank specially our volunteer mentors for their time and support you have given to your mentees. Thank you.

Since we are celebrating our first year, we want to hear **from all our mentees as well as our mentors** to evaluate who is using these resources. Please send us an e-mail to: mentoring@nlp.ws and let us know the following:

- 1) If you are a mentee a) are you in contact with your mentor or b) if you are not in contact with your mentor and if you want to terminate your participation in this program.
- 2) If you are a mentor a) are you in contact with your mentee or b) if you are not in contact with your mentees and if you want to mentor another mentee.

We will assume you are withdrawing from this NLPA Mentoring Program if we do not receive an email from you.

Thank you for your time!

We also want to let you know the good news . We have created a “Facetime” page for this group to get in touch with both mentees and mentors. You will be invited to participate if you are still a mentor or a mentee in the NLPA Mentoring Program. We think this is a great new way to keep in touch with each other. We will be sharing lots of information pertinent to both mentees and mentors.

Keep in touch,

The NLPA Mentoring Program Team,
Regina Jean-Van Hell, Ph.D., Rachel Reinders, MS , Valerie Minchala, Ph.D., and Laura P Minero.

A Mentee Story,

I am sure there are many peers out there who can relate to being a first generation child of immigrants, who carry the responsibility and honor of doing amazing things with the opportunities created by our dedicated parents. The pressure is intense, the passion is real, and the struggle is alive. Going through a doctoral program as a first-born, a Latina, and a mother, has many challenges and often times is a lonely journey. It is hard for others outside of this world to truly understand. Part of me also does not believe feelings of being overwhelmed are merited, given the challenges overcome by my parents and ancestors. But the truth remains; seeking a doctorate is hard.

Susi has come into my life at a pivotal moment. I have undergone stresses of matching for internship all while prioritizing my family’s needs first. I did not know Susi last year, yet this year she has already become a solid foundation of emotional support in such a short time. We don’t need lengthy phone calls on a daily basis or numerous meetings over coffee. There is tremendous relief in just connecting with someone who simply gets it. She gets what it’s like to be a Latina in the field. She gets what is like to experience microaggressions. She gets what it’s like to make sacrifices for the sake of a greater good in the work we do. A simple text message to check in is a validation to some of my most overwhelming moments during internship match and dissertation writing, while juggling all my other roles.

This is the beginning of great relationship and I have already learned so much from her for just being who she is. It sounds so simple, but it’s so perfect. I am so grateful to NLPA for connecting her with me. She is genuine, compassionate, and thoughtful. I appreciate having the opportunity in developing this relationship!

Yahaira “Yari” Diaz, M.Ed.
PhD student in School Psychology
Loyola University Chicago

By Melanie M. Domenech Rodriguez, Ph.D.:

I have mostly been responsive to my mentee’s requests. Initially we shared personal information over email. Then we met at APA and now we are Skyping this week. Ayli is like a “sobrina” to me. She’s not in my life every day or with any particular intensity, but when she’s there, I’m really happy to see her and provide any and all support that is needed to see her succeed. I’m very excited to see her professional progress over time. She has much to offer! Her commitment to her work and to improving Latinx communities is inspiring!

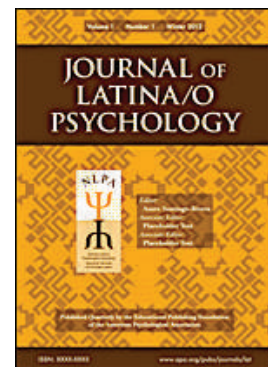
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NATIONAL LATINA/O PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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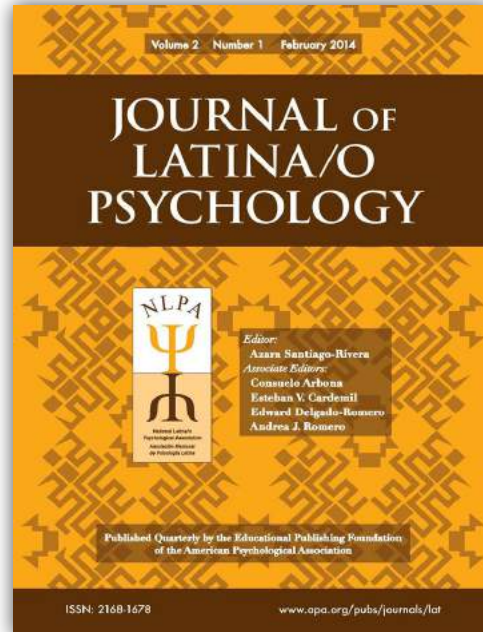


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