

# La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium

Hispanic/Latino Cultures

# Special thanks to...

- Gundersen Health System
- La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium (LMHSC)
- LMHSC Cultural Competency Committee

for their assistance in developing this cultural competence module

# Disclaimer

## Caution on Stereotyping

- The material in this program is generalized and is not intended to perpetuate stereotypes of diverse individuals or groups of people
- Cultural traits may vary based on individual preference and level of acculturation – someone may have physical attributes of a specific heritage, but it does not mean he/she practices the traits of that culture
- Bottom line: Never Assume, Always Ask!
  - ▶ Never assume that every member of any culture holds the same beliefs and ideals
  - ▶ Use this background information to ask culturally sensitive, informed questions

# Background

- The term “Hispanic” was introduced in the USA by the USA 1972 census to denominate citizens that considered themselves of Mexican, Cuban, Central American, Spanish, Puerto Rican, South American, Afro-Hispanic and Asian-Hispanic heritage – not a denomination of race, but of ethnicity
- The term Hispanic was originally introduced by the Spaniards when referring to Spanish conquered territories. The term Latino was later introduced by the French to include territories conquered by any European country with romance language roots. This included people with French, Italian, and Portuguese roots, not only people from Spain.
- Most recently indigenous people of Latin America, people born in the USA of Hispanic or Latino heritage, and people of diverse Spanish speaking backgrounds prefer the term Latino/a to identify themselves.
- More than 21 countries on 4 continents share a Hispanic/Latino heritage.
- The cultural and ethnic background of all these countries might be very different. Generalizations and stereotyping could denote insensitivity to differences.

# History

- Christopher Columbus sailed west from Spain and thought he had found a route to the Orient
- Conquistadores followed to expand Spanish empire and discover treasures
- Spanish Catholic Missions came next to win new converts
  - Spanish culture was spreading from Mexico to Central and South America
  - The Spanish American War in 1898 resulted in the U.S.'s acquisition of Cuba and Puerto Rico.
  - Cuba became independent in 1902, Puerto Rico remains a US territory

# Immigration Influences

- Immigration to the U.S. is due to:
  - Economical policies such as Trade agreements (NAFTA, CAFTA,...)
  - Political events (revolutions, coup d'etat)
  - Civil wars
- After the “Civil War” many of these immigrants became political refugees in the U.S. (mainly from Central America)

# Interaction 1 of 5

- “Hispanic/Latino” is a term that refers to people representing more than 21 countries.
  - True
  - False

**Caution on  
Stereotyping**

# Interaction 1 of 5 (Answer)

- “Hispanic/Latino” is a term that refers to people representing more than 21 countries.
  - True
  - False



# Statistics

- Mexicans = largest Hispanic/Latino group in U.S. (58%/>20 million)
  - Include at least 2 million seasonal migratory workers
- Puerto Ricans = 2<sup>nd</sup> largest Hispanic group in U.S. (19%/6.9 million)
  - 3 million on main land & 3.9 million on the island

# Social Structure: Cultural Elements

- Common cultural threads heavily based on:
  - La Familia = family
  - Respeto – respect
  - Personalismo = personal relationships
  - Confianza = trust

# Social Structure: La Familia (family)

- Traditional “family” in culture includes:
  - Grandparents, aunts/uncles, cousins & compadres (close friends and godparents)
- These extended families and the support role they play for one another is as important as the nuclear family
- Interdependence is favored over independence
  - Consult with family for big decisions
  - Family will come along to medical visits
  - Family involved in treatment & decision making

# Interaction 2 of 5

- Puerto Ricans are the largest population in the U.S.
  - True
  - False

**Caution on  
Stereotyping**

## Interaction 2 of 5 (Answer)

- Puerto Ricans are the largest population in the U.S.
  - True
  - False

# Values: Respeto (respect)

- Dictates proper behavior toward others based on:
  - Age, sex, social position, economics, and authority
  - Older adults expect respect from youngsters, women from men, men from women, teachers from students, employers from employees, etc.
  - Health providers are generally given a high level of respeto & their advice is valued

# Values: Personalismo (personal relationships)

- Hispanics/Latino tend to stress the importance of personalismo rather than institutional relationships
  - Expect health providers to be warm, friendly, and take an active interest in the patient's life
  - Should greet patients with inquiries about family to show that there is a personal interest
  - Because of loyalty, patients may follow a health provider if there is a change in practice location
  - If leaving the area the Hispanic/Latinopatients would expect to be introduced and acquainted to new provider in advance

# Values: Confianza (trust)

- Trust built between a health provider & a Hispanic/Latino patient will require:
  - Long-term provider-patient relationship
  - Quality/un-rushed exam time
- A provider who is able to establish confianza with a Hispanic/Latino patient will find:
  - Improvement in the quality of care-giving and willingness in the patient to take advice to heart
  - With confianza there is increased likelihood of compliance



# Interaction 3 of 5

- Which of these classifications is not a factor in respecto?

(Select one)

- Authority
- Height
- Economic Standing

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## Interaction 3 of 5 (Answer)

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(Select one)

- Authority
- Height
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# Spirituality

- Over 77% of Hispanics/Latinos in the U.S. are Catholic, which may be different from U.S. Catholic practices
- Religion is a strong component in their daily lives
- Understanding the importance of the Catholic faith for many Hispanic/Latino patients is very beneficial to health providers

# Communication

- “We’re a touching people. If you’re more than a handshake distance from your customer or patient you’re too far, “ says a Mexican American pharmacist and state legislator who has conducted cultural proficiency trainings for her colleagues. “Touching, how you make eye contact, the subtle things all count,” she explains. Avoiding a close personal space with a Hispanic/Latino person can be interpreted as a sign of rejection or serious illness.

# Communication Continued

- Hispanics/Latinos show respect by avoiding direct eye contact with authority figures, however health care providers are expected to look directly at the patient, even if using an interpreter
- Younger health providers are expected to show respect by treating an older patient in a formal manner
- It is polite to address Hispanic/Latino adults as Senor (Mr.), Don (Sir), Senora (Mrs.) or Dona (Madam), as well as Mr. and Mrs.

# Communication Continued

- Even if you do not speak Spanish, show respect with greetings such as:
  - Buenos dias (good morning)
  - Buenas tardes (good afternoon)
- Encourage the asking of questions
  - Hispanic/Latino patients may not want to ask questions for fear it will show disrespect to authority
  - Depending on heritage, there may be a cultural taboo against expressing negative feelings directly

# Interaction 4 of 5

- The majority of Hispanic/Latino people in the U.S. are Methodist.
  - True
  - False

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Stereotyping**

## Interaction 4 of 5 (Answer)

- The majority of Hispanic/Latino people in the U.S. are Methodist.
  - True
  - False



# Spatial Orientation: Closeness is Favored

- When non-Hispanic/Latino providers are more than 2 ft. away from Hispanic/Latino patients, they may appear distant, uninterested, and detached. This can be avoided by:
  - Sitting closer
  - Leaning forward
  - Giving comforting pat on shoulder
- Hispanics/Latinos have a very expressive culture
  - Physical contact and closeness are the norm, not the exception

# Sense of Time

- Tend to be present oriented
- They have a flexible “here and now” persona
- This may conflict with schedules as defined by Western society
- Present oriented individuals may not see a problem in arriving 10-15 minutes late, since they will accomplish everything and probably stay late

# Environmental Control

- In general, Hispanics/Latinos believe that they do not have ultimate control
- Catholic Hispanics/Latinos may tend to place control into God's hands

# Interaction 5 of 5

- Health providers might accidentally express disinterest in a patient by:

(Select one)

- Standing across the room when speaking to the patient
- Sitting in a chair right in front of the patient
- Leaning toward the patient while looking at them

**Caution on  
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# Interaction 5 of 5 (Answer)

- Health providers might accidentally express disinterest in a patient by:

(Select one)

- Standing across the room when speaking to the patient
- Sitting in a chair right in front of the patient
- Leaning toward the patient while looking at them

# Question 1 of 5: Identify the correct choice to complete each of the bulleted statements below:

- The first to colonize Mexico, Central and South America was:
- Confianza means:
- For Hispanics/Latinos, it is acceptable to inquire about:
- Hispanic/Latino people prefer:

Choices:

- a. Trust
- b. Spain
- c. Family and family events
- d. Closeness and contact with other individuals

**Caution on  
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# Question 1 of 5: Identify the correct choice to complete each of the bulleted statements below:

## (Answers)

- The first to colonize Mexico, Central and South America was **Spain**.
- Confianza means **trust**.
- For Hispanics/Latinos, it is acceptable to inquire about **family and friends events**.
- Hispanic/Latino people prefer **closeness and contact with other individuals**.

Choices:

- a. Trust
- b. Spain
- c. Family and family events
- d. Closeness and contact with other individuals

## Question 2 of 5

- Civil War has been a major influence on the immigration of Hispanic/Latino people to the U.S.
  - True
  - False

**Caution on  
Stereotyping**



## Question 2 of 5 (Answer)

- Civil War has been a major influence on the immigration of Hispanic/Latino people to the U.S.
  - True
  - False

# Question 3 of 5

- Hispanic/Latino culture favors interdependence over independence.
  - True
  - False

**Caution on  
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## Question 3 of 5 (Answer)

- Hispanic/Latino culture favors interdependence over independence.
  - True
  - False

# Question 4 of 5

- Which of these behaviors can build trust between a Hispanic/Latino patient and a health provider?

(Select all that apply)

- A long-term patient-provider relationship
- Allowing for quality/un-rushed exam time
- Short and quick appointments

**Caution on  
Stereotyping**

# Question 4 of 5 (Answer)

- Which of these behaviors can build trust between a Hispanic/Latino patient and a health provider?

(Select all that apply)

- A long-term patient-provider relationship
- Allowing for quality/un-rushed exam time
- Short and quick appointments

# Question 5 of 5

- Which of the following are acceptable ways to address a Hispanic/Latino patient?

(Select all that apply)

- Hey you
- Senor
- Mr.
- Dona
- Mrs.

**Caution on  
Stereotyping**

# Question 5 of 5 (Answer)

- Which of the following are acceptable ways to address a Hispanic/Latino patient?

(Select all that apply)

- Hey you
- **Senor**
- **Mr.**
- **Dona**
- **Mrs.**

# La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium

We hope you had a good experience using this module.  
If you have any comments or ideas you would like to  
share about this module, or future modules, please  
contact the LMHSC Cultural Competence Committee at:

[hscinformation@westernnc.edu](mailto:hscinformation@westernnc.edu)

Thank you!



# La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium

For additional cultural competency resources,  
please visit the [website](#).

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