

Creating *Confianza*: Schools, Providers, and Parents Working Together for Youth

A Grant Proposal to the Robert Wood Johnson
Foundation

Partner Group: UNC School of Social Work, El
Futuro, Chatham County Schools, Chatham County
Together!

Our Purpose

- The overarching goal of the *Confianza* project is to design and test a new service delivery system for new immigrant and Spanish-speaking middle- and high-school aged youth and their families.

What Makes *Confianza* Special?

- Data Driven using a new representative statewide data set obtained from the Latino Adolescent Migration, Health, and Adaptation Project (LAMHA)
<http://www.cpc.unc.edu/projects/lamha>
- Uses the expertise of a local mental health group that has been working with this population.
- Takes advantage of strong pre-existing relationships between agencies.

What Community Will We Be Serving?

- **Siler City, North Carolina**, a hub for new immigrants from Latin American countries is served by the **Chatham County school system** (a *Confianza* project partner).
- At the end of the 2005-2006 school year, Chatham County schools reported **7,410** enrolled students; of these, **1,533** self-identified as Hispanic/Latino.
- For the same period, the school system reported **1,004** students enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs; approximately half were U.S. born and half were new immigrants.
- Like the majority of Latinos in North Carolina, **60% or more of these families come from Mexico.**

Mental Health in Chatham County Schools

- Chatham County Schools regularly participate in the Youth Risk Behavior survey conducted by the CDC.
- Of all 7th and 8th graders in the school system, 19% reported feeling sad or hopeless for at least a two-week period in the last year; 26% of all high-school students had similar feelings. Approximately 12% of both middle- and high-school youth in Chatham County reported active suicidal thoughts.
- An alarmingly high number of the high-school group (37%) reported that they felt like hurting someone else.

Who Will We Serve: The Students.

- Based on LAMHA data, we estimate that more than half of the new immigrant students have a mental health need
- Yet only 3% to 5% are accessing mental health services.
- El Futuro's clients have reported family histories of alcohol abuse (63%) and domestic violence (52%).
- 28% have GAF scores indicating they are seriously impaired (GAF less than 51).
- Of El Futuro's current clients, 36% are in the 12 to 18 year age range with diagnoses of mood, conduct disorders, and situational stressors being the primary reasons for service.

More About Student Need

- Family difficulties is the reason given for most mental health referrals in schools (Foster et al., 2005).
- LAMHA data suggests that Latino youth in North Carolina describe themselves as close and involved with their families and family decision-making.
- LAMHA participants said they agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:
 - “Family members respect one another” (89%);
 - “As a family, we share similar beliefs and values” (83%);
 - “We really do trust and confide in one another” (78%);
 - “We can express our feelings with our family” (73%).
- LAMHA data also show that **59% of youth exhibited anxiety symptoms, 33% experienced PTSD symptoms, and 9% had been actively suicidal in the past two weeks**. In addition, 41% reported incidents of discrimination (Chapman & Perreira, 2006).
- Suggests that **new immigrant youth have mental health needs but that these needs do not necessarily stem from the same roots as those for the majority of youth in this country** making cultural competence in assessing and treating mental health difficulties imperative.

Service Use Patterns (n=164)

- **Importance of Getting Help**
 - 98% say that it's important to get help for emotional and behavioral problems
 - 99% say would probably get help for kid displaying problems
- **Barriers to Intervention**
 - **Time**
 - 77% worried that they would not have enough time in general
 - 94% worried they would not have enough time to go to appointments
 - 70% reported that they would have to miss work to take their adolescent
 - **Cost**
 - 72% worried about the cost of services
 - Of those who were concerned about the cost:
 - 76% had no insurance
 - 17% worried that their insurance would not cover services
 - **Information**
 - 80% stated that they did not know who in their community helped adolescents

Service Use (Continued)

- **Culture**

- 27% would find it difficult to speak with someone outside their family about personal issues
- 22% said it was difficult to ask for help
- 23% said they would feel shame asking for help
- 12% worried about what their family would think
- 10% worried about what their friends would think
- 11% worried about what other people would think

- **To Best Help, Helpers Should:**

- **Speak their language**
 - 81% say language is important or very important
 - 9% say language is not important at all
- **Understand their culture**
 - 68% say cultural understanding is important or very
 - 21% say it would not be important at all

Parental Involvement in Treatment: Quotes from LAMHA

- “Well, in this case we will both go, when it comes to the children, one needs to go as a couple...because it is both of our problems...then to see what he [the professional] can tell us and *in case he needs to talk to our son or daughter, we will take them.*”
- “...To a specialist first, before anything, a doctor that would *tell me* about this change from a child to a young person, adolescent. And *we* would look for a solution.”

“Sometimes we don’t know how to answer our children or how- we don’t know how to guide them and how to, help them. And sometimes they don’t feel absolute confidence in us either. To talk about their needs or what they feel or what is wrong and sometimes they look in other people and there are people who see like they are helping them but they are doing more harm. So, I think, yes, I would look for someone professional because this person is specialized in these subjects and these cases, right? So, I think yes, I would look for professional help. Yes.”

— *A parent describing why they would pursue professional help for a child with symptoms of PTSD.*

Project Plan

- Three Pronged Effort
 - Create an environment that is welcoming to new immigrant youth
 - Foster increased awareness and knowledge of mental health difficulties (teachers/parents)
 - Providing services for early intervention, referral, and treatment.

Changing the Environment

- A training directed to teachers and other school personnel to create a school environment that is receptive to newcomers.
 - The training we hope to use is the “Beyond Diversity” curriculum.
 - “consider the implications of racism, exclusion, and prejudice” on students by focusing on personal self-awareness.
 - Training will highlight personal views of power, privilege, and one’s personal statuses and their impact on school climate.

Increasing Knowledge of Mental Health

- For Parents
- For Teachers
- El Futuro's currently used trainings for health care professionals will be adapted for use with teachers and parents.

Prong 3: Providing Culturally Tailored Services

- Family Liaison
- Service Provision through El Futuro either at the Parent Resource Center or El Futuro's Siler City Office.

Partnerships

- Chatham County Schools *<http://www.chatham.k12.nc.us/>*
- Chatham County Together!
<http://www.chathamcountytogether.org>
- El Futuro Mental Health Clinic *<http://www.elfuturo-nc.org/about.html>*
- The UNC- Chapel Hill School of Social Work
<http://ssw.unc.edu>
- The Chatham Child Well-Being Collaborative
(advisory)
- Pacific Educational Group
<http://www.pacificeducationalgroup.com>