



national
latin@
network
casa de esperanza

A Youth-Centered Approach Respecting and Empowering Youth to Prevent and End Violence

presented by
Nallely Castro Montoya
María Cristina Pacheco Alcalá
Zoe Martens

-
- This project is supported by Grant No. 2016-CY-AX-0004 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this program are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

Casa de Esperanza



Our mission is to
mobilize Latinas
and Latin@
communities to
end domestic
violence.

national
latin@
network
casa de esperanza

Objectives

- Participants will review the main components of the youth-centered approach theory to social action and community engagement.
- Participants will explore best practices and lessons learned from the implementation of this approach with three distinctive groups of Latin@ youth.
- Participants will identify 1-2 ways in which their organizations can integrate the leadership and guidance of youth in their decision making process.

What do people say about young persons?

What do young persons think about themselves?

Youth centered approach

- Some common beliefs around youth:
 - preparation period for the transition between childhood and adulthood
 - Problematic life stage
 - Key phase for development

Youth centered approach

- What do these beliefs have in common?
 - Young people as homogeneous
 - Stigma to young people (mostly negative)
 - Lack of cultural competence
 - Lack of considerations for underserved or marginalized populations and communities
- What about the people that work with youth?
 - How that relationship is established, nurtured and developed?

Youth centered approach

- Recognizes diversity and encourages to acknowledge all roles assigned to youth in its context, considering power and control issues and social construction of youth.
- Provides the space to reflect about stigma to youth by reframing prejudices, stereotypes and a constant dialogue among the parts involved
 - Parents and children/youth
 - Community
 - School

Youth centered approach

- Puts on the table inequity on the relations between young personas and adults.
 - How they pay or not attention to young peoples ideas, needs, areas of interest
 - How the feeling of exclusion from some activities and decision making is addressed
 - Long term development into supporting the development of future adults who are part of society and will be making decisions on different settings.

Nourish Community Involvement

- Putting community at the center and letting their voice guide our work has always been a philosophy of Casa de Esperanza.
- Communities change and so does our work

Youth Amig@s

- Leadership development training
 - Latin@ youth conference
 - Community action projects
- Overnight camp
- Presentations
- Building leadership & relationships
- Youth voices

Goals of Listening Sessions

- To understand the current realities of Latinas including their hopes, dreams and challenges
- To inform and guide our community engagement work
- To identify opportunities for our organization and others to improve or change services provided to Latin@s in the Twin Cities
- To use what we learned to develop new tools for others interested in utilizing the listening session approach in their communities

Listening Sessions

Through listening sessions we are essentially answering the following questions:

- What is needed?
- How do we move forward with our work?
- What are the existing resources (formal and informal)?
- What can we do?
- How will the changes benefit community?

Overview of Listening Sessions

- Listening sessions were completed between January and July of 2017
- Gathered information from 68 Latin@s about their goals, challenges, dreams, and source of pride
- Translated, sorted and analyzed what we heard

Overview of Listening Sessions continued...

- Girl Scouts collaborated by donating their time to facilitate girls listening sessions during their normal group times in Apply Valley High School.
- LEDC (Latino Economic Development Center) collaborated their time and space in hosting a boys listening session.

Overview of Listening Sessions continued...

- We facilitated a total of 10 listening sessions- in Apple Valley, Inver Grove Heights, Minneapolis and Saint Paul.
- Sessions were held in the following schools: AGAPE (Adolescent Girls and Parenting Education) High School, Apple Valley High School, El Colegio Charter School and Inver Hills Community College.
- 3 of the listening sessions were held at Casa de Esperanza

Participants: Women/Girls

- We spoke to 56 women. The typical respondent:
- 11 to 24 years old
 - 6 of the 56 were older than 24
- Students
- Born or raised in the United States
 - Of Mexican descent
- 2 to 3 children per household.
- Report Spanish as their first language, but preferred to speak English

Participants: Boys

- We spoke to 12 boys. The typical respondent:
- 11 to 18 years old
- Students
- Most were born or raised in the United States
 - Of Mexican, Ecuadorian, and Guatemalan descent
- About half preferred Spanish and half preferred English, most were bilingual.

What we asked

- What do you spend most of your day doing?
- What are your most important day-to-day needs?
- List one personal achievement you are proud of and why.
- To whom do you turn when you have a problem?
- If you could set a personal goal, realize a dream or wish, what would that be? What would you need to reach that goal?

An approach for engaging communities



Take Back to Community



Intervention: Centering Youth Voices

- What is safety as defined by youth?
- How can we support them in getting there?

Youth Advocacy

- Holistic, culturally-relevant, support and advocacy to Latina adolescents and teen mothers (24 and younger)
- Access to culturally relevant mental health services, legal advocacy, housing

Youth Advocacy in Schools

- Prevention and intervention
- Effective in school services
- Improvements still needed- listening to Latina youth voices

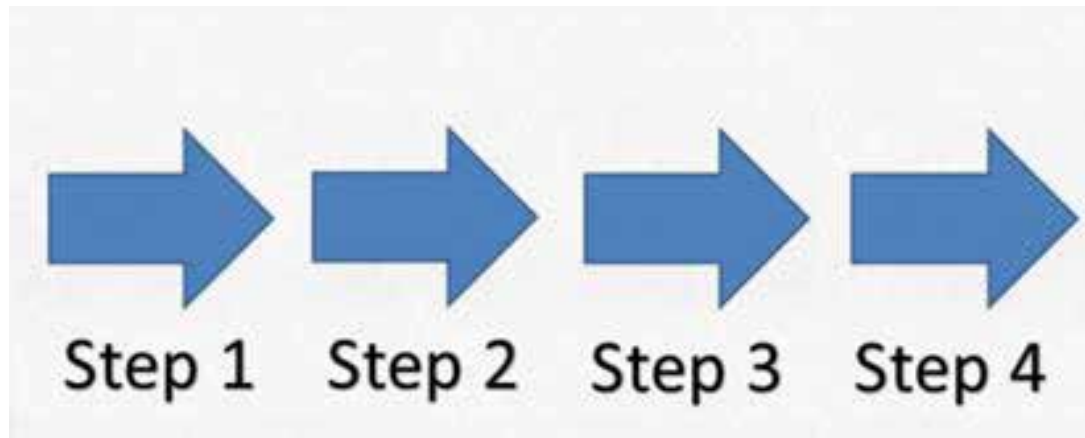


Casa de Esperanza © 2018

national
latin@
network
casa de esperanza

Optimal Safety for Youth

- Physical separation + Civil legal protection = optimal safety for survivor and their family



Optimal Safety for Youth

- Get an Order for Protection > law enforcement help to remove abusive person
- Or go to shelter > get an Order for Protection
- Relationship violence is not the only issue that youth face

Youth Survivors & Civil Legal Remedies

- What does the legal system mean to Latin@ youth?
- Are civil legal remedies the best or only path toward safety?

Youth-Centered Definitions of Safety

- Flexibility
- Understanding and language access
- Youth-centered safety planning
- Utilizing informal support networks
- Working with other adults to advocate for youth's perspective

Other Challenges

- Creating/rebuilding relationship with parents
- Confusion around legal/parental rights
- Balancing responsibilities

Listening to Youth's Message

Their children are their hope and reason to keep going

- Desire to give them what might not have been possible in home country
- Strength that comes from navigating multiple identities

Similarities & Difference

- Support vs. Leadership
- Advocacy
- Youth's Realities
- Prevention vs. Intervention

Best Practices

- Listen & allow for youth to guide your work
- Importance of family
- Relationship
- Increase youth resources
- Culture
- Community Engagement

Best Practices

- Build up family support systems
- Legal advocacy
- Practicing self-care



Social Networks – Follow us!



@casadeesperanza
@WeSayNoMas
@DecimosNoMas



@casa_de_esperanza



@casadeesperanzamn
@WeSayNoMas
@DecimosNoMas



fuerzaunida

Contact Information



national **latin@** network

Nallely Castro Montoya

Youth Initiative Specialist

nmontoya@casadeesperanza.org

651-646-5553 ext. 320

María Cristina Pacheco

Project Manager

mcpacheco@casadeesperanza.org

787-619-1455

Zoe Martens

Youth Advocate

zmartens@casadeesperanza.org

651-646-5553 ext. 310



national
latin@
network
casa de esperanza

casadeesperanza.org

nationallatinonetwork.org