

DID YOU KNOW?

- Hispanic Americans are the largest minority group in the U.S. (18.1%).
- Only 7% of U.S. psychiatrists identify as Latino/Hispanic.
- Lack of cultural competency and Spanish fluency in mental healthcare contributes to lower usage of mental health services.
- Hispanics are about half as likely to seek mental health care compared to White Americans.



MIND & CULTURA:

How Mental Health
affects Hispanic/Latino
Communities

Adapted from L2S'
Youth-for-Youth
Mental Health
Guidebook!





Historical Context

Hispanic/Latino Americans are diverse in culture, language, and history, yet many share complex sociopolitical ties. Communities across Latin America have faced displacement, discrimination, and U.S.-linked political struggles, leaving lasting effects and shaping Latino identity and mental health today.

Cultural Influences & Pressures

Colorism continues to affect darker-skinned Latinos, with anti-Blackness especially harming Afro-Latinos & fueling cultural identity struggles.



- Machismo (once tied to strength and family) can keep men from seeking help, raising risks of illness, addiction, and suicide, while for women it often brings violence, harrassments, & self-blame, silencing survivors and harming their mental health.

Engaging with Health Care & Expressing Distress

- Language barriers, cultural differences, and historical abuses reduce trust in the healthcare system.
- Somatization and culture-bound syndromes (mal de ojo, susto, ataque de nervios) often manifest physical symptoms of psychological distress.
- Mental illness stigma and Western-style therapies can feel intrusive or too individualistic.



Accessing Treatment & Seeking Help

- About 1/3 of uninsured people in the U.S. are Latino; SSN/ID requirements and complex systems block many from care.
- Many immigrants avoid treatment due to fear that using public benefits may risk their legal status.
- Some clinics don't require SSN; sliding-scale fees, bilingual staff, Spanish hotlines, therapists, and community centers are available.



¡SÍ SE PUEDE!

Family, Communities, & the Church

- Close-knit families inspire individuals to succeed for themselves and their loved ones, giving hope during challenges.
- Framing mental illness through culturally-relevant terms reduces stigma and encourages support.
- Religious communities offer guidance and support but may conflict with traditional healing practices.



Ongoing Challenges

Hispanic/Latino communities in the U.S. face fear and trauma from anti-Latino rhetoric, racial profiling, aggressive immigration enforcement, family separations, and the detention of undocumented individuals, legal residents, and even citizens, which further deepens discrimination and uncertainty. Even so, access to accurate information and culturally sensitive resources can help communities navigate these challenges and strengthen resilience.