



*Culturally  
Responsive*  
**Counseling**  
*With*  
**Latinas/os**

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# Culturally Responsive Counseling With Latinas/os

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## Dedication

To the millions of Latinas/os who will shape the future of the United States and to my Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development, Latino Network, and National Latina/o Psychological Association *familias*.

—Patricia Arredondo

• • •

To George, Nisa Pilar, and Jonathan, who affirm and transform my Puerto Rican roots.

—Maritza Gallardo-Cooper

• • •

Dedicated to my professional *familia* (National Latina/o Psychological Association) and my children, Javi, Isa, and Gil.

—Edward A. Delgado-Romero

• • •

I'd like to dedicate this to my dad, Emiliano Zapata, for instilling in me my Latino family values; my mom, Deborah Cornell, for always supporting and encouraging me; my sister, Elena Castellano, for being my rock; my nieces Lexus and Chloe for being my inspiration; and my partner in life, Brian Hicks, for believing in me and honoring my dedication to my work. Thank you for being an important part of my life—*Te quiero mucho para siempre!*

—Angela L. Zapata

• • •

*Muchisimas gracias* to our “*hija*” Marisela López Flores, a doctoral student in Counseling Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She made all of the *detalles* fall into place with great *orgullo* (pride).





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## Preface

Estimates indicate that in the year 2050 the Latino population will be 30% of the U.S. population, a demographic shift driven primarily by births and not immigration (Passel & Cohn, 2008). Census projections also indicate that ethnic minority individuals (persons of Black/African, Asian, Pacific Islander, Latino/Hispanic, and Native American heritage) will be the majority, surpassing the White population. Many readers of this text may find that with each passing year, they are working with, teaching, counseling, advising, being taught by, and being led by Latina/o professionals in the workplace and perhaps have family members of Latino heritage. In a phenomenon sometimes referred to as the “browning” of America, Latinos are transforming the United States demographically, culturally, and politically. As reported in 2012, 1 out of every 4 children younger than age 18 in the United States is of Latino heritage, and 93% of these are U.S. citizens (P. Taylor, Gonzalez-Barrera, Passel, & Lopez, 2012). Thus, the future of the country is guaranteed to be Latina/o American.

School counselors are already on the front lines, working with children born in the United States to immigrant and second- and third-generation American-born parents. The parents of their students may be of different ethnic heritages, not speakers of Spanish, and, like others, trying to live out the American Dream. Thus, to be effective and client-centered, school counselors must have a breadth of knowledge about Latino families, cultural and bicultural values, gender roles and rules, and parents’ expectations for their children’s educational future. Counselors must be mindful of the trends in academic achievement for Latina/o students from kindergarten through Grade 12. Although the high school dropout rate for Latino students has historically been about 50%, with more children born in the United States, there will likely come to be less attrition and more individuals pursuing some form of postsecondary education.

Those who work on college campuses providing counseling, career counseling, or advising to students or military veterans need to appreciate how to promote Latina/o student achievement. The majority of new students will be the first in their families to attend college, and they will often be attending local institutions. Therefore, counseling professionals will need to be creative to engage commuters, residential students, honors students, less prepared students, and even parents. Consider that in 2012, Latinos became the largest ethnic minority group on 4-year

campuses (Fry & Lopez, 2012) and that Hispanic-Serving Institutions educate more than 50% of Latino students in the United States. These are just the current data; imagine the future data.

Some 20–25 years ago, counselors attending the conferences of the American Counseling Association lamented the fact that Latino families were “traditional,” monolingual Spanish speakers and immigrants, fatalistic, and otherwise resistant to counseling. This text challenges all of these myths about Latinos and Latino families. With roots in the territories of the U.S. southwest for centuries, contemporary Latinas/os have achieved bicultural socialization and reflect the multidimensional diversity of all other Americans in terms of sexual orientation, religious and political preferences, work ethic, desire to get ahead, and so forth.

The amount of information available on Latinos has never been greater. Our sources for this text are other authors, primarily Latinas/os who have published on topics such as educational trends, health beliefs and disparities, machismo, spirituality, acculturative stress, economic mobility, DREAMERS (young adults, most of whom are unauthorized, who would be positively affected by the passage of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act), immigration, gender role change, the academic achievement of first-generation college students, international counseling, and so forth. Then there are the scholars from multidisciplinary backgrounds—health and health care; community studies; elementary, higher, bilingual, and other dimensions of education; sociology; political science; history; international relationships; counseling and psychology, particularly from multicultural and Latino-specific perspectives; economics and consumerism; media; and so forth.

The Pew Hispanic Center is one of the most reliable sources of research on a range of topics relative to Latinos, including religion, politics, aspirations for life change, and demographic shifts in the country initiated by Latino mobility. The Southern Poverty Law Center is a social advocacy organization that champions the rights of all groups and individuals who experience discrimination and various forms of hate crimes. The National Institute for Latino Policy provides daily updates on matters involving and affecting Latinos on the mainland and in Puerto Rico. For example, the topic of pro-statehood versus remaining a commonwealth is discussed from multiple angles.

Finally, Latinos have not only increasingly become part of the mainstream media but have established their own media as well. NBC, Fox, and CNN have Spanish-language programming. NBC Universal produces daily human interest reports, news, and other updates targeting the U.S. Latino viewer. Today, most online networks have Spanish-language versions. Yet Univisión has a worldwide audience that outshines any U.S. mainstream network in terms of viewership. We are beginning to see cultural shifts in the country. For example, soccer (or *fútbol*, as it is called in Spanish-speaking countries) broke the barrier with the World Cup in the early 1990s. Magazines such as *People en Español*, *Latina*, and *Latino* are popular and widely available. In academia there is the *Hispanic Outlook on Education*, *Hispanic Business*, and two academic journals with a Latino focus: *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education* and *Journal of Latina/o Psychology*. The American Counseling Association’s *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* is also an excellent multicultural resource that often reports on Latino-centered research. If all professional disciplines and forms of media are covering and coveting the burgeoning Latino population, it is essential that counseling professionals in all contexts become fully prepared through Latino-centered awareness, knowledge, and skills. It has always been our contention that when counselors focus on specialty issues or groups not typically addressed in training, they learn about theories, beliefs,



and practices that can then be applied to other cultural groups. The Latino-based worldviews, child-rearing practices, beliefs about health and mental health, beliefs about identity development, and response to counseling discussed in this book will seem similar to, and a little different from, those of other individuals and cultural groups (e.g., White Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders). Regardless of the setting or the population being served, context and culture matter when it comes to being a culturally competent counselor. It is our hope that the knowledge provided in these chapters will inform and be adapted to counselor education, research, practice, and community engagement with Latinos and non-Latino groups as well. It has heuristic value.

## Overview of the Book

This book applies Latino counseling competencies (Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, & Gallardo-Cooper, 2002) adapted from the Multicultural Counseling Competencies (D. W. Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992) paradigm. Each chapter begins with a *dicho* (proverb) to illustrate a way of giving advice or guidance as it relates to a particular time in life or circumstance one is trying to manage. We attempt to use *dichos* that speak to the topic of each chapter and its content. Chapters 1–8 provide knowledge necessary for culturally responsive and ethical practices with individuals and families. Chapters 9 and 10 give more attention to interventions, although each chapter introduces case scenarios that are designed to stimulate analysis and considerations from multiple perspectives. Chapters 11 and 12 focus on the counseling profession. In Chapter 11, we discuss the role of the *ACA Code of Ethics* (American Counseling Association, 2005) in informing culturally competent practice informed by the Multicultural Counseling Competencies (D. W. Sue et al., 1992) and Latino-specific competencies. In Chapter 12, we provide a rationale for an intentional focus on Latino-centered counseling so that counseling professionals will be better prepared for this reality based on projected demographics. The case scenarios and examples throughout invite counselors to think about situations from a Latino lens and then use the knowledge they acquire to conceptualize the cases and hopefully discuss them in classroom or supervision settings. Each case study is based on real experiences but is deidentified and changed slightly to protect anonymity. Throughout the text we use Spanish words and terms as appropriate, and because Spanish is a romance language, the term *Latina/o* is used. Readers may walk away with increased personal knowledge of commonly used words that can facilitate relationship building or simply greater confidence in their cross-cultural counseling repertoire. Finally, Appendix A contains the Culture-Centered Clinical Interview–Revised, a tool for more inclusive and culture-centered data gathering with Latinas/os, and Appendix B provides a list of resources that can inform Latino-centered knowledge building.

Changes in the overall Latino demographic since 1990 and 2000 censuses have been dramatic. Annual updates from the Community Population Survey, published by the U.S. Census Bureau, have captured these population trends. Thus, in Chapter 1, “Who Are Latinos?” we go beyond data from the 2010 Census report to regular updates on various indicators—age, national heritage, geographic distribution, health and health risks, military service, fertility rates, and so forth. In 2013, individuals of Latino heritage, from 1st to 10th generation, made up 16.5% of the U.S. population. In Chapter 1 we discuss how the birth rate—not immigration—is the contributing factor to these demographic changes, with implications for education, economics, and employment discussed in later chapters. Chapter 1

also addresses historic and contemporary immigration and relevant legislation affecting immigrants and children of immigrants. A mindset of empowerment has emerged and is energizing Latino and other ethnic youth to advocate for self-determination and inclusion in the country they consider to be theirs.

The uniqueness of Latinos, their similarities to other cultural groups, as well as their within-group differences are discussed in Chapter 2, "Latino Worldviews and Cultural Values." The contemporary Latino multicultural worldview has evolved from historical intersections of indigenous (e.g., Aztec, Mayan, Mixtec), African, and European beliefs and practices. Culture as a way of life was shaped in the New World by religious and spiritual beliefs, family and community values and practices, economics, work ethic, and environmental factors. *La raza cósmica* (Vasconcelos, 1925), or the "cosmic/universal race," best describes the complex Latino culture. Latinos have drawn from many sources of influence over the centuries, throughout eras of conquest and diasporas, to core beliefs about family-centeredness, interdependence, the role of a higher power, cultural pride through the arts and literature, and many manifestations of self-determination. This chapter discusses core values as anchors but not limitations; with each generation, values and beliefs are modified and lived out differently.

Chapter 3, "Acculturation and Enculturation Processes," builds on the first two chapters with further discussion of the shaping of individuals based on beliefs and value orientations as well as the role of acculturation as a phenomenon of change for individuals and *familias* (families). For too long acculturation has been viewed as a process of Americanization. Scholars now admit that acculturation is not an A equals B phenomenon but rather a complex process involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioral changes. Enculturation, or the process of becoming more knowledgeable about one's Latino heritage, can also lead to identity change and renewed worldviews. Because acculturation is a form of socialization and change, stressors are always part of the journey. For example, a Latina and a Caucasian first-generation college student will experience acculturation in the new college environment in similar and different ways. On a predominantly White campus, the Latina is in the minority, which adds stress to her acculturation process. The White student will likely experience stressors, but not necessarily because of her national heritage. Thus, what we learn about Latinas/os from concepts typically applied to them, like acculturation, will be useful for counselors working with heterogeneous populations.

A plethora of research has addressed identity development among Latino adolescents, which is often coupled with processes of behavioral acculturation, ethnic pride, and intergenerational conflict. Chapter 4, "The Complexity of Latina/o Multidimensional Identity," provides many examples of the intersections of different dimensions of identity for Latinas/os as well as the heterogeneity of Latino identity across different natural/cultural groups (i.e., Cubans, Puerto Ricans, those of Mexican heritage). There is a discussion of how color, economics, citizenship, immigrant status, geographic residence, and other individual differences influence self-identity. In a color-conscious society, there are more challenges for acceptance and inclusion for Latinos who are brown and black. Speaking with an accent in a country where there are political arguments for English-only policies and anti-bilingual education, individuals experience further marginalization, confusion, and self-doubt. A further conundrum is that of gender, sexual orientation, and religion. The Latino worldview tends to be conservative and traditional on these three dimensions of identity. Thus, knowledge about these biases will be useful for counselors working with clients who are examining their identity concerns and relationships with family members in particular.

Education has long been the determinant for advancement for immigrant and low-income families. In Chapter 5, "Education," we discuss the presence of Latinos in record numbers in K–12 schools and higher education. For example, it was reported that in 2012 approximately 1 in 4 elementary students (24.7%) were Latino and that among prekindergartners through 12th graders, 23.9% were Latino (Fry & Lopez, 2012). For the first time in history, Latinos have become the largest ethnic minority group on 4-year campuses (Fry & Lopez, 2012). This chapter focuses on examples from across the United States, where counselors make a difference in educational settings.

Drawing on empirical research studies, we report on interventions with students, parents, and counselors that can guide the work of all counselors. Furthermore, with the number of first-generation college students increasing, it is important to examine factors that enable and limit academic success. Fortunately, research is under way in universities on intersecting issues such as marginalization, the power of identity groups such as fraternities and sororities, and the effects of high school achievement on college performance. Attention to research-based data will be of great value to practitioners.

Chapter 6, "Employment, Economics, and the Psychology of Working," introduces interrelated topics related to the advancement of Latino families in U.S. society and Latinos' historical contributions to the country's economy in some of the lowest paying yet necessary work roles. Latinos are represented in the agricultural, service, and construction industries, more so than other cultural groups. Low wages and the exploitation of undocumented immigrants have led to approximately 47.1% of Latino families earning less than \$20,000 a year, according to the 2010 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). In spite of obstacles introduced by legislation, discrimination, and other structural barriers, the need for self-determination is a psychological driver for Latinas/os in the workforce. In fact, in 2012 Latinos expressed confidence in their personal finances and the direction the country was moving. They too are pursuing the American Dream.

Currently, many Latinos are confronted with multiple life challenges. Immigrants in particular, both authorized and unauthorized, have more barriers to negotiate on a daily basis. Thus, Chapter 7, "Situational Stressors and Their Effects," addresses the types of stressors faced by Latinos, including negative portrayals in the media, stereotype threat, and acculturative stress. The Latino paradox as it relates to health is discussed as one example of resilience. Freedom University is introduced as a collective resource for unauthorized students and an example of how concerned educators can help to combat unjust legislation, ensure social justice, and model resilience.

Chapter 8, "*La Familia Latina: Strengths and Transformations*," includes multiple discussions about the evolution of Latino families over the centuries. Counselors need to learn about the Latino life cycle across the life span; the transformation of families because of individual differences; mobility, forced and chosen; stressors; plans; and the persistence of the value of *familismo* across generations. Latinos need to be recognized as people of strength, constancy, and persistence. After all, who else could do the back-breaking work of agricultural workers, toil in the kitchens of the best restaurants, and work two or three jobs to make ends meet? Latinos are goal-oriented, and parents transmit this expectation as they apply the *dicho* (proverb) *De padres sanos, hijos honrados* (From well-centered parents emerge honorable children).

Chapter 9, "Planning for Culture-Centered Assessment and Practice," is very instructive and pragmatic. Examples describe the role of Latino perspectives in making clinical assessments and the cultural syndromes most applicable to

Latino groups. Furthermore, there is discussion about the role of interpreters and culture-bound diagnoses. Finally, readers are reminded how to apply Latino cultural values sensitively, effectively, and ethically when they work with children and families.

Building on the previous chapters, Chapter 10, “Latinas/os in Counseling,” addresses various scenarios that may occur when Latino individuals and families engage in Western-style counseling. The focus on spirituality is noteworthy inasmuch as immigrants and second-generation Latinos may seek solutions to difficult life situations in their belief system and also with indigenous spiritual support. The use of language in counseling is examined as well, and readers are reminded that ethnic match is not a factor in successful counseling. Discussions of strengths-based models that acknowledge resilience and other demonstrations of self-determination are woven throughout the chapter. Counseling with Latinas/os is a growing specialty area within the profession, and counselors must be prepared to deliver culturally appropriate and ethical services.

Chapter 11, “Ethics and Organizational Cultural Competencies,” examines the ethical basis for multicultural competence with Latino populations. In this chapter, we also identify professional associations and other resources counselors can turn to to expand their awareness, knowledge, and skills related to Latinos.

Throughout the text, considerable data are reported about the increasing Latino-heritage population in the United States, particularly children. Given these facts and other data about the multidimensional Latino population and its impact on education, the workplace, the economy, and other systems in the country, it seems reasonable to conjecture about the implications for the counseling profession. Chapter 12, “The Future of Latina/o-Centered Counseling,” considers how the profession will shift and adapt to Latinos through teaching, research, service, and clinical practice. Moreover, there will be opportunities for international educational collaborations with Spanish-speaking nations to the south, enriching the practices of individuals and educational institutions from Colombia, Guatemala, Venezuela, and other countries. Comas-Díaz (2012) speculated that the new generation of Latinos will be *futuristas*, a group that synthesizes Latino and U.S. values into a community-focused society. The 2012 Presidential elections underscored this sentiment.

We hope that this comprehensive volume about Latinos will inspire and propel counselors to embrace the multifaceted, changing, and complex reality of Latinos in the United States. The future of the United States is tied to the future of the Latino people as they grow in number and influence, and counselors, guided by the ideal of social justice, can help to ensure that this future is inclusive and promotes the well-being of all people. *Adelante siempre*—always moving forward, *porque “Si se puede”*—because yes we can.



## About the Authors

**Dr. Patricia Arredondo** has contributed to the counseling profession for more than 35 years through her extensive scholarship and leadership in multicultural counseling competencies, counseling Latinas/os, organizational diversity, women's leadership, and social justice advocacy. Her scholarship, leadership in professional associations, and mentorship of hundreds of students and emerging professionals are extensive. She is a past-president of the American Counseling Association (ACA), the National Latina/o Psychological Association, the Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues (Division 45) of the American Psychological Association, and the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development. Dr. Arredondo was named an ACA Living Legend and an American Psychological Association Fellow. She received her EdD in counseling from Boston University. Dr. Arredondo is the president of The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Chicago Campus.



**Dr. Maritza Gallardo-Cooper** has been a mental health practitioner for the past 35 years in the private and public sector. She has been a clinician, a director of outpatient and residential treatment programs, and a coordinator of school-based consultation and treatment programs. Her practice has focused on marriage and family therapy, school psychology, clinical supervision, training, program development, and the effectiveness of service delivery. Her involvement with Latino mental health issues began in 1978 when she was a member of the Hispanic Task Force of the President's Commission of Mental Health. She is an active member of the American Counseling Association and the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development and is a past-vice-president of the Latino Concern Group. She is also a member of the National Latina/o Psychological Association and the Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues (Division 45) of the American Psychological Association. Dr. Gallardo-Cooper teaches graduate courses in clinical supervision at the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala and is a respected author in the areas of bilingual counseling and multicultural family therapy. Dr. Gallardo-Cooper holds a doctorate from the University of Florida.



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