



2024 Annual Conference

Nurturing Latinx Mental Health
Networks & Building Bridges of Support

 **February 1, 2024: In-Person Kickoff Event
at County College at Morris in Randolph, NJ**

 **February 2, 2024: Virtual Conference via Zoom**

5.5 APA APPROVED CE'S
7.5 NJ & NY SOCIAL WORK CE'S

Register Today!

www.latinomentalhealthnj.com/annualconference



¡Hola!

Amigos,

With immense gratitude, I extend a warm welcome to our Annual Conference. Your unwavering support has been instrumental in propelling our mission to new heights, and for that, we are truly thankful.

As this year's President, it is both an honor and a privilege to stand before a community dedicated to promoting mental health and well-being within our state's Latine community. Your commitment to this cause is the heartbeat of our association, and it is what makes events like these so impactful.

In reflecting on our journey together, I am inspired by the strides we have made and I am excited to share a positive vision for 2024. This year holds the promise of even greater presence, impacting programming and strengthened partnerships.

At this year's conference and at our exciting events planned for this year, I encourage you to engage in enriching discussions, connect with fellow professionals, and leave with renewed inspiration. Your participation in our association not only signifies your dedication to the profession, but also contributes to the vibrant tapestry of our shared vision for a healthier and more resilient community.

Thank you for being an integral part of the Latino Mental Health Association of New Jersey. Cheers to a year filled with learning, growth and inspiration!

Sincerely,

Vanessa De Jesus Guzman

Vanessa De Jesus Guzman, LPC, NCC
Latino Mental Health Association of New Jersey 2024 President



In October 2023, LMHANJ held its first annual Hispanic Heritage Month Event, Celebrating Unity Among Diversity. Through dialogue and open reflection, this program focused on celebrating our communities, leveraging our connections, and promoting unity across ethnicities, disciplines, and professional practice. This year's annual conference, Nurturing Latinx Mental Health Networks & Building Bridges of Support, delves deeper into this dialogue. With workshops that focus on financial wellness, pragmatic activism, and resilience, I hope that your professional identity will be activated and enhanced. I hope that others' focus on intersectionality, liberation health and equity, and cultural factors in healing resonate with your clinical voice and strengthen your practice. And in the spirit of unity and networking, I encourage you to make connections throughout the day that can continue to be nurtured personally and professionally.

As Latinx mental health providers, LMHANJ understands that support and advocacy are at the center of our best work, in the direct service of the Latinx community. This conference lineup reflects these values wholeheartedly, as does our association programming and initiatives. I assure you that the dialogue in which we engage throughout the conference will only be the beginning of our collective impact on the community. I am excited by what we'll achieve together.

With these sentiments and deep pride in the behind-the-scenes planning and teamwork that I have seen among our Board, workshop presenters, and sponsors, I welcome you to our annual conference.

Sincerely,

Angela P. Vargas

Angela P. Vargas, PhD
Latino Mental Health Association of New Jersey 2024 President- Elect and Conference Chair



Latino Mental Health Association of New Jersey



Our Mission

Founded in 1999, the Latino Mental Health Association of New Jersey (formerly the Latino Psychological Association of New Jersey) is committed to addressing the mental health needs of Latinos by supporting mental health professionals through the advancement of training, treatment, research, and mentorship, and by advocating for the well-being of the Latinx community.

Become a Member

TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP



Student Membership



Professional Membership



Lifetime Membership

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Advanced Notice for Events
- Reduced Rates for Events
- Employment Postings
- Full Access to Membership Site
- Members Only Newsletters
- Internal Member Directory
- Profile Highlighted on Website*
- Advisory Board Opportunity *

*Lifetime Member



LEADERSHIP TEAM



Vanessa De Jesus Guzman, LPC, NCC
2024 President



Enmanuel Mercedes, PhD
2024 Past President



Angela P. Vargas, PhD
*2024 President Elect
2023 Treasurer*



Azara Santiago Rivera, PhD, NCC
2023 Past President



Kathy Acosta, LCSW
2024 Treasurer



Yvette Ramos, LCSW
*2024 Marketing
2023 Secretary*



Grace S. Ardila, LCSW
2023 Secretary



Jessenia Rivera, LPC, NCC
2024 Early Career Professional



Apollonia Pinzas
2024 Student Representative



Conference Sponsor Latinx Practice Collective

The mission of the Latinx Practice Collective is to elevate clinical entrepreneurs in New Jersey and New York, fostering a strong community and collaboration. The Latinx Practice Collective is dedicated to uniting professionals, sharing knowledge, and providing the support and resources needed to thrive as a clinical entrepreneur.

We are a community of entrepreneurs who are fearlessly embracing our cultural background on a path to success. As the Collective, we deeply value and celebrate our diverse backgrounds and experiences. We understand the importance of creating a space that honors our Latinx heritage, allowing us to embrace our cultural roots while pursuing our entrepreneurial dreams. By staying true to our identities, we are able to bring an authentic perspective to our work and connect with others who share a similar background.

By joining us, you'll be part of a dynamic network that empowers you to make a significant and positive difference in the Latinx community.



www.latinxpracticecollective.com

Conference Program

Poster Presentations

Welcome Remarks

Vanessa De Jesus Guzman, LPC, NCC

*Utilizing Centering Racial and Ethnic Identity Framework in Clinical Practice

Jonathan Sepulveda, PhD & Angela P. Vargas, PhD

Year in Review

Enmanuel Mercedes, PhD

Acknowledgments

Vanessa De Jesus Guzman, LPC, NCC

Awards

Angela P. Vargas, PhD

Dinner and Networking

Closing Remarks

Angela P. Vargas, PhD

1 Clinical CE
NJ & NY Social Workers

1 CE for Psychologists, LPCs, LMFTs

Sponsor

Latinx Practice Collective



Our mission is to elevate clinical entrepreneurs in New Jersey and New York, fostering a strong community and collaboration.

The Latinx Practice Collective is dedicated to uniting professionals, sharing knowledge, and providing the support and resources needed to thrive as a clinical entrepreneur.



JUAN RIOS, DSW, LCSW
Dr. Robert D. McCormick
Award Recipient



JULIANA LONDOÑO, LAC, NCC
Emerging Leader
Award Recipient

Congratulations



JUAN RIOS, DSW, LCSW

DR. ROBERT D. McCORMICK AWARD RECIPIENT

The Robert D. McCormick Award is given in recognition of a member's outstanding contributions to the Latino Mental Health Association of New Jersey. The pillars of the award are founded on advocacy, training, research and mentorship to the New Jersey Latinx community.

Congratulations



JULIANA LONDOÑO, LAC, NCC

EMERGING LEADER AWARD RECIPIENT

The Emerging Leader Award honors a professional in the field who is exhibiting exceptional commitment, innovation, and a profound passion for positively impacting mental health. This award celebrates their achievements thus far and anticipates the continued positive influence they will undoubtedly have on the future of mental health care.



Nurturing Latinx Mental Health Networks & Building Bridges of Support

WELCOMING REMARKS

8:45 am

Vanessa De Jesus Guzman, LPC, NCC
LMHANJ President

6.5 Social Cultural Competency CE's
NJ & NY Social Workers
Full attendance required

***4.5 CE's for Psychologists, LPCs, LMFTS**

WORKSHOP 1

9:00 am
-
10:30 am

***LIBERATED HEALTH: TRANSFORMING HEALTHCARE THROUGH EQUITY AND INTEGRATION**

Juan Rios, DSW, LCSW & Enmanuel Mercedes, PhD

WORKSHOPS 2 & 3

10:40 am
-
11:40 am

REFRAMING LATINO FINANCIAL DISCIPLINE: A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH TO FINANCIAL WELLNESS

Jasmine Ramirez, LCSW, CFSW

ACTIVISM PREPAREDNESS: HOW PRAGMATIC ACTIVISM CAN HELP HAVE YOUR VOICE FELT IN PUBLIC POLICY

Orville Morales, MBA

Networking Lunch

11:40 am
-
12:10 pm

Join us from 11:50-12:10 for an Optional "Bocados y Contactos" Networking Lunch

WORKSHOP 4

12:10 pm
-
1:40 pm

***MIXED CITIZENSHIP FAMILIES:
SYMPTOMS AND EXPERIENCES REPORTED
DURING IMMIGRATION-RELATED FORENSIC
EVALUATIONS OF EXTREME HARDSHIP**

*Aileen Torres, PhD
Ryan Puebla, MA, LAC*

WORKSHOP 5

1:50 pm
-
2:50 pm

**INTERGENERATIONAL & CULTURAL FACTORS
IN EATING DISORDERS HEALING
IN OUR LATINE COMMUNITIES**

Ashley Acle, MBA, MFT, LMFT

Break

2:50pm
-
3:05pm

WORKSHOP 6

3:05 pm
-
4:35 pm

***CULTIVATING RESILIENCE AND WELL BEING:
STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING LATINX
EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH**

*Yvette Ramos, MSW, LCSW,
Bibiana Guterrez, PhD, Marizayda Torres, LMHC, LPC*

CLOSING REMARKS

4:35 pm

Angela P. Vargas, PhD
LMHANJ President-Elect & Conference Coordinator



Workshop Descriptions

WORKSHOP 1 :

***Liberated Health: Transforming Healthcare through Equity and Integration**

Juan Rios, DSW, LCSW & Enmanuel Mercedes, PhD

This conference session offers a deep dive into the transformative concept of Liberated Health Clinical Care. Central to this discourse is the Liberation Health model, a groundbreaking theory that connects individual and familial health issues with wider socio-economic and historical factors (Belkin-Martinez, 2014). This model offers a unique perspective on how various forms of internal and external oppression can significantly impact health outcomes.

Participants in this session will be enriched with knowledge and understanding in several key areas:

1. Application of the Liberation Health Model: Insight into how this model can be effectively applied within clinical settings, offering a new lens through which healthcare professionals can view and address health issues.
2. Holistic Analysis of Health Factors: A thorough examination of the interplay between personal experiences, cultural contexts, and institutional structures in shaping health outcomes. This analysis is crucial in understanding the multifaceted nature of health and wellbeing.
3. Empowerment Strategies: Development of practical strategies aimed at empowering both individuals and communities. These strategies focus on fostering holistic liberation, encompassing both physical and mental health.

Additionally, the session will provide practical use case examples. These examples will offer tangible insights into how the Liberation Health model can be applied in real-world scenarios, illustrating the model's effectiveness in promoting systemic change and individual empowerment. This interactive session is specifically tailored for healthcare professionals, social workers, and advocates. It promises to be a rich resource for those seeking to address health disparities through systemic change and personal empowerment, making it a must-attend event for professionals in these fields.

WORKSHOP 2:

Reframing Latino Financial Discipline: A Trauma-Informed Approach to Financial Wellness

Jasmine Ramirez, LCSW, CFSW

The workshop, "Reframing Latino Financial Discipline: A Trauma-Informed Approach to Financial Wellness," challenges the conventional belief that financial challenges are solely linked to a lack of discipline. Instead, it acknowledges the multifaceted nature of financial issues, which include elements such as financial trauma, cultural norms, and gender dynamics. This workshop primarily centers on the Latino community, providing a fresh perspective that delves into the intricate interplay between financial well-being and mental health. By drawing parallels with medical treatment, the presentation underscores the significance of adopting a trauma-informed approach in financial therapy to address the complexities of financial struggles effectively.

WORKSHOP 3: Activism Preparedness: How Pragmatic Activism Can Help Have Your Voice Felt In Public Policy

Orville Morales, MBA

Pragmatic Activism is a six-phase methodology for social change that allows for intentional and reasonable action over time. This will enable people to be a part of a broader, more public dialogue of political, social, economic, and philosophical decision-making in our society. Therefore, to build strong Latinx Mental Health Networks, it is important to obtain a baseline understanding of who a mental health professional can influence, beyond your individual practices. In our workshop session, we will: Explore collectively the 24+ public officials that each have an impact on Latinx Mental Health in NJ. We will discuss the other professional sectors that have can support and hinder the grow of Latinx Mental Health awareness. Explore the proactive options to engage in systems change that impact the Latinx Mental Health Community.

This workshop benefits: Non-profit coalitions and trade associations that seek to life the power of the voices of mental health practitioners, young professionals starting their careers that need an orientation of the political, social, and economic influence in NJ, and individual practitioners that believe their business is a platform for positive change in the community.

WORKSHOP 4: *Mixed Citizenship Families: Symptoms and Experiences Reported During Immigration-Related Forensic Evaluations of Extreme Hardship

Aileen Torres, PhD, Ryan Puebla, MA, LAC, Gladys Martinez, MEd, LPC, NCC

The Latino National Health and Immigration Survey found that approximately 25% of respondents were in mixed-citizenship families (Vargas & Ybarra, 2017). These families have at least one family member who is undocumented and one or more have legal permission to reside in the United States (Passel et al., 2014). Contrary to popular belief, undocumented family members of citizens are offered no special protection if they entered the country without proper documentation. The undocumented immigrant needs to return to their home country to apply for a legal visa and they may be barred from reentry for a period of up to ten years. The insecurity associated with the “illegal” status of one of the family members impacts the mental health and quality of life of individuals in mixed-citizenship families. Additionally many of these immigrants had already experienced some form of pre-migration trauma (Valentin-Cortes et al., 2020) on top of other acculturative stressors. A USC or legal permanent resident (LPR) may apply for an Extreme Hardship waiver to expedite immigration proceedings, and a psychological evaluation may be a component of this application. The present study utilizes archival record review that examines data from psychological evaluations conducted solely for Extreme Hardship waivers to describe the common mental health symptoms and quality of life challenges experienced by these mixed-citizenship families (Barber-Rioja et al., 2022; Evan & Haas, 2018). Descriptive information from the Brief Symptom Inventory and Life Events Checklist, as well as report excerpts will be provided about the documented family member’s experiences and symptoms.

WORKSHOP 5: Intergenerational & Cultural Factors in Eating Disorders Healing in Our Latine Communities

Ashley Acle, MBA, MFT, LMFT

Eating disorders are prevalent among our Latine community. However, most diagnostic tools and treatment models do not consider cultural factors that may increase the risk of developing these highly lethal conditions. This can lead to delays in eating disorders detection and treatment, a worsening of symptoms, and relational barriers to treatment engagement in the future. Healing from eating disorders happens in relationships, connections, and larger contexts. A culturally sensitive approach to treating eating disorders among Latine creates an expansive space to better center the needs of the client served within their unique cultural and relational contexts. Intergenerational factors, like trauma, can be identified and explored as they contribute to eating disorder development, maintenance, and the healing process. Additionally, Latine living with eating disorders may connect with intergenerational strengths and ancestry in ways that uplift their humanity and wellbeing, honoring their present and future while paying respects and, potentially, grieving the past. Cultural sensitive approaches that consider the effects of xenophobia, racism, discrimination, and colorism may also facilitate the timely detection of eating disorders among Latine living with eating disorders while decolonizing and de-westernizing how eating disorders are conceptualized and treated.

WORKSHOP 7: *Cultivating Resilience and Well Being: Strategies for Enhancing Latinx Employee Mental Health

Yvette Ramos, MSW, LCSW, Bibiana Gutierrez, PhD, Marizayda Torres, LMHC, LPC

In the fast-paced world of modern business and organizations, employees' mental health is a critical yet often overlooked aspect of workplace wellness. Latinx employee's unique challenges intersect with cultural, socioeconomic, and organizational factors. With Latinx making up 19% of the total labor force as of 2022 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022), during a period where we are collectively experiencing a mental health crisis, we must cultivate resilience and enhance mental health well-being among Latinx employees.

This presentation will address the intersectional experiences of Latinx employees, the unique stressors faced by Latinx employees in professional environments, and their impact on mental health. It will address these complexities by offering culturally affirming and evidence-based strategies aimed at improving mental health outcomes for Latinx employees.

The session will conclude with actionable recommendations for mental health professionals and organizational leaders to create inclusive workplaces promoting Latinx employees' resilience and mental well-being.

IN-PERSON WORKSHOP:

***Utilizing Centering Racial and Ethnic Identity in Latinx Identity Framework in Clinical Practice**

Jonathan Sepulveda, PhD & Angela P Vargas, PhD

Colonial mentality refers to the internalized inferiority of one's ethnic, racial, and cultural identities due to the history of oppression that one's racial and/or ethnic group has experienced (David & Okazaki, 2006). People who have been colonized will internalize negative stereotypes such as the denigration of physical features that are non-European, aspire to be more like the dominant group, and become isolated from their original culture (Freire, 1968/2000). A history of colonialism has socialized Latinxs to perpetuate anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism through the marginalization of individuals with more African and Indigenous phenotypes.

The Centering Racial and Ethnic Identity for Latinxs (C-REIL) framework provides guidance towards the demarginalization of Blackness in Latinx psychology (Adames et al., 2021). Moreover, the C-REIL posits that Latinx identity is the intersection between race (e.g., White) and ethnicity (e.g., Colombian; Adames et al., 2021). The C-REIL encourages the acceptance of responsibility for anti-Black socialization, biases, and prejudices within the Latinx community as a necessary precursor to dismantle racism and colorism (Adames et al., 2021).

Testimonio is a process that allows individuals to transform previous experience and personal identity into a new present and future (Huber, 2009). It also allows individuals to create a narrative that explores their personal experiences with injustices and oppression (Huber, 2009). This presentation will utilize a testimonio to guide the audience through a personal reflection of my racial socialization, experiences as oppressor and/or oppressed, and how these experiences have impacted my Latinx Identity development.



Conference Presenters



Jonathan Sepulveda, PhD

Angela P. Vargas, PhD

Utilizing Centering Racial and Ethnic Identity Framework in Clinical Practice

Juan Rios, DSW, LCSW

Enmanuel Mercedes, PhD

Liberating Health: Transforming Healthcare through Equity and Integration



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Reframing Latino Financial Discipline:
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Mixed citizenship families:
Symptoms and Experiences Reported
During Immigration-Related Forensic
Evaluations of Extreme Hardship



Ashley Acle, MBA, MFT, LMFT
Intergenerational & Cultural Factors in Eating
Disorders Healing in Our Latine Communities

Yvette Ramos, MSW, LCSW
Bibiana Gutierrez, PhD | Marizayda Torres, LMHC, LPC

Cultivating Resilience & Well Being:
Strategies for Enhancing Latinx Employee Mental Health





Poster Presentations

Lived Experiences: Immigration, Family Separation, and Resilience

Fernanda Moura, MA, Joseph Wroblewski, MA, Deanna Enunwa, EdM, Christine Varghese, BA, Sama Jaber, BA, Agnes Benny, BA, Sarah Saad, BA, Bayron Ovalle, BA, Mishel Calle Urgiles, BA, Pei-wen Ma, PhD, Aileen Torres, PhD

The current study seeks to elucidate the ways in which immigration-related family separation impacts individual and family functioning in the Latinx community. The study also aims to integrate the knowledge and understanding of attachment theory, family systems perspectives, and the theory of ambiguous loss to provide a framework from which the impact of family separation on individual and family functioning can be better understood. These efforts are essential to the development and implementation of appropriate trauma-informed services that are culturally sensitive and impelling in supporting youth and their families both during the phases of separation and subsequent to family reunification.

Responding to the Migrant Crisis: Lessons Learned from a School-Based Group Intervention for Recently Arrived Latinx Middle School Students

Gabriela Munoz De Zubiria, MEd, Natalia Vallejo Ulloa, MA (graduate student); Eric C. Chen, PhD (Professor, Counseling Psychology); Laura Guy, LCSW-R (Program and Outreach Coordinator)

The poster presentation focuses on addressing the mental health needs of migrant youth by emphasizing the importance of culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate mental health support, highlighting the Latinx presence in mental health services, and recognizing the broader cultural and sociopolitical implications of migration and mental health.



Continuing Education

APA Approved

Rutgers Graduate School of Applied & Professional Psychology is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. Rutgers Graduate School of Applied & Professional Psychology maintains responsibility for this program and its content.



NY Psychologists

Rutgers Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP) is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Psychology as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed psychologists #PSY-0123.



NJ & NY Social Workers

This conference has been approved for 6 Social Work continuing education hours by the Rutgers School of Social Work in accordance with New Jersey Administrative Code 13:44G and recognized by the New Jersey Board of Social Work Examiners and the New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Work.



NJ LMFT/MFT and LPC/LAC

Programs approved by the American Psychological Association are acceptable sources of continuing education credits. Please see <https://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/regulations/Chapter-34-Subchapters-10-31-Professional-Counselors.pdf>, Section: 13:34-15.4 APPROVAL OF COURSES OR PROGRAMS on page 27. For all other professional licenses and certifications, please reference your issuing state board regulations regarding reciprocity of continuing education credits.

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