A SUPPORT GROUP FOR UNDOCUMENTED LATINA WOMEN
WITH DEPRESSION: A GRANT PROPOSAL

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Undocumented Latinas are at risk of depression due to acculturation stress and other risk factors including poverty, low educational attainment, unemployment, and separation from children (National Alliance on Mental Illness [NAMI], 2009; Santiago-Rivera, Kanter, Busch, Rusch, Reyes, West, & Runge, 2011).

The purpose of this project was to develop a program that aims to decrease depressive symptoms, improve psychological well being, and increase coping through an 8-week Spanish support group facilitated by an MSW and a promotora for undocumented Latina women. Program utilizes essential components of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to help the women increase peer support and coping and decrease depression.

Undocumented immigrants experience higher rates of poverty, low coverage of health insurance, and low levels of educational attainment (Passel & Cohn, 2009)
Social Work Relevance

- Undocumented individuals face lack of access to services due to legal status (Torrico, 2009).

- Undocumented Latinos are more likely to live in an underserved low-income community and Latinos are at an increased risk of experiencing symptoms of depression, they are also less likely to access mental health treatment due to barriers (Alegría, Mulvaney-Day, Woo, Torres, Gao, & Oddo, 2007).

- One of the main barriers that Latinos experience to mental health services is the limited availability of services delivered in their native language (Caplan & Whittemore, 2013).

- Social workers serve underserved communities and are likely to work with undocumented individuals.
Cross- Cultural Relevance

- Alegría et al. (2007) stated that lack of access to health insurance, a fear of being labeled, and lack of knowledge of the mental health conditions contributes to Latinos not seeking services from mental health professionals.

- Along with CBT and case management, Latinas with depression benefit from support groups, peer counseling, and the integration of promotoras in mental health treatment (Coffman & Norton, 2010).

- It is common for Latinas to seek help or advice from relatives, peers, or friends when experiencing sadness or depression (Heilemann & Copeland, 2005).

- This program reduces the language and cultural barriers for undocumented Latinas.
 Methods

- Target population is undocumented Spanish speaking Latina women experiencing depressive symptoms. Reasons for targeting this population include their limited access to support services due to legal status or lack of financial resources.

- Strategies used to identify and select a funding source included completing a database search through a grant search engine the Long Beach Nonprofit Partnership (LBNP). Key words included: *Latino, California, mental health, support groups, undocumented, community health workers, peer support, and promotoras de salud*.

- The Annenberg Foundation was selected as a funding source.

- Sources used for the needs assessment included the United States Census Bureau database was accessed in order to research County Quick Facts. Peer reviewed articles were located with the assistance of the California State University, Long Beach librarian and databases.

- Projected budget is $110,800 for one year including staff salaries: MSW Program Director, Promotora, Child care worker, direct program costs and utilities.
Grant Proposal

This program aims to decrease depressive symptoms and improve psychological well-being and increase coping of 120 undocumented Latina women through a support group. The purpose of the support group is to improve the psychological well-being of group members by using aspects of cognitive behavioral therapy in order to increase support and coping skills. Referrals will be provided by the promotora to supplement and potentially help group members become linked to programs that are available to undocumented Latino families.

Sustainability: Partnering with mental health service agencies in Long Beach to create a smooth referral process.

Objectives/Evaluation:
- Starting July 2014, staff will enroll a minimum of 25 group members each month until June 2015. At the end of the support group, 80% of group members will demonstrate a 25% decrease in depressive symptoms as measured by the CES-D Scale.
- By the eighth week of the group, 85% of members will identify a minimum of three sources of support in which they can turn to after the completion of the group.
- By the eighth week of the group, 95% of group members that received community resources from the promotora will identify two community resources that services undocumented families.
- Depression will be measured using an adapted version of the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CESD Scale) prior to the first group session, at the final group session, and at the one month follow-up.
Lessons Learned/
Implications for Social Work Practice

- Insufficient existence of literature about the Latina undocumented population in the U.S. and depression.

- Hardships that are experienced by the undocumented population may not be exact to the general Latina population.

- Currently, there are steps towards the acceptance of and increase in services for undocumented immigrants as this population increases (Immigrant Legal Resource Center, n.d.).

- With the population of undocumented individuals expected to increase, there are movements towards increasing the services for their eligibility to receive these services.
References


References
