Latinos During Emergencies: Cultural Considerations Impacting Disaster Preparedness
Guest Speakers

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Thank you!
Objectives

• Describe two cultural differences that might impact emergency preparedness activities.

• Identify strategies for assessing the needs of the Latino population in a community.

• List two approaches to engage members from the Latino community in emergency preparedness activities.

• Identify culturally sensitive, cross-cultural risk communication methods.
Guiding Principles

• Legal
• Humanitarian
• Practical

Photo: Born & Bred by Estevan Oriol
Need for Latino-focused emergency preparedness and response efforts

1. Latinos: large, growing, widely dispersed subpopulation
2. Numerous barriers to full inclusion in emergency planning and response
3. Successful Latino-focused efforts benefit the whole community
Latinos: Significant U.S. subpopulation

• ~50 million people = ~1 of every 6 U.S. residents
• Fastest-growing minority group
• Live in every state
• Growing population in most states
Latinos ethnic origins

[Map showing the ethnic origins of Latinos around the world]
The U.S. Latino community

- Majority U.S. citizens (74%)
- Most speak Spanish at home (78%)
- Look to community-based organizations for information and services
- Own an increasing number of businesses
- Young population – high workforce participation
- Many families have multiple immigration statuses
- Most likely to be Catholics or evangelicals
- More than 25% have no regular health care provider

NCLR
National Council of La Raza
Percent Population of Latinos Currently Living in the United States by Country of Origin
Linguistic and cultural variations among Latinos in the US

• Language and cultural variation
  – Individual factors
  – Environmental factors
  – Country of origin
  – Acculturation

• Cautionary tales
  – Risks of stereotyping
Traditional Latino core cultural constructs

• Familism
  – Welds individuals to family
  – Strong loyalty to family members
  – Affiliation over confrontation
  – Cooperation versus competition
  – Interdependence over independence
  – Gender roles prescriptions
  – Filial piety
• Collectivism
  – Group needs over individual needs
  – “We” and “us” versus “I” and “me”
  – Promotes amiable, social interactions

• Respect
  – Differential appropriate behaviors
    • Age, gender, SES, authority status
• Fatalism
  – Acceptance of an unkind fate
  – External locus of control
  – Passive endurance
  – “Que sera, sera”

• Time orientation
  – Past-present timeline
  – Cyclical concept of time
  – Flexible attitude toward time
Coping among earthquake survivors in Southern Peru: A case study

Research team

• Interdisciplinary
  • Public health
  • Anthropology
  • Social Work
• Transnational
  • Peruvian
  • Turkish
• U.S.
Study Sample and Procedures

• Purposive sampling
• N=24 (11 women, 13 men)
• Ages 65-90
• Primarily married or widowed
• Most of low SES
• Individual 1-4 hours videotaped interviews
• Semi-structured, open-ended questions
• Trained Peruvian interviewer
Study results: Coping

• Collectivism
  – Functioning and coping collectively
  – Examples:
    ▪ “We then went out to the street and the neighbors...we’ve all helped each other”
    ▪ “We all keep each other company”
    ▪ “Being in society is to live and share”
Study Results: Fatalism

Resignation

– Examples:

▪ “Don’t worry about me, I’ve already lived my life”

▪ “Whatever God wants for me”

▪ “Well, I’m okay with what’s going on. I leave it all in God’s hands”
Religion and spirituality

- Praying
- Attending Mass
- Church activities
- Examples:
  - “I’ve asked God to give me strength”
  - “I ask the Lord every day to help me”
  - “I ask the Lord to give me a lot of strength to go on fighting”
Social support

Local and distant sources

• Nuclear and extended family
• Neighbors
• Friends
• Church
General Study Results

Gender differences

– Women displayed greater mental distress from loss or damage to their homes than men

– Women exhibited greater difficulty adapting to emergency sheltering and temporary housing
Study Conclusions

• General overarching themes
  – Resilience
  – Sadness

• Coping
  – Cultural values and practices
    • Collectivism, *familism*, resignation
  – Spiritual and religious practices
  – Local and distant social networks
The National Council of La Raza

- Largest Latino civil rights and advocacy organization in the U.S.
- National network of ~300 affiliated community based organizations
- Program and policy work in 5 areas:
  - Assets/investments
  - Civil rights/immigration
  - Education
  - Employment & economic status
  - Health
Recent NCLR Disaster Preparedness Work

1. Katrina Relief Fund & white paper
2. California Wildfires research report
3. Emergency Manager’s Tool Kit: Meeting the Needs of Latino Communities
Katrina Relief Fund

3. Emergency Manager’s Tool Kit: Meeting the Needs of Latino Communities (2011)
Tool Kit Development

• Based on formative research conducted in New Orleans and Orlando
• Guided by group of experts in emergency preparedness & response for vulnerable populations
• Published in 2011, includes text and CD-ROM available for download
Barriers to full inclusion

- Lack of appropriate systems and procedures
- Emergency responders’ knowledge and experience gaps
- Hispanic language, past experiences, and immigration status
Factors affecting emergency communications with Latinos

Include:
• Attitudes towards government
• Access
• Sources of information
• Language
• Literacy
Attitudes towards government

May be fearful or distrustful due to:

• Past experience of seeing home country government as corrupt or abusive
• Documentation issues/ fear of arrest or deportation
Responder Gaps

• Inappropriate actions can create distrust
• Incorrect assumptions exist about the need to obtain documentation or determine eligibility during an emergency.
• Incorrect assumptions that Latino legal residents and citizens, especially those with limited English skills, are “illegal” – so they are denied or discouraged from seeking help
Access

Some Latinos live and work in isolated areas and may not see or hear most warnings or emergency directives.
Community Engagement

• Understand your community
• Develop ongoing collaborative relationships
• Develop relationships with Latino media
• Integrate Latino community into your preparedness activities
Things to Know about your Latino Community

- Media use
- Where they live and work
- Health practices and sources of health care
- Immigration Status
Partners

• Develop ongoing collaborative relationships with Latino group
Trusted sources of information

Churches & community organizations

Hispanic media outlets

Family
Internet and New Media

• Predominantly Spanish-speaking Latinos
• Bilingual or English-speaking Latinos
• Young English-speaking Latinos
Effective Communication Strategies: Literacy

• Use plain language
• Assume low literacy levels – 5th or 6th grade
• Some Latinos, especially immigrants who arrived as adults, come from rural areas and have had little access to education
• Limited literacy may be in Spanish or English
Language

• Use Spanish-language only or make materials bilingual
• Don’t just translate, transcreate.
• Use Spanish-speakers rather than voice-over or subtitles
• For diverse Latino populations, use standard terms rather than country-specific.
Culturally appropriate emergency preparedness education for Latinos

Example 1

Vaccination POD announcements highlighting how a health behavior will impact the community:

“Protect your NEIGHBORHOOD against influenza”

vs.

“Protect YOURSELF against influenza”
Example 2
Offering opportunities to foster amiable interactions among community members and social support by blending social and educational activities.

“Flood Safety Fair”
vs.
“Flood Safety Class”
Example 3
Offer preparedness educational programs in community settings that facilitate attendance of multiple family members AND assist families with logistical barriers.

“FAMILY Preparedness Class”
vs.
“PERSONAL Preparedness Class”
Example 4
Recognize the role of elders in the traditional Latino familial hierarchy and target them in educational programs.

“Fire safety training for older adults and their caregivers.”

vs.

“Fire safety training”
Example 5
Reach out to faith organizations to co-host learning sessions and model preparedness behaviors.

“Snow Emergency Kit Blessing and Distribution after mass on Sunday”

vs.

“Free Snow Emergency Kits available at your local church”
Engagement benefits everyone

- Overall community health and safety is improved
- Burden on emergency responders is reduced
- Latinos are better able to care for themselves and avoid putting others at risk
“During a crisis, human beings need help to stay safe and sustain life, no matter what their nationality, cultural background or citizenship status.”

- American Red Cross Statement on Impartiality
Resources

• New York•New Jersey Preparedness and Emergency Response Learning Center at www.ualbany.edu/sph/cphp

• Emergency Manager’s Tool Kit: Meeting the Needs of Latino Communities available at www.nclr.org - Publications
Resources

• Joint NCLR-FEMA webinar on meeting the needs of Latino communities in emergency management. March 27 2pm EST
  marcus.coleman@dhs.gov

• National Resource Center on Advancing Emergency Preparedness for Culturally Diverse Communities
  http://www.diversitypreparedness.org/
Evaluation

Please visit

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to fill out your evaluation.

Thank you!