



National Hispanic and Latino

**MHTTC**

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

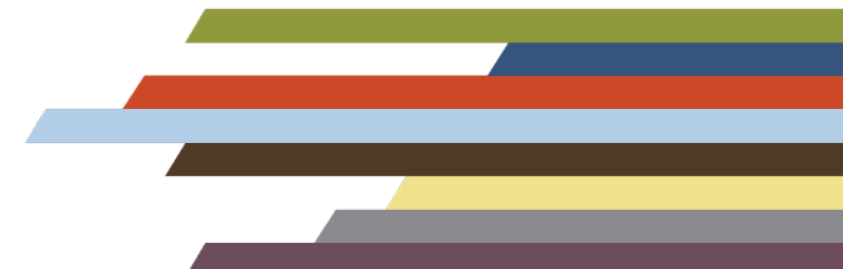
# **SECTION 2/3: Cultural Values and Idioms of Distress in the Hispanic and Latino Populations: Peer Worker Perspective & Application**

**J Rocky Romero, PhD, LMSW  
National Hispanic and Latino MHTTC  
September 16, 2020**

**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

**UCC**  
UNIVERSIDAD CENTRAL DEL CARIBE

**IRESA**  
INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH, EDUCATION  
AND SERVICES IN ADDICTION



The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

STRENGTHS-BASED  
AND HOPEFUL

INCLUSIVE AND  
ACCEPTING OF  
DIVERSE CULTURES,  
GENDERS,  
PERSPECTIVES,  
AND EXPERIENCES

HEALING-CENTERED/  
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS  
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR  
OWN JOURNEYS

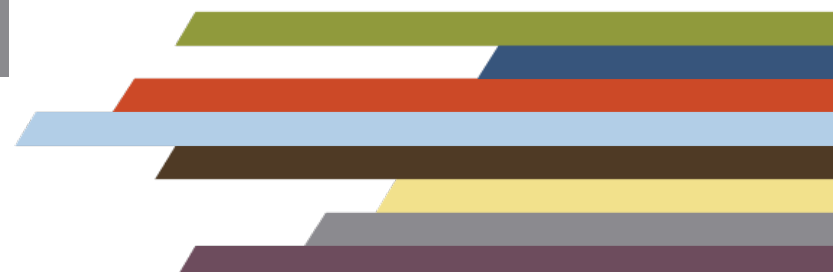
PERSON-FIRST AND  
FREE OF LABELS

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND  
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR  
AND UNDERSTANDABLE

CONSISTENT WITH  
OUR ACTIONS,  
POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS

Adapted from: [https://mhcc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Recovery-Oriented-Language-Guide\\_2019ed\\_v1\\_20190809-Web.pdf](https://mhcc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Recovery-Oriented-Language-Guide_2019ed_v1_20190809-Web.pdf)





National Hispanic and Latino

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

### **About the presenter:**

Dr. J Rocky Romero is the CEO and owner of JR Romero & Associates, a training and consultant company he started almost 20 years ago. In addition, Dr. Romero is a former Assistant Professor for New Mexico Highlands University School of Social Work in Albuquerque, NM. He served as the co-chair for Governor Richardson's appointed NM Higher Education Department on Cultural Competency Task-Force. Dr. Romero has also served as an Executive Council member for the NM-Consortium for Behavioral Health Training and Research. In addition, Dr. Romero completed his doctoral studies at the University of New Mexico in Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Studies. Dr. Romero has been a trainer and consultant for the NHL-MHTTC for the last 10 years. He is focused on culturally appropriate treatment while focusing on reducing health disparities for people of color.

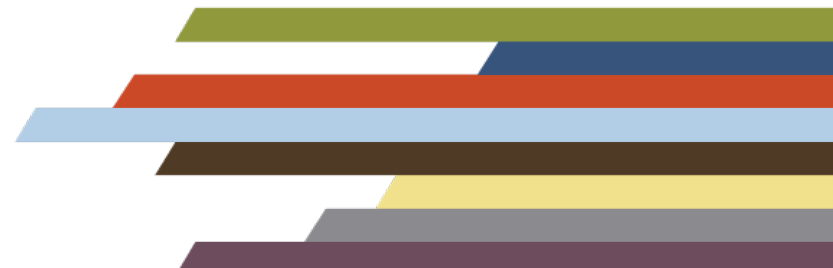


National Hispanic and Latino

MHTTC

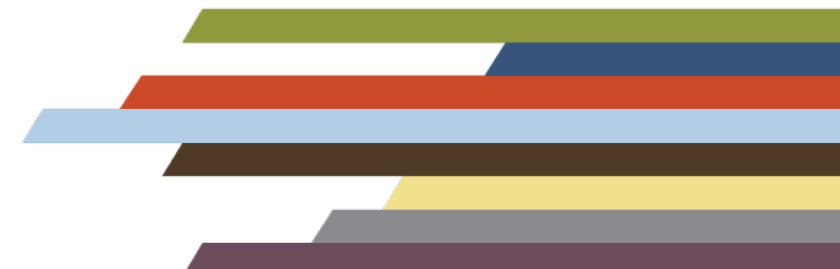
Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



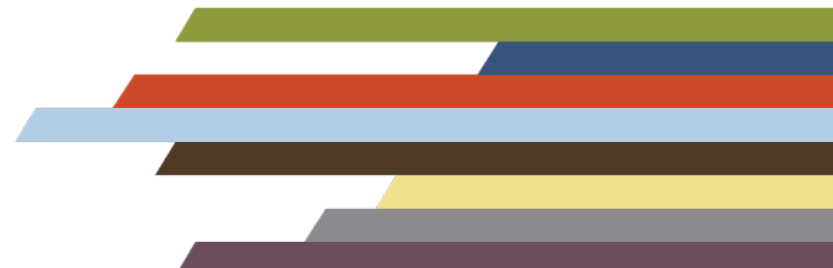
# Goal

This section will provide training on integrating cultural values and idioms of distress in the mental health treatment.



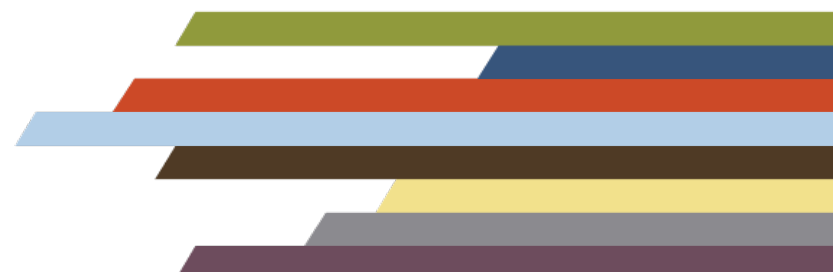
# Learning Objectives

1. Describe cultural concepts of distress and values unique to Hispanic and Latino communities.
2. Discuss the pertinence of cultural idioms of distress in mental health treatment and understand challenges Hispanic and Latino populations may face.
3. Demonstrate an ability to identify unique concepts of distress and incorporate idioms of distress as part of assessment and intervention while providing mental health services for Hispanic and Latino populations.



# Cultural Responsiveness

- Cultural responsiveness means to:
  - “able to understand and to consider the different cultural background of the people you teach, offer services to, etc.” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019)
  - The provider can explore the impact of the client’s/patient’s culture during the intake or therapy session.



# Cultural Competence

- “a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that ... enable a system, agency, or group of professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations”

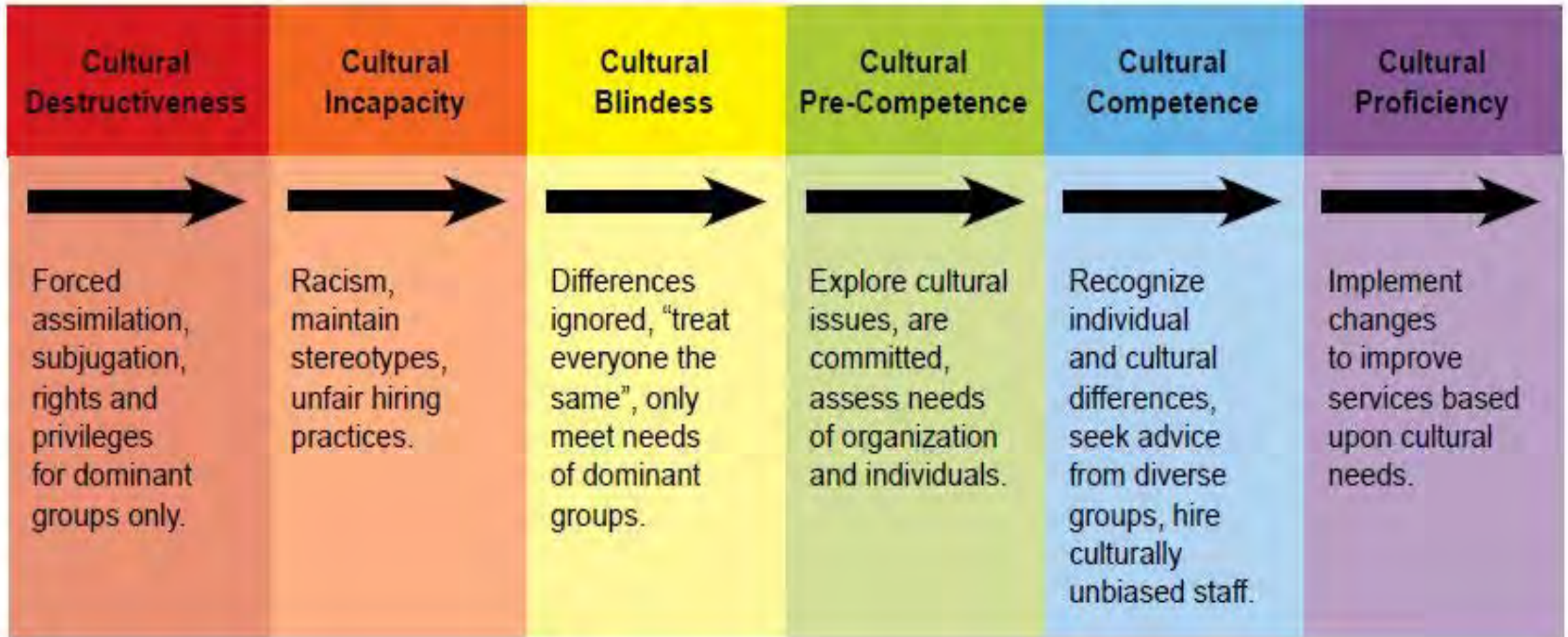
(Cross et al. 1989, p. 13)

- “Cultural competence is a dynamic, ongoing developmental process that requires a long-term commitment and is achieved over time”

(U. S. Department of Health and Human Services [HHS] 2003a, p.12)



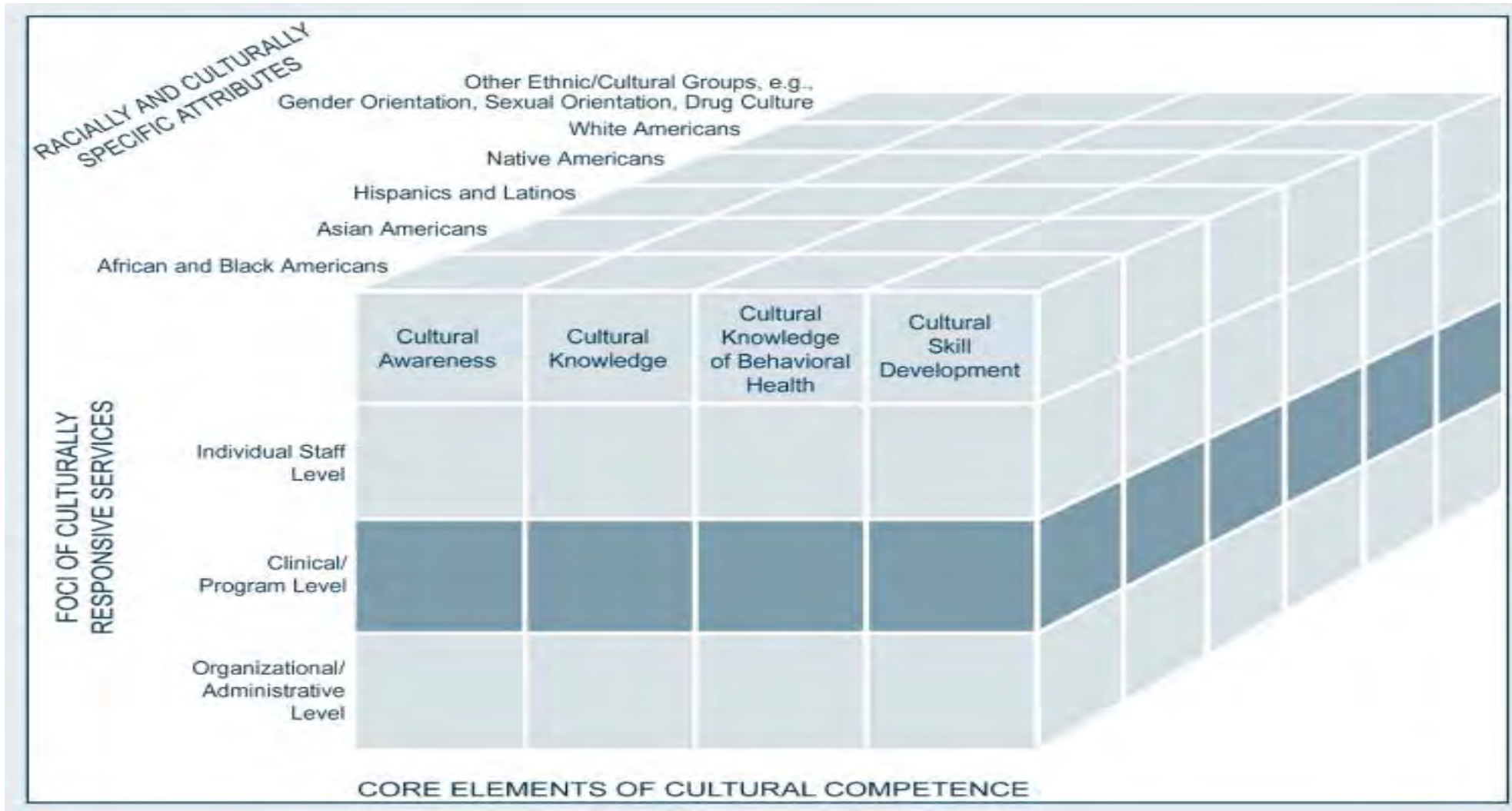
# Continuum of Cultural Competency



(Goode, 2004)

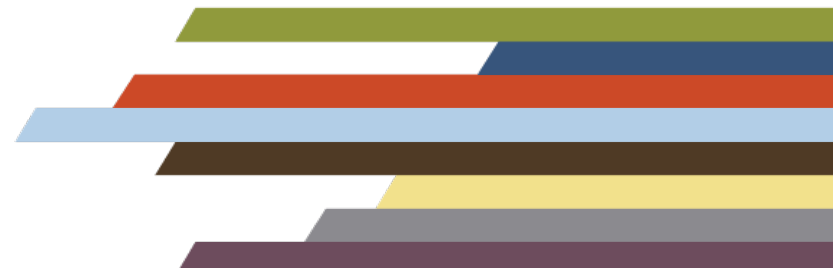


# Multidimensional Model for Developing Cultural Competence.



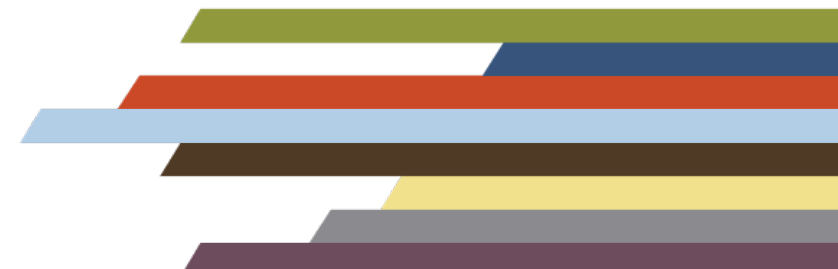
# Principles for culturally competent treatment services for Hispanic and Latino populations

- Demonstrate and gain knowledge about the culture, including the cultural values.
- Become aware of their own attitudes, beliefs, biases, and assumptions about others.
- Recognize the impact of cultural idioms of distress while creating a case conceptualization and providing mental health services.



# Cultural Values for Hispanics and Latinos

- A. “Familia” –covered session 1
- B. “Respeto”-covered session 1
- C. “Personalismo”-covered session 1
- D. “Confianza”
- E. “Espiritualidad”
- F. Traditional Healing
  - Curanderismo





# Cultural Values for Hispanics and Latinos

## D. “Confianza”-Trust

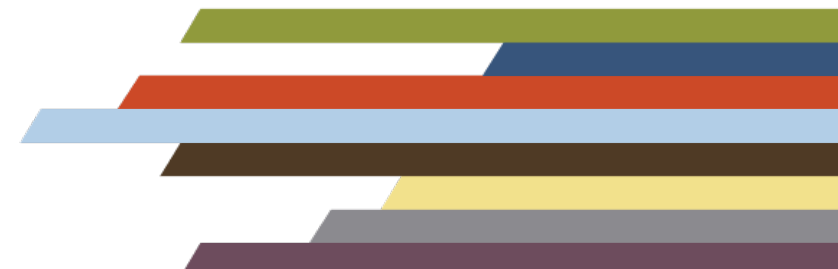
- A form of mutual reciprocity having faith that individual will help you to the best of their ability based on the relationship.
- Mutual reciprocity in the relationship may be emphasized and expected.
- Small self-disclosures may be helpful in establishing trust.



# Cultural Values for Hispanics and Latinos

## E. “Espiritualidad” Spirituality

- The term *fatalism* (spirituality) expresses the belief that the individual cannot do much to alter their fate
- Illness can be view as a spiritual punishment.
- Spirituality can be very helpful, as the religious leaders tend to also be community leaders.

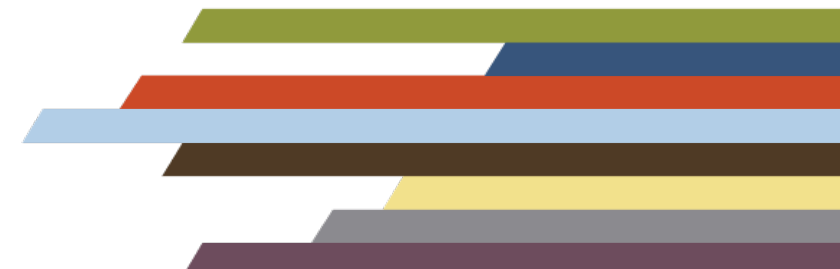


# Cultural Values for Hispanics and Latinos

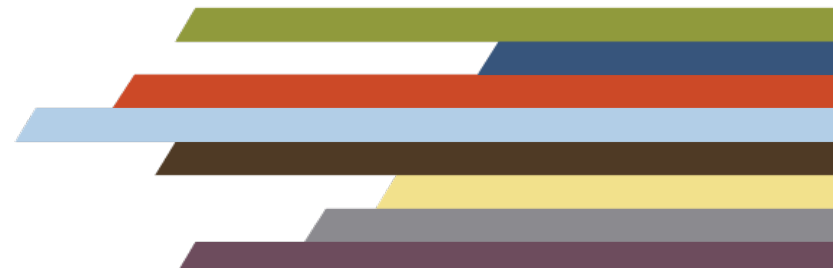
## F. Traditional Healing

- “Curanderismo” is the indigenous method of cure many of the traditional illnesses:
  - “Susto”
  - “Empacho”
  - “Mal de ojo”

- “Curanderos”, “brujos” “espiritistas” or folk healers
- “Yerberos” herbalists-have more knowledge in plants to treat the body
- They perform “limpias” or cleansing to get rid of negative forces.
- The practices sometimes are secretive.



# CULTURAL





# The Impact of Cultural Concepts of Distress upon Hispanic and Latino

- Cultural concepts of distress may be related to:

- Acculturation
- Discrimination
- Oppression
- Stigma



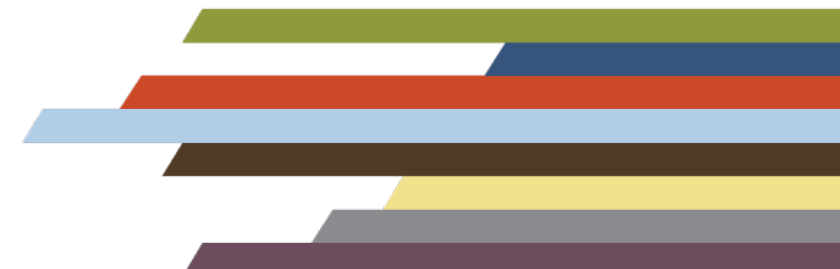
(Sadock, Sadock, & Ruiz, 2017)

# VIDEO



## A Conversation With Latinos on Race

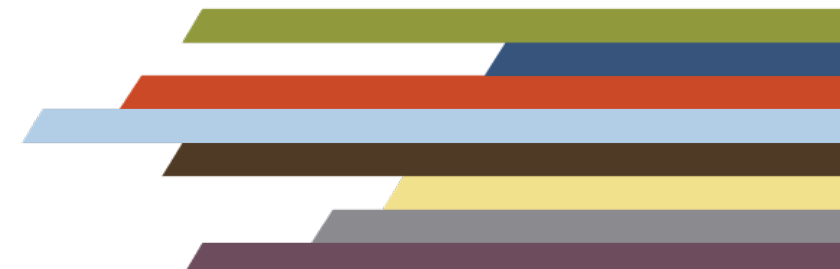
- <https://youtu.be/tLLCHbCgJbM>



# Forms of Expression of Distress and Illness

- **Cultural idioms of distress:** Ways that symptoms are expressed which provide a collective, shared ways of experiencing and talking about personal and social concerns;
- **Cultural explanations (perceived causes):** Labels, attributions, or features of an explanatory model that indicate culturally recognized meaning or etiology for symptoms, illness, or distress

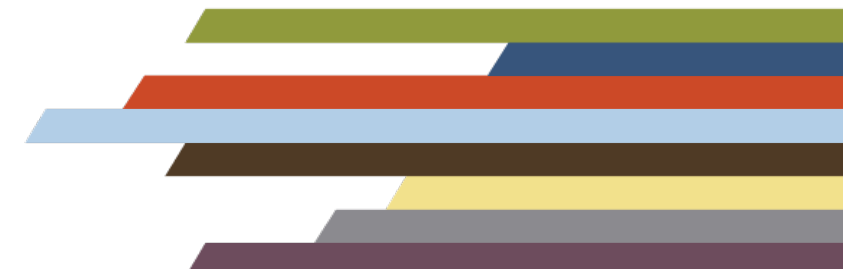
(APA, 2013. p.758)



# Forms of Expression of Distress and Illness

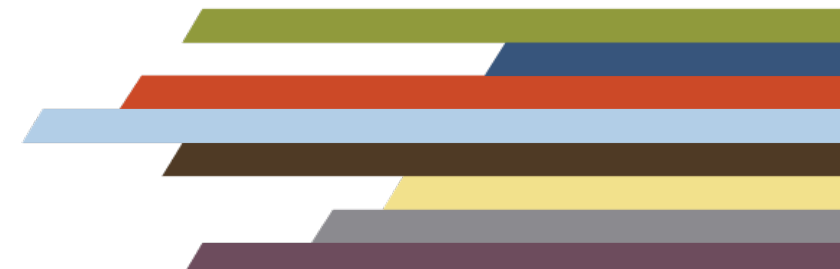
According to the DSM 5 (APA, 2013), cultural concepts of distress are expressed through three concepts:

- **Cultural syndromes**: Groups of symptoms and signs that co-occur among individuals in specific cultural groups, communities, and contexts.



# Cultural Idioms of Distress

- Definition of Idioms of distress
  - Idioms of distress were defined as a way in which a specific culture express affliction.
  - Idioms matter when the provider want to provide a cultural sensitive treatment.
  - Idioms of distress could be an expression of anxiety, depression, and dissociation tendency, post-traumatic stress disorder and general anxiety disorder.



# Cultural Idioms of Distress

- “Nervios”
  - General state of vulnerability to stressful experiences.
  - It is a broad idiom that may be accompanied by somatic symptoms.



# Cultural Idioms of Distress

- “Ataque de nervios”
  - Characterized by symptoms of intense emotional upset (including anxiety), screaming, shouting, crying, trembling, may include verbal and physical aggression.



# Cultural Idioms of Distress

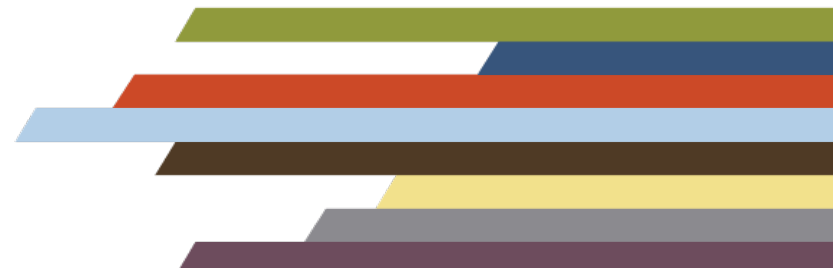
- “Susto”
  - Cultural explanation for an illness attributed to a frightening event that causes the soul to leave the body and results in unhappiness and sickness, as well as difficulties functioning in key social roles.
  - This syndrome may occur with somatic symptoms and is related to a specific incident.





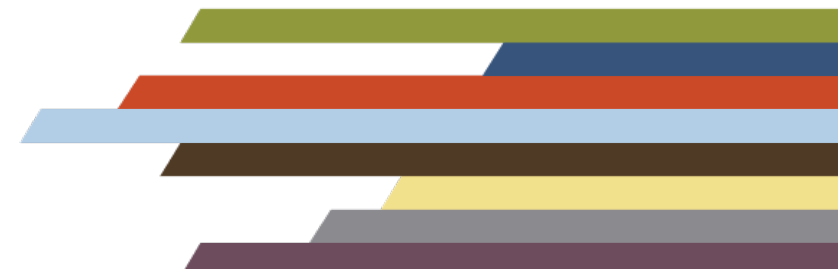
# APPLICATION

## Case Example



# Video

- *No Soy Loco I'm Not Crazy: Understanding the Stigma of Mental Illness in Latinos*
- <https://youtu.be/hEtTIDKHWYA>





National Hispanic and Latino

**MHTTC**

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Ibis Carrión, Psy.D.  
Director

[ibis.carrion@uccaribe.edu](mailto:ibis.carrion@uccaribe.edu)

Angel Casillas, MHS  
Project Manager

[angel.casillas@uccaribe.edu](mailto:angel.casillas@uccaribe.edu)

Your opinion is important to us! Fill out your evaluation forms, it only takes a couple of minutes! Just scan this code with your smartphone. Don't worry if you can't - an email will be sent to you with the link.



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PJ357DD>

## Follow Us



@hilaMHTTC



## Website:

<http://www.mhttcnetwork.org/hispaniclatino/>

Email: [hispaniclatino@mhttcnetwork.org](mailto:hispaniclatino@mhttcnetwork.org)

# Reference

American Psychiatric Association (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

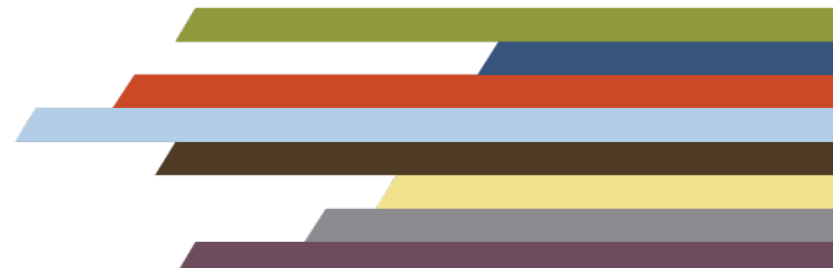
Cambridge Dictionary (2019). <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/culturally-responsive>

Cross, T. L., Bazron, B. J., Dennis, K. W., & Isaacs, M. R. (1989). *Towards a culturally competent system of care: a monograph on effective services for minority children who are severely emotionally disturbed*, Vol. 1. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Child Development Center.

Falicov, C. (2014). *Latino families in therapy*. (2nd Ed.) New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Goode, T. W. (2004). *Promoting Cultural & Linguistic Competency Checklist for Personnel Providing Services and Supports in Early Intervention and Early Childhood Settings*.

Hinton, D., & Lewis-Fernandez, R., (2010). Idioms of distress among trauma survivors: Subtypes and clinical utility. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 34, 209-218.



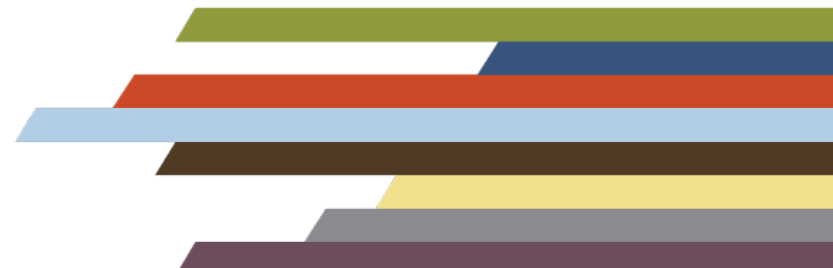
# Reference

Lewis-Fernandez, R., Gorritz, M., Raggio, G., Pelaez, C., Chen, H., Guarnaccia, P. (2010). Association of trauma-related disorders and dissociation with four idioms of distress among Latino psychiatric outpatients. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 34, 219-243.

Lima-Nogueira, B., de Jesus-Mari, J., & Razzouk, D. (2015). Cultural –bound syndrome spanish speaking in Latin America: the case of nervios, susto and ataque de nervios. *Archives of clinical psychiatry*, 42(6). <https://www.archivespsy.com/article/42-6/culture-bound-syndromes-in-spanish-speaking-latin-america-the-case-of-nervios-susto-and-ataques-de-nervios/>

Sadock, B., Sadock, V. & Ruiz, P. (2017). *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry*, 10th ed. Wolters Kluwer.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014) *Improving cultural competence*. Treatment improvement protocol (TIP) series, No. 59. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK248423/>



# Other Resources

- What's the Deal with Latinos NOT Talking about MENTAL HEALTH?. The Kat Call <https://youtu.be/gGBOhQJ9qvY>
- Mental Health, Stigma & the Latinx Comunidad [The LatinXpert ep. 14] <https://youtu.be/4S9-GOfaC3E>
- <https://world-trust.org/product/healing-justice/#prettyPhoto>
- Cracking the Codes-The System of Racial Inequity-  
<https://youtu.be/37pbtz46FSU>
- <https://crackingthecodes.org>

