

# Cultural & Linguistic Competency & Equity: From A Mental Health Perspective

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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 to include other boards and committees. In addition, Dr. Romero completed his doctoral studies at the University of New Mexico in Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Studies with a focus on analyzing legal discourse through a critical race theory lens.

Dr. Romero has been a trainer and consultant for the NHL-MHTTC for the last 10 years, in addition he is a National trainer for Clare|Matrix, formerly the Matrix Institute, for the last 12 years. He is focused on culturally appropriate treatment while focusing on reducing health disparities for people of color. Lastly, Dr. Romero is focused on the intersections of racism, discrimination, and the impact of racialized legal discourse on people of color.

# Co-Sponsor Slide



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 AND  
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)



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# Authors Disclose Conflicts of Interest

- No conflict of interest to disclose.

# Learning Objectives:

- Identify basic cultural considerations for Hispanic and Latino youth and families.
- Describe and understand contextual meaning in language use.
- Know how utterances, signs and symbols inform how clients **READ THE WORLD**; literacy.
- Realize how important Language is in the delivery of mental health services, **LANGUAGE MATTERS!**
- Become aware and review CLAS Standards.

# Contextual Meaning

- Contextual and historical meaning that has been given to words is of great significance when considering literacy and the assignment of a contextual meaning.
- This can also be the ability to go beyond the words on the sheet of a paper to understand the words as they pertain to self, and the projection of self as it relates to others.
- In certain cultures, words and the use of words can only be used in certain sacred spaces, thus, creating and assigning an even more specific cultural and historical meaning



# Bakhtin (1986) explains...

language in two genres; the primary and the secondary genres. The primary is typically spoken and the secondary is typically written., the very interrelations between primary and secondary genres and the process of historical formation of the latter shed light on the nature of utterance (and above all on the complex problem of the interrelations among language, ideology, and world view) (pg. 262)

For example, in many Latinx populations the history of colonization, the immigration journey of the generation(s) before them, or their own journey, acculturation, and the way they interpret the United States all inform the way they READ THE WORLD.

# Utterances Symbols and Systems

READING THE WORLD...How does each client and/or family read the world? What does the world around them tell them about their existence?

# As Miles Myers (1996) explains:

The ideas of English and English language arts grow out of the domains of literature and public discourse (radio commercials, TV public debates and panels, cereal boxes, newspapers, posters, magazines) and are expressed in the concepts of love, hate, envy, and friendship. (pg. 305)

# Language Matters

# Institutions, School Personnel & Providers May Exacerbate Mental Health Symptoms for Latinx Communities

- LANGUAGE MATTERS
- SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DISCOURSE
- RACIAL MICRO-AGGRESSIONS
- EXPLICIT RACISM

# Language Matters

1. Practices: Using language, discourse and rhetoric to continue to oppress minorities and further perpetuate the dichotomy of US vs THEM-a very significant and long-term strategy of racists and racism in DIVIDE & CONQUER, Examples: from the highest officials in the current US administration: Their Language Matters, language matters!

Examples: “criminal” “illegal alien” “illegal immigrants” “violent protestors” vs. “fine people” “peaceful protestors” “those kids”

# Social and Institutional Language

2. Policies: The use of language in policy matter, especially when it comes to resource allocation. Us vs Them, Theirs vs Ours... The order of the race groups in a document matter, as well as those that are left out of documents matter (Why are certain racial groups excluded from documents?). “Othering” groups within policy as legal discourse has cemented people of colors place since prior to colonization. This includes schools.

\*\*School tracking: AP students, Special Education, Profiling



# Explicit Racism

- Racial Profiling & Discrimination
- Broken Window Policing (In Schools: ALL instances of misconduct are referred to Probation or the Courts)
- Zero Tolerance
- Academic Tracking
- Militarized Police/Policing in Schools

# Racial Microaggressions

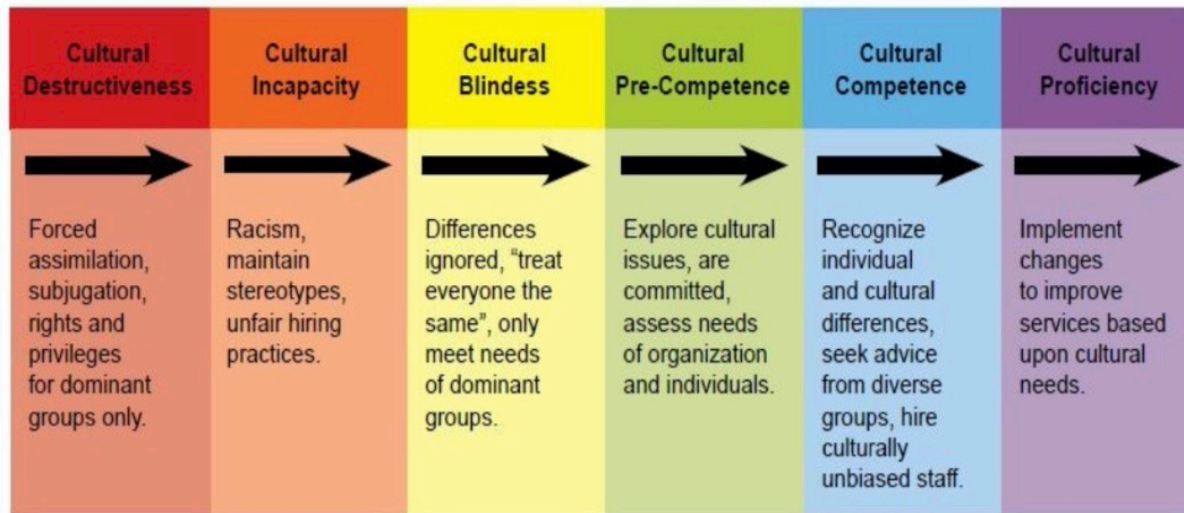
When speaking TO A PERSON OF COLOR,

- “you speak well!”
- “Where are you from...?”
- ”You speak good English.”
- Talking behind a person/students/clients/families back to other professionals or staff about racial identifiers or stereotypes but unwilling to speak directly to the person/students/clients/families. Passing notes or talking when a person of color is speaking without giving them your attention, etc.

# Additional Reminders

## CULTURAL PROFICIENCY LEADS TO CULTURAL HUMILITY & ACTION

Continuum of Cultural Competency



# Additional Reminders

C.L.A.S.

Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Services

**The enhanced National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health Care are issued by the USDHHS' Office of Minority Health to advance health equity, improve quality and eliminate health care disparities by establishing a blueprint to implement culturally and linguistically appropriate services.**

**Source: OMH, 2016**

# Fifteen Standards

...

Principal Standard,

- Provide effective, equitable, understandable and respectful quality care and services that are responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy and other communication needs.

**This is a declaration that  
federally funded programs  
adhere to the CLAS standards.**

**Who enforces this...?**

# CLAS Standards Implementation Recommendation

1. Increase the depth, clarity, and concrete action steps in strategic planning for National CLAS Standards implementation.
2. Make needs assessments a priority, use them to drive strategic planning and activities for National CLAS Standards implementation, and conduct them frequently enough to permit course-correction if activities are not meeting identified needs.
3. Incorporate evaluation of patient and population outcomes, in addition to evaluation of process measures, into National CLAS Standards implementation.
4. Assess the extent to which cultural and linguistic competency efforts are guided by the comprehensive framework of the National CLAS Standards.



# Implementation Recommendations Cont.

5. Consider ways to streamline dissemination of National CLAS Standards implementation activities by using the National CLAS Standards as a framework for organizing all CLAS activities and developing a website that combines resources, reports, and strategic plans.



# References

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health. (2016). National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care: Compendium of State-Sponsored National CLAS Standards Implementation Activities. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

# Please register!



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May 14, 2021  
9:30AM-12:00PM  
Pacific Time



Register:  
<http://bit.ly/LatinoMHS>

## LATINX MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT



### Mental Health Issues in the Latino Communities

Inma Iglesias, LICSW, LCSW-C, RPT-S



### Equity Mental Health: Breaking barriers to access mental health treatment & increase community awareness about the Latino populations

Luis R. Torres, Ph.D.



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