



Enhancing Mental Health Services for the Hispanic and Latinx Community Webinar Series

The Northeast and Caribbean MHTTC and the Latino Mental Health Association of New Jersey are proud to offer a free webinar series for professionals in the behavioral health workforce designed to spotlight different aspects of mental health services for the Latinx/Hispanic community and adequately respond to their unique mental health needs.

This webinar series will explore the range of experiences that may lead to mental health conditions such as immigration, acculturation, trauma, and generational conflicts. This series will also highlight the unique institutional and systemic barriers that impede access to mental health services, which result in reduced help-seeking behaviors.



Session 1

March 11, 2022 | 12:00-1:30 pm EST

Identify and discuss the barriers that prevent members of the Hispanic and Latinx community from seeking and accessing mental health services. Presented by Dr. Jesselly De La Cruz.

Session 2

April 13, 2022 | 12:00-1:30 pm EST

Explore the intersectionality and cultural diversities within the Hispanic and Latinx community and how it impacts mental health services with a focus on cultural considerations and trauma histories. Presented by Dr. Azara Santiago Rivera.

Session 3

May 10, 2022 | 12:00-1:30 pm EST

Identify the intersection between the legal system and mental health services as an undocumented member of the Hispanic and Latinx Community. Presented by Dr. Melissa Rivera Marano.

More Information & Registration:

bit.ly/3tcXw4O

Presenters:



Jesselley De La Cruz, DSW, LCSW

Dr. De La Cruz, BA in Political Science (Rider University), MSW (Rutgers University), and DSW (Rutgers University), is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in NJ. She completed a Post-Graduate Certificate in Family Therapy at The Multicultural Family Institute, Inc. in Highland Park, NJ. Having originated from an underprivileged background and being a child of an immigrant family herself, Dr. De La Cruz's education and work has been motivated by her desire to support traditionally underserved populations. Towards that overarching goal, she has worked with Latino advocacy nonprofit agencies. She currently serves as Executive Director for the Latino Action Network Foundation. Her clinical experience includes providing emergency screening of persons in mental health crisis at an inner-city hospital, outpatient and in-home child and family therapy, and clinical consultation for nursing homes with primarily Spanish-speaking residents. In addition, she has extensive experience working in the prevention of child sexual abuse by conducting forensic evaluations, individual, group and family therapy at an intensive outpatient program for court mandated youth who have been sexually abused and/or have fire setting behaviors. Currently, Dr. De La Cruz coordinates the psychological treatment of child sexual abuse survivors and their non-offending families in Hudson County, NJ. As a Practitioner Scholar, her research interests focus on systemic approaches to the prevention and treatment of sexual abuse, and the healing of intergenerational trauma in families through the use of mindfulness-based psychotherapies, play therapy, multi-systemic family therapy, as well as the political empowerment of Latinos in NJ.



Dr. Azara Santiago Rivera

Dr. Santiago Rivera serves as the Coordinator of the Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology at Felician University, Lodi, New Jersey. Also, she earned the status of Emeritus Professor and was the Director of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program in the Department of Psychology at Merrimack College. Before joining the Merrimack community, she held academic appointments at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology (TCSP) as the chair of the Counseling Department in August 2011 and became dean of academic affairs in August 2013 until 2015. Dr. Santiago-Rivera served as the associate dean of the School of Education, University at Albany (NY) from 2001–2004. Among outcomes of her work were initiatives to advance early career faculty with a focus on publishing, teaching strategies and tenure and promotion processes. In addition, she also held faculty positions as a professor, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (2004–2011) and assistant and associate professor, University at Albany [NY] (1992–2004). Her publications and research interests include multicultural competencies in the counseling profession, bilingual therapy, Latinx adults and depression, and the impact of environmental contamination on the biopsychosocial well-being of Native Americans. Her current work involves assessing depression in Latinx adults and the challenges associated with the use of translated measures from English to Spanish. She is a coauthor of 3 books, over 50 peer reviewed articles and book chapters, and has given over 120 presentations/workshops at local, national and international conferences, universities, and organizations. She has held leadership positions in professional organizations such as the Vice-President of the Latino Interest Network of the Association of Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD), and the President of Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) within the American Counseling Association. She is a past-President of the National Latino/a Psychological Association. She is the Founding Editor of the Journal of Latinx Psychology (APA journal) and is a Fellow of Divisions 45 and 17 of APA. In 2014, Dr. Santiago-Rivera received the APA Presidential Citation for outstanding contribution to the profession. Currently, Dr. Santiago Rivera is the President of the Latino Mental Health Association of New Jersey and the Treasurer-Elect of the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education.



Melissa Rivera Marano, Psy.D.

Dr. Melissa Rivera Marano obtained both her Masters and Doctorate degrees in Clinical Psychology from the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology at Rutgers University. Dr. Rivera Marano has provided assessment and therapy services as a Licensed Clinical Psychologist since 2001. In addition to clinical services, during her career she has worked as an administrator of a youth-based community organization and program researcher. Dr. Melissa Rivera Marano is the owner of MRM Psychological Testing and Clinical Services, a group practice with two locations in Monmouth County, NJ. She is also a Part Time Lecturer for the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology, Rutgers University. Dr. Rivera Marano is on medical staff at Monmouth Medical Staff and works as the Psychologist on the inter-disciplinary team for the Regional Newborn Extension Program. Dr. Rivera Marano is published. Publications, presentations and research involve topics about Latinx mental health, cultural values, family and couple's therapy, immigration and assessment. Dr. Rivera Marano is a former Board Trustee on NAMI NJ and former Board member of the New Jersey Psychological Association Foundation of New Jersey. She is an active member of the National Latino Psychological Association, NJ Psychological Association and Monmouth/Ocean County Psychological Association. Dr. Rivera Marano is also a member of NJPA's Committee on Diversity and Inclusion's Immigration Action Group. Currently, Dr. Rivera Marano serves as the Past President of the Latino Mental Health Association of New Jersey.