



# Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project's Living with Love Program

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Supporting, organizing and empowering the indigenous migrant communities in California's Central Coast

## LOCATION AND GROUPS SERVED



Ventura County, CA (Oxnard, Hueneme, Rio area)



- **Latinx / Indigenous Migrants**
  - Mixteco and Zapotec decent
- **Adults**
  - Age 18+ or Emancipated Minors

## OVERVIEW

- **History and origins of Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP)**
  - Lack of linguistically appropriate health services in the community by medical professionals, community leaders and organization founder (Sandy Young)
- **Community Leaders/Health workers (promotoras) integral to MICOP's development**
  - Uncovering the community's strengths and needs
  - Established and strengthened trust and assurance with the community
- **Promotoras observed domestic violence (DV) and mental health needs in the community**
  - MICOP trains promotoras in DV
  - Living with Love curriculum developed in 2013 – collaboration w/ County Mental Health
- **Living with Love (LwL)**
  - Direct Prevention and Early Intervention mental health and domestic violence program
  - Developed for Mexican indigenous populations, including Latinos
  - Addresses depression, anxiety, domestic violence, and socio-cultural & linguistic isolation
  - Eight-week program delivered by promotoras
  - Created by health educator and promotora from the local community
  - Promotoras inform ongoing edits to curriculum and program delivery



## GOALS



**GOAL 1. Increase mental health knowledge and reduce stigmatization of mental health care**

- Common mental health problems
- Perceptions of mental health care



**GOAL 2. Increase knowledge of DV and support resources**

- What constitutes DV; Impact on family wellness
- Safety planning
- Accessing local DV services



**GOAL 3. Reduce social, cultural and linguistic isolation**

- Pride in indigenous Latino identity, communication, social bonds, and social engagement

**GOAL 4. Improve capacity to manage daily stressors**

- Implement cognitive behavioral techniques
- Use meditation, breathing techniques and mindfulness
- Manage anxiety
- Reduce depressive symptoms

**GOAL 5. Improve knowledge of, and connectedness to, mental health services**

- Knowledge of available services in Ventura County
- Confidence in ability to access services for self and/or family members
- Willingness to receive services and/or support family/friends who do so
- Referrals and navigation assistance

## STRATEGIES

- **Maintain High Level of Community Trust**
  - MICOP is an integrated part of the community
- **Grassroots Outreach**
  - Establish personal connections (door-to-door, community meetings, outside schools, laundromats, apartment complexes)
  - Pan y Café in agricultural fields
  - Swap meet & Community Radio Station
- **Promotora as Role Model**
  - Promotora shares their own self-realization journey
  - From the community, To the community
  - Shared life experiences, beliefs, values, language, and cultural knowledge
- **Supportive peer groups**
  - Safe space; confidentiality; encouraged to talk from their own experiences; sit in a circle
  - Focus on the "We" over the "I"
- **Culturally and linguistically appropriate services**
  - Simultaneous interpretation (Spanish and Mixteco)
- **Community Advisory Board**
  - Oversee the project development and evaluation process



## LOCAL EVALUATION APPROACH AND PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- **26 Living with Love Series (8-weeks) Completed as of September 4, 2019**
  - Local and state-wide evaluation alternate (conducted with every other cohort)

### Approach

- Pre, Post and 2-3 Month Follow-Up Surveys
  - Includes select items from Statewide Eval
  - Modified mid-program to address admin challenges, w/ participant & promotora input
- Focus Groups at 2-3 Month Follow-Up

### Participation & Retention

- Baseline surveys = 146
- Follow-up surveys = 107 to date
- 2 or 3 Month Follow-Up Surveys = 35 to date
  - note: multiple cohorts not due for follow-up*
- Focus Group Participants = 55

### Preliminary Findings

Surveys Demonstrate Significant Increases in:

- Perceived *Social Support & Strength of Family Relationships*
- *Cultural Identity*
- *Religion/Spirituality*
- *Knowledge: Depression; Anxiety; Domestic Violence*
- *Familiarity w/ Local Services*
- Confidence in using *coping skills/tools* – GREATEST IMPROVEMENT

Slight decrease in stigma related to mental health challenges and care seeking

Focus Group Participants shared Most Helpful Aspects of the LwL Program

- Family communication skills
- Breathing techniques
- Mindfulness practices
- Learning to go for a walk
- Learning not to over-think

### Participant Characteristics (n=146)

Characteristic	% or Mean
Age	38 yrs (18-75)
Married/Live w Partner	75%
Foreign Born	95%
Years in US*	1-50 yrs
Language Spoken at Home	
Spanish	77%
Mixteco	36%
Zapoteco	3%

\*asked in first version of survey only (n=98)

## NEXT STEPS

- **Expand reach to other counties in CA** through contracts and collaborations
- Ongoing evaluation efforts with long-term goal of **evidence-based program status**
- Certified as a **resource under Family Law**
- Strong focus on **sustainability**

## CONTACTS

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