

Atención Plena and Pláticas:

A Latino Cultural Wealth Approach Youth Mental Wellness



Integral Community Solutions Institute

Location

Fresno County, CA

Groups Served

- Latinx children, youth and families
- Our community-defined approach is the last hope for our student population at the Community Justice Center and other Fresno urban locations
- For our young Latinx population this Program is often the last resort to break the school-to-prison pipeline
- Past experience: high absenteeism, defiant behavior, fighting, drug use, gang involvement, recidivism

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Methods

ATENCIÓN PLENA: MINDFULNESS WITH A LATINO TWIST

The students go through a 12-session Bienestar Curriculum (e.g., anger, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, mindfulness, communication and relationships, grief and loss, self-esteem, wellness, leadership and life skills, and self-compassion). The combination of poetry, lyrics and sound beats, the students kids convey their emotions and feelings via hip hop. Students also go on weekend retreat where they practice mindfulness.

PLÁTICAS (MENTAL HEALTH CONVERSATIONS)

Pláticas, as a practice, is grounded in the Latino Indigenous wisdom tradition that goes back thousands of years. It is a form to transmit knowledge regarding well-being, mental wellness, psychological, and healing trastornos (emotional imbalances), and related themes addressed through familiar cultural formats such as canciones (songs), dichos (sayings), cuentos (stories), and poesía (poetry).

MIXED METHODS EVALUATION

Pre/Post surveys we collected = 128 pre and 142 post surveys for the SWE team. These measures helped us to document mental health improvement over time. The school site from which we collected data (a traditional high school) agreed to share all the relevant school data that we needed, as well as give us access to the youth receiving the treatment for conducting surveys.

Results

Our quantitative findings show the effectiveness of our CDEP over the last three (3) years. Quantitatively, we collected 128 pre and 142 post SWE surveys. In all this data, our findings showed that our CDEP was effective in supporting youth as they improved navigating the school system and improving their mental health and wellness. The SWE survey showed that our CDEP helped youth to improve in accessing the protective factors that help them cope with school and life, and psychological distress and functioning. The SWE data showed improvement in all measures. All in all, we saw growth, excitement about our CDEPs, CDEPs that were delivered effectively, and CDEPs that were positively affecting the lives of youth.

Sample of Findings

Pre, Post, and Change of Protective Factors for Youth, By Mean and Numbers

At present...	Pre/ Post (n)	Pre Mean	Post Mean	Mean Change
your culture gives you strength	123/142	2.14	1.94	+ 0.20
you feel connected to the spiritual/ religious traditions of the culture you were raised in	119/139	2.27	2.07	+ 0.20
your culture is important to you	119/140	1.92	1.75	+ 0.17
your culture helps you to feel good about who you are	119/140	2.03	1.87	+ 0.16

Note: Likert Scale: 1=Strongly Agree; 2=Agree; 3=I am Neutral; 4=Disagree; 5=Strongly Disagree. A +/- system of showing change in growth or decline was used for readability purposes.

Pre, Post, and Change of Protective Factors for Youth During the Past 30 Days, By Means and Numbers

About how often during the past 30 days did you feel...	Pre/ Post (n)	Pre Mean	Post Mean	Mean Change
isolated and alienated from society?	120/140	3.53	3.84	- 0.31
connected to your culture?	122/141	2.34	2.10	+ 0.24
marginalized or excluded from society?	118/140	3.54	3.76	- 0.22
balanced in mind, body, spirit and soul?	118/141	2.55	2.36	+ 0.19

Note: Likert Scale: 1=All the time; 2=Most of the time; 3=Some of the time; 4=A little of the time; 5=None of the time. A +/- system of showing change in growth or decline was used for readability purposes. It is important to note that, for some indicators, a negative change represents an improvement, as it reflects a reduction in undesirable experiences (e.g., isolation or marginalization).

Discussion

- Data showed our CDEP helped youth improve in accessing protective factors that help them cope with school, life, and psychological distress/functioning

- The SWE data showed improvement in all measures.

- We saw growth, excitement about our CDEPs, CDEPs that were delivered effectively, and CDEPs positively affecting the lives of youth

- Results show the importance and effect of our CDEPs and our Bienestar Curriculum

- Our CDEPs changes lives, uplifts youth, and disrupts the school-to-prison pipeline

- Our youth felt a connection in how our Latina/o therapists embedded culture in their delivery and our Bienestar Curriculum

Recommendations

1. We need to continue to offer our CDEP to at risk youth, but also expand to other demographics in our community
2. We need to continue funding, and searching for sustainability efforts, as this program is a significant resource in our community for at risk youth
3. We need to continue to develop our Bienestar to different demographics in our community
4. We now have our Bienestar curriculum written as a manual in English and Spanish, but we need to move forward in translating it in Arabic, Hmong, and Punjabi
5. Need to standardize attendance and dosage tracking of our program, particularly our Bienestar curriculum sessions

California Reducing Disparities Project



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