Mi Hermana’s Keeper: A Workshop on Promising Practices for At-risk and System-involved Latinas

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GOALS OF THIS WORKSHOP

• Review pertinent Literature
• Project Overview & Methodology
• Discussion of Key Findings
• Recommendations based on Findings
• Collaborative Discussion & Considerations for Future Directions
SOUTHWEST KEY PROGRAMS

Mission/Misión:
Opening doors to opportunity so individuals can achieve their dreams

Opening puertas de oportunidad para que todas las personas logren sus sueños

Date Founded: December 1, 1987

Legal Status: Nonprofit 501(c)(3) Organization

Major Programs: Southwest Key operates approximately 75 juvenile justice and family programs, safe shelters for immigrant children, schools, and community initiatives

Headquarters: Austin, Texas

Locations: Texas, Arizona, California, Wisconsin, Georgia, New York, Florida

Quality System: Accredited by The Council on Accreditation

Company Profile
MI HERMANA’S KEEPER INITIATIVE

• In response to White House’s Initiative, My Brother’s Keeper (Obama, 2014)

• We join calls-to-action for inclusion of women and girls
  – My Sister’s Keeper (Morris, 2014)

WHY FOCUS ON LATINAS?

• 1 in 4 girls in U.S. public schools is a Latina
• > 50% school-age females are Latina in Texas, California, and New Mexico
• By 2060, ≈ 1/3 of U.S. female population will be Latina
• “Linchpin of the next generation” – White House Report

“We’re prioritizing them without apology.”

– Stakeholder

MHK INITIATIVE GOALS

• To be gender-specific, culturally responsive, trauma-informed, strengths-based, and developmentally appropriate

• To spotlight the voices of Latinas, Caregivers, and Stakeholders, bringing the lived experiences of at-risk and system-involved Latina adolescents out of the darkness

• To build a system of care that thoughtfully honors and addresses their needs
METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

• 9 focus groups conducted with Latinas, Caregivers, and Stakeholders in Austin, Laredo, and San Antonio

• 11 semi-structured, in-depth supplemental interviews

• Data from 22 Latinas, 18 Caregivers, and 42 Stakeholders
METHODOLOGY

Data Analysis

• Data was audio-recorded, transcribed, translated where necessary, and analyzed using MAXQDA software

• Data was grouped into categories of information (codes) and then grouped into broader perspectives (themes)

• In a feedback forum, themes were refined and used to inform practice recommendations
KEY THEMES FROM FOCUS GROUPS

Experiences of Young Latinas
- Positive and Negatives of Ethnic Identity; Upholding “la Raza”
- Latinas want to Be Heard and Value Respect

Latinas Involvement in Various Systems
- Teachers Need to Change, & Schools Need to Be Culturally Responsive
- Different Caregiver and Youth Views on Being Treated Fairly

Improving Outcomes for Young Latinas
- The Program is Helpful, “You’re There for Us”
- Concern about Acculturation, “Stuck in the Middle”
- Meet Caregivers “Where They Are”
- Stakeholders Call for Systems Change, “This is a Crisis”
THEME: Positives & Negatives of Ethnic Identity, Upholding “la Raza”

RECOMMENDATION: Provide programming that reflects and teaches Latino cultural heritage.
PROVIDE PROGRAMMING THAT REFLECTS AND TEACHES LATINO CULTURAL HERITAGE.

• Speak to families in preferred language.
• Don’t make assumptions that every family is the same because they are Latino.

“You be proud of being a Latina. Showing that little girl that might not speak Spanish how beautiful it is.” – Stakeholder
THEME: Latinas Want to Be Heard and Value Respect

RECOMMENDATION: Provide programming that values respeto and teaches respectful practices.

RECOMMENDATION: Provide programming that supports relational practices.
Provide programming that values respeto and teaches respectful practices.

- Support staff and families in validating the opinions of Latinas.
- Ask Latinas how they want to be respected and validated.
- Hold individual check-ins with Latinas and remind them they are part of the process and in control.
- “Actually listen and not have like a smart comment to say about it, or like laugh at it...Just sit there and listen.” – Latina
PROVIDE PROGRAMMING THAT SUPPORTS RELATIONAL PRACTICES.

• Provide programs with a relational-cultural lens that uphold Latino values, such as *simpatia*.

• Use relational strategies such as listening, empathic responding, and being authentic.

• Focus on the Latinas’ strengths and support empowerment groups.
THEME: Teachers Need to Change and Schools Need to be Culturally Responsive

RECOMMENDATION: Provide programming on culturally responsive school practices.
PROVIDE PROGRAMMING ON CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SCHOOL PRACTICES.

• Take time to ask students about their day and welcome them.

“Like, you know, how they just say ‘Good Morning’ and then they start the lesson. Like, no, like ‘How’s your day?’ Stuff like that. Make [me] feel comfortable.” – Latina

• Support access to cultural capital by promoting communication between Caregivers and school staff.

• Encourage school staff in providing Latinas with curriculum and teaching that incorporates relatable aspects of students’ daily lives.

“There is a disconnect between the education system and our culture...if we’re not doing it in a culturally competent way, to where we acknowledge the culture that they bring with them and their family, then we are putting these students at a disadvantage.”

– Stakeholder
THEME: Different Caregiver and Youth Views on Being Treated Fairly

RECOMMENDATION: Promote anti-racist values.
PROMOTE ANTI-RACIST VALUES.

• Develop programs aimed at reducing implicit racial bias.
• Use anti-discriminatory strategies – learn about individuals before making a judgment, and see the potential for success in each Latina.
• Develop consciousness-raising workshops on undoing racism with school staff.

“We think no matter what you do, they treat you differently.” — Latina

“I feel like they think that we’re bad or something.” — Latina
THEME: The Program is Helpful, “You’re There for Us”

RECOMMENDATION: Provide case management services for the entire family.
PROVIDE CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY.

• Help access essential resources and provide one-on-one counseling.

• Develop or use referrals for “intensive case management” services, such as wraparound services, home visits, and parent workshops.

“They helped us a lot with that. They made sure we had – because like our house had burned down. And so they made sure we had a place, we had food, clothes.” – Latina

“We got help tremendously from all around…to food, and they were going to help us with housing if we needed, and clothing.” – Caregiver
THEME: Concern about Acculturation, “Stuck in the Middle”

RECOMMENDATION: Support cross-generational programming to instill values.
SOUTH WEST KEY PROGRAMS

SUPPORT CROSS-GENERATIONAL PROGRAMMING TO INSTILL VALUES.

• Hold collaborative discussion groups between Caregivers and Latinas on acculturation and transmitting cultural values.

• Establish cross-generational programming.

“Being intentional about creating cross-generational projects, about youth serving elders in some way and creating a space for those things to happen because so often now we don’t have those spaces for them, for that to happen...We match some elders with some youth...and it was beautiful to see that. These young girls helping elders and feeling so proud of it, and bridging...at least for a little while, that gap.”

- Stakeholder
THEME: Meet Caregivers “Where They Are”

RECOMMENDATION: Develop programming for Caregivers to Overcome Obstacles.
DEVELOP PROGRAMMING FOR CAREGIVERS TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES.

• Provide school-based parental involvement programs that include parent-teacher partnerships.
• Provide intensive case management and build supportive rapport with Caregivers.

“How do you get the parents to come to the table? Because sometimes you’ll have parents that are always going to be at the table...If you meet them where they are, and try to open up conversations about what is happening, I think that tends to draw things out and open dialogue.”  -Stakeholder

“I feel like parents are hungry for the help...I’m getting that feedback. They are showing up.”  -Stakeholder
THEME: Stakeholders Call for Systems Change, “This is a Crisis!”

RECOMMENDATION: Support effective systems advocacy.
SUPPORT EFFECTIVE SYSTEMS ADVOCACY.

• Partner with Stakeholders and advocate for equitable resource distribution in schools.
• Collaborate with other agencies serving Latinas.

“We want the whole city – I mean, it needs to be brought to [the mayor]. This is a crisis...This is our robust future workforce, this is our robust creative collateral in this city...When is [this city] ready to take a cultural shift.” – Stakeholder
RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON KEY THEMES

1. Provide programming that reflects and teaches Latino cultural heritage
2. Provide programming that values *respeto* and teaches respectful practices
3. Provide programming that supports relational practices
4. Promote anti-racist values
5. Provide case management services for the entire family
6. Support cross-generational programming to instill values
7. Develop programming for caregivers to overcome obstacles
8. Support Effective Systems Advocacy
“Nothing’s gonna stop me from getting to where I want to be.”

“To become something, to be a better person.”

“My main goal is to go to college because I would be the first to go to college in my family...so, that’s pretty big. I’ve always wanted to be the first one.”

- Our Latinas, “Linchpin of the Next Generation”
For more information contact

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