Latinx College Students

Innovations in Mental Health, Advocacy, and Social Justice Programs

edited by
José Miguel Maldonado
Adrianne L. Johnson

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FOREWORD

"The Latina in me is an ember that blazes forever."
—Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor

In August of 2005, Hurricane Katrina forced approximately 15,000 Latinx children and their families to evacuate from Louisiana as the record-setting storm destroyed their communities. Many families evacuated to Arkansas and within days of displacement, clinics and mental health facilities saw their client numbers dramatically increase. I was a doctoral student at the University of Arkansas–Fayetteville currently, providing assessment, diagnosis, and mental health counseling at a nonprofit community clinic. In the afternoons, I met with Latino and Latina clients, using motions and gestures and purposeful facial expressions to communicate when there were no interpreters available. The trauma of this displacement transcended our language barriers and cultural differences. The cohort of children displaced by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 are now adults, many in college, and all of whom share a historical bond which has carried them into their adulthood in the United States. As they build their careers and families, the Latinx population navigates racism, violence, and social injustices while balancing cultural and intersectional identities. I have considered myself a social justice advocate for many years. I have developed culturally informed graduate course content, designed and implemented professional anti-oppressive practice trainings on institutional oppression, and published on

topics of education, DEI, and mental health. Throughout my life journey, I have learned through this work that I don't know enough, and there's more for me to do. I feel humbled and honored to have worked with the authors of this text, each of whom are authorities in their field and have dedicated their work to illustrating key issues which shape the Latinx experience. During this process, I reflected on our counseling dispositions of "we" where the mentality of counselors advance social and structural changes in mental health in college settings. I think one of the challenges is getting people from different corners in our society to see the "we" instead of "I." My everlasting hope is that this textbook adds to best practices and to the research literature on the mental health of Latinx students and their families. Overseeing this textbook, I have also realized that the opportunity exists as our society continues to recognize more than ever that we are unique individuals with converging identities. I would say that if our society can embrace that kind of "we," then all of us together can advocate towards a unified position of social justice for a Latinx community that is in dire need of advocacy. I also arrived at a mindset where we must actively be engaged with others inside and outside our field including landmark colleges and universities. This Latinx textbook targeted more productive dialogue with university deans, clinical mental health counselors, and counselor educators. I project this relevant work to reveal culturally competent strategies and a new order of social change for Latinx students. My internal reflections include challenging the systemic structures of oppression collectively examining our own biases and disrupting the "status quo" of hidden, discriminatory practices inflicted upon Latinx students. Finally, building upon the knowledge of pioneering work of Latinx authors, this textbook aims to change the failing infrastructure of our mental health practices and social justice initiatives.

The entirety of this work will provide a thorough conceptualization regarding various models of intervention, support, and mental health counseling for Latinx student communities. I fully understand the intellectual values that lie in sharing our courageous conversations. Ultimately, I stand amazed at the opportunity for us to propel into a new space of inclusion for Latinx communities. These developing ideas clearly and systemically are poised to engage others to stand in solidarity for Latinx students.

—Adrianne L. Johnson

PREFACE

Empowered Voices Unite as One

There is so much fear and hate. We must negate it with active, courageous love.
—Latina Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

As we are tapping the surface for greater understanding of Latinx students in college, it is counselor educators and mental health advocates that bear the ultimate responsibility to provide advocacy and social justice at all levels of support and intervention. All over the world, we are witnessing unprecedented levels of racism and discrimination inflicted upon Latin American communities ranging from anti-immigration policies, exclusionary tactics, and a general sentiment of, "You are not welcome here."

Derived from a deep calling to social justice in action, we humbly called upon a diverse group of influential authors in academia to tackle a wide range of converging topics. These writers illuminated new strategies and an inclusive lens about Latinx cultural ideology, machismo, and the impact of acculturation on the mental health of Latinx students. The racism and discrimination have become more aggressive with the influx of Latinx families crossing the borders of the United States to make a better life than the one they had at home. Herein lies the struggle, where we are just tapping the surface of new paradigm shifts in population growth among Latinx individuals within local neighborhoods and communities.

With dramatically increasing numbers of Latinx students entering college, our hope rests on the history and present day, transformative methods in education and counseling fields. Together, we believe this textbook aligns with a stronger sense of self-awareness and social justice advocacy. We affirm a proactive Stan's to dismantling cultural bias while strengthening the identity of Latinx communities. It is within the pages of this textbook that we focus on self-awareness, culturally relevant mental health counseling, and a better direction on training and best practices in college settings. I am not exempt to this process of self-discovery and awareness. With every ounce of optimism and hope for the future, we are called to continue this important work. Our collective advocacy is connecting a better understanding of acculturation processes and mental health programs that lead to a stronger sense of connection and inclusion for Latinx students.

The focus of this textbook is to develop the growing research of literature about the cultural ideology and mental health advocacy needed for Latinx students all across colleges and universities. This text can serve as a primary and foundational component to providing mental health counseling with culturally competent counseling and programs. The chapter offers specifically provided practical strategies and a framework for structuring university programs to meet the needs of Latinx students. With innovative topics in (a) Latino machismo, (b) Latinx cultural ideology, (c) exclusionary practices Latinx, (d) converging identities, (e) gender socialization and disparities, (f) career counseling, (g) and mental health of undocumented and DACAmented Latino males. The creation of new programs, cultural self-awareness, and evidence-based counseling found in the chapters can make the difference soon for university administrators and mental health counselors advocating for Latinx students.

CHAPTER 1

LATINX AND THE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

Alan Acosta

When analyzing the experience of Latino males, it is important to understand what dynamics of Latino masculinity may be influencing identity development. One part of Latino masculinity often discussed but not fully understood is machismo. The concept of machismo is one of the most complex, nuanced, and multifaceted phenomena to understand, particularly with respect to its association within the Latino/a/x community. The effects and consequences of machismo in how it is displayed, experienced, and how it relates to Latino male masculinity and identity is crucial to understand in order to holistically support this important demographic. This chapter will review research and literature related to Latino masculinity, particularly within the construct of machismo, situating machismo within the context of the history, contemporary trends, and cultural ideology of the Latino/a/x community.

A brief word about the presentation of Spanish words in this chapter. In most printed English texts, Spanish words are italicized. English texts overwhelmingly italicize Spanish words to indicate a difference in the usage,

meaning, significance, and importance of Spanish relative and subordinate to English (Casillas, 2014; Hurtado & Sinha, 2016). This chapter will not italicize Spanish words (unless presenting a direct quote), endorsing Casillas' (2014) perspective:

> I have chosen not to signal to the reader by way of italics when Spanish is written, since, in my opinion, this supports U.S.-based class, racial, and linguistic hierarchies, particularly regarding Spanish. The visually marked difference to reflect the shift from English to Spanish interrupts the flow of the text. It assumes that readers are monolingual in English. It differentiates Spanish while affirming English as the norm. I privilege the bilingual reader by refusing to italicize Spanish. (p. xiii)

LATINO MACHISMO: WHAT IS IT?

The concept of machismo, particularly its connection to Latino males and masculinity, has been studied, analyzed, conceptualized, and reframed in the literature throughout the last 50 years (Cowan, 2017), and is examined by Latinx and non-Latinx researchers. While Latino masculinity can be explored without specifically focusing on machismo (or its synonyms, macho or machista), it can be difficult to find literature—whether a dissertation, journal article, or book—about Latino masculinity that does not in some way grapple with the concept of machismo. In fact, there are entire texts dedicated to understanding Latino masculinity and its connection to machismo better (Abalos, 2002; Gonzalez, 1996; Hurtado & Sinha, 2016; Mirandé, 1997).

No singular, common definition of machismo exists, but scholars have described it in various ways (Cowan, 2017; Hurtado & Sinha, 2016). Most literature, particularly prior to the early-to-mid 2000s, connects and describes machismo with negative connotations. Often, machismo is associated with physically and verbally aggressive, angry, hostile, homophobic, transphobic, and sexist behaviors (Arciniega et al., 2008; Cowan, 2017; Gonzalez, 1996; Hurtado & Sinha, 2016; Patrón, 2021; Saez et al., 2009; Walters & Valenzuela, 2020). Beyond forms of discrimination and hate, machismo is also routinely linked to the idea of being more manly. This connection often is displayed as perceived strength, toughness, emotional stoicism, virility, and hypersexuality. Literature points to numerous stereotypical examples of the overly masculine Latino male and his connection to negative machismo, including the "Latin lover" trope—a proclivity for numerous sexual conquests, particularly of women, a propensity for fathering many children, and an extreme aversion to any form of non-heteronormative sexuality (Hurtado & Sinha, 2016; Patrón, 2021; Peña-Talamantes, 2013; Saez

et al., 2009). Many scholars situate their research about machismo within the structure of either trying to understand these negative stereotypes or attempting to deconstruct it (Arciniega et al., 2008).

When attempting to understand machismo, it should be noted there are scholars that push back against its negative-only construct and implications for masculinity. Scholars with this perspective argue most machismo-focused literature often ignores its positive aspects, including embracing toughness, care for women, thoughtfulness, and sensitivity (Arciniega et al., 2008; Falicov, 2010; Liang et al., 2010). Mirandé (1997) mentions numerous positive qualities of machismo, including "courage, valor, honor, sincerity, respect, pride, humility, and responsibility" (p. 72). It has also been argued reconceptualizing machismo provides Latino males with the ability to reforge sexual orientations, challenge traditional conceptions of sexuality and sexual activity, and engaging in macho flexibility—a process of interaction between gender, sexuality, and the creation of progressive gendered sexual identities (Peña-Talamantes, 2013).

In studies on machismo, the negative, overperforming masculine traits are shown to have negative impacts on the sense of self, identity, and mental health of Latino males (Arciniega et al., 2008; Patrón, 2021). It is difficult to find studies demonstrating or highlighting the positive aspects to the oft discussed braggadocious swagger most people associate with machismo. For the purposes of this chapter, machismo is conceived of as the embodiment of Latino male chauvinism, dominance, and aggression, and acknowledges its detrimental impact on the psychosocial development of Latino males (Abalos, 2002; Hurtado & Sinha, 2016).

HISTORY

The history of Latino masculinity and identity is complicated. While there are many areas of the history of Latino masculinity and identity that could be discussed, the following aspects will be focused on specifically: cultural values, machismo, familismo, respeto, authority, honor, and generational inheritance.

Cultural Values

There are many values specific to the Latino/a/x community which set it apart from other communities of color. Some of those values include family—having a collectivist mindset as opposed to an individualist focus—and creative expressions specific to their country or countries of origin—such as music, dance, food, advertisements, celebrations, and art (Acosta & Guthrie,

2020, 2021; Falicov, 2001). These various values can have a profound impact on Latino masculinity and identity. Some literature indicates these cultural values are essential elements of how Latino males see themselves as leaders (Acosta & Guthrie, 2020) and are potentially the origin for models of masculine or hypermasculine identity (Walters & Valenzuela, 2020).

One of the most essential values in the Latino/a/x culture identified in the literature centers on the Spanish language (Bordas, 2012, 2013; Guardia & Evans, 2008; Ortiz, 2004; Torres, 2003, 2004; Valverde, 2007). As a language, Spanish is often inherited from one generation to the next at much higher levels compared to other linguistic racial, ethnic, or minoritized groups (Oh & Au, 2005), making its usage an important part of a Latino/a/x identity; it should be noted that according to Oh and Au (2005), more younger Latino/a/x individuals are preferencing English over their heritage language, and heritage language can be lost after a few generations are born in the United States. Torres (2004) observed that college students who speak Spanish are more likely to identify as Latino/a, and Guardia and Evans (2008) discovered Latino students in higher education extracurricular settings who knew and spoke Spanish found an additional connection to each other. The use of the Spanish language is often one of the first aspects anyone inside and outside of the Latino/a/x community points to when referencing this vibrant community. It is often used as an expression and embodiment of Latino masculinity and machismo.

Machismo

The history of machismo is one of interesting evolution. Cowan (2017) highlights the history of how machismo as a concept has been presented and embodied in English society for the last 50 years, and he shares social science scholars as far back as the 1950s used machismo as a means of perpetuating stereotypes, which is a significant reason the word acquired a negative connotation and Latin American masculinities became pathologized. He observes the various uses of the word in numerous disparate contexts has made operationalizing machismo increasingly difficult, noting scholars over the last 40 years have mostly studied machismo as a stigma that has only evolved into a more complicated dynamic.

The overwhelmingly negative stereotypes upon which machismo has been built often overshadowed and distorted substantive conversations about Latino masculinity (Hurtado & Sinha, 2016; Walters & Valenzuela, 2020). Cowan (2017) asserts machismo has become one of if not the foundational paradigm upon which most masculinity studies—particularly within but even beyond the Latin American community—have been based. Some research indicates machismo has either created or inhibited gender

role conflict for and among Latino men (Liang et al., 2010). Often, it is difficult for Latino men to express their manliness appropriately or fully—inclusive of "feminine" aspects—because of this conflict (Patrón, 2021; Peña-Talamantes, 2013; Saez et al., 2009).

Contemporarily, more texts focus less on defining machismo as they do on reconstructing or deconstructing its meaning and influence on Latino masculinity or Latino male identity (Abalos, 2002; Gonzalez, 1996; Mirandé, 1997), and scholars are engaging in research challenging this dominant narrative regarding machismo and its impacts on Latino males (Arciniega et al., 2008; Liang et al., 2010; Mirandé, 1997; Walters & Valenzuela, 2020). Research is also showing more and more Latino males find the negative connotations, tropes, and stereotypes associated with machismo not only unapplicable to their experience, but they reject it as a form of desirable masculinity (Hurtado & Sinha, 2016; Sáenz et al., 2018). Just as it has for over 50 years, machismo and all its correlated meanings and consequences for Latino masculinity will continue to evolve in the future.

Familismo: Family Above Self

Another important core value of the Latino/a/x culture is familismo, which is critical to understand when discussing Latino males, masculinity, machismo, and Latino mental health since many Latino/a/x individuals turn to their families for support (Piña-Watson et al., 2013). In a broad sense, the concept of familismo is "the strong identification and attachment of persons with their nuclear and extended families" (Smith-Morris et al., 2012, p. 36), with the individual often placing the needs of the entire family ahead of their own (Patrón, 2021). Calzada et al. (2012) go one step further by defining familismo in two parts: attitudinal and behavioral. They expound:

> Attitudinal *familismo* refers to feelings of loyalty, solidarity, and reciprocity among family members, comprising four core components: (a) belief that *family comes before the individual*, (b) *familial interconnectedness*, (c) belief in *family reciprocity*, and (d) belief in *familial honor*. Behavioral *familismo* refers to the behaviors that reflect these beliefs, such as family help with childrearing. (p. 1697)

Scholars cite numerous potential positive impacts of familismo on Latino families, including lower rates of substance use, lower rates of behavior problems, better psychological adjustment, better community engagement, higher academic effort in school, and a positive support of children's development (Calzada et al., 2012; Patrón, 2021; Pérez & Taylor, 2016; Piña-Watson et al., 2013; Sáenz et al., 2018). Research shows extended family can play an integral role in Latino males' academic success (Pérez & Taylor, 2016). However, familismo is also linked to negative impacts, including

increased adverse consequences due to familial conflict, increased pressure to contribute to families financially, lower collegiate enrollment, and is considered a contributor to the White–Latino/a/x educational attainment gap in higher education (Calzada et al., 2012; Patrón, 2021; Piña-Watson et al., 2013; Sáenz et al., 2018).

Additionally, familismo has been connected to Latino masculinity and machismo by scholars. It is noted Latino males tend to be considered family oriented, which highlights their nurturing side as fathers, providing a loving and affectionate contrast to the label of the stoic, emotionally unavailable Latino father (Sáenz et al., 2018). However, there are negative aspects of familismo in relation to Latino masculinity—as among Latino males who identify as queer—familismo can result in conflict over sexuality experiences. This tension can result in keeping sexuality and sexual identity hidden as well as the need to be strategic in how to come out to family members (Patrón, 2021). While the importance of family can influence individuals from all racial and ethnic groups, the familismo value for the Latino/a/x community is crucial in understanding Latino masculinity.

Respeto (Respect)

Respeto, or respect, is often considered an important value not just to Latino males but to the Latino/a/x community. Bordas (2013) identifies having respeto as one of the core values of the Latino community and an essential part of how Latino/a/x individuals demonstrate their leadership abilities. In their study on Latino males and leadership, Acosta and Guthrie (2021) found some participants expressed they were uncomfortable being called leaders because they were raised to be respectful and humble. These studies are a few examples of the extent to which respeto is embedded in the Latino/a/x culture.

In several research studies, respeto is linked in a positive manner with machismo and Latino male identity. Walters and Valenzuela (2020) found Latino males showed respeto by not embedding the negative stereotypes associated with machismo into their romantic relationships, limiting themselves and their partners emotionally. Additionally, their respondents shared showing respeto to others was a core tenet of masculinity, and respondents were willing to show respect to gay men even if they did not agree with their sexual orientation (Walters & Valenzuela, 2020).

Authority

Authority is a value identified in the literature as linked to Latino males, machismo, and Latino masculinity (Acosta & Guthrie, 2020; Patrón, 2021).

Latino males are often thought of and referred to as the "head of the household"—the person in charge of the nuclear family. This authority has stereotypically been coupled with machismo and demonstrated by the Latino male exerting that authority in a brutal, abusive, sometimes violent manner (Abalos, 2002; Hurtado & Sinha, 2016; Mirandé, 1997). Additionally, Patrón (2021) notes one element of familismo is the demand of respect for authoritative positionality. When looking at how Latino males display leadership, Latino males would connect their leadership identity with a formal leadership position holding authority over others (Acosta & Guthrie, 2020, 2021). In recent scholarship, Latino males have rejected traditional notions of masculinity perpetuating authoritative dominance, particularly within romantic relationships (Walters & Valenzuela, 2020), offering an example of the rejection of the concept of the Latino male as beholden to and exercising authority over others.

Helping to make Latino males be successful requires knowledge of the history, values, and cultural nuances that influence their identity and development. Understanding these various elements and the complexities impacting them allows for others to assist Latino males in feeling empowered and supported.

CONTEMPORARY TRENDS

When discussing the Latino/a/x population, it is important to be clear on what is meant when using the term Latino/a/x—as how to classify people of Latin origin has been the subject of much debate in the literature (Gracia, 2000; Hinojosa, 2016; Lozano, 2015; Roth, 2012). One of the best definitions, and the one this chapter uses, is stated by Salinas et al. (2020): "As a group, Latinx/a/o are comprised of native and foreign-born residents who trace their origins to Puerto Rico and approximately 20 countries, including Mexico, Cuba, and others, throughout the Caribbean and Central and South America" (p. 9). It is also debated in the literature as to whether to classify Latino/a/x people as its own race, with some scholars making the case it is (Lozano, 2015; Oquendo, 1995; Roth, 2012), while others argue it is not (Beltrán, 2010; Bordas, 2013; Guardia, 2015; Hinojosa, 2016).

The Latino community is among the fastest growing populations in the United States, and it will continue to grow in the future (Flores et al., 2017; Oh & Au, 2015; Page, 2013; Roth, 2012; Sáenz et al., 2016). Being aware of the contemporary trends most relevant to the Latino/a/x community can be informative in providing the most effective support to Latino males. While there are numerous trends related to the Latino population that can be analyzed, the following contemporary salient issues include: the term

Latinx, Latinos' socioeconomic impact, the impact of migration, and the mental health of Latinos.

Latinx

Most of the Spanish language is gendered, with masculine and feminine prefixes and articles throughout the language. Recent critical scholarship has identified Latinx (pronounced La-teen-x) as an inclusive descriptor of individuals of Latin American descent whose gender identity and expression exist outside of the masculine and feminine binary (Gómez-Barrias & Fiol-Matta, 2014; Monzó, 2016; Torres et al., 2019). Latinx first emerged in 2004 but regained prominence in 2015 (Gamio Cuervo, 2016). Salinas et al. (2020) argue Latinx's popularity is likely due to its use and spread via social media and other popular media outlets, which also resulted in having a positive impact on its increased usage in academia. Usage of the term is steadily increasing (Salinas & Lozano, 2019; Torres et al., 2019), although Salinas et al. (2020) acknowledge Latinx is likely most heavily used contemporarily by researchers in academia, confining its usage to research journals and conferences. Salinas (2020) further notes in his study that participants did not use the term Latinx in their home communities, and there is an ongoing debate about the applicability of Latinx to this community (de Onis, 2017). Additionally, Torres et al. (2019) state Latinx has detractors: "Some critics consider it to be another form of linguistic imperialism; specifically, U.S.-born Latinos imposing new language on predominantly Spanish-speaking Latinos who may struggle to use or pronounce the term *Latinx*" (p. 2). The debate over the usage and relevancy of Latinx as a descriptor for this population is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

Socioeconomic Impact

Though many Latino/a/x individuals migrate to the United States for financial concerns (Calzada et al., 2012), the Latino/a/x community, broadly—and Latino males, specifically—in the United States face significant socioeconomic barriers to success (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004; Sáenz et al., 2016). These socioeconomic barriers to social mobility and success include the decline of a traditional nuclear family, family size, the significant percentage of the Latino/a/x community living in poverty, the significant number of Latino/a/x individuals working "blue collar" jobs, and language barrier considerations (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004). How to support the Latino/a/x community in managing these socioeconomic barriers

is a critical concern for the United States going forward (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004).

The most effective and impactful way to improve the socioeconomic impact of the Latino/a/x population, including Latino males, is to expand their educational attainment—particularly at the postsecondary level (Cabrera et al., 2016; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009, 2011, 2012; Sáenz et al., 2016). Despite increasing enrollment of the Latino/a/x population at higher education institutions over the last 20 years (Page, 2013), Latino males continue to lag behind their peers, often due to issues with integrating into predominantly White institutions, difficulties with psychosocial adjustments, difficulties in maintaining familial ties, and financial constraints (Acosta & Guthrie, 2020; Pérez & Taylor, 2016; Sáenz et al., 2016). If higher education institutions are serious about supporting Latino males, they will find ways to sustain their success. Mechanisms for increasing the retention and graduation of Latino males include increasing involvement in extracurricular activities, strengthening connections with faculty, and providing experiential learning opportunities (Acosta & Guthrie, 2020; Pérez & Taylor, 2016; Sáenz et al., 2016).

Increasing the educational attainment of Latino males provides them with socioeconomic alternatives to prison, the military, or the workforce (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009). It also provides them a means to increase their social mobility and earning and buying power (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004). It is in the United States's interests to support Latino males' socioeconomic improvement through educational attainment in the future, as doing so would alleviate the stress of the costs associated in providing societal resources to low socioeconomic Latino/a/x individuals, including health care and emergency response costs (St. John, 2003).

Migration Impact

Immigration to the United States overall is growing (Oh & Au, 2005), and Latino/a/x individuals are among the fastest growing immigrant groups in the United States (Lueck & Wilson, 2011)—making migration an important issue affecting the Latino/a/x community (Calzada et al., 2012; Smith-Morris et al., 2012). Members of the Latino/a/x community migrate to the United States for a number of reasons, including financial considerations, increased opportunity for academic achievement—particularly among children—and safety concerns (Arriagada, 2005; Calzada et al., 2012; Salinas et al., 2020).

Considered by some to be a potentially continuous process with varying degrees of obligation over the lifespan (Smith-Morris, 2012), research has identified several ways migration has and will continue to impact the

Latino/a/x community. One effect has been a pressure to assimilate to U.S. culture, often from parents to children; migration tends to strengthen the influence of familismo within the Latino/a/x nuclear family (Calzada et al., 2012). Frequently, Latino/a/x parents—particularly if they have migrated to the United States—will insist their children "fit in" to the dominant U.S. culture to help maintain their safety and provide them an opportunity to achieve academically (Calzada et al., 2012). Additionally, migration has been found to have significant impacts—mostly negative—on Latino/a/x mental health, connections to depression, financial status, and academic achievement throughout all educational levels (Institute for Hispanic Health, 2005; Lueck & Wilson, 2011; Ornelas & Perreira, 2011). As increased Latino/a/x migration patterns continue, it will be imperative to identify effective mechanisms for supporting the Latino/a/x community, particularly Latino males, in dealing with its effects.

Mental Health

The mental health of the Latino/a/x population broadly and Latino males specifically has been well-studied in the literature, and it continues to be an area ripe for a multitude of future research (Institute for Hispanic Health, 2005). Mental health is an area of concern for both the Latino/a/x population and mental health professionals (Gamst et al., 2002), as there have been many adverse health effects—including physical—because of mental health stress. Several dynamics have an influence on Latino/a/x individuals' mental health, including migration, acculturation, family obligations, financial concerns, and academic requirements—whether in K–12 schools or postsecondary institutions (Cabassa et al., 2006; Gamst et al., 2002; Institute for Hispanic Health, 2005; Ornelas & Perreira, 2011).

The literature has also identified mental health concerns specifically for Latino males. Studies indicate there is a correlation between measures of machismo or hypermasculinity and negative mental and emotional impacts and risky behaviors (Arciniega et al., 2008; Estrada & Jimenez, 2017; Piña-Watson et al., 2013). Latino males who identify as queer also face several mental health concerns, along with significant dangers to their physical well-being (Patrón, 2021). Some literature suggests the more traditional notions of masculinity and machismo to which Latino males subscribe will lessen the likelihood of seeking support with these concerns, as doing so would violate the standards of toughness and be seen as weak and vulnerable, playing into some of Latino males' biggest fears (Cabrera et al., 2016). There is a growing body of research, however, indicating Latino males are willing to seek out help from a variety of resources, including family and significant others (Calzada et al., 2012; Cerezo et al., 2013; Piña-Watson et al., 2013).