

**NATIONAL LATINO ALLIANCE
FOR THE ELIMINATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
ALIANZA LATINA NACIONAL
PARA ERRADICAR LA VIOLENCIA DOMESTICA**

FORUM ON LATINOS WHO BATTER: HOPE FOR THOSE WHO HURT OTHERS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

On April 27-28, 2001, a diverse group of Latino men and women deeply committed to the elimination of domestic violence in the Latino community gathered in Pasadena, California to participate in the *Forum on Latinos Who Batter: Hope for Those Who Hurt Others*. They came from throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Chile and Guatemala. This national event, officially sponsored by the National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence/Alianza Latina Nacional Para Erradicar La Violencia Doméstica (known as Alianza), was organized in partnership with the National Compadres Network and with the support of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Community Services.

The *Forum on Latinos Who Batter* had six primary objectives:

- Explore through presentation and dialogue theories of why men batter, and the cultural and social contexts in which battering occurs;
- Present seven extant intervention models for working with Latino men who batter;
- Broaden the vision for the elimination of domestic violence beyond criminal justice solutions and toward a more holistic and culturally based approach;
- Promote and model a vision of men and women working together to end domestic violence;
- Provide networking opportunities for Latino/a domestic violence service providers working in the United States and Latin America;
- Provide materials, including resource lists of trainers and materials available in the field for working with men who batter.

Alianza presented forum activities over two days. **On Day One**, a group of forty leaders, survivors, advocates, researchers, and practitioners in the field of domestic violence engaged in a substantive and intense dialogue to try to establish a foundation and a vision for what we are trying to accomplish in this critical area of work. The dialogue revolved around the importance of working with men, the positive and negative influences that culture can have on ending or perpetuating violence, and the impact of colonialism and racism on our families and communities. Challenging questions that were posed and discussed included:

- ¿Cura la cultura?/Does culture heal?
- ¿Cuáles son las cargas y los regalos de la cultura?/What are the burdens and gifts inherent in the culture?
- What in the culture contributes to domestic violence?

- Which of our traditions can help stop the violence; which practices help promote healing?

Day Two consisted of an opening plenary session, workshops based on seven different models for working with men who batter, and a closing question and answer period. An additional 80 participants joined the initial group of 40 who were present during the first day.

DAY ONE – COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

THE BICULTURAL JOURNEY: ¿Cura La Cultura? – Does Culture Heal?

WELCOME AND OPENING SESSION

In the tradition of Alianza’s public meetings and forums, participants took their seats in a large circle that went around the meeting room. Dr. Ricardo Carrillo, one of Alianza’s founders and Director of its Training and Technical Assistance Division, opened the event with a song which he wrote—“Los Regalos”/The Gifts.

Alianza Executive Director Adelita Medina gave a brief synopsis of the organization’s history and background and explained the purpose and significance of the *Forum on Latinos Who Batter: Hope for Those Who Hurt Others* forum. She explained that the forum is the first major project of Alianza’s Training and Technical Assistance Division, and in many ways is breaking new ground. It is a landmark event that brings together in one common place, men and women who have been working independently in their respective cities and towns, on a very critical issue, giving them an opportunity to share and discuss ideas, experiences, strategies, and approaches for working with Latinos who batter and for working together as men and women.

CEREMONIA/OPENING CEREMONY

Also in keeping with an Alianza tradition, the forum included a *Ceremonia*/opening ritual. Isaac Cardenas, an Apache holy man (medicine man) and a member of the National Compadres Network led participants through a ceremony meant to create a sacred working space for the day, where participants could openly share their feelings, thoughts, and experiences. He informed participants about the small altar, which had been set up in a corner of the room, and invited them to place something on it that represented themselves, members of their families, or people they work with. He asked for blessings for all who have lost their lives because of domestic violence and asked that the Creator grant all participants a long life so that they could continue their work: “because the violence is still there in our families, we have work to do with our cousins, our uncles, our mothers and our fathers.”

MORNING DIALOGUE

After the opening ceremony, Dr. Carrillo introduced two prominent practitioners/educators who would provide a historical and pedagogical overview of the theory, practice, cultural context and politics of domestic violence services and policies during the past 30 years, particularly the development of batterer intervention programs: Fernando Mederos, Ed.D., a domestic violence consultant and Alianza Steering Committee member, and Julia Perilla, Ph.D., a clinical

community psychologist and assistant research professor at Georgia State University (GSU) and one of the founders of Alianza, who now heads the organization's Research Center (known as *El Centro*), based at GSU in Atlanta.

Fernando Mederos Ed.D.

Batterer Intervention Programs: Creating Our Own Paths

Dr. Mederos presented an overview of the trajectory that Batterer Intervention Programs have had within the context of a women-led domestic violence movement. He discussed the early stages of public response to domestic violence, which included providing secure shelter for victims of violence and explained how this very rapidly moved toward legislative action and toward institutional advocacy to obtain coordinated protective actions by the police, prosecutors, courts and probation departments on behalf of victims of violence.

As the criminal justice and social services systems became more involved in the issues of domestic violence, the criminalization of batterers became the new norm. It was thought that through direct criminal justice intervention, including arrests and prosecution, probation and mandatory attendance at batterer intervention programs for offenders on probation, men would be compelled to change their behavior.

Dr. Mederos said that feminism helped shape the curricula of the mandated batterer intervention programs (BIPs) which emerged in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, maintaining that the only way to protect battered women was for BIPs to focus on ending violence and holding batterers "accountable." Battering came to be defined not as an impulsive act, but as a *pattern of deliberate coercive control* punctuated by intimidation, psychological abuse, intrusive and one-sided male privilege, and acts of violence.

Dr. Mederos described how these programs developed in a climate of controversy, doubt, and criticism if not outright hostility, and said that if the practitioners who pioneered BIPs had listened to these criticisms, a specialized discipline for re-educating physically abusive and coercive men would not have developed. It was crucial to develop programs that had a fundamental perspective that violence and abusive behavior are never justified and that men from diverse backgrounds had to challenge and change traditions of male supremacy and oppressive practices toward women.

He said that many BIPs focused on stopping male violence and teaching non-abusive alternatives to violent and abusive conduct, but excluded other concerns and factors such as mental health problems, substance abuse, the perpetrator's history of trauma, harassment by the police, or economic aspects.

A more alarming development was that some racial and ethnic groups (particularly Latinos and African Americans) were seen as more violent toward women and less likely to change their behavior. He cited recent surveys that make clear that race and ethnicity are not predictors of intimate partner violence and the differences in the prevalence of physical assault by European Americans, African Americans and Latinos are minor.

There was no recognition, Dr. Mederos said, that culture influences how men from different backgrounds develop their sense of manhood and justify abuse and oppressive relationships with women. Also missing was an understanding that all cultures have values, practices, and traditions of manhood that support healthy and functional relationships.

Dr. Mederos shared examples of research and studies that show that physically abusive men can change, that men can stop violence, that education can affect change, and that men can be recovered for the community. There is a whole sphere of culture and social values and if you address that, and if you teach people different ways of being in a relationship, a very powerful change can occur.

He explained how the reliance on a criminal justice system approach, though an essential milestone for the protection and safety of victims, is now too limiting for the deep work that needs to be done to transform and heal batterers. He said that statistics indicate that 75 percent of intimate partner assaults are not reported to the authorities and asserted that relying only on shelters and on criminal justice interventions with men will not be enough. It is imperative, he asserted, to develop more community-based approaches to support battered women and to educate physically abusive men or men who are at risk of becoming abusers.

Dr. Mederos concluded by saying that despite the evolution over the last 30 years, of ideas and theories about the roots of domestic violence, and the development of systems and approaches to address it, the field needs to expand beyond its current limited approach. It needs to embrace strategies that will not only stop violence, but also bring lifelong healing for all affected and that will take into consideration the resources contained in our culture and in our communities. He said that this also challenges us to look at partner violence in all its forms, including that which occurs in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities, which too often is excluded from discussions on ending domestic violence.

Julia Perilla, Ph.D.

How Culture Can Be Used to Eliminate Violence in the Latino Family

Dr. Julia Perilla discussed the evolution and current state of the theory and practice of domestic violence intervention and prevention strategies, citing examples from her own personal and professional history. She highlighted the potential that exists in Latino communities to create “truly transforming,” structured methods and models that reflect who we are, and that are respectful of our traditions, our cultures, and our diversity, while keeping central the safety of our families.”

Dr. Perilla said that as a clinical community psychologist she has had a lot of unlearning and relearning to do and has had to expand her frame of reference in order to develop alternative approaches and strategies. She credited various world influences that have informed her current approach to working with men who batter and with families affected by domestic violence: the literature, ideas and theories of U.S. and Western peoples, and the empirical work being done by practitioners throughout Puerto Rico, Central America, and South America.

Dr. Perilla suggested that a framework that considers domestic violence as a societal problem and a violation of a person’s basic human rights will allow us to go beyond a paradigm that

begins and ends with patriarchy as the sole root of domestic violence. A human rights framework calls for a much broader and deeper analysis that explores the way in which many forms of oppression and misuse of power—including patriarchy—interact with one another and how this intersection affects the occurrence of domestic violence.

She said that we have to understand how domestic violence is related to our personal and collective history—to issues of poverty, discrimination, gender expectation, religion, homophobia, and immigration. And added that in order to facilitate real transformation in others, practitioners must first undertake the process of personal transformation themselves.

Dr. Perilla also emphasized the need to look carefully and honestly at element of our cultures that support and maintain the use of violence as a viable option in relationships. “We have to deconstruct the myths regarding gender roles and expectations, and together reconstruct new definitions of who we are and what we are meant to be. Fortunately, our culture has along with the negative elements that have been present, a tremendous potential to retake some of the traditional ways of relating that are more respectful and life giving.”

She said that the program that she coordinates in Atlanta, *Caminar Latino*, emerged as a direct result of the input she and her colleagues received from the women in the program, who emerged as strong advocates for services for their children. Some years later the women asked why, if violence was the men’s responsibility, the program wasn’t working with them. The women challenged her to learn to work with the men. They said they did not intend to leave the relationship; they just wanted the violence to stop.

Once Dr. Perilla began including men who batter in the fabric of domestic violence prevention and intervention at *Caminar Latino*, and emerged as a strong advocate for such inclusion, she had to defend, explain and define her position to the larger domestic violence community.

Dr. Perilla said she was hopeful that the innovative work that is taking place within Latino communities will transform the entire domestic violence movement and imbue the field with an understanding of the need for culturally and linguistically competent programs and the inclusion of men in solving the issues related to domestic violence.

Question-and-Answer Session

Dr. Ricardo Carrillo and Rosario Navarrette, a member of Alianza’s Steering Committee, facilitated the question-and-answer period, which followed both presentations. Several questions and issues were posed, some of which received responses and some of which are issues that require further exploration as the field moves toward developing new strategies and approaches for working with Latino men who batter.

- Men who are battered and women who batter—differences in patterns and histories. It was acknowledged that while there are women who use violence against their partners, statistics indicate that the overwhelming majority of batterers are men.
- Research methodologies and contradictory findings including questions on whether psychological abuse escalates as physical abuse diminishes; how problems with self-

reporting affect statistics on battering, and how to weigh children's responses to their parents' participation in intervention strategies.

- The need for extant models, including strategies for healing relationships in addition to the current focus on curtailing/stopping anger and violence.
- The need to find effective alternative intervention strategies to work with men who are more firmly entrenched in their violence behaviors, i.e., those who resort to more coercive behaviors, have higher levels of violence and are more recalcitrant to change; while convincing policy makers and practitioners that “one-size-fits-all” programming cannot meet the needs of all batterers.
- The need to address the domestic violence intervention and prevention needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities through more comprehensive research and the creation of more innovative strategies.

CONOCIMIENTO—ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND INTERCONNECTEDNESS

Following in Alianza's tradition of carrying out a period of *conocimiento*/acknowledgement and interconnectedness, participants were asked to share a few words—citing who they were, who they represented at the forum, and what issues—what *regalos* or *cargas*/gifts or burdens they wanted to place on the altar. One by one the participants shared experiences growing up; they talked about their parents, spouses, children and grandchildren, about the work they do; and about how domestic violence and other forms of violence have touched their lives or the lives of their loved ones, contributing to their unique perspectives, and to their commitment to prevent violence from happening to others. (The full report contains an edited cross-section of statements made, experiences shared, and hopes expressed, with names omitted to protect the speakers' privacy).

THE ROUNDTABLE —AN OPEN DIALOGUE: ¿Cura La Cultura? – Does Culture Heal?

The group reconvened after lunch for an afternoon roundtable to continue searching for clarity regarding the role that culture plays in preventing domestic violence or in perpetuating it.

Positive and Negative Aspects of *La Cultura*

The main question posed was: ¿*Cura la cultura?*/Does Culture heal? Many pointed out that *la cultura* has been used to defend violence, to reinforce secrecy, to allow abuse. They said that certain cultural realities were a key part of the problem, not the solution. Others countered that many aspects of our culture, our traditions, our beliefs, can and have provided positive guidance and influence. They asserted that culture can serve as a protective factor; it can provide protection from involvement in unhealthy and destructive behavior, it can help build *familias* that are healthy, loving, and nurturing.

Participants identified the following cultural influences as negative:

- Mandatory expectation of *respeto* (respect) at home for parents, even when they are abusive, and how this often gets transferred to a man demanding respect from his partner in a relationship;
- Homophobia: The belief that being gay is unacceptable to *familia*, justifying rejection and abuse;
- The family holding a girl/woman responsible for her own rape or battering; considering her “damaged goods” if raped and at fault if beaten;
- Fatalistic view of events: *Lo que dios mande* (whatever God wills); *Si dios quiere* (if God so wishes); *Ni modo* (there is nothing that can be done);
- Sacrificial and religiously fatalistic view of abuse: *Es tu cruz* (it’s your cross to bear).

Participants identified the following cultural influences as positive:

- The concept of the honorable and non-violent man: *El hombre que le levanta la mano a una mujer, no es hombre* (a man who hits a woman, is not a man).
- The concept of guilt and responsibility. Recognizing that: *Un hombre sin verguenza, es un descarado* (a man without shame is a man without face). The recognition that shame stains the family and the memory of ancestors. One can take ownership and responsibility for the violence and can make amends, instead of minimizing, justifying, or denying the violence, which only tends to perpetuate it. Healing from oppression and colonization, men can once again find real balance in their lives, restore their *cara*, their heart and their spirit.
- Families are fundamental in transmitting positive cultural values. They can promote an understanding of history, experience, and teachings

Culture and Religion

A discussion of the significant influence of religion or “the Church” on Latino culture generated intense feelings and a vigorous discussion among participants. Although there was a general consensus that religion has been profoundly important to the Latino community, there were disparate views on the nature of religion, about what the actual impact of religion has been, and how it helps or hinders the practitioner’s work with men who batter.

Culture, Violence and Oppression

This portion of the dialogue centered on analyzing the origin of violent behaviors within Latino families; how the common culture of violence has influenced Latino culture and led to generational patterns of violence; and how misperceptions of Latino cultural mores affect Latinos themselves.

Participants said it is important to view the patterns of violence in Latino families within the context of the violence and slaughter committed 500 years ago by the Spanish colonizers, the expanding imposition of colonial and imperialist structures throughout the continent, and the continuing disrespect and disregard in present day society for Latino’s true culture and

traditions—in everything from the educational system and social services, to services for domestic violence victims and perpetrators.

They pointed to the correlation that exists between the oppression of a culture, a people, and the oppression in a home, and recognized how the trauma experienced historically has had the effect of transforming many of the oppressed into oppressors in their own hearts and homes.

Another topic that emerged during the dialogue was how the general culture has trivialized Latino culture and how Latinos themselves have in many ways accepted this debasement. Significant holidays have, for example, been commercialized and stripped of their true and historical meaning.

Participants also expressed serious concern about how the violent history of Latino peoples has exerted a heavy toll on cultural identity and values by eroding respect and responsibility, undermining confidence and self-worth, and even corrupting, misappropriating, and redefining the language of their ancestors. For example, the traditional definition of a *verdadero macho*/ a real man has been turned completely upside down. “Macho” in today’s lexicon means someone who throws his weight around as a *pistolero*/gunman, *mujeriego*/womanizer), *borrachon*/drunkard), *cantinero*/one who hangs out in bars, using violent and destructive behavior to assert power and position.

This so-called *machismo* manifests as sexism and homophobia, excusing violence against women and gays as part of the natural order. Among more traditional people—closer to their indigenous roots—the true meaning of *macho* has always defined a protector and provider for family and community: someone who is *responsable*/responsible, *trabajador*/hard-working, *noble*/honorable, *un hombre de palabra*/a man of his word. Today, young Latinos are continuing to grow up with false notions of what it is to be a man. Some have come to believe that violence is a part of their people’s core cultural identity. And it is in the promulgation of these falsehoods, participants asserted, that the root of the problem lies—the systematic, multigenerational process of internalized oppression that gives way to a cycle of violence.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It became clear that practitioners must take into consideration the contradictions that exist within *la cultura* and the legacy of multiple oppressions—poverty, discrimination, colonization—in their work with men who batter, in order to help bring about long-term change. Practitioners were urged to adopt Paolo Freire’s vision of *educare*—that liberating form of education which has the power to transform, to help heal—into their work with men who batter, regardless of the men’s educational backgrounds or literacy levels. Practitioners can work with men to:

- Deconstruct the myth of machismo and relate this myth to their own behavior;
- Link sexism, sexual repression and homophobia to personal behaviors separating men from each other, their families and communities;
- Understand how generational trauma in families is linked to historical and political oppression suffered by our great-great-great-great grandparents;
- Understand that violence is a learned behavior, not an inherited or genetic trait; and

- Acknowledge Latino masculine reaction to the oppressors of today, the reaction to resultant economic pressures and how this reactive energy wears on the spirit and saps their effectiveness as responsible fathers and husbands.

Participants discussed practical approaches they could employ when working with men who are violent and abusive in their relationships, including the following:

- Conducting groups in Spanish, honoring people's histories and origins;
- Reinforcing positive elements within *la cultura*;
- Understanding where men stand on the violence continuum;
- Teaching true love of self and the need to self-nurture;
- Modeling healthy relationships between men and women within a group setting;
- Talking about equality in relationships—*respeto* and sharing responsibilities;
- Reinforcing or introducing the belief that men have the capacity to teach and mirror acceptable behavior for their children;
- Facilitating healthy discussions on sexuality and addressing sexual repression and its role in violence;
- Discussing the social and political history of oppression, how men are affected by this history, and how they have internalized and reproduced this oppressive behavior toward their families;
- Teaching anger management skills;
- Encouraging men to find ways of nurturing relationships and creating an atmosphere of change in the home;
- Working with children and youth to break the generational chain of violence; addressing teen relationship violence; education children about domestic violence; and
- Not relying on translated materials and adapted models, but developing our own.

DAY TWO

GENERAL SESSION – WORKING WITH LATINO MEN WHO BATTER

Day two of the Forum consisted of two plenary sessions and workshops based on seven different models for working with Latino men who batter.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Alianza staff and Steering Committee members greeted participants and provided a brief history of the origins of Alianza, highlighting activities including public forums, which like this one brought together presenters participants from throughout the United States and Puerto Rico to share experiences, ideas, hopes, and plans for the future.

OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremonial prayer was led by Adelina Padilla, a Chumash elder working with the National Compadres Network, who reiterated the themes of duality and interconnectedness

spoken about in Day 1. We were reminded that we have diversity within diversity. We are a people of multiple roots with a complex heritage seeking to keep our spirit alive.

MORNING PLENARY

El Hombre Latino y La Violencia: Thoughts about our Journey; Forging our own Future

Fernandos Mederos, Ed.D., a domestic violence consultant and Alianza Steering Committee member, provided a historical context of how batterer intervention programs developed and their positive and negative impact and influence on Latino communities. (The full text of this presentation can be found in the section on Day One).

Julia Perilla, Ph.D., a clinical community psychologist and assistant research professor at Georgia State University (GSU) and one of the founders of Alianza, who now heads the organization's Research Center (known as *El Centro*), based at GSU in Atlanta, gave a summary of where we are today in terms of programming and shared her vision for the future; she explored the unique ways in which a thorough and clear view of our culture can help us forge the path for our future endeavors to eliminate *la violencia en la familia*. (The full text of this presentation can be found in the section on Day One).

Ricardo Carrillo, Ph.D., provided a summary of the roundtable dialogue that took place on Day One regarding the positive and negative influences that culture can have on ending or perpetuating violence in Latino families and communities and on facilitating or hindering the work that needs to take place. He highlighted the elements in our culture, our traditions, our history that help promote healing and well being, and how these can inspire us to develop new strategies, new models, new approaches for preventing and ending domestic violence in Latino families and communities.

WORKSHOPS/ROUNDTABLES: Models for working with Latino Men

TALLERES/MESAS REDONDAS: Modelos para Trabajar con Hombres Latinos

Following the morning plenary, participants broke up into seven *talleres* (workshops) some conducted in English, others in Spanish. The workshops represented different approaches for working with Latino men who batter; they represented pieces of the history and the pioneering that Latinos have undertaken to develop batterer intervention programs that truly respond to the needs of Latino families and communities. The theoretical frameworks, curricula, and educational strategies they presented demonstrate exciting opportunities for transformational models for achieving peace within families, between partners, and between adults and children. *(A description of the models is included in the full report, which follows this executive summary.)*

1. The following two workshops represented models that were created within a criminal justice context for the mainstream population, with some adaptations for cultural concerns. Safety and accountability are the guiding principles establishing the parameters for their work.

- *Power and Control: Tactics Used by Abusive Men; from The Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project's Curriculum in Spanish*
Presenter: Luis Aravena Azócar
- *Cultural Competence in Connecticut: EVOLVE Program*
Presenters: Fernando Mederos, Ed.D., and Oliver Williams, Ph.D.

2. The following three workshops represented approaches that appeared in response to the cultural limitations of mainstream models. They sought inspiration for the curricula and program models from Latin American theorists and feminists, as well as from the voiced needs of Latina victims of domestic violence and Latino men seeking to change their violent, oppressive behavior at home. While safety and accountability remain the primary goal, gender analysis, deconstruction of masculinity, and re-education for equity in relationships are the guiding principles.

- *CECEVIM: A Culturally Appropriate Model for Working with Latino Abusers*
Presenters: Antonio Ramírez and Luis Ortega
- *Caminar Latino: A Comprehensive Intervention for Latino Families Affected by Domestic Violence*
Presenters: Julia Perilla, Ph.D., and Felipe Pérez
- *CORIAN: The Project of Men Renouncing their Violence—A Re-educative Experience with Men in Mexico*
Presenter: Roberto Garda, M.A.

3. The next two workshops spoke to unmet needs in our community for healing violence among men and toward sexual minorities. Safety and accountability remain paramount, but the framework expands to incorporate prevention, inclusion, and restorative justice as critical components for the Latino community's transformation to non-violence.

- *The National Compadres Network: El Hombre Buscando Su Balance—Man Seeking His Balance*
Presenters: Ricardo Carrillo, Ph.D., Rolando Gouboud-Reyna, L.C.S.W., Samuel Martínez, L.C.S.W., and Jerry Tello, M.A.
- *The National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Organization (LLEGO)—Addressing Domestic Violence Issues Among Latino Gay Men, Love That Kills: In Search of a Theoretical Model to Work with Latino Gay Men Who Batter their Partners*
Presenters: Luis Nieves-Rosa and Martín Ornelas-Quintero

CLOSING SESSION

Movimiento: Diálogo entre Nosotros; ¿A Dónde Vamos?

At the end of the day, workshop leaders gave participants an opportunity to ask questions, voice concerns, and offer suggestions about what is needed to work successfully with men who batter. Suggestions and recommendations made included the following:

After the workshops, all the presenters gathered on the dais and, with Dr. Ricardo Carrillo as the facilitator, participated in a final question-and-answer period. Each presenter shared their insights and related what they thought was the most significant contribution to come out of the conference. Participants then posed questions, voiced concerns and made suggestions about what is needed to work successfully with men who batter. Among ideas practitioners should consider:

- Creating spaces where men dealing with violence can go voluntarily and work on changing themselves.
- Integrating violence when creating programs dealing with other life issues, such as parenting, substance abuse, adolescence, children's education, etc. The issue of violence should not be considered in isolation, nor should it be omitted from related programs.
- The danger of collusion with abusive men in programs, i.e., facilitators could become so sensitive to the batterers they work with, that the safety of the women and children involved is jeopardized. Understanding that this work for social change requires changing oneself. Collusion is an on-going struggle that requires doing work with ourselves and staying in communication with women advocates, using them for supervision. There needs to be a strong reemphasis on the fact that one of the primary commitments in ending domestic violence is the safety of the victims.
- We have to deconstruct the myths regarding gender roles and expectations, and reconstruct new definitions of who we are and what we are meant to be. We also have to acknowledge that although the majority of batterers we work with are male, that there are female batterers and we need to try to understand how and in what contexts that violence occurs. Along with that is making sure that we are always very open and respectful to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender considerations. A theoretical framework for dealing with these communities is very much needed.
- Avoiding punitive treatment of men who batter. "If you are punishing and harsh, how can you heal?" Using a respectful approach does not mean a man is not held accountable for his actions. Despite the conventional view that "real" work with batterers must be confrontational and hard-hitting, Latino program models are demonstrating a different path that could bring about more long-lasting and greater change for individuals, families and communities. The challenge in this journey for domestic peace is developing methods for transforming behavior using balanced and integrated ways of relating and learning, models in which to live out the sacredness of all our relations.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the forum, it was understood that we were not saying: “This is the absolute way, but rather that we are creating a vision of where we need to go; this is where we are headed; we are not there yet; this is a work in progress.”

We will continue to help develop prevention and intervention approaches, as well as strategies that respond to the needs and concerns of our diverse Latino families and communities—strategies that will not only stop violence, but also bring lifelong healing for all affected and that will take into consideration the culture and language of the people we work and the many resources contained in our culture and in our communities.

We will encourage men and women to work together in this essential endeavor and continue to work with mainstream service providers who have proven to be true allies, with the judicial and law enforcement systems, with schools, health providers, and clergy.

We will look at partner violence in all its forms, including that which occurs in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities.

This report is dedicated to all the Latinas who have labored many difficult years calling for the eradication of violence from our homes and communities and to the men who have stepped up to join in this journey toward a culture of peace.