

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

June 2003



NATIONAL LATINO ALLIANCE
for the Elimination of Domestic Violence
ALIANZA LATINA NACIONAL PARA ERRADICAR LA VIOLENCIA DOMESTICA

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April 6-7, 2001

**HOSTED BY THE NATIONAL LATINO ALLIANCE FOR THE
ELIMINATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

**IN COLLABORATION WITH
THE NATIONAL COMPADRES NETWORK**

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**NATIONAL LATINO ALLIANCE FOR THE ELIMINATION
OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

**ALIANZA LATINA NACIONAL PARA ERRADICAR
LA VIOLENCIA DOMESTICA (ALIANZA)**

Mission and Purpose

The National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence (the Alianza) is a group of nationally recognized Latina and Latino advocates, community activists, practitioners, researchers, and survivors of domestic violence working together to promote understanding, sustain dialogue, and generate solutions to move toward the elimination of domestic violence affecting Latino communities, with an understanding of the sacredness of all relations and communities.

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FOREWORD

Domestic violence continues to take a tremendous toll on our families and communities. Its roots are complex and difficult to ascertain, and Latinos are faced with a combination of factors—immigration, acculturation, language, worldviews, values, and cultural beliefs that contribute to the labyrinth of complications in dealing with this issue.

We have made small and humble strides to develop models, approaches, and styles of intervention and prevention, and are working diligently to influence policy and research in these areas.

The *Forum on Latinos Who Batter* is a landmark event that brought together in one location, at the national level, men and women who have been working independently on this very critical issue. The forum gave those who attended an opportunity to share ideas, experiences, skills, and strategies for working with Latinos who batter.

We are committed to making our communities safe within the context of the sacredness of relationships. In light of the fact that the Latino population is increasing in significant numbers, we need to be aware about the negative consequences that domestic violence will have on future generations. If we don't help our men and our families to heal, what kind of an example will we offer our young people? We have to teach them about respect, honor, and dignity.

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. We will take into consideration the culture and language of the people we work with and we will encourage men and women to work together in this essential endeavor.

The National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence and The National Comadres Network want to acknowledge all of the participants, presenters, survivors, families, systems of care, providers of services, legislators, and funders, for their support and belief in our efforts to explore and promote the exciting work being conducted nationally and internationally with Latinos who batter. We hope and pray that this effort has made a contribution to the field of treatment for Latinos who hurt others.

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 them in this journey toward a culture of peace.

Ricardo Carillo, Ph.D
Jerry Tello

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 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:

- Does culture heal?
- 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*. 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, prosecution 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*, evolved 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;
- How to weigh children’s responses to their parents’ participation in intervention strategies;

- The need for different 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 violent 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 dominant 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), *borrachón* (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 responsible, hard-working, 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 ancestors;
- 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 and 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

Fernando 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.

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*.

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

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.

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; ¿Adónde 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:

Presenters shared their insights and related what they thought were the most significant contributions 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. Suggestions and recommendations included the following:

- 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. Struggling against collusion is an on-going battle that requires doing work with ourselves and working closely with women advocates. 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 (LGBT) considerations. A theoretical framework for dealing with the LGBT 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 with 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.

FORO SOBRE HOMBRES LATINOS QUE MALTRATAN: ESPERANZA PARA HOMBRES QUE DAÑAN A OTROS

RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

INTRODUCCIÓN

Un grupo muy diverso de latinos y latinas profundamente dedicados a erradicar la violencia doméstica en la comunidad latina se reunió del 27 al 28 de abril de 2001 en Pasadena, California para participar en el Foro sobre hombres latinos que maltratan: *Esperanza para hombres que dañan a otros*. Los participantes provenían de todo Estados Unidos, Puerto Rico, México, Chile y Guatemala. Este evento, patrocinado oficialmente por la Alianza Latina Nacional para Erradicar la Violencia Doméstica, conocida sencillamente como la *Alianza*, fue organizado junto con la Red Nacional Compadres y contó con el apoyo de la Oficina de Servicios Comunitarios/ Administración para los Niños y la Familia del Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos de los Estados Unidos.

El *Foro sobre hombres latinos que maltratan* tenía seis objetivos principales:

- Explorar, por medio de presentaciones y diálogo, las teorías del por qué los hombres maltratan y el contexto cultural y social en el cual este ocurre.
- Presentar los siete modelos de intervención existentes para trabajar con hombres latinos que maltratan.
- Ampliar la visión de la erradicación de la violencia más allá de las soluciones criminalistas y acercarse más hacia un abordaje más holístico y más cultural.
- Promover y modelar una noción de hombres y mujeres trabajando juntos para poner fin a la violencia doméstica.
- Proveer oportunidades para que los proveedores de servicios latinos que trabajan en asuntos sobre la violencia doméstica se relacionen entre sí en Estados Unidos y América Latina que sean latinos.
- Proporcionar materiales e incluso listas de recursos de capacitadores y de materiales que existen para trabajar con hombres que maltratan.

La Alianza presentó actividades en el foro en dos días. El **Primer Día** un grupo de 40 líderes, supervivientes, defensores, investigadores y practicantes del campo de la violencia doméstica entabló un diálogo intenso y substancial para tratar de establecer las bases y la visión de lo que estamos tratando de alcanzar en esta área vital de trabajo. El diálogo se centró en la importancia de trabajar con los hombres, las influencias positivas y negativas que puede tener la cultura en perpetuar o dar fin a la violencia y en el impacto del colonialismo y el racismo en la familia y la comunidad latina. Algunos de los temas que se discutieron fueron:

- *¿Cura la cultura?*
- *¿Cuáles son las cargas y los regalos de la cultura?*
- *¿Qué hay en la cultura que contribuye a la violencia doméstica?*

➤ *¿Cuáles tradiciones ayudan a poner fin a la violencia? ¿Qué prácticas ayudan a promover la cura?*

Al **Segundo Día** hubo una sesión plenaria de apertura, talleres basados en siete modelos distintos para trabajar con hombres que maltratan y una sesión de clausura para preguntas. Ochenta participantes más se unieron al grupo de 40 que participó el primer día.

PRIMER DÍA – DIÁLOGO COMUNITARIO

EL TRAYECTO BICULTURAL: ¿Cura la cultura?

SESIÓN DE APERTURA Y BIENVENIDA

Siguiendo la tradición de los foros y las reuniones públicas de la Alianza, los participantes tomaron asiento formando un gran círculo en la sala de reunión. El Dr. Ricardo Carrillo, uno de los fundadores y Director de la División de Capacitación y Asistencia Técnica, inauguró el evento con una canción de su autoría titulada *Los Regalos*.

La Directora Ejecutiva de la Alianza, Adelita Medina presentó una sinopsis de los antecedentes y la historia de la organización y explicó la razón y el significado del *Foro sobre hombres latinos que maltratan: esperanza para hombres que dañan a otros*. Explicó que el foro es el primer gran proyecto de la División de Capacitación y Asistencia Técnica de la Alianza y que de muchas maneras está forjando un nuevo camino. El foro representa un hito que reunió en un solo lugar a hombres y mujeres que han estado trabajando de forma independiente en sus respectivas ciudades sobre un tema vital y les dio la oportunidad de compartir y discutir ideas, experiencias, estrategias y abordajes para tratar con los hombres latinos que maltratan y también para trabajar juntos, hombres y mujeres.

CEREMONIA DE APERTURA

Siguiendo la tradición de la Alianza, el foro incluyó el ritual inicial de la *ceremonia de apertura*. Issac Cárdenas, un curandero apache e integrante de la Red Nacional Compadres, guió a los participantes en una ceremonia que transformaría el lugar de la reunión en lugar sagrado de reunión en el cual los participantes pudieran expresar sus sentimientos, pensamientos y experiencias sin reservas. Señaló a los participantes el pequeño altar que se había erguido en un rincón del salón y los invitó a poner algo sobre él que representara a sus familiares, a las personas con quienes trabajaban y a ellos mismos. Pidió bendiciones por todos los que han perdido la vida como consecuencia de la violencia doméstica y pidió al Señor que concediese larga vida a los participantes para que pudieran seguir su obra: “Porque la violencia sigue aquí en nuestras familias, tenemos mucho con que trabajar con nuestros primos, tíos, madres y padres.”

DIÁLOGO DE LA MAÑANA

Después de la ceremonia de apertura, el Dr. Carrillo presentó a dos educadores/practicantes que darían una visión histórica y pedagógica de la teoría, práctica, contexto cultural y política de los servicios y política de la violencia doméstica durante los últimos 30 años, especialmente la creación de programas de intervención para quienes que maltratan. Ellos son Fernando

Merderos, Ed. D., consultor de violencia doméstica y miembro del Comité Directivo de la Alianza y Julia Perilla, Ph.D., psicóloga clínica comunitaria y profesora adjunto de investigación de la Georgia State University (GSU) y una de las fundadoras de la Alianza y que ahora lidera el Centro de Investigación de la organización (*El Centro*) con sede en GSU en Atlanta.

Fernando Mederos Ed.D.

Programas De Intervención Para Hombres Que Maltratan: Creando Nuestros Propios Caminos

El Dr. Mederos presentó un panorama general de la trayectoria que han seguido los programas de intervención para hombres que maltratan en el contexto del movimiento de violencia doméstica liderado por mujeres. Habló de las etapas incipientes de la respuesta pública a la violencia doméstica que incluía brindar refugio a las víctimas de la violencia y explico cómo esto se transformó rápidamente en acción legislativa y en un programa de defensa y promoción institucional para tomar medidas de protección coordinadas entre la policía, la fiscalía, los tribunales y los programas de libertad condicional a favor de las víctimas de la violencia.

A medida que fueron participando cada vez más los servicios jurídicos y sociales en el tema de la violencia doméstica, la criminalización de los agresores se volvió la norma. Se pensaba que por medio de una intervención directa de la justicia penal, que incluía arrestos y enjuiciamiento, libertad condicional y obligatoriedad en la asistencia a programas de intervención para agresores y acusados en libertad condicional, los hombres se verían obligados a cambiar su comportamiento.

El Dr. Mederos dijo que el feminismo ayudó a moldear el currículo de los programas de intervención para agresores que surgieron a finales de la década de 70 y durante la década de los 80, insistiendo que la única forma de proteger a la mujer golpeada era por medio de estos programas que se concentraban en poner fin a la violencia y hacer que los agresores se responsabilizaran por sus actos. La agresión no se definió como un acto impulsivo sino como un *patrón de control coercitivo e intencionado* que incluía la intimidación, el abuso psicológico, privilegios machistas sesgados y actos de violencia.

El Dr. Mederos describió cómo estos programas se crearon en un entorno de controversias, dudas, críticas y hostilidad declarada y agregó que si los practicantes que iniciaron los programas de intervención para agresores hubiesen prestado atención a estas críticas no se habría desarrollado una disciplina especializada para reeducar a los hombres coercitivos y que maltratan físicamente. Fue crucial elaborar programas que tuvieran una perspectiva fundamental que la violencia y el comportamiento abusivo nunca tienen justificación y que los hombres de diferentes antecedentes y culturas tenían que desafiar y cambiar las tradiciones de supremacía masculina y prácticas opresivas contra la mujer.

Dijo que muchos de estos programas de intervención se enfocaron a poner fin a la violencia masculina y a enseñar alternativas no abusivas para conductas abusivas, pero excluían otros factores y preocupaciones tales como problemas de salud mental, abuso de sustancias, el pasado del propio agresor, acoso por parte de la policía u otros aspectos económicos.

Un acontecimiento más alarmante fue la percepción de que algunos grupos raciales y étnicos (especialmente latinos y afro americanos) eran más violentos hacia la mujer y tenían menos

probabilidades de cambiar su comportamiento. Citó algunas encuestas recientes que ilustran claramente que ni la raza ni la etnia son factores para predecir la violencia hacia un compañero íntimo y que la diferencia en la prevalencia de acoso físico cometidos por euro americanos, afro americanos, y latinoamericanos es mucho menor.

No hay pruebas, dijo el Dr. Mederos, que la cultura ejerce influencia en la manera en que los hombres de distintas herencias culturales desarrollan su sentido de masculinidad y justifican las relaciones agresivas y opresivas hacia las mujeres. Tampoco se incluye en hecho que todas las culturas tienen valores, prácticas y tradiciones de masculinidad que apoyan las relaciones funcionales y sanas.

El Dr. Mederos dio ejemplos de la investigación y los estudios que demuestran que los hombres que maltratan físicamente pueden cambiar, que los hombres pueden parar de cometer actos de agresión, que la educación puede hacer posible un cambio y que los hombres se pueden recuperar para beneficio de toda la comunidad. Hay toda una esfera de culturas y valores sociales y si uno aborda esa parte, y si uno enseña las diferentes maneras de participar en una relación, pueden darse cambios muy poderosos.

Explicó cómo el abordaje de depender del sistema de justicia penal, aunque un hito importantísimo para la protección y la seguridad de las víctimas, ahora es demasiado restrictivo para el trabajo de fondo que precisa hacerse para transformar y curar a los que golpean. Dijo que las estadísticas indican que el 75% de las agresiones entre compañeros íntimos no se denuncia a las autoridades y afirmó que no será suficiente depender exclusivamente de los albergues y las intervenciones de la justicia penal. Es imperativo, afirmó, que se elaboren abordajes basados en la comunidad para apoyar a las mujeres maltratadas y para educar a los hombres que maltratan físicamente o que están en peligro de tornarse agresores.

El Dr. Mederos concluyó diciendo que a pesar de la evolución a lo largo de los 30 años de las ideas y teorías sobre las causas de la violencia doméstica y de la elaboración de sistemas y abordajes para hacerle frente, el campo necesita expandirse más allá de su enfoque actual limitado. Precisa comprender estrategias que no solo detendrán la violencia, sino que traerán una cura de por vida para todos aquellos afectados por la violencia y que tomará en consideración los recursos que se encuentran a disposición en nuestra cultura y nuestra comunidad. Dijo también que esto nos obliga a analizar la violencia entre parejas sean entre homosexuales, bisexuales y transexuales, quienes muchas veces quedan excluidos de las discusiones sobre cómo detener la violencia doméstica.

Julia Perilla, Ph.D.

Cómo Se Puede Usar La Cultura Para Erradicar La Violencia En La Familia Latina

La Dra. Julia Perilla habló de la evolución y del estado actual de la teoría y la práctica de las estrategias de intervención y prevención de violencia doméstica citando ejemplos de su propia historia personal y profesional. Recalcó el potencial que existe en la comunidad latina para crear métodos y modelos estructurados “verdaderamente transformadores” que reflejen quienes somos, que respeten nuestras tradiciones, nuestra cultura, nuestra diversidad y al mismo tiempo mantengan al centro la seguridad de nuestra familia.

La Dra. Perilla dijo que como psicóloga clínica comunitaria ha tenido mucho que aprender, desaprender y volver a aprender y ha tenido que aumentar su marco de referencia para desarrollar abordajes y estrategias alternas. Dijo que varias influencias mundiales le han servido para crear su abordaje actual para trabajar con hombres latinos que maltratan y con las familias que han sufrido violencia doméstica. La literatura, las ideas y las teorías de los pueblos occidentales y estadounidenses, y el trabajo empírico que practican en Puerto Rico, Centro y Sudamérica.

La Dra. Perilla sugirió que un marco que considere la violencia doméstica como problema de la sociedad y una violación de los derechos más básicos de la persona nos permitirá ir más allá del paradigma que comienza y termina con patriarcado como la única fuente de la violencia doméstica. Un marco de derechos humanos exige un análisis más profundo y más amplio que explora la manera por la cual muchas formas de opresión y abuso de poder, incluso el patriarcado, interactúan entre sí y cómo esta interacción afecta que ocurra o no la violencia doméstica.

Dijo que tenemos que entender la manera en que la violencia doméstica se relaciona con nuestra historia personal y colectiva, con temas de pobreza, discriminación, expectativas de género, religión, homofobia e inmigración. Agregó que para poder facilitar la verdadera transformación en otros primero se debe emprender el proceso de transformación personal propio.

La Dra. Perilla enfatizó la necesidad de mirar detenida y honestamente a los elementos de nuestra cultura que mantienen y apoyan el uso de la violencia como opción viable en las relaciones. “Debemos desmoronar los mitos sobre los papeles y las expectativas de género y juntos reconstruir nuevas definiciones sobre quiénes somos y como deberíamos ser. Felizmente, nuestra cultura además de tener los elementos negativos que han estado presentes, tiene un enorme potencial para retomar formas tradicionales de relacionarse que son más respetuosas y más vivificantes.

Dijo que el programa que coordina en Atlanta, *Caminar Latino*, surgió como resultado directo de las recomendaciones que recibiera junto a sus colegas de las mujeres del programa que resultaron fuertes defensoras de los servicios para sus hijos. Algunos años después, las mujeres declararon que si la violencia era responsabilidad del hombre, entonces porqué el programa no funcionaba con ellos y exigieron que se aprendiera a trabajar con ellos. Dijeron que no querían abandonar las relaciones, solo querían que cesara la violencia.

Una vez que la Dra. Perilla empezó a incluir a los hombres que maltratan en el trabajo de prevención e intervención de violencia doméstica de *Caminar Latino* y comenzó a defender fuertemente esa postura, tuvo que justificar, explicar y definir esa posición a toda la comunidad que trabaja con violencia doméstica.

La Dra. Perilla dijo que tiene esperanzas que el trabajo innovador que se está haciendo en la comunidad latina transforme todo el movimiento de violencia doméstica e imbuja el campo de la violencia doméstica con el entendimiento de la necesidad de programas lingüística y culturalmente competentes y de incluir a los hombres en la solución de los temas relacionados con la violencia doméstica.

Sesión De Preguntas

El Dr. Ricardo Carrillo y Rosario Navarrette, miembros del Comité Directivo de la Alianza dirigieron la sesión de preguntas luego de ambas presentaciones.

Se formularon varias preguntas y analizaron varios temas, algunas de las inquietudes fueron solucionadas pero hubo temas que aún requieren de estudios a medida que el campo busca nuevas estrategias y abordajes para trabajar con los hombres latinos que maltratan.

- Hombres maltratados y mujeres que maltratan—las diferencias en los patrones y las historias. Se admite que aunque hay mujeres que maltratan a sus parejas, las estadísticas indican que la gran mayoría de los agresores son varones.
- Las metodologías de investigación y los resultados contradictorios, incluso las preguntas sobre si aumenta el maltrato psicológico a medida que disminuye el maltrato físico; cómo el problema de la denuncia afecta el maltrato y cómo medir las respuestas de los niños a que sus padres participen en estrategias de intervención.
- La necesidad de modelos existentes, incluso estrategias para curar las relaciones además del enfoque actual en reducir/detener la ira y la violencia.
- La necesidad de encontrar estrategias de intervención alternas que funcionen con hombres que tengan comportamientos violentos más arraigados, o sea, aquellos que recurren a comportamientos más coercitivos, que tienen niveles de violencia más altos y son más obstinados en cuanto al cambio, al mismo tiempo en que se trata de convencer a quienes toman decisiones políticas y a practicantes que los programas “unitalla” no puede alcanzar las necesidades de todos los agresores.
- La necesidad de abordar las necesidades de prevención e intervención de violencia doméstica en las comunidades homosexuales, bisexuales y transexuales por medio de una investigación más generalizada y la elaboración de estrategias más innovadoras.

CONOCIMIENTO – EL RECONOCIMIENTO Y LA INTERCONEXIÓN

Siguiendo la tradición de la Alianza de llevar a cabo una sesión de *conocimiento, reconocimiento e interconexión*, se pidió a los participantes que dijeran quiénes eran, a quiénes representaban en el foro y cuáles temas trataban, qué *regalos o cargas* querían dejar en el altar. Uno a uno los participantes fueron compartiendo sus experiencias, hablaron sobre sus padres, cónyuges, hijos y nietos, contaron a qué se dedicaban, cómo la violencia doméstica y las otras formas de violencia les había afectado personalmente o la vida de sus seres queridos, contribuyendo así sus singulares perspectivas y hablaron también sobre el compromiso que sostienen hacia evitar que otros sufran este tipo de violencia.

MESA REDONDA

DIÁLOGO ABIERTO: ¿Cura la cultura?

El grupo volvió a reunirse después de almuerzo en una mesa redonda para buscar mayor claridad en cuanto al papel que desempeña la cultura en la prevención o la continuación de la violencia doméstica.

Aspectos Positivos Y Negativos De La Cultura

La interrogante principal fue la siguiente: *¿Cura la cultura?* Muchos respondieron que *la cultura* se ha usado para defender eventos de violencia, para reforzar el sigilo y para permitir el maltrato. Comentaron que ciertas realidades culturales eran una parte importante del problema pero no la solución. Otras personas dijeron que muchos aspectos de la cultura latina, las tradiciones y creencias pueden y han brindado orientación e influencia positiva. Reafirmaron que la cultura puede servir como factor de protección, que puede brindar protección contra la participación en comportamientos destructivos que no son saludables y también que puede ayudar a forjar *familias* que son saludables, cariñosas y afectuosas.

Los participantes identificaron y clasificaron las siguientes influencias culturales como negativas:

- Expectativas obligatorias de *respeto* por parte de los padres en casa, incluso cuando éstos son abusadores y cómo esto generalmente se transmite a que el hombre exija respeto de su pareja en una relación.
- Homofobia: La creencia que ser homosexual es inaceptable para la *familia*, justificando todo tipo de rechazo y abuso.
- La familia responsabiliza a la joven o a la mujer por haber sido violada o maltratada y la considera “usada” si la han violado o culpable si la han golpeado.
- Perspectivas fatalistas: *Lo que dios mande. Si dios quiere. Ni modo.*
- Visión fatalista o sacrificadamente fatalista del maltrato: *Es tu cruz.*

Los participantes identificaron y clasificaron las siguientes influencias culturales como positivas:

- El concepto del hombre honorable y no violento: *El hombre que le levanta la mano a una mujer, no es hombre.*
- El concepto de culpa y responsabilidad. Reconocer que “*Un hombre sin vergüenza es un descarado*”. El reconocimiento que la vergüenza mancha a la familia y al recuerdo de los antepasados. Uno puede reconocer y responsabilizarse por la violencia y puede tratar de reparar el daño en vez de minimizar, justificar o negar la violencia que lo único que hace es perpetuarla. Al curarse de la opresión y colonización, los hombres pueden una vez más encontrar el verdadero equilibrio en sus vidas, recuperar la dignidad, *cara*, corazón y espíritu.
- Las familias son imprescindibles para transmitir valores culturales positivos. Promueven el entendimiento de la historia, experiencia y las enseñanzas.

Cultura Y Religión

Un análisis de la influencia significativa de la religión, o la “Iglesia” en la cultura latina generó sentimientos intensos y una charla vigorosa entre los participantes. Aunque hubo consenso general que la religión ha sido profundamente importante para la comunidad latina, hubo visiones profundamente diferentes en cuanto a la naturaleza de la religión, sobre cuál ha sido el

impacto de la misma y cómo ayuda o dificulta el trabajo del practicante con los hombres que maltratan.

Cultura, Violencia Y Opresión

Esta parte del diálogo se centró en el análisis del origen de los comportamientos violentos dentro de las familias latinas, cómo la cultura común de la violencia ha influenciado a la cultura latina y ha llevado a patrones generacionales de violencia y cómo las percepciones erradas de los valores culturales latinos afectan más a los propios latinos.

Los participantes dijeron que era importante ver los patrones de violencia en la familia latina dentro del marco de la violencia y la masacre que cometieron hace 500 años los colonizadores españoles, la imposición cada vez mayor de las estructuras colonialistas e imperialistas por todo el continente y la continua falta de respeto y consideración de la verdadera cultura y tradición latina en la sociedad actual, en todo, desde el sistema educativo y servicios sociales hasta los servicios ofrecidos a las víctimas y los aquellos que realizan actos de violencia doméstica.

Señalaron la relación que existe entre opresores de una cultura, de un pueblo, y la opresión en un hogar, y reconocieron que el trauma histórico tiene el gran efecto de transformar a los oprimidos en opresores en sus propios corazones y hogares.

Otro tema que surgió durante el diálogo fue cómo la cultura general ha trivializado la cultura latina y cómo los propios latinos hasta cierto punto han aceptado esta degradación. Por ejemplo, algunas conmemoraciones de fiestas importantes se han comercializado a tal punto que han perdido su verdadero valor y significado histórico.

Los participantes también han expresado serias preocupaciones sobre cómo la historia violenta del pueblo latino ha afectado negativamente la identidad y valores culturales al erosionar el respeto y la responsabilidad, ha socavado la auto confianza y el valor propio e incluso han corrompido, malversado y redefinido el lenguaje de sus antepasados. Por ejemplo, la definición tradicional de *verdadero macho* se ha invertido totalmente. *Macho* en el léxico actual se refiere a alguien que abusa como *pistolero, mujeriego, borrachón, cantinero*, usando comportamientos violentos y destructivos para hacerse de poder y posición.

Este “*machismo*” se manifiesta como sexismo y homofobia justificando la violencia contra la mujer y los homosexuales como parte de supuesto orden natural. Entre las poblaciones más tradicionales, aquellas que están más próximas a sus raíces indígenas, la verdadera definición de *macho* siempre ha significado un ser protector y proveedor de la familia y la comunidad: alguien *responsable, trabajador, noble, hombre de palabra*. Hoy en día los jóvenes latinos siguen creciendo con nociones equivocadas de lo que es ser hombre. Algunos han llegado a pensar que la violencia es parte de su propia identidad cultural. Y es mediante la promulgación de todas estas nociones falsas que vemos está la raíz de los problemas, aseveraron los participantes; el proceso sistematizado y multigeneracional de internalizar la opresión es lo que da lugar al ciclo de la violencia.

Conclusiones y Recomendaciones

Quedó muy claro que los practicantes deben tomar en consideración las contradicciones que existen en la cultura y en la herencia de múltiples opresiones, pobreza, discriminación, colonización, al trabajar con los hombres que maltratan para poder llegar a cambios de comportamiento duraderos. Se urgió a los practicantes que adoptasen la visión de *educare* de Paulo Freire, esa forma de educar tan libertadora que tiene el poder de transformar y ayudar a curar. Esta visión se debe incluir en el trabajo que se hace con los hombres que maltratan, independientemente del nivel de educación que hayan alcanzado. Los practicantes que trabajen con los hombres deben:

- Echar abajo el mito del machismo y relacionarlo con el comportamiento.
- Vincular el sexismo, la represión sexual y la homofobia a comportamientos personales que separan al hombre del hombre, de su familia y de su comunidad.
- Entender cómo el trauma generacional en la familia está conectado con la opresión histórica y política que sufrieron los tatarabuelos de nuestros tatarabuelos.
- Entender que la violencia es comportamiento aprendido, no heredado ni es característica genética.
- Reconocer la reacción masculina latina del opresor de hoy, la reacción que resulta de las presiones económicas y cómo esta energía reactiva desgasta el espíritu y socava la eficacia de ser padres y cónyuges responsables.

Los participantes analizaron abordajes prácticos que podrían utilizar cuando trabajen con hombres que sean violentos y abusivos en sus relaciones, como por ejemplo:

- Llevar a cabo las reuniones de los grupos en español, honrando la historia y el origen de las personas.
- Reforzar los elementos positivos dentro de la cultura latina.
- Entender dónde se ubican los hombres en el continuo de la violencia.
- Enseñar el verdadero amor a si mismo y la necesidad de quererse a uno mismo.
- Modelar relaciones saludables entre hombres y mujeres en una situación en grupo.
- Hablar sobre la igualdad en las relaciones, el *respeto* y compartir la responsabilidad.
- Reforzar o introducir la creencia que el hombre tiene la capacidad de enseñar y reflejar comportamientos aceptables para sus hijos.
- Facilitar discusiones saludables sobre la sexualidad y hablar sobre la represión sexual y el papel que desempeña en la violencia.
- Analizar la historia social y política de la opresión; cómo los hombres se ven afectados por esta historia y cómo han internalizado y reproducido este comportamiento opresor hacia sus familias.
- Enseñar técnicas para controlar la ira.

- Exhortar a que los hombres encuentren formas de nutrir las relaciones creando un ambiente de cambio en el hogar.
- Trabajar con niños y jóvenes para que corten la cadena generacional de la violencia, hablar sobre violencia entre jóvenes, informar a los niños sobre la violencia doméstica y
- No confiarse de materiales traducidos ni de modelos adaptados, sino que crear los propios.

SEGUNDO DÍA

SESIÓN GENERAL

CÓMO TRABAJAR CON HOMBRES LATINOS QUE MALTRATAN

El Segundo día hubo dos sesiones plenarias y talleres basados en siete modelos distintos de cómo trabajar con hombres latinos que maltratan.

BIENVENIDA E INTRODUCCIÓN

El personal de la Alianza y del Comité Directivo recibieron a los participantes y les brindaron una breve historia del origen de la Alianza, resaltaron algunas actividades, como por ejemplo, los foros públicos que como éste reunieron presentadores y participantes de Estados Unidos y Puerto Rico para compartir experiencias, ideas, esperanzas y planes para el futuro.

CEREMONIA DE APERTURA

La oración ceremonial de apertura la guió Adelina Padilla, una sabia Chumash que trabaja con la Red Nacional Compadres, quien reiteró el tema de la dualidad e interconexión que se trató el Primer Día. Nos recordó que existe la diversidad en la diversidad. Somos un pueblo de múltiples raíces con una herencia compleja que busca mantener vivo el espíritu.

SESIÓN PLENARIA DE LA MAÑANA

El Hombre Latino Y La Violencia: Pensamientos Sobre Nuestro Trayecto; Cómo Forjar El Futuro

Fernando Mederos, Ed.D., consultor de violencia doméstica y miembro del Comité Directivo de la Alianza, brindó el contexto histórico de cómo se crearon los programas de intervención para agresores y cuál ha sido el impacto positivo y negativo y la influencia en la comunidad latina. (En la sección del Primer Día encontrará todo el texto de la presentación).

Julia Perilla, Ph.D., psicóloga clínica y profesora asistente de investigación de la Georgia State University (GSU) y una de las fundadoras de la Alianza, que actualmente lidera el Centro de Investigación de la organización, conocido como *El Centro*, basado en Atlanta, hizo un resumen sobre nuestra posición actual en términos de programación y compartió su visión para el futuro. Exploró las formas singulares en que una visión clara y completa de la cultura puede ayudarnos a forjar el camino hacia el futuro para erradicar la violencia en la familia.

Ricardo Carrillo, Ph.D., presentó un resumen del diálogo que tuvo lugar el Primer Día en la mesa redonda sobre las influencias positivas y negativas que tiene la violencia en dar fin o perpetuar la violencia en la familia y la comunidad latina y en facilitar o dificultar el trabajo que se debe hacer. Resaltó los elementos de nuestra cultura, las tradiciones y la historia que pueden ayudar a promover la cura y el bienestar, y cómo estos nos pueden inspirar a elaborar nuevas estrategias, nuevos modelos, nuevos abordajes para prevenir y erradicar la violencia doméstica en la familia y la comunidad latina.

TALLERES/MESAS REDONDAS:

Modelos Para Trabajar Con Hombres Latinos

Después de la sesión plenaria los participantes se dividieron en siete talleres, algunos en inglés otros en español. Los talleres trataron abordajes diferentes para trabajar con los hombres latinos que maltratan, presentaron el trabajo histórico y pionero que han dedicado los latinos para crear programas de intervención para agresores que verdaderamente respondan a las necesidades de la familia y la comunidad latina. Los marcos teóricos, programas de estudios y estrategias educativas que se presentaron demuestran fascinantes oportunidades de modelos de transformación para alcanzar la paz en el seno de la familia, entre parejas y entre adultos y niños.

1. Los dos talleres siguientes presentaron modelos que se crearon dentro de un contexto de justicia penal para la población convencional, con algunas adaptaciones por motivos de cultura. Seguridad y responsabilidad son los principios que guían los parámetros de este trabajo.

- *Poder y control: Tácticas que usan los hombres que maltratan, del programa de estudios en español que usa el Proyecto de Intervención de Maltrato Doméstico en Duluth.*
Presentador: Luis Aravena Azócar
- *Competencia cultural en Connecticut: Programa EVOLVE.*
Presentador: Fernando Mederos, Ed.D. y Oliver Williams, Ph.D.

➤ **2. Los tres talleres siguientes presentaron abordajes que surgieron como respuesta a las limitaciones culturales de los modelos convencionales. Buscaron inspiración para estos modelos de programas y programas de estudios en los teóricos y feministas latinoamericanos así como en las voces de las víctimas latinas de violencia doméstica y en los hombres latinos que buscaban cambiar su comportamiento violento y opresivo en casa. Aunque la seguridad y la responsabilidad siguen siendo el objetivo principal, los principios rectores son el análisis de género, la reconstrucción de la masculinidad y la reeducación para que haya equidad en las relaciones.**

➤ *CECEVIM: Un modelo culturalmente apropiado para trabajar con agresores latinos.*

Presentadores: Antonio Ramírez y Luis Ortega

➤ *Caminar Latino: Un programa completo de intervención para la familia latina que sufre violencia doméstica*

Presentadores: Julia Perilla, Ph.D. y Felipe Pérez

- *CORIAC: El proyecto de los hombres que renuncian a la violencia – una experiencia de reeducación con hombres en México*

Presentador: Roberto Garda, M.A.

3. Los dos talleres siguientes trataron sobre las necesidades que no se han satisfecho de curar la violencia entre hombres y hacia las minorías sexuales. La seguridad y la responsabilidad siguen siendo primordiales, pero el marco se extiende para incorporar la prevención, inclusión y la justicia reconstituyente como componentes vitales para la transformación de la comunidad latina hacia la ausencia de violencia.

- *La Red Nacional Compadres: El hombre buscando su balance*

Presentadores: Ricardo Carrillo, Ph.D., Rolando Gouboud-Reyna, L.C.S.W., Samuel Martínez, L.C.S.W. y Jerry Tello, M.A.

- *La organización nacional latina de homosexuales, bisexuales y transexuales (LLEGO) – Cómo abordar temas de violencia doméstica entre hombres latinos homosexuales, Amor que mata: En busca de un modelo teórico para trabajar con los hombres latinos homosexuales que maltratan a sus parejas*

Presentadores: Luis Nieves Rosa y Martín Ornelas Quintero

SESIÓN PLENARIA DE CLAUSURA

Movimiento: Diálogo Entre Nosotros; ¿A Dónde Vamos?

Al concluir las labores, los líderes de los talleres ofrecieron a los participantes la oportunidad de formular preguntas, indicar sus preocupaciones y ofrecer sugerencias sobre lo que se necesita para trabajar exitosamente con hombres que maltratan.

Cada uno de los presentadores dijo lo que en su opinión eran las contribuciones más importante que surgieron en la conferencia. Los participantes luego formularon preguntas, indicaron sus preocupaciones y ofrecieron sugerencias sobre lo que se necesita para trabajar exitosamente con hombres que maltratan. Las sugerencias y recomendaciones que surgieron aparecen a continuación.

- Crear lugares a dónde puedan ir por voluntad propia los hombres que estén lidiando con violencia a trabajar para transformarse.
- Integrar la violencia cuando se elaboren programas que traten otros temas de la vida, como por ejemplo, la crianza de los hijos, el abuso de sustancias, la adolescencia, la educación infantil, etc. El tema de la violencia no se debe considerar por sí sólo, ni se debería omitir de programas conexos.
- El peligro de connivencia con los hombres en los programas, en otras palabras, que los facilitadores queden tan susceptibles y conscientes de lo que les pasa a los agresores con los que trabajan que pueden poner en peligro la seguridad de las mujeres y los niños. Entender que este trabajo por el cambio social exige cambiar uno mismo. La connivencia es una lucha constante que exige arduo trabajo con uno mismo y mantener contacto y

comunicación con las promotoras y defensoras femeninas y usarlas a ellas como supervisoras. Debe haber fuerte énfasis en el hecho que uno de los principales compromisos para poner fin a la violencia doméstica es la seguridad de las víctimas.

- Debemos desmoronar los mitos sobre los papeles y las expectativas según el género y juntos reconstruir nuevas definiciones sobre quiénes somos y que deberíamos ser. También debemos reconocer que aunque la mayoría de los agresores son varones, hay agresoras femeninas y debemos entender cómo y en qué contexto sucede ese tipo de violencia. Además de esto uno debe cerciorarse de siempre estar disponible y ser respetuoso con toda consideración relacionada con homosexuales, bisexuales y transexuales. Se necesita un marco teórico para tratar con estos grupos.
- Evitar tratamientos punitivos para los hombres que maltratan. “Si castiga y castiga fuerte, ¿cómo puede curar?” El uso de un abordaje respetuoso no significa que este hombre no se le responsabilice por sus actos. A pesar de la visión convencional de que el “verdadero” trabajo con agresores debe ser contencioso y fuerte, los modelos de programas latinos están demostrando un camino diferente que podría provocar cambios mayores más duraderos para el individuo, la familia y la comunidad. El desafío de este recorrido para la paz familiar está resultando en métodos para transformar comportamientos usando maneras integradas y equilibradas de relacionarse y aprender, modelos de cómo vivir lo sagrado en nuestras relaciones.

CONCLUSIÓN

Al final del foro, quedó claro que no estábamos diciendo: “Esta es la única manera, sino que estamos creando una visión hacia dónde debemos dirigirnos. Es hacia dónde estamos dirigiéndonos. No hemos llegado aún, este es un trabajo en construcción.”

Seguiremos ayudando a elaborar abordajes de prevención e intervención, así como estrategias que responden a las necesidades y las preocupaciones de nuestras familias y comunidades latinas tan diversas. Estrategias que no sólo detendrán la violencia, sino que traerán también curas duraderas para todos los afectados. Curas que toman en consideración la cultura y el idioma de las personas con las que trabajamos y los muchos recursos que tiene nuestra cultura y comunidad.

Exhortaremos a los hombres y las mujeres a que trabajen juntos en este esfuerzo tan esencial y seguiremos trabajando con los proveedores de servicios convencionales que han demostrado ser verdaderos aliados, con los sistemas jurídicos y de ley y orden, los proveedores de servicios de salud y el clero.

Analizaremos la violencia en todas sus manifestaciones, incluso aquella que sucede en las comunidades homosexuales, bisexuales y transexuales.

Este informe está dedicado a las latinas que han trabajado por arduos años por la erradicación de la violencia en el hogar y la comunidad y a los hombres que se han unido en este camino hacia una cultura de paz.

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

FULL REPORT

PLENARY SESSION

INTRODUCTION

“This forum is in many ways breaking new ground. We can actually say we are on the cutting edge with this forum. I’m talking about exploring new approaches, that take into consideration the culture and language of the people we work with, that involve men and women working together, and that work with men who batter. The women/survivors, themselves, have told us that the reality of their lives would not change in significant ways unless their partners, with whom most of them continue to live, could also receive domestic violence services.”

—Julia Perilla, Ph.D., Alianza Research Center Director, Georgia State University

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 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.

COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

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

“I think it is essential to include men in the domestic violence movement. In fact, it would be a mistake to exclude them. We bring a different dimension to the dialogue about what Latino men should be doing to end domestic violence. We have a stake in helping to define what it is to be a good man, a good husband, and a good father. And beyond that what we can do to promote the well being of our children, our families and our communities. As Latinos, we cannot be silent and expect others to tell us the kind of individuals we should be or how we should be perceived.”

--Etiony Aldarondo, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Boston College.

On Day One, a group of forty leaders, advocates, researchers, and practitioners in the field of domestic violence engaged in a substantive dialogue about the positive and negative influences that culture can have on ending or perpetuating violence in Latino families and communities. Challenging questions that were posed and discussed included:

- Does culture heal?
- 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 promote healing?

WELCOME AND OPENING SESSION

In the tradition of Alianza’s public meetings and forums, participants took their seats in a large circle that filled 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 that he wrote—*Los Regalos/The Gifts*.

Opening remarks, activities, and ceremonies, carried out in Spanish and English, reflected the spirit and premise of the forum: the belief that domestic violence can be eliminated through the collective efforts and spiritual solidarity of all Latinas/os, gays, lesbians, heterosexuals, the old and the young; researchers, advocates, and practitioners; survivors and former batterers.

Alianza Executive Director Adelita Medina began her welcome address with a statement about the critical importance of men and women working together to end the violence that affects our families and communities:

“This morning I turned on the television at 6 o’clock, and I saw the people in Vieques, in Puerto Rico...there was an announcement that seven people had broken through the barrier and gotten to the island and stopped the bombing for today, for one day! I use that as an example, because the battle of the people of Vieques against the Navy has been described as David against Goliath...they have a tremendous determination against tremendous odds. Y para usar el slogan que se usaba aquí en California, y a través del país—que sí se puede!/to use the slogan that was used here in California and

throughout the country,...yes, it can be done! We've been told constantly: No, las mujeres no podemos trabajar con los hombres, las mujeres y los hombres no pueden trabajar juntos; y nosotros decimos que sí se puede! /No, we women cannot work with men, women and men cannot work together; and we say that yes, it can be done! In Alianza, our Steering Committee is made up of men and women, and they are here . You will meet them today and tomorrow if you haven't already done so, and like myself, be inspired by them. I know, too, that we are going to be inspired by the work that each of you is doing in your respective communities."

Ms. Medina gave a brief synopsis of the organization's history and background and explained the purpose and significance of the forum. She emphasized that instead of being an established institution, Alianza represents a "growing network" of Latina and Latino advocates, community activists, practitioners, researchers, and survivors of domestic violence all working together to fulfill Alianza's mission: *"to promote understanding, sustain dialogue, and generate solutions that will move toward the elimination of domestic violence in Latino communities—with an understanding of the sacredness of all relationships and communities."* Alianza is the first and only national organization to focus on the specific and particular domestic violence issues and concerns of Latino communities.

Ms. Medina went on to say that Alianza holds that criminal prosecution alone is not an adequate means to address the root causes of violence against women, particularly in communities of color. While maintaining that the safety of women and children is paramount, Alianza considers that an integrated and comprehensive approach is more effective and necessary, so that it takes into account entire families and communities. Alianza also believes it is imperative to utilize culturally and linguistically competent approaches when working with Latino men, women, and children.

Ms. Medina said that the *Forum on Latinos Who Batter: Hope for Those Who Hurt Others* is the first major project of Alianza's Training and Technical Assistance Division, and in many other 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, to address a crucial issue, giving them an opportunity to share and discuss ideas, experiences, strategies, and approaches for working with Latinos who batter.

OPENING CEREMONY (CEREMONIA)

Also in keeping with an Alianza tradition, the forum included a *Ceremonia* (opening ritual). Isaac Cardenas, an Apache ceremony leader (medicine man) and a member of the National Compadres Network, began the opening ceremony with an explanation of the importance of sitting in a circle:

"We're in a circle because it is tradition—it's traditional in indigenous ways, in native ways—to sit together where there is nobody bigger or more important than anybody else; where men and women, children and elders, all have a voice; and everyone is acknowledged and honored for their position. You have all been invited to come specifically for that, because you have juicio, you have wisdom, you have experience, you have sabiduría/knowledge); you have something to offer. You've already worked the land in your community; you've already made your commitments present; you've

already made a difference. And we're hoping to dialogue together, to share with each other, to talk with each other, to look at each other, to enjoy each other, so that we can be inspired in our work, and come to some understanding—a deeper understanding—of how to be more effective in this workplace.”

Mr. Cardenas guided the participants through the *Ceremonia* 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. He invited them to place at the altar something that represented themselves, members of their families, or people with whom they work. “Maybe you have a picture of a loved one, or maybe you just want to write this person’s name down, to help invoke his or her spirit...” After explaining that he would use three languages (Apache, English, and Spanish) during the *Ceremonia* as well as sacred objects that are used in special ceremonies, he asked everyone to stand up and join in a blessing. He invoked the energy of the four directions: the East—the direction of the rising sun, the direction of man; the West—the direction of the evening star, the direction of woman; the South—the direction where the spirit road leads to the spirit world; the direction where those who have finished their work here go, and those yet unborn come from; the North—the direction that blesses the elders, that gives clarity, and when the leaves turn and they fall, then the spring comes, an indication of rebirth.

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. Ricardo Carrillo introduced two 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 (*El Centro*), based at GSU.

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 began by discussing the early stages of public response to domestic violence. The movement began by supporting and providing secure shelter for victims of violence. Very rapidly, this moved toward legislative action, such as protective order statutes that were implemented in the late 1970s, and toward institutional advocacy to obtain coordinated protective actions by the police, prosecutors, courts and probation departments on behalf of victims of violence. Prior to this, an abuser had to inflict severe damage, such as murder or a grave injury in order for the criminal justice system to intercede. In a sense, there was a very high threshold of injury and harm before state intervention to restrain abusers and stop violent behavior. This high threshold for arrest and prosecution gave abusers' immunity for many acts of violence.

"...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. As research and experience in working with Latino families have shown, our societal system of protection, punishment and accountability is used reluctantly, if at all, by Latino communities."

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. Our society was drawing a line regarding acceptable norms in relationships. A two-fold response was developed; first a shelter system that offered support and sanctuary for battered women, and later the criminal justice system was brought in to hold men accountable.

Another response to battering that developed at this time was educational programs for men who batter, which came to be called batterer intervention programs (BIPs). Feminism helped shape

the curricula of these emerging mandated batterer intervention programs. The feminist perspective maintained that the only way to protect battered women was for BIPs to focus on ending violence and holding batterers “accountable” (a term that entered usage in the 1980s). According to feminist theory, battering was tolerated by society because of the institutionally supported patriarchy and its dynamics of power and control, oppression, and male privilege. Court-mandated, men-only programs were tailored to meet this challenge. Participants would learn alternatives and skills for dealing with their violent impulses. Battering was 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.

These programs developed in a climate of controversy and doubt, if not outright hostility. For example, many mental health practitioners maintained that men did not have a problem with violence, they were just involved in bad relationships; they had partners who provoked them. Other mental health practitioners believed that men’s violence toward women arose from unresolved psychological problems and developmental deficits; thus, asserting that sexism and male supremacy either did not exist or were not at the root of violence against women. Ministers and clergy often cited the bible to support male supremacy in marital relationships; they did not approve of violent behavior, but they overlooked it in the name of supporting traditional marriages. Other opponents of batterer intervention programs affirmed that it was “natural” for men to be dominant and that men just had to get the violence and frustration out of their systems somehow. Why make an issue of behavior that was inevitable and “hardwired?”

If the practitioners who pioneered BIPs in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s had listened to these criticisms, a specialized discipline for re-educating physically abusive and coercive men would not have developed. Traditional mental health approaches, which failed to focus on stopping violence and other forms of abusive behavior, would have prevailed. This would have further endangered many victims of violence and deprived them of critical support. Clearly, 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.

At the same time, many BIPs focused on stopping male violence and teaching non-abusive alternatives to violent and abusive conduct and excluded any other concerns. This was a rigid approach. Men were told that mental health problems, substance abuse, or the perpetrator’s history of trauma were not factors that needed to be considered. Being broke, harassed by the police, or being unemployed were factors that were not taken into consideration in trying to understand abusive and violent behavior. There was no acknowledgement that these issues could act as substantial obstacles to the change process.

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. In reality, recent surveys (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000)² 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. At best, culture was viewed only as the inspiration and source of male supremacy. Dr. Mederos remembered counselors in BIPs saying that: “when men talk about their culture (or race) in

batterer intervention groups, the only thing they're doing is trying to get off the hook." There was no recognition that culture influences how men from different backgrounds develop their sense of manhood and justify abuse and oppressive relationships with women. In fact, understanding how abusers from diverse backgrounds explain or justify their behavior is fundamental in helping them change their thinking about manhood, about women and about marital relationships. Further, there was no understanding that all cultures *also* have values, practices, and traditions of manhood that support healthy and functional relationships. In reality, cultural background and life experiences can be used to justify violence and oppressive relationships. At the same time, cultural background and life experiences have formidable healing power: *La cultura cura* (culture heals). There is room for culturally based approaches for working with men who batter and few existing BIP models have taken this route.

Dr. Mederos also emphasized that physically abusive men can change. He cited research by Ed Gondolf (2001),³ who conducted a long term follow-up study of 800 men who completed court-mandated BIPs in four cities. The survey showed that, according to confidential interviews of their original and subsequent partners, close to 80 percent of men who completed a batterer intervention program stopped being violent either at the time of the first intervention or within the next 18 months and remained non-violent during the next 30 months (or two-and-one-half years) of follow-up.

He pointed out that three out of four of the BIPs, which the men in the study attended, were not sophisticated clinical programs: they were educational programs. "What this study suggested," asserted Dr. Mederos, "is 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. And it also suggests that perhaps we should be doing something else other than relying on the criminal justice system." It is possible for change to come about through education and modeling new behaviors.

As an example, Dr. Mederos recounted the experiences of a Latina clinician and battered women's advocate who worked in a community health center that offered support groups for battered Latinas. Over a span of one year, a total of 80 women attended 2 support groups. At the urging of the women, the center staff decided to offer a group for men recruited from the partners of women in the support groups. Twelve men attended consistently throughout the year and were tracked by staff. All stopped their violent behavior. Staff found that of the 80 women attending groups, three went to shelters during that time; two left their partners and then went back; and about 50 stayed with their partners. Of those who never left their relationships, many began effective dialogues for change with their partners. Of those 50 women, only one had a partner who was arrested. It seems that substantial change was brought without criminal justice intervention.

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. As research and experience in working with Latino families have shown, our societal system of protection, punishment and accountability is used reluctantly, if at all, by Latino communities.

Dr. Mederos acknowledged that the system that he and others helped to build may work well for a small portion of the population, but it may not be fulfilling the needs of a large part of our community. Many Latinas fear or mistrust the criminal justice system and believe it has an oppressive impact on men in their families. They are aware of the disproportionate levels of incarceration of men in communities of color. Furthermore, many Latinas do not use the criminal justice system because approximately 30 percent of our people are recent immigrants, either documented or undocumented, and they fear further victimization by the system. They fear that arrest of abusers results in the deportation of men who are undocumented or who have temporary work visas, and of many men who are legal U.S. residents and are convicted. This is a catastrophic event for many families. Many of these women want the abuse to stop, but they do not want their partners to go to jail. They don't think it helps them or their families.

We also know, from the National Violence Against Women Survey (2000) that 75 percent of intimate partner assaults are not reported to the authorities.⁴ To rely only on shelters and on criminal justice interventions with men will not be enough. It is imperative 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. Culturally based intervention with men should be an important part of what we do.

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.”

“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.”

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. She mentioned *Colectivo por Relaciones Igualitarias (CORIAC)*, in Mexico City and pointed out that someone from the organization was in the audience as were others whose work she was familiar with. She added that the ideas and writings of such educators and social scientists as Paolo Freire,⁴ Ignacio Martín-Baró,⁵ and Marcela Lagard⁶ have provided much food for thought, dialogue, and action.

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. “This is no easy task, because we have to do this complex and seemingly endless work very honestly, carefully, and with a great deal of integrity, so that we never ever use the emerging patterns of oppression, as a rationalization or as an excuse for domestic violence.”

Dr. Perilla asked practitioners to examine their own lives and approaches to their work. She said that in order to facilitate real transformation in others, practitioners must first undertake the

process of personal transformation themselves. She cautioned against using “a top-down, hierarchical approach” to practice or wielding acquired education and expertise as power and emphasized that only through dialogue can one avoid becoming part of the existing hierarchical and oppressive structure. “This is no easy task. Instead of beginning with the people... who come to us for help, or who have been court mandated, I must first look at myself. What in my own personal life—my history, my beliefs, my expectations, status, education, and privilege—has given me power, and how am I using that power?”

“If I, as the psychologist in my community, approach my work using a top down, hierarchical approach, appearing as the expert due to the privilege my education has given me, believing that I know what is best for the men, and in my previous work, what was best for the women and children; if I lecture instead of dialogue, if I engage in dynamics that disrespect, put down men...I am in essence becoming part of the hierarchical and oppressive structure.

Dr. Perilla also emphasized the need to look carefully and honestly at elements 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 without resorting to the rose-colored, romantic views about our ancestors. The re-remembering and reconstructing of new ways of being are possibly some of the most important strategies that we can bring to this work.”

Dr. Perilla acknowledged that what she was describing appeared somewhat paradoxical and definitely contrary to what she learned at the university and also quite different from the models of interventions with batterers that Fernando Mederos had described.

She went on to share her own journey of confronting domestic violence both personally and professionally. “My education in domestic violence began when I started a focus group for Spanish-speaking women in Georgia in 1990. I had personally been a battered woman, sexually, physically and emotionally. I’ve been abused by both of my husbands—*un Latino y un Americano*. When I began to work with the women, I was able to put that work and my memories together, driven by the tremendous strength of the women.”

She said that the program that she coordinates—*Caminar Latino*—emerged as a direct result of the input she and her colleagues received from the women who participated in the program. For example, the first dramatic shift in the program’s design and approach in the early 1990s developed when *Caminar Latino*’s female participants emerged as strong advocates for services for their children. What they needed was not babysitting services, but a special program that would help the children address the trauma through which they had lived. *Camino Latino* now offers three programs for children and infants and a group for adolescents.

Some years later the women asked why, if violence was the men’s responsibility, the program wasn’t working with them. Dr. Perilla who at the time still looked to “mainstream models” to guide her work, found the recommendation shocking. Her subsequent attempts at rationalizations of why she was not prepared to work with men who batter left the women completely

unimpressed and unconvinced. The women challenged her to learn to work with the men. “They were relentless,” she added. They said they did not intend to leave the relationship; they just wanted the violence to stop.

As she looked around for models that would be helpful, she found herself confronting the conventional wisdom that women would be put at risk if a program was to include working with their partners. She said critics were not taking into account the fact the majority of the women were choosing to stay with the men. “Just when I was at a complete loss as to what to do, and how to go about doing this, two men came into my life, both present here today.” She acknowledged this as the “hand of God” coming to her aid and a sign that she was on the right path, despite the conventional thinking.

In 1994, Felipe Pérez, a long-time community member, approached her about wanting to work in Atlanta in the area of domestic violence. In 1995 he began working with *Caminar Latino*, where he serves as facilitator of an intervention group for Latino men who batter. Around that time Dr. Perilla also met Antonio Ramírez, director of (CECEVIM) *Centro de Capacitación para Erradicar la Violencia Intrafamiliar Masculina/Training Center to Eradicate Masculine Intrafamily Violence*, a consulting agency dedicated to training organizations that work with Latino men who batter. Mr. Ramírez provided the initial training for *Caminar Latino* staff and continues his affiliation with the program as an ally and consultant.

From these beginnings, Dr. Perilla was able to address issues of culture as well as self-evaluation in understanding and treating the root causes of domestic violence in Latino communities. We have to carefully and honestly look at elements of our cultures that support and maintain the use of violence as a viable option in relationships.

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. In the spirit of Paulo Freire’s *grupos de conscientización/critical consciousness groups*, *Caminar Latino* continues to be guided by the women, children, and adolescents in the program. The team struggles to hold on to a non-hierarchical, egalitarian model, being keenly aware of the need to consistently analyze their work, including the ways in which different oppressions, including racism, classism, nationalism, elitism, homophobia, and ageism, as well as patriarchy, can adversely impact their work if they are not constantly challenging themselves and each other in a respectful and honest manner. Dr. Perilla also highlighted the need 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.

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

*“If we really want to work and make an impact, we need to go back to the roots [of the problem]— *tenemos que regresar a las raíces del problema*. A lot of programs around the nation like to work from the trunk of the tree *para arriba* (upward) but never work at the roots. Just go deeply inside and look and see what’s being done in those roots and you will have an answer.”*

--Forum Participant

Dr. Ricardo Carrillo and Rosario Navarrette, a member of Alianza’s Steering Committee (Board), 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 their thoughts, their feelings, and experiences. They spoke about the many countries they or their families came from, including Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, Colombia, Chile, Canada, and Ethiopia. They 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.

Following is an edited cross-section of statements made, experiences shared, and hopes expressed, with names omitted to protect the speakers' privacy.

- “To the altar I want to bring the spirit of my son who died a week after being born prematurely because of domestic violence. I would never have talked about this, especially in public, but it is important that you know from where we come and why we are doing this work and why we are in this struggle. It is a great privilege to be in the same struggle with you.”
- “I worked in Guatemala, where I was born and raised, and in college and university I dedicated time to working for justice and peace, for democracy. For that reason the government in my country invited me—a very eloquent invitation—to leave the country. Otherwise, I wouldn't exist. So, after twenty-two years, I sit here, and that's why I say I'm a survivor. Why do I mention this now? When I started to work with domestic violence in the mid-eighties in Colorado, I was stricken by the resemblance ... between the oppression that I was seeing, between the oppression that we see at home, and the oppression we see in our communities—the oppression seen as social injustice. In order to achieve real peace we need to look at not only the violence that occurs at home, but we also need to look into our communities and social justice.”
- “My daughters and granddaughters are what motivate me. I was very controlling with their mother and I don't want them to go through that...while we were out fighting for democracy, our homes were as bad as a dictatorship.”
- “The field of domestic violence wants to make us fit into the criminal justice model, but this doesn't allow for diversity, to see who [the batterers] are, to listen to men's hearts.”
- “If we really want to work and make an impact, we need to go back to the roots [of the problem]— *tenemos que regresar a las raíces del problema*. A lot of programs around the nation like to work from the trunk of the tree *para arriba* (upward) but never work at the roots. Just go deeply inside and look and see what's being done in those roots and you will have an answer.”
- “I grew up in a family of secrets...sexual abuse. No one could express sadness or anger except my father.”
- “Forty years ago I survived domestic violence. In those days there was no treatment, there were no shelters for women, there were no groups of men. I think as a result of that, I feel my *misión en la vida es trabajar en este trabajo* (my mission in life is to do this work). *Ayudar a los hombres, es ayudar a las mujeres* (to help the men, is to help the women). *Yo sé que las mujeres queremos mucho a los hombres... Y ayudando a los hombres estoy ayudando a las mujeres*. (I know that we women care very much for men... and by helping men, I am helping women.)”
- “My mother would say, ‘your dad was a beautiful man except when he was drinking. It was a terrible disease.’ We need to separate the disease from what is beautiful.”

- “My father told me—just about every day of his life—that I was ugly, that I was stupid, that I wasn’t violent enough, that I was fat, that I was a mutation, that I was filth. He also loved me and there were rare times when something happened to him and he would reach out to me and hold me and hug me. And when he died, I was there with him. He had hundreds of ulcers in his digestive tract and they tried operating and they couldn’t. I connected it with something else that I found out about after he died... that he had very much been rejected and abused in his own family. The other thing I found out was that he had been a homosexual in my country’s society, a society that told him [you] could not be who you are, you cannot demand respect, you cannot be in our family, you cannot marry and you cannot stand up. So I understood why he was desperate that I would turn out to be this man, what he wanted to be.”
- “I want to put my *compañero*, my daughter, my siblings, my nieces and nephews, my parents, and the hundreds of women that my organization has served since 1984 [on the altar]. I also want to put the many women whom I have known personally and those I have not known who have lost their lives to domestic violence, and the children that they have left behind.”

AN OPEN DIALOGUE: ¿Cura La Cultura?/Does Culture Heal?

The group reconvened after lunch for an afternoon roundtable to continue exploring the role that culture can play in either preventing domestic violence or in perpetuating it. The focus was on identifying positive elements—factors in our culture that can be used to protect and liberate women, to help men regain a true sense of self—someone who is responsible and hardworking; to promote health and well being for families and communities; and to illuminate and inspire the practitioner’s work. The group also found it necessary to identify and recognize the negative elements that can reinforce negative behavior and hinder progress as we work to prevent further violence and to develop new models of intervention for working with Latino families and communities already affected by domestic violence.

Positive and Negative Aspects of *La Cultura*

Culture helps us find our roots and our place in this world. Often, it is only when we lose our culture to the values of the greater society that we can successfully reflect on it and desire to recapture that sense of belonging. Culture can help us become re-rooted, grounded, centered, and interconnected. It can provide viable choices and options and help make contributions for future generations.

Practitioners involved in the early groundbreaking work with men who batter opened the afternoon dialogue. They said their original mentors were white men whose practical experience and theoretical background was based on the beliefs and practices of white, feminist women. Subsequently, the evolution of programs serving Latino men was strongly influenced by models that minimized or overlooked culture. Many in the battered women’s movement remain cautious and suspicious of the motives of men newly entering the field and are not eager to participate in joint efforts. The current criminal justice model tends to reinforce this separation. To address these obstacles and disseminate findings, the speakers emphasized that the community needs to write about and make visible emerging culturally based models.

The initial discussions provided a meaningful segue into the main question of the day: ¿Cura la cultura? Does culture heal? One participant suggested the question be turned into a direct statement: *Es muy difícil curar sin la cultura*. (It is difficult to heal without culture.) Culture can be empowering or detrimental. 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.

As participants grappled with the dichotomy of culture, it became clear there was not “just one way” to define and value culture. The group agreed to reject the larger system’s limited one-size-fits-all thinking and to shape the positive aspects of culture into an emerging theoretical framework on which to build meaningful practice.

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 helps us find our roots and our place in this world. Often, it is only when we lose our culture to the values of the greater society that we can successfully reflect on it and desire to recapture that sense of belonging. Culture can help us become re-rooted, grounded, centered, and interconnected. It can provide viable choices and options and help make contributions for future generations.

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.

While all acknowledged the turbulent and repressive history of “the church,” especially institutionalized religion, and the influence of conservative and fundamentalist church teachings,

some participants sought to separate church politics and clerical hierarchy from its unfettered spiritual teachings and progressive priests and ministers.

Several participants cited examples of individual priests who have done wonderful healing work in their communities and parishes. In one community, for example, a progressive priest helps people by blessing divorces, welcoming unmarried couples, and condemning violence. Another priest has shown independence and inclusive spirituality by blessing gay couples. Dr. Perilla's program, *Caminar Latino*, works closely with the Catholic church in Atlanta and is housed in a Catholic mission, and is supported in part with Church funds.

Some participants countered these positive examples with angry rebuttals concerning repressive Church admonitions and rules that help perpetuate and validate sexism and homophobia. They noted the influence that some religious teachings and beliefs have had on encouraging women to stay in abusive relationships for the sake of keeping their marriages intact. These critics were not impressed when other participants pointed to the Church's proclaimed edict against violence and its acknowledgement of its past role in oppressing the indigenous people of the Americas.

After listening to varying points of views and experiences, participants set aside the unresolved issues which emerged, and achieved consensus in reaffirming the primacy of spirituality in their lives and how spirituality is needed to heal the wounds of violence of practitioners, survivors, and for batterers.

Culture, Violence and Oppression

This portion of the dialogue centered on analyzing the origin of violent behaviors within Latino families; how the societal culture of violence both past and present has impacted Latino culture, led to generational patterns of violence; and created misperceptions of Latino cultural mores which in the end has influenced how Latinos' behave among themselves, within their families and communities.

"... 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... they are also taught that men should not show emotions or share their feelings. And it is in the promulgation of these falsehoods that the root of the problem lies—the systematic, multigenerational process of internalized oppression that gives way to a cycle of violence."

Some participants contended that patterns of violence in Latino families need to be understood—though not excused—within the historical context of the violence and slaughter committed 500 years ago by the Spanish invaders and the expanding imposition of colonial and imperialist structures throughout the continent. Races and cultures were mixed in great part through rape and violent coercion, creating today's Latino *mestizaje*/people of mixed races. For many at the roundtable, this violent historical process of conquering by violence and oppression left a legacy of trauma and alienation, a legacy that distanced Latinos from their true collective cultural memory of the "*respeto*," transforming the sacredness of relationships to relationships that are steeped in the political and personal violence of internalized oppression.

The group further emphasized 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.

Participants explained that survival for indigenous peoples took many forms that continue to this day. For some, it was a quiet resistance nurtured by holding on to familiar values of family, community, respect, hard work, honor, humility, or through an embracing of religion or spirituality. The trauma experienced also had the effect of transforming many of the oppressed into oppressors in their own hearts and homes. Some participants contended that Latinos learned, internalized, and carried on this oppressive violence in order to survive. For these “survivors,” violent expression became a way to exercise power and control in their individual lives. There is a correlation between the oppression of a culture, a people, and the oppression in a home. In a sense, both are learned behaviors reinforced economically, socially, and politically.

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. For example, Latino culture is trivialized by commercializing holidays and stripping them of their true and historical meaning. *Cinco de Mayo*, *Fiesta Days*, and similar historical and cultural celebrations have been co-opted and commercialized by businesses that encourage drinking and partying to promote their products.

More significant, participants said, is 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 the language. “Our own words are stolen from us,” claimed one participant. Some of our words have been misappropriated and re-defined, a practice that has undermined the deeper cultural significance of the language. 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), *borrachón* (drunkard), *cantinerero* (one who hangs out in bars), using violent and destructive behavior to assert power and position.

Used with disdain by some and false pride by others, the term *macho* now encapsulates an assortment of negative, internalized, oppressive behaviors attributable to males. 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 responsible, hard-working, 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. In addition to being indoctrinated in the belief in masculine privilege, young men are also taught that men should not show emotions or share their feelings. 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 integrate a knowledge of the contradictions that exist within *la cultura* and of the legacy of multiple oppressions—poverty, discrimination, colonization—into their work with men who batter if these men are to achieve long-term change. Practitioners should consider adopting Paolo Freire’s vision of *educare*—that liberating education which has the power to transform, to help heal—in their work with men who batter, regardless of their educational backgrounds or literacy levels. Practitioners can help men:

- 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 dominating *gringo* of today, the reaction to the resultant economic, social, and political oppression 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 strategies:

- Conducting groups in Spanish, honoring people’s histories and origins, and using inclusive language;
- 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 repeated this oppressive behavior in their families;
- Having batterers walk in the shoes of their victims;
- Teaching anger management skills;

- Encouraging men to think of ten things they can do to nurture relationships and create an atmosphere of change in the home; don't just tell men what they have done wrong and leave it at that;
- Working with children and youth to break the generational chain of violence; and
- Not relying on translated materials and adapted models, which often "miss the point," but developing our own.

Through education, practitioners will offer men informed choices. They will have the information to help them decide whether to continue to imitate their oppressors within the family paradigm or reclaim an honorable legacy of positive Latino values and behaviors.

CLOSING CEREMONY

The formal part of the day was then concluded in ceremony, as it began, by honoring the four directions, giving thanks for the sharing of emotions and ideas, for the meaningful dialogue that took place, and for guidance and blessings for all forum participants.

HEALING CIRCLES

After dinner, some of the participants attended healing circles for men and women, allowing them separate spaces where they could process feelings and memories that emerged during the day's intense discussions.

DAY TWO

GENERAL SESSION—WORKING WITH LATINO MEN WHO BATTER

“In light of the fact that Latinos are increasing in significant numbers, we need to be aware about the negative consequences that domestic violence will have on future generations. If we don’t help our men and our families to heal, what kind of an example will we offer our young people? We have to teach them about respect, honor, and dignity. For the most part, our communities have been neglected by researchers, by funders, by social service agencies. Alianza is playing a very significant role in creating new inroads for Latinos in the field of domestic violence. We are developing our own research, programs, training materials, and healing approaches.”

—Jerry Tello, Executive Director, National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute

The agenda for the second day of the Forum consisted of two plenary sessions and several workshops based on seven different models for working with Latino men who batter. The first hour and half of this day began with song, welcoming hospitality, ceremony and informational presentations. Unlike the first day, the room could not accommodate one large circle. Instead, clusters of six to eight people sat at round tables set up in a large sunlit room with a scattering of large palms. A raised dais at the front afforded everyone a view of the speakers and a small altar.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Alianza staff and Steering Committee members greeted participants and provided a review of the history of Alianza, highlighting activities including the 1997 National Symposium on La Violencia Doméstica and the 2000 First National Latino Policy Summit on Domestic Violence, 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, with support from Isaac Cardenas. Though not present the day before, she reiterated the themes of duality and interconnectedness pointing out that “...all important men have had to come through a woman.” She called for a time to reflect, for invoking and including the sacred in all that we undertake. 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

Fernando 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.

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/*El Centro*, based at GSU, 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, *Dialogo sobre Cultura y Colonialization/Dialogue on Culture and Colonization*, regarding the positive and negative influences that culture can have on ending or perpetuating violence in Latino families and communities, 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, in Latino communities.

WORKSHOPS/ROUNDTABLES: Models for Working with Latino Men

Following the morning plenary, participants broke up into seven *talleres* (workshops) some 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 common theme in the workshops is an analysis of the cultural contradictions that Latino men confront in their lives. Critical analysis and deconstruction of these contradictions are seen as key for true accountability, reeducation, healing and transformation of men who enter programs voluntarily and involuntarily to deal with their violence. Men are respectfully challenged to confront these contradictions using different approaches, with a growing attention to using strategies that do not replicate power and control models of interaction between facilitators and batterers. A challenge for the field is to document our work and conduct research that can inform the development of a continuum of interventions to eradicate violence that effectively respond to our diversity. This is especially true for the Latino lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities, which is just beginning to bring domestic violence into the open.

I. 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.

Poder y Control/Power and Control: Tactics Used by Abusive Men; from The Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project's Curriculum in Spanish

Presenter: Luis Aravena Azócar

Mr. Aravena presented an overview of the 1999 Spanish-language adaptation of the curriculum originally developed in 1981 as part of this country's first integrated community response for dealing with domestic violence, the "Domestic Abuse Intervention Project" in Duluth, Minnesota. The model holds that violence against women is a community problem requiring a community response in which batterers are confronted with an unequivocal message that such violence is not acceptable or tolerated. The curriculum focuses on the intentionality of violence as a tool for power and control in a relationship. It is based on experiences and ideas drawn from the women's movement, civil rights movement, and Gandhi's non-violence movement. The Duluth model uses Paulo Freire's educational strategy of critical thinking to challenge and confront men regarding their belief systems and behaviors towards women and in relationships. Freire's strategy holds that a distinction must be made between what is natural and what is cultural, or learned. By identifying what is learned behavior, batterers then can work to change those behaviors that are negative and oppressive. Men participating in group sessions discuss their own experiences, explore roles and relationships between men and women, and make decisions to change. Along with videotaped stories of abused women, the "Wheel of Power" and the "Wheel of Equality" are tools used to educate participants.

The classes are designed to get men to confront patriarchy and male privilege in their personal behavior, to stop violence and to take newly acquired tools and skills to build relationships based on equality and respect. The "*Poder y Control/Power and Control*" curriculum is only part of the coordinated community effort to end domestic violence and it must be recognized as such. It was made clear that other community resources, such as police, courts, social service agencies and shelters must be part of the integrated effort. The workshop allowed participants to experience some of the model's educational exercises and to become familiar with the supplementary Spanish-language curriculum and video. The workshop also covered general elements of the Duluth Model and the Coordinated Community Response (CCR) to domestic violence, which includes the educational groups for men.

Cultural Competence in Connecticut: EVOLVE Program

Presenters: Fernando Mederos, Ed.D., and Oliver Williams, Ph.D.

EVOLVE is a state-sponsored program that is part of a coordinated community response network within the criminal justice system. The principal goals are the safety of victims and the accountability of batterers. The program includes lessons on recognizing violence and abuse; identifying the type of men they want to be; managing their feelings, how their violence affects victims; how to communicate; and the role of sexuality in violence. Men are ordered by the court

to attend either 26 or 52 weeks of psycho-educational classes as an alternative to incarceration after pleading guilty. Classes are limited to 15 participants. Those required to attend 52 weeks, spend the first 26 weeks attending twice-weekly sessions, one of which includes role-plays, video vignettes and brief lessons. The second 26 weeks are spent attending once-a week groups focusing on practicing new behaviors and holding intense discussions of how they are using them in their daily lives.

The tightly structured curriculum focuses on addressing power and control issues men use to justify physical abuse. Within culturally heterogeneous groups of men, cultural attitudes are analyzed to see where they play a role in violent behavior and encourage women's oppression. Those attitudes also are reviewed to help men identify and incorporate in their lives those that promote respect and responsibility toward women. The program works to change belief systems and behaviors that result in violence against women. Men are taught how to identify their emotional state and then manage those feelings when they find themselves in emotionally charged and potentially violent situations. EVOLVE goes a step further than some programs, focusing on men's roles and responsibilities as fathers within the framework of existing court orders and with specific protocols to protect the privacy and safety of mothers. They also learn how to build positive relationships with their child(ren)'s mother. Alcohol and substance abuse education is integrated throughout the classes and treatment referrals are made as necessary. Strictly supervised contact with victims is facilitated when all parties are in agreement.

II. The following three workshops represented approaches that emerged 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 Centro de Capacitación para Erradicar la Violencia Intrafamiliar Masculina (Training Center to Eradicate Masculine Intrafamily Violence): A Culturally Appropriate Model for Working with Latino Abusers

Presenters: Antonio Ramírez and Luis Ortega

Workshop presenters reviewed CECEVIM's history, program structure, theoretical foundations, and intervention strategies. They said it was created in 1996 to attempt to fill the gap that exists for culturally appropriate intervention models for Latino men who are abusive. The goal of CECEVIM's 52-week program is for men to work with other men who want to stop their violence and to teach and support each other in the creation of intimate, cooperative and democratic relationships within their families. CECEVIM embodies the tenet that to create effective programs for abusers from different cultures and ethnicities, it is necessary to consider the abuser's history, politics, social and economic conditions, education, religion, beliefs, gender relations, and other factors than can provide context to his violence. The model has three main theoretical foundations:

- ***A feminist gender analysis*** based in great measure on Latino feminism, a political force that builds a bridge between political, gender, age, class, ethnic, social and economic oppression and which views family violence as another form of oppression. Adopting this view assists men to make a commitment to personal change as a way to build a united front against all kinds of oppression that affects everyone:
- ***An ecological perspective*** which helps in understanding the dynamics between social, political, and cultural environments and the individual's gender identity construction and the relation of masculine identities and violence in the home. CECEVIM's ecological base considers five internal and external spaces that assist an individual to survive (physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and cultural); and
- ***Ancient native spiritual concepts*** that assist men in their deconstruction of learned and historically unchallenged assumptions about men's identities; the reconstruction which follows relies on spirituality to help men address the fears that emerge in this process: Who am I going to be then? How will I know that I am myself? How can I behave? How can I know that I am not going to be destroyed? Men are taught that we are part of a sacred dimension and every individual is free to explore his or her deepest being without being overcome by fear.

Men who finish the program are encouraged to stay on as facilitators. Their influence on new men is very powerful and inspiring. Having men from the community as facilitators adds an important dimension—it is a community of men taking an interest in stopping masculine violence. It is not necessary for facilitators to have professional degrees in behavioral sciences.

Based in San Francisco, Calif., CECEVIM, *Centro de Capacitación para Erradicar la Violencia Intrafamiliar Masculina* (Training Center to Eradicate Masculine Intrafamily Violence), supports an expanding network of direct service providers in the United States, Mexico, Central and South America through facilitator training and technical assistance tailored to the needs and culture of each community.

Caminar Latino: A Comprehensive Intervention for Latino Families Affected by Domestic Violence

Presenters: Julia Perilla, Ph.D., and Felipe Pérez

C*aminar Latino*, in Atlanta, was created at the insistence of Latina victims of domestic violence who were members of the first support and reflection group for Spanish-speaking women in Georgia. They wanted a family-focused approach to addressing violence in their homes. *Caminar Latino* uses Paulo Freire's *conscientización* (critical consciousness) model, which includes information sharing, dialogue, and re-educational components regarding domestic violence and substance abuse. Drawing heavily from the curriculum provided by CECEVIM for male batterers, women are the monitors and evaluators for the work being done with their partners. For example, women can report an incident with their partner, and that experience can be addressed either directly or as a general theme for discussion in the batterers' group. Topics for the men's groups often come from the women or advocates. A class on STDs and HIV/AIDS was added because women said they could not negotiate safer sex practices with their partners if the men did not have the same information available to them. This again reflects

the program's philosophy of listening to the women and using their input to guide the interventions. Men also use their own experiences in discussions and group members take over much of the dialogue, giving each other feedback, support and advice—with some guidance from the facilitator. Children's groups were also developed at the request of battered mothers who realized their children needed services that addressed their specific needs as children witnesses of domestic violence.

The program attempts to create a safe environment in which all members of a family have the opportunity to work on issues related to the impact of violence in the home. Violence is viewed as a human rights issue and as a social malaise that requires personal and societal transformation. As part of their commitment to non-hierarchical (i.e. non-violent) models for community work, staff joins the circles of analysis and critical thinking as members who also are working on their own violence issues. Safety and accountability are paramount, and the program is strongly committed to creating family-focused transformations to eradicate violence. The workshop allowed participants to experience an actual session of the intervention, through exercise and dialogue.

CORIAC: The Project of Men Renouncing their Violence— A Re-educative Experience with Men in Mexico

Presenter: Roberto Garda, M.A.

A voluntary program for men who want to make a commitment to non-violence, CORIAC's mission is to change conventional Mexican attitudes toward masculinity, which they see as impoverishing men's lives and resulting in the oppression of women. They are working toward a culture based on equity and respect in the public and private arenas. Personal transformation is supported by creating spaces for men to engage in reflection and action. Based in Mexico City, CORIAC has close affiliation with CECEVIM and uses its theoretical framework for addressing masculinity and how this plays out in violent relationships. The organization was established in 1994 with a greater freedom to deal with issues of violence and male privilege without the complicated cultural challenges facing programs in the United States.

The workshop presented the main characteristics of CORIAC's model, called "Men Renouncing Their Violence." Topics covered included the different levels of intervention, the techniques used, and the underlying theoretical basis for this model, as well as additional materials used in practice. The program model begins with an orientation that includes identifying the problem and what the men's expectations are. Then it proceeds toward completing three levels. The first level is having the men recognize that their violent behavior is learned, take responsibility for it and its consequences, and then renounce its use. The second level asks the men to openly express their feelings as they relate to their violent behavior toward their partner. The third level asks the men to negotiate with their partners a mutually agreed upon plan for ending the violence.

Results from self-evaluations by "Men Renouncing Their Violence" program participants were shared with the workshop attendees. The presenter also described efforts to replicate the model in other parts of Mexico. Community awareness and education are conducted through conferences, workshops and training sessions addressing issues of gender, violence, relationships

and healthy development of men and women. CORIAC also is involved in several research projects dealing with violence, men and youth, which they expect to publish within the next two years.

III. 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.

Using pre-Columbian principles and spirituality as catalysts for healing, prevention and personal transformation was the focus of the workshop. It emphasized a treatment and prevention strategy for working with Latino batterers that draws on Freire analysis of oppression, as well as on pre-Columbian principles of *El Hombre Noble* (the honorable man). Men learn accountability for their violence through the concept of *palabra*/one's word, and learn ancient spiritual values of balance, rhythm, and harmony by honoring the "sacredness of relations."

National Compadres Network works with young men at risk for domestic violence by providing mentorship and prevention strategies and helping them maintain violence-free relationships. Without compromising the group's commitment to safety and accountability for those suffering domestic violence, the paradigm is shifted from a deficit model to building on the strengths within the community, culture and individual.

Through programs focusing on male responsibility in the family and community, they infuse their teachings with transformative experiences to help men find balance with the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of their being. Programs for children and young men focus on positive male images fatherhood education. Other programs work towards violence-free relationships for men referred through the courts. Groups always begin and end with ceremony; poetry, music, art and drama are tools for spiritual self-knowledge. The peeling away of internalized oppression and cultural distortions includes the process of *conocimiento* (who and where you are from) and *el espejo*/the mirror—telling stories of one's life. The sacredness of relationships in the circle of family and community guide the healing work. Men are reconnected in positive ways, re-creating extended family and safe spaces to gather and share on a regular basis to support the journey towards balance.

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

The lack of information and understanding the domestic violence field has for the dynamics of violence in same-sex and transgender relationships was brought into sharp focus. Led by the feminist movement, the heterosexual community has come up with various theoretical models to address domestic violence within that population. Theoretical models addressing the issue with racial/ethnic minority communities also are now being developed, but little is known about domestic abuse within the Latino lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. Now, programs to document it are being developed.

The workshop emphasized the importance of including this part of the Latino population in discussions and in the development of culturally healing models in the community. The presenters related what has been done to address this issue; reviewed which theoretical models have been used to address domestic violence among same-sex relationships; and highlighted the particular concerns in developing a model to work with Latino gay men who are batterers. They introduced the preliminary report by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs detailing 1999 domestic violence statistics in the LGTB community. The report tracked incidents in eight regions of the country. The presenters also emphasized that there is not a single Latino lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender program dealing with domestic violence in this country. Yet, this population is highly vulnerable to many forms of violence, leaving internalized scars that often erupt in personal violence toward partners.

The violent impact of homophobia within Latino communities, where many families reject their own, is compounded by the violence of societal discrimination against Latinos from the dominant U.S. culture. There are few safe spaces supporting open, healthy relationships and behavior where this community can gather. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has increased the complexity of obstacles this population must overcome to live in peace, build family and community, and find balance in themselves. A theoretical framework for dealing with violence in this community is in its infancy. LLEGO (The National Latino/a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Organization) is the only Latino network advocating for increased resources for health services as well as human and civil rights for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities in the United States, Puerto Rico and Latin America.

CLOSING PLENARY

Movimiento: Diálogo entre Nosotros; ¿A Dónde Vamos?

“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.”

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. Presenters responded and a lively discussion was held. 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. Struggling against collusion is an on-going battle that requires doing work with ourselves, staying in communication with women advocates, and working in conjunction with them. 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.

CLOSING PRAYER

Ceremony leader Isaac Cárdenas gave a closing prayer to acknowledge all the work that was done and giving thanks for bringing people together to stop the violence and to help in the healing of those who are victims and those who are perpetrators. He prayed that the work continue.

With words of appreciation and thanks, Alianza staff encouraged participants to continue their conversations during the outdoor reception. Physically tired, but intellectually and spiritually energized, conference participants gathered in small groups to eat and listen to music, appreciating the space and time to relax together and laugh after an intense period of learning and sharing.

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.

ENDNOTES

¹ Abuser, batterer and physically abusive man were used interchangeably throughout this talk.

² Tjaden, P. & Thoennes, N. (July 2000). *Extent, Nature, And Consequences Of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings From The National Violence Against Women Survey*. Washington, DC: Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, 810 Seventh Street N.W. Washington, DC 20531

³ Gondolf, E. (2001). *Batterer Intervention Systems*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

⁴ National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs; LGBT Domestic Violence in 1999, NYC Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project. (Preliminary Report, 1999) NY, NY 10001.

⁵ Ignacio Martín-Baró, a Jesuit priest, social psychologist, and a renowned scholar dedicated his life to the cause of human rights, equality, and social justice. Through his advocacy, research, and rehabilitation programs, Martín-Baró worked to heal the individual and collective scars of war and oppression in El Salvador, his adopted country.

⁶ Mexican ethnologist and feminist author who pioneered gender studies in universities in Mexico.

