

Alternative Healing Practices

To Treat Trauma

Prepared by:
Vanessa Berens, Assistant Trainer

Encuentro Latino
National Institute on Family Violence

www.latinodv.org 1-888-743-7545 mail@latinodv.org



Holistic Approach

- ◆ Alternative Healing
- ◆ Traditional Healing
- ◆ Folk Healing



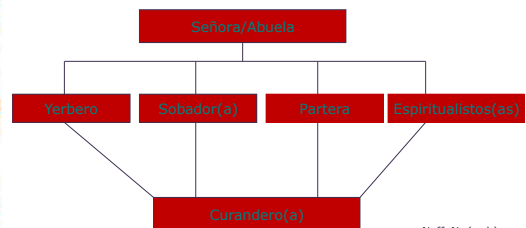
Folk Healers

- ◆ *Yerbero* (herbalist)
- ◆ *Sobador* (massage therapist)
- ◆ *Partera* (midwife, who also treats problems with young children)
- ◆ *Espiritualistos(as)* (psychic mediums)
- ◆ *Curandero* (healer who may use multiple modalities)

(Trotter & Chavira, 2000)



Hierarchy of Lay Healers



Neff, N. (n.d.).



Common Folk Illnesses

- *Susto*: soul loss; literally “fright of the soul”
- *Empacho*: digestive blockage
- *Caida de la mollera, espanto*: soul loss
- *Mal de ojo*: evil eye
- *Brujería*: witchcraft / *Embrujado*: hexed
- *Ataque de nervios*: nervous distress
- *Bilis, colera, muina*: rage
- *Locura*: chronic psychosis

(American Psychiatric Association, 2000)



Curanderismo

- From the verb *curar*, which means “to heal”
- Become healers after long apprenticeships
- Greater emphasis on person’s innate talent to heal, such as gifts from a higher power
- *El Dón*- Spiritual calling
- Multiple areas of specialties and work on many realms including physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual

(Trotter & Chavira, 2000; Tafur, Crowe, & Torres, 2009)



Core of Curanderismo

- Spirituality and maintaining harmony and balance with nature
- Common to rely on spiritual paraphernalia (pictures of saints, crosses, and holy water)
- Recognize a duality of “naturally” and “supernaturally” causes of illnesses

(Trotter & Chavira, 2000)



Spiritual Healing

- ◆ Alturas (Altars)
- ◆ Saints (Specific Roles)
- ◆ Los milagritos (Miracles)
- ◆ Amuletos (Amulets)
- ◆ Mandas/Ofrendas (Offerings)
- ◆ Veladoras (Candles)
- ◆ Shaman (High Priest)



(Trotter & Chavira, 2000)



Cleansing

- Limpias or Barridas (cleansing):
 - Bring back the body and spirit
 - Draw out illness and negative forces into the objects used (herbs, branches, or egg)
 - Cleansing prayer brings healing energy into the person to replace this negativity
 - Draw a person's soul back into their body after extreme shock or other intense emotion
 - Used for spiritual imbalance brought on by anything from excess of fright, envy, anger, overexposure to heat or cold or other reasons
- Smudging/Sahumerio/Incensing

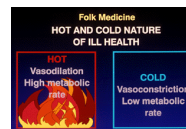
(Trotter & Chavira, 2000; Krajewski-Jaime, 1991)



Herbal Remedies

- Treatment of minor illnesses
- The retention of a locus of self-control
- Spiritual cleansings
- Used in teas, herbal baths, or poultices
- Imbalances of heat and cold, dry and wet

(Trotter & Chavira, 1997; Neff, N., n.d.)



Energy Balancing

- ◆ Hot and cold balance
- ◆ Material and Spiritual balance
- ◆ Vibrating energy
- ◆ Crystals
- ◆ Massage /Reiki
- ◆ Biofeedback
- ◆ Hypnotherapy
- ◆ Acupuncture and acupressure



(Trotter & Chavira, 1997; Neff, N., n.d.)



Relaxation



- Meditation
 - » Deep breathing
 - Progressive relaxation
- Visual imagery



- Aromatherapy
- Exercise/Tai Chi/Yoga
- Mindfulness
- Visit with loved ones
- Smile for one minute



Culturally Competent Treatment

- Holistic healing is treating the multidimensional aspects of a person's mind, body, and spirit
- Understanding the client's world view with improved culturally competent healing strategies
- Using alternative healing that can enhance the intervention process and prevent misdiagnosing or incorrect assessments
- Invite the client to openly interact on treatment plan, bringing in important dimensions of their life



References

- American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed.). Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Association.
- Krajewski-Jaime, E. R. (1991). Folk-healing among Mexican-American Families as a consideration in the delivery of child welfare and child health care services. *Child Welfare, 70*(2), 157-167.
- Neff, N. (n.d.). Folk Medicine in Hispanics in the Southwestern United States. Retrieved February 4, 2010, from <http://www.rice.edu/projects/HispanicHealth/html>.
- Tafur, M. M., Crowe, T. K., & Torres, E. (2009). A review of curanderismo and healing practices among Mexicans and Mexican Americans. *Occupational therapy International, 16*(1), 82-88.
- Trotter, R. T. (2001). Curanderismo: A picture of Mexican- American folk healing. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, 7*(2), 129-131.
- Trotter, R. T., & Chavira, J. A. (1997). *Curanderismo, Mexican American folk healing* (2nd ed.). Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.



Encuentro Latino National Institute on Family Violence

www.latinodv.org 1-888-743-7545 mail@latinodv.org

