

Strengths in the Latina Community

- **F: Please take a few minutes to create a list of strengths or “protective factors” of the Latina community. (allow time – see lists below)**
 - List 1:
 - *Familismo / comunidad* Family / community (Intersections)
 - *Caballerism* (Chivarly, the way the ideal man should behave)
 - Spirituality as a tool in the healing process
 - Adaption / Acculturation showcasing ability to adapt to different environments / lifestyles.
 - List 2:
 - Family oriented
 - Supportive
 - Hard working
 - Determined
 - Educated
 - Compassionate
 - Happy
 - List 3:
 - Family
 - Traditions
 - Religion
 - List 4:
 - Family connection
 - Communication
 - Help to each other (in some circumstances)
 - Fight for what you want
 - Patience
 - Love

- **F: What is one thing that stood out to you on the list that you created? Or one thing that you think is unique, or really strong.**

- P4: Who is going to start this time?
- P1: Family oriented.
- **F: Can you say a little bit more about that?**

- P1: I think it's a good and it's a bad thing.
- Others: Yeah

• P1: Because we tend to move in packs. And it's a good thing when that pack supports one another.

But it's not a good thing when that pack actually harms one another.

Especially in the work that we do with sexual assault, where the majority of the cases are family members assaulting other family members.

And that secrecy, of family, that comes with being a survivor of sexual assault.

There's never justice for you.

Because if at one point you call the police, that person is known in the family, you will have the whole family against you.

And then if you don't call the police then the potential of this person harming other family members, or even if your family wanted to do something about, also becomes an issue.

In many cases, you might as well just shut your mouth and just take it. And when you get older then you beat them up, just kidding, you deal with it in some other way.

But yeah, family-oriented.

- **F: And so you said that's how it could be a negative, how is it also a strength?**

- P1: Because I think that, for us, divorce is always at the bottom of the list, no matter what.

And we try to save that family unit for our children, and when we have good family systems we see the growth in our community and how this can contribute to the family and to the community.

And really, bring in that set of family values that will keep you grounded as you acculturate to this society.

And it's a healthier acculturation rather than having the negative impact of the other side.

- **F: Did anyone else have something like that?**

- All: Yeah, yeah, I had family. Me, too.

- **F: All the rest of you! Do you want to talk about why you selected that, or even, if it was just similar?**

- All: (Laughter)

- P3: S/he just said it.

- **F: And that's okay, too.**

- P4: I think I'll add, the piece of the community, la comunidad, we see that here in this *city* and how we can all try to intersect our work and best support each other.

So, we create like our own professional family.

- P1: Yeah, and then we learn when we move here, we start to understand and learn that family is not just your birth family but you can create your own family as you move forward.

- And really, how other Latinos in your community make that whole family.
- P4: Yeah, that's the framework we used, too at my school, when I developed programming. We'd call it the "academic family" that ensure that students would succeed and have higher retention rates in school.
- P1: Creating your own kindof support system and having people to lean on, too.
- **F: Other thoughts about why the two of you selected that?**
- P2: Just because, I just saw it in my own family, too.

Good or bad, you're together all the time.

And like, *other participant* said, it can be good because you have your family there to support you in situations.

But at the same time I just remember my grandma telling one (*in the family*) who wants to get a divorce, "You get married, now you get married. You're not going to divorce."

But anyways, we will be with them, we will still have family.

It doesn't matter that they were going through these problems.

Bad or good, you're always going to be there and they're going to be always there.

Judging each other, still but . . .

- Others: laughter
- P2: But family.
- Others: Yeah, yeah
- P2: But you're still there.

And I think that was one of the cultural shocks that I got here with my husband's family, too.

Thinking that I know that they love each other, and everything, but being with that family wasn't like my family.

Oh yeah, we eat lunch, but then everyone goes away and nobody talks about anything. Just like having lunch.

And "don't you guys hang out, or do something else, or talk about your issues, or something?" It's like, no.

- P1: We have no issues.
 - Others: laugher, yeah
 - **F: Do you think that would be another strength, too? Being more willing to talk about issues, or no? I just heard it come up . . .**
 - P2: I put communication as my second (*item on the list of strengths*).

And I was surprised because, in my own family, my nuclear family, my parents and I, we had good communication through all the time and still we do.

But at the same time, talking about sexual assault, or talking about birth control, or talking about preventive services, I never thought about that.

I was never, oh, you need to learn this.

My Mom talked to me about sex when I was 18 and it was just like, “don’t do it.”

- P1: “Don’t do it”
- P2: “Until you find the guy that you are going to marry. That was her sex talk.

So we didn’t have communication about this to prevent sexual assault or to have healthy relationships.

I was in a really bad relationship once, and my parents never said anything until I broke up with that *person*, and my Dad said, “I’m so glad you’re not marrying him.”

- Others: Yeah, yeah
- P2: I was like, “Why you didn’t say anything before?” You know??
- Others: Yeah
- P2: But we had really good communication but in these types of things that we want to prevent we don’t have that much communication yet. Family really . . .

- P1: In a sense, I feel that we all grew up, the way that we learned was by making mistakes, because we didn’t have this parenting . . . like . . .

- P2: Guidance
- Others: Yes
- P1: Yeah, guidance like redirecting you, you know.

If you got into a bad relationship, oh well. We’re not going to get into each other’s business.

You'll figure it out. Did you learn? I'm glad you're not marrying him – but did you learn?

- P2: Yeah