# Supporting Community-Based DV Work Through Academic Collaboration

Submitted by: Daniel W. Snook, Miklós B. Halmos, M. Alejandra Arce, Hannah L. Joseph, Gabriel P. Kuperminc, Rebecca Rodriguez, Rosario de la Torre, & Teresa Burns

Interventions to support survivors of domestic violence (DV) have historically and predominantly been developed with and geared toward White, English-speaking, non-immigrant populations. Interventions to reduce negative effects of domestic violence are highly context dependent. Latina DV survivors face unique socio-cultural barriers when seeking services.

Figure 1 Model of FAI Services. Image provided by the authors.
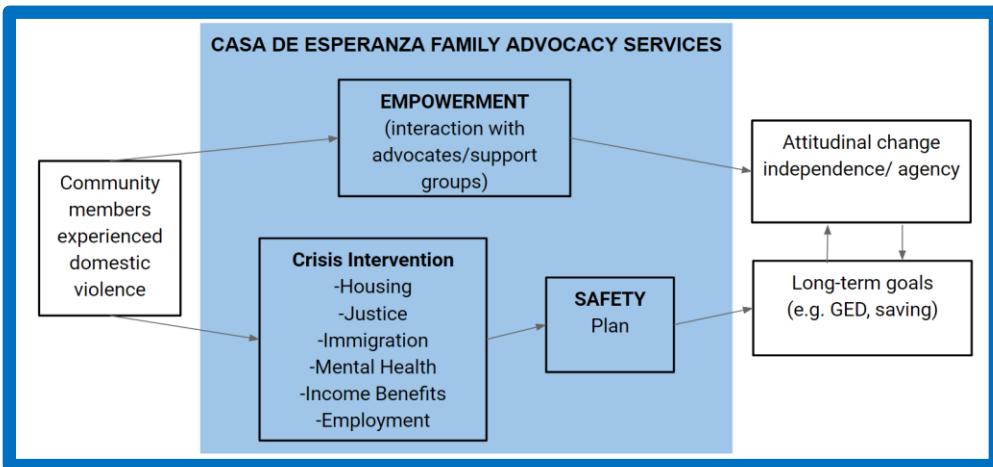
Casa de Esperanza's Family Advocacy Initiative (FAI) seeks to support LatinX communities impacted by DV by facilitating a variety of services including a 24-hour hotline, shelter, community advocacy, and transitional housing support network. Casa de Esperanza provides resources for LatinX families who have experienced DV in ways that acknowledge the realities of their lives. Services are bilingual, and break down barriers that many LatinX people face, like immigration concerns, a complex legal system, and navigating family values in situations where perpetrators are often spouses.

Highlights

Domestic Violence interventions are highly dependent on the person-environment fit.

_____

LatinX communities need interventions culturally sensitive to their needs.

_____

Community-based resources can be supported by collaborative academic partnerships to strengthen the evaluation component of the work.

A university-community partnership was established to define, design, and plan an evaluation of Casa de Esperanza's FAI. Community Psychology doctoral students at Georgia State University collaborated with members of Casa de Esperanza's team to analyze organizational programming. We conducted focus groups with staff and provided a framework for an evaluation of the FAI that has potential to improve the quality of its crucial services. We highlighted the need for culturally sensitive programs for survivors of DV and the benefits of collaborative community partnerships and evidence-based evaluative learning.

HOW DID A COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVE INFORM YOUR WORK?

Throughout the project, themes of participant empowerment, socio-cultural implications, evidence-based approaches, and cultural sensitivity manifested themselves in efforts to develop and prepare a collaborative evaluation plan for this unique, culturally-informed initiative.

Methods

To measure the success of Casa de Esperanza's culturally sensitive services for LatinX survivors of DV, the university team designed an evaluation plan that includes case management data, as well as quantitative survey outcomes. Importantly, this plan was informed by and responsive to the concerns and suggestions made by staff during focus group discussions. For example, based on feedback from staff, recommendations included providing staff with additional support and resources, specifically data recording services. The program's logic model was reviewed and refined with recommendations made for more clearly aligning program inputs/activities with quantifiable outcomes/impacts in order to aid programmatic efforts, build evidence of effectiveness, and aid subsequent evaluation efforts.

Results

➢ Evaluation efforts for the Family Advocacy Initiative at Casa de Esperanza highlight the need for streamlining intake interviews and related follow-up forms to aid programmatic work as well as subsequent monitoring and evaluation activities.

➢ The integration of validated, standardized questionnaires assessing outcomes of interest to the program, and creation of a database to collect, organize, and analyze the data, was recommended to aid future follow-up work with participants as well as monitoring and evaluation activities.

What Does This Mean For?

Research and Evaluation: This work is an example of a foundational approach for a well-designed, evidence supported, culturally informed evaluation plan which, in turn, highlights the unique needs and challenges of a community-driven domestic violence intervention program.

Practice: Integrating monitoring and evaluation methods into existent programmatic work further strengthens and highlights the outcomes and impacts of programs. Further, this project calls attention to the need for culturally-informed programs, especially within domestic violence prevention efforts, and presents as a model program the work spearheaded by the Family Advocacy Initiative utilizing Casa de Esperanza's Latina Advocacy Framework.

Social Action: This project illustrates the importance of collaboration between researchers/evaluators and the community to achieve goals that are culturally relevant and tailored to organizational needs. In addition, this project supports the role that community resources can play in supporting and empowering LatinX survivors of domestic violence, who have been historically underserved in mainstream DV programs.

Original Citation: Arce, M. A., Snook, D. W., Joseph, H. L., Halmos, M. B., Rodriguez, R., de la Torre, R., Burns, T. & Kuperminc, G. P. (2020). _From Theory to Practice: Forging a Collaborative Evaluation Strategy for a Culturally-Informed Domestic Violence Initiative_. Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice, 11(3).