Navigating the Web of Worries:

Using Psychodrama Techniques to Help Latino Immigrant Families Manage Acculturation Stress

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In this article, we discuss the second session of the *Entre Dos Mundos*/Between Two Worlds (EDM) program for immigrant families. EDM is a curriculum that uses psychodrama techniques to help immigrant families adjust to cultural changes and prevent family problems that arise from acculturation stress. We present three case studies that highlight different action structures for working with multiple-family groups of Latino/a immigrants. Directors' notes are presented, and group processes are discussed.

KEYWORDS: Immigration; culture; prevention; psychodrama; experiential techniques; multiple-family groups.

BACKGROUND

One critical difference between Latino adolescents and many of their non-Latino peers is that the former often have to cope with the complexities inherent in the acculturation process, which causes individuals and families significant stress (Smokowski & Bacallao, 2010). *Acculturation stress* accumulates as a result of the daily conflicts and strains that many immigrants experience while adjusting to a new cultural system. This stress seems to be heightened by negative cultural experiences, for example, discrimination and language barriers (Smokowski & Bacallao, 2010; Smokowski, Buchanan, & Bacallao, 2009). Studies reveal that

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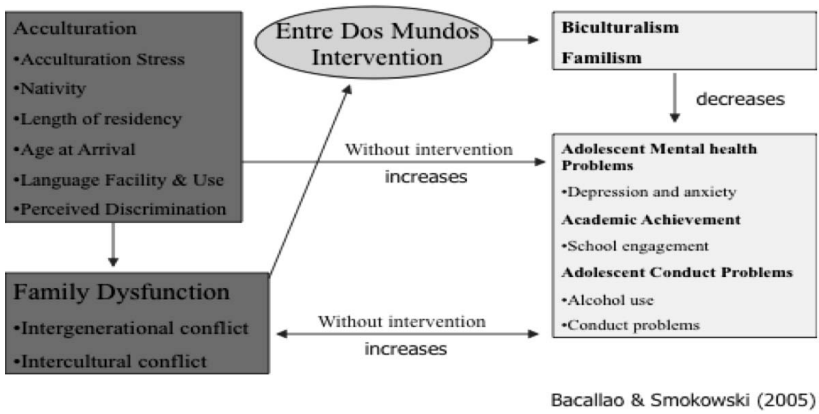

Figure 1. *Entre Dos Mundos*: Conceptual model.

acculturation stress is strongly connected to depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, alcohol use, and aggressive behavior among youth (Gil, Wagner, & Vega, 2000; Hovey & King, 1996; Katragadda & Tidwell, 1998; Smokowski et al., 2009).

Immigration experiences contribute stressors that can undermine mental health, leading to both acculturation stress and familial stress. Depending upon the reasons for their relocation—as well as the social environment the family left and the environment they entered—immigrant families often experience significant upheaval during migration. This upheaval includes shifts in socioeconomic status, loss of social networks, new or drastically restructured family roles, and disorienting cultural changes in the new land (Hernandez & McGoldrick, 1999).

Acculturation stressors have received significant attention in the academic literature on Latino immigrants. Gil et al. (2000) have suggested that immigrants may engage in negative health behaviors and delinquent behavior as a strategy for coping with acculturation stressors, such as language difficulties and discrimination. Maladaptive behavior is thought to derive from "increased perceptions of discrimination, internalization of minority status, and/or socialization into cultural attitudes and behaviors that have a disintegrative effect on family ties" (Gil, Vega, & Dimas, 1994, p. 45). These acculturation stressors result in conflict within an individual's psychological adaptation, such as tension reconciling competing demands from his or her culture of origin and the host culture (Rogler, Cortes, & Malgady, 1991).

Conflicts among family members who are adjusting to the new cultural system at different rates are also common in immigrant families (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980). Adolescents usually acculturate much faster than their parents, leaving an acculturation gap that causes intergenerational stress between parents and children. Figure 1 illustrates this relationship on the left-hand side of the figure. Without intervention, the stress from acculturation often generates intercultural psychological conflicts for individuals (e.g., feeling pulled between two cultural systems) and intergenerational cultural conflicts between family

members (e.g., parents and adolescents arguing over how things should be done in this new culture). In turn, these conflicts are connected to problematic developmental outcomes such as anxiety, depression, school disengagement, alcohol use, and conduct problems such as delinquency and aggression.

The *Entre Dos Mundos*/Between Two Worlds (EDM) program uses psychodrama to address the negative effects of acculturation stress. Psychodrama is a psychotherapeutic method used in a group setting to encourage participants to act out scenes from their lives. For example, memories, fantasies, unfinished situations, or hopes for the future are enacted. Psychodrama facilitates reflection and insight on one's life while also acknowledging and processing emotions (Kellerman, 1992). Although conducted in a group setting, psychodrama focuses on the experiences of one individual, whereas sociodrama focuses on the experiences of the group and a shared social issue (Moreno, 1943, p. 437). Psychodrama results in a number of positive changes, making it a useful intervention for immigrant populations. For example, past research has found that psychodrama is associated with increases in empathy and positive behavior; improvements in relationship quality; and decreases in aggression, depression, anxiety, and distress (for a review, see Kellerman, 1987; Kipper & Ben-Ely, 1979).

The utility of a psychodrama-based intervention to alleviate acculturation stress seems promising. The EDM program uses psychodrama methods to address a number of acculturation stressors, such as discrimination experiences, parent–adolescent cultural conflict, and forming relationships with non-Latinos, among others. In the EDM action-oriented groups, the facilitator, called the Director, uses a variety of psychodrama techniques, including the following:

- Role reversal, in which the protagonist takes on the role of another person in order to "see themselves as others see them" (Karp & Farrall, 2014, p. 17).
- Doubling, a form of role taking when a group member offers to step briefly into the role of the protagonist to voice thoughts, feelings, or physical sensations the protagonist might not be aware of.
- Mirroring, which enables the protagonist to gain distance from a memory or enacted situation by standing outside of the scene (Dayton, 2015).
- Empty chair, when the protagonist speaks to an imagined significant other, an entity, or an abstract concept seated in an empty chair (Carnabucci, 2014).
- Enactment, acting out and externalizing one's inner thoughts, emotions, reality, or fantasy of critical scenes from personal and social experiences shared by the participating families (Levens, 2014).

As illustrated in Figure 1, EDM attempts to offset the negative impact of acculturation stress by increasing family adaptability and biculturalism in Latino adolescents and their parents. The theoretical background of the intervention hypothesizes that increasing biculturalism and family adaptability in immigrant Latino families decreases cultural conflict between parents and adolescents (Szapocznik, Santisteban, Kurtines, Perez-Vidal, & Hervis, 1986). Ultimately, this decrease in intergenerational conflict may lead to decreased levels of adolescent anxiety, depression, and conduct problems.

Session content is experiential, based on psychodrama methods for exploring intra- and interpersonal situations and relationships, while encouraging interaction with family members in a culturally respectful manner within a supportive group environment. Structured warm-ups are used to focus the multiple-family groups on that week's theme.

In Session 2 of the EDM program, we address the worries that parents and adolescents have for each other that are generated by acculturation stress. In the sections to follow, psychodrama techniques and sociodramas were facilitated to directly address immigrant parents' and adolescents' worries for each other in the receiving country. A summary of how EDM group members responded to these psychodrama methods, as well as a process discussion on the clinical utility of the approach, is provided in the "Directors' Notes and Conclusions."

Session 2 Theme: *What worries do immigrant adolescents have for their parents? What worries do immigrant parents have for their adolescents? How can we comfort each other and help to decrease some of these worries?*

LOCOGRAM WARM-UP AND SOCIODRAMA FOR IMMIGRANT FAMILIES TO SHARE THEIR WORRIES

The codirectors (referred to as Directors 1 and 2) separate the multiple-family group of adolescents and parents into two rooms or different spaces for the first portion of the session, called the warm-up. Director 2 facilitates the following discussion and activity with the parents, while Director 1 does the same with the adolescents. Each group enters a circle of chairs that surround a pile of rocks of various sizes. There are five more rocks than there are participants, to provide choices in selecting one's rock size. Before the participants take a seat, the Director leads them in a walk around the outside of the circle. As they are walking, the Director explains how immigrant families face a multitude of changes in daily activities: how they cook, eat, dress, interact with others, manage time, resolve problems, raise families, uphold customs and values, and communicate in another language.

Immigrant families enter a country that has a long history of racism and xenophobia, despite the fact that everyone who came to the United States was an immigrant. These cultural changes are often faced without the extra support and advice from their families in South America and Mexico. The Director continues with these instructions:

> During this time of adaptation, it is natural that our worries for our parents [or our teenagers] have grown heavy. Recall a worry that you have or had this week for your parent [or adolescent]. Choose a rock to represent the weight of your worry and then carry it to your seat.

Once everyone is seated, the Director invites the participants to introduce the rock they have selected as their recent worry for their parent or adolescent. Some participants feel fiercely loyal and protective of their parent or adolescent, and

prefer to keep the worry private. To accommodate those participants while doing a check-in with everyone, the Director can model how to share the weight of a worry and use other ways that the rock symbolizes it. The Director can also model how to share the content of a worry, which may reveal some information about the family member in the other room. One of the rules of the group is to speak of the other family member, when separated, as if the member were present.

During the check-in, the Directors point out similarities that are heard and seen between the participants to foster connections. Groupings of individuals can also be done around the size of their rocks—small, medium, or large—or by the shape—sharp-angled, rounded. Simple criteria groupings can quickly put participants with a commonality together to help foster a thematic discussion of their worries while not revealing too much of the content without the other family member present.

The Director actively listens to emerging themes in the warm-up—worries about communication in English only, worries about perceived dangers in U.S. culture, worries about becoming too Americanized and its impact on the family. Themes must be limited to five for the purposes of the locogram activity, which is to follow.

The locogram is an action structure used to divide the five main worries that have emerged from the subgroup into the four corners and the center of the room. A locogram represents a word, phrase, or symbol that is designated at one of the corners or the center of the room. The Director recapitulates the adolescent subgroup's five themes through the locogram structure by saying:

> In this corner are the worries you have for your parents about discrimination. In the second corner [walks to that area] are the worries you have for your parents about language. The third corner are the worries you have for your parents about safety at their workplace, and the last corner, worries for your parents about the family members that they left behind in their country. The center space of the room are the worries for your parents about deportation.

Each corner can be depicted with a simple visual representation, largely drawn with marker on paper and taped to the corner wall or placed on the floor. Labeling the spaces can prevent some confusion as to what the choices are and where the worries are located.

The adolescent participants are instructed to walk the corners or center space and decide where their current worry for their parent pulls them. Clusters of adolescents gather in the corners or center based on a shared concern. To become better known and sense each other's feelings, they are given time to share something about the worry they all carry. An action locogram provides visual information to everyone about the group—for example, we see who worries about the same things, or we see one individual standing alone with a particular worry.

The Director is also making a mental note of how the overall group disperses itself, if there is a pattern in how people group themselves and the number of

individuals in the assigned spaces. One person from each locogram space is asked to make a general statement to the larger group about their choice. If one person is standing alone, separate from the others, the Director asks that individual to share something about his or her concern and then invites others to provide doubling. Now the individual is asked to make a second choice and briefly connect with the others in that space by exchanging something about this worry for one's parents.

The locogram groups are ready to create a situation where the worry they have chosen (discrimination, language, job safety, a family member in country of origin, deportation) surfaces for an adolescent (or a parent). It is not to be one person's exact situation, but rather a compilation of bits and pieces from everyone's experience with this particular worry. The situation contains one scene, with a fictional main character who represents something from each one in the locogram group. The number of characters in the scene is limited to the number of people in a group. Everyone is instructed to create a beginning and a middle that has conflict. The conflict provokes the worry.

For the adolescent subgroup, the ending is left for the parents to complete; as for the parent subgroup, their sociodrama ending will be in the hands of the adolescents. These endings are opportunities for the subgroups to collectively comfort and ease the others' worries. In guiding the locogram groups to create their sociodrama, questions are posed: Where does the scene take place? What is necessary to include in this scene and how can you depict it (a kitchen table at home, a park bench at the soccer field)? Who are the characters (limit the number to no more than the number of individuals in the locogram group)? What happens to burden the fictional adolescent or parent with worry for the other? Because worrying can be a solitary preoccupation with one's thoughts, this enactment must show behaviors triggered by worry. When signs of readiness are observed, the subgroups reunite to begin the action phase of sociodramas.

Adolescents are asked to do their sociodramas while parents watch as the audience members. Before starting the enactment, the first locogram adolescent group is asked, "Where would this worry belong on the acculturation spectrogram? Decide as a group, and then place your rocks in that area on the acculturation spectrogram."

The first sociodrama is set up at home, at the kitchen table with a father, mother, and adolescent, drinking their morning cup of coffee and eating toast. Today is the birthday of the parents' youngest child (the adolescents' sibling), who resides in their country of origin with his grandparents.

The mother is very sad as she shares earlier memories of her child, whom she has not seen in 3 years. The adolescent suggests that they call to wish the younger sibling a happy birthday, but the father retorts that hearing his youngest son's voice will make them even sadder. "We must pray that God reunites us," says the mother. She stares at her coffee without drinking it. The father urges her to get busy with work so that she can stop thinking about his birthday. He reminds the family that they are in this country to work and study, and when they do that, it will make the time go fast and there won't be any time for missing family members who are not with them. The adolescent writes the phone number of his uncle's house (who lives near the grandparents) and passes it to his mother. The father

sees the paper, takes it, tears it up, and orders the adolescent to stop making this day more painful than it already is. The mother quietly says, "Be respectful to your father." The adolescent mutters an apology to his father, excuses himself from the table without finishing his breakfast, and exits the scene, locking himself in his bedroom for the rest of the day.

The director stops the sociodrama and brings attention to the adolescent's body by asking, "Where in his body is he carrying the heaviness of worry? Speak as if you are that part of his body." Using I-statements and lifting one of the rocks to concretize the heaviness are encouraged in this type of somatic role reversal. The audience also identifies the adolescent's behaviors that are connected to his worry for his mother—he didn't finish his breakfast, he stopped talking, he locked his door, he went to hide. Audience members double the protagonist as they see him separated from his parents and alone. The doubling offered to a protagonist in a sociodrama is an extension of support for all the adolescents in the locogram group "family members left behind." The protagonist in this short sociodrama represents their shared concern.

The shift in focus toward comforting the adolescent is explored by inviting the parents into the sociodrama to try out actions that may decrease the protagonist's worry for his mother. Parental actions are emphasized more than words; to simply tell the adolescent not to worry does not grow new behavioral habits in alleviating it. When audience members enter this sociodrama, they become auxiliaries to the protagonist. The protagonist is asked to return to the kitchen table while those who step into the sociodrama as his "parents" have an opportunity to do behavioral rehearsals on how to alleviate his worry.

Some of these behavioral rehearsals include the father going out and returning with a store-bought cake and box of candles, the mother telling an engaging story to her adolescent about his younger brother, the father telling the family that they will bake a *tres leches* cake to celebrate his birthday, the mother asking the son for the uncle's phone number to call and sing "Las Mañanitas" (a traditional birthday song), the parents making a timeframe for when they will bring the youngest son to the United States and sharing it with the adolescent, and the father initiating a discussion of how the youngest son gains many benefits from remaining in the country of origin with two working parents financially supporting his education there.

In closing the sociodrama, the locogram group is asked to revisit the acculturation spectrogram and look at where their rocks were originally positioned, next to the culture-of-origin pole. Did the weight of the adolescent's worry decrease as parents responded in different behavioral ways? Do the rocks need to be repositioned after the sociodrama or remain where they are? The locogram group members decided to pick up their rocks out of their original spot, next to the culture-of-origin pole, and place them halfway between that pole and the middle of the arc (see Figure 2). The repositioning of the rocks by the adolescents, who carry this worry, captures the power of the parents and their action-oriented efforts at decreasing the adolescent's worry. This movement shows an increase toward bicultural adaptation through the work done in the sociodrama.

The acculturation spectrogram uses 2 poles positioned on opposite ends with an arc that crosses between them. The left pole is marked "Culture of Origin". The right pole is marked "U.S. Culture". Participants use the acculturation spectrogram to explore movement between the two cultures. The middle range of the arc represents biculturalism.

Figure 2. Acculturation spectrogram with rocks to symbolize worries.

The other two, short sociodramas enacted by the adolescent locogram groups are (1) parents would get hurt while operating dangerous equipment at a logging factory with insufficient training, limited language comprehension, and a neglectful supervisor; and (2) the rental office would find out that the parents are undocumented workers and report them. The formula from the first sociodrama is applied to parents' work dangers and deportation. The locogram group for work dangers begins by placing rocks symbolic of worry about one quarter of the distance away from the culture-of-origin pole.

The adolescents explain how their parents gained new work skills by learning how to operate equipment in the logging industry, but the language barrier impedes their training, safety, and supervision. The work scene is set up and the sociodrama unveils the adolescent's concern. The enactment is frozen to allow a somatic role reversal and doubling for the protagonist. Action cues that the adolescent is worried are identified, and behavioral rehearsals for parents to comfort the adolescent are conducted. Doubling the protagonist concludes the sociodrama. The work-dangers locogram group moves their rocks from the starting position on the acculturation spectrogram to show that parents can make effective adaptations at work to ease the worry that the protagonist carried. Movement toward bicultural development is seen on the acculturation spectrogram (see Figure 2).

Main themes concerning worries about their adolescents that were explored with parents throughout the 3-year program included adolescents becoming too liberal and losing respect for parents, grief caused by the separation from family members in the country of origin, running away to return to Mexico without parental permission, getting into trouble with the police, being targeted for racism, the perceived dangers of U.S. culture, adolescents not being raised by the whole family (extended family members in the country of origin), increased dependency

on their children, deportation, invitations by American peers, and not knowing the parents of their daughter or son's friends.

Main themes on worries about parents identified by the adolescents during EDM sessions included filing applications to obtain or renew a green card, managing and filing legal documents for residency, insufficient money for monthly bills, being deported, finding affordable housing, looking for quick jobs to make ends meet, locating health care or services in Spanish, dealing with adult bullies, and protecting parents from racist attitudes and actions. In summary, all these concerns are connected to acculturation stress, which makes action methods so relevant because adaptations can be practiced to alleviate worries and progress can be witnessed and measured on the acculturation spectrogram.

A MODIFIED EMPTY-CHAIR TECHNIQUE TO ADDRESS ADOLESCENTS' WORRIES

Another action piece that is used to reveal and promote dialogue about the worries that immigrant adolescents and parents have for each other is the empty chair technique. At the start of Session 2, parents and adolescents separate into two subgroups to begin a brief introduction on how immigrant adolescents and parents have worries for the other. The Director explains that many of these worries are unique to the immigrant family because of the adaptation process that they are experiencing. Members of the family are at different stages in their adaptation to the United States. When we see our parents or adolescents facing adaptation challenges, we sometimes worry about them. Worries are preoccupations in our thoughts that are often not talked about. "Today, we are going to reveal some of those worries as a group, and see how we can comfort each other," explains the Director. This is the objective of Session 2 in the EDM program.

A brief discussion among the subgroup members begins to identify some of the worries they carry for their parent or adolescent. Large, blank papers are taped on the wall for participants to depict their worries through pictures. The subgroup is instructed to show one worry on a sheet of paper through a picture (no words) using black, thick-tipped markers. Cut-up grocery bags are used for the paper; their thickness prevents ink from seeping through to the wall, and they are big enough to fit across the back part of the chair one leans on when sitting. Several adolescents gather around the paper to discuss how they want to illustrate a particular shared worry. They are encouraged to collaboratively create a picture, one per page. This activity requires standing to complete the pictures. Directors have noted that standing up encourages quicker collaboration than sitting at tables while drawing.

After the pictures are completed, participants sit down while volunteers briefly identify the worry and describe its visual depiction. Subgroup members are asked to stand up if this is a worry they are currently carrying for their adolescent or parent, to acknowledge the shared concern. If there is only one person representing a picture, after the individual introduces it to the group the Director asks others to stand up if they have carried this worry in the past.

Due to the time limit, pictures supported by one person will not go into the action phase. Therefore, it is important to see if such an individual stands up for

other pictures to be integrated into the action phase. Also, the Director can ask the individual to make a second choice with one of the other worries. In observing how many are standing up for each picture, the Director is able to eliminate single-supported pictures, condense the choices, and gauge the number of pictures with the time left for the action phase. The pictures are removed from the wall and taped onto the back of a chair, one picture per chair.

Now that the warm-up is sufficient to move into the action phase, the subgroups are reunited. The adolescent group is asked to begin by placing one of their chairs, taped with the picture of a concern for a parent, on the acculturation spectrogram. Adolescents introduce their worry and picture to the parents, who are watching the enactment. These adolescents are asked to stand facing the chair on the acculturation spectrogram.

They are each given a ball of neon-colored thin rope and instructed to tie the end of the rope with a knot to one of the legs of the chair (the legs are used because the back of the chair already has the picture taped on it). Holding onto the other end of the rope ball, adolescents are to show how close or far they feel relative to this concern at the present time by stepping farther away from the chair, moving closer to it, stepping over toward the side, or standing directly in front of it.

The adolescents' distance and position are made highly visible for the audience members by the neon-colored rope. Adolescents are given strips of masking tape and a marker to write their names and tape them horizontally on the floor. This marks the distance they are standing from the depicted concern. Imagining the concern sitting in the empty chair, the positioned adolescents are invited to speak to it.

If an adolescent asks the empty chair a question, such as "My parents work hard and they don't miss any days. Why aren't they getting promoted like the other workers?," the adolescent is taken out of his or her position and placed in the empty chair to respond to his or her own question, but in the role of the identified worry—in this case, discrimination. An auxiliary from the audience holds the position where the adolescent stepped out, picks up the rope, and repeats the question to the empty chair. The repetition of the question is addressed to the person sitting in the chair, who is now in the role of the worry. As soon as the response is given, the individual is directed out of the empty chair and returned to the original spot, standing with his or her rope at a distance from the chair.

When adolescents are finished addressing the empty chair, they remain standing in their positions with rope in their hands, while the Directors turn to the parents in the audience:

> These are our immigrant children. They have been through so much. We love them. We brought them here so that their lives could be better in the U.S. But they are worried. We, as parents, have a responsibility to comfort our children from these worries. What can we do to pull them farther away from this worry?

Cross-parenting and collective parenting are highly encouraged in generating immediate, practical action plans in the enactment that can also be carried out

by the parents during the week. After a parent makes a statement of what he or she can do to alleviate some of the worry, the adolescents, who are standing in their original positions, are asked to move closer, farther away, or more toward the side or front—or remain in the same spot—if that parental action would help shift their position relative to this worry.

The parents are advised to watch when their adolescent moves farther away from the side of the empty chair and then put that statement into real action during the week. Something in that statement stimulates distance from the worry. When the action piece ends, the adolescents are asked if they need to change the position of their empty chair on the acculturation spectrogram after hearing the action plans from the parents.

Usually, the empty chair is relocated a little closer to the middle range of the acculturation spectrogram when it is placed near the culture-of-origin pole. When the chair is placed near the U.S.-culture pole by parents at the start of the exercise, it often gets repositioned closer to the middle. The mirror technique wraps up this enactment. One of the adolescents volunteers to step out of his or her position and go to the sidelines of the action space. An auxiliary from the audience anchors the volunteer's spot. The adolescent volunteer looks at how the action ended, taking in what he or she has observed, and makes a closing comment as a witness of the collective effort and revelation in that moment.

The empty chair is usually done with one or two of the adolescent pictures and one of the parent pictures. The pictures are selected by the subgroups through a sociometric choice-making process. All pictures that are not used in the action phase are displayed on the walls.

HANGING OUR WORRIES ON A CLOTHESLINE TO DRY

The parents and adolescents are separated during the warm-up to briefly discuss immigrant adolescent or parent worries for the other family member. Along a table without chairs, everyone takes a sheet of paper and is asked to create a picture of a worry that they currently have for their adolescent or parent. Colored markers, crayons, and chalk are distributed. No names are written on the paper. After both subgroups finish with their pictures, they reunite in the room where the acculturation spectrogram is taped on the floor.

A long clothesline has been tied between two pillars. This particular group was held at a community arts center where there were pillars and even a stage. The pillar on the left side represents the culture of origin, and the pillar on the right is U.S. culture. It is the acculturation spectrogram in clothesline form but without the arc. Everyone is handed a clothespin and asked to hang their pictures on the clothesline, where they see it belonging between the two pillars and with the other pictures near it.

All pictures must face the line of chairs, so that when participants are sitting, they can still see them. This activity is done in silence, just looking at the other pictures and being mindful of the tension between the two pillars. "Where does your picture belong?" asks the Director. Sometimes participants reposition their picture if another picture is hung next to theirs, and it no longer feels like it fits

there. In other words, the first hanging of the picture may not be the final position on the clothesline. Using clothespins makes these adjustments easy.

After everyone has hung pictures on the clothesline between the two designated pillars, the parents are invited first to browse the clothesline and select a picture they would like to explore in action. Pictures are not identified with names, but most parents look to see what picture their adolescents have in their hands before it is hung; less attention is given by adolescents to pictures made by their parents.

When a picture is pointed out for more discussion by the parents, the Directors explicitly include the other pictures next to it, to broaden and connect the concern with the others. Usually, the depiction of the concern clues the group in as to whether it is directed to an adolescent or a parent. The Directors are intentional about generalizing the depicted concern to the multifamily group, not to a specific family. In doing this, the Directors ask the parents to describe what they see in the picture that is similar to the ones next to it. Directors try to curb judgments or opinions about the picture, and although participants are not asked who made it, adolescents will readily volunteer this information.

In looking at a picture, there can be a prominent figure or object that catches the parents' attention. This may be the reason they have selected the picture to explore in more depth. A group role reversal can be done with a prominent figure or object from a drawing, or a short one-scene action piece with dialogue could follow. A group of parents was curious about a picture showing a male adolescent driving away from his family's mobile home, leaving a mother and his three little sisters inside. The adolescent was holding a phone to his ear. A bubble singled out the adolescent's concern with the words "Papa, when are you coming back? I'm leaving now."

In looking carefully at the details in this picture, the parents concluded that the mother and her young daughters were probably the least acculturated in the family, making them the most vulnerable members. They were left alone, and this was the male adolescent's concern. The action piece set up the worried adolescent driving and talking to his Papa. Various adolescents and parents played these two roles, taking turns trying to alleviate the concern by developing an action plan. Several plans were generated between Papa and the worried adolescent to better ensure the safety of the women in the family when the men were away from the house.

One of the mothers, who stepped into the role of Papa to problem-solve with the son over the phone, asked about the son's route to work and suddenly thought of the library that was on his way. The son was confused as to why his Papa would think of the library. The woman playing the role of Papa suggested that when the adolescent leaves for work on Saturday he could drive his mother and younger sisters to the public library, where volunteers offer English classes and childcare. Audience members started to clap, welcoming this information.

The final phase of a psychodrama session is called the sharing. After each of the described action phases, a sharing followed. There are many ways to do a sharing; group members express how the work was relevant to them, free of

judgment, opinions, and advice. The sharing is a time of reintegration for the group and the protagonist.

Sharing also offers the protagonist a surrounding of support and a space for auxiliaries to derole from the parts they took in the action phase. It is a time to connect with others as well as with oneself. The Directors have facilitated sharing on the acculturation spectrogram—for example, "As you reflect on what you would like to share with our families, place yourself somewhere on the acculturation spectrogram and speak from that space."

We have also used the empty chair during sharing by placing it in the center, identifying what it represents, and then sharing with it. The empty chair has represented freedom in the United States to our immigrant families during the sharing phase. The neon rope can also be used in sharing, makes visible how we are connected together and as one. The first person begins by holding on to the end of the rope and passes the ball of rope to someone he or she wants to share with. The second person holds on somewhere on the rope and passes the ball of rope while sharing with that individual. This creates a web that concretizes the group's sociometric connections.

DIRECTORS' NOTES AND CONCLUSIONS

In our clinical work with Latino immigrant families, great relief has been expressed in bringing these worries to the surface through psychodrama techniques and communication. The group environment consistently provides the sense that the individual is not alone in handling the anxiety provoked by worries. Throughout the 3-year EDM program, many of the participants shared the same patterns of worries, but the taboo against speaking about these worries cut off critical lines for family support.

Within the EDM multifamily groups, adolescents and parents could find support from others who are in a similar place in the acculturation process. They were able to deepen their understanding and empathy for those at a different place in the acculturation process. This diversity in acculturation enriches the group process, allowing natural mentoring relationships to form, cross-family parenting to surface, and a strong sense of the collective parenting experience to continue to grow outside of the country of origin.

We had not anticipated having this session in our original listing of session themes. The need to consider worries after immigration surfaced from our extensive interviews with families prior to the EDM group. Adolescents and parents wanted to talk about these perceived burdens, but did not know how. They thought their silence somehow protected the other family members. The three case examples given in this article showed action structures for addressing this group theme.

Using the acculturation spectrogram, locograms, drawings, one-scene sociodramas, sociometric activities, and the empty chair created openings that felt safe and collective for dialogue about participants' worries for each other. Creating a sociogram with string was an effective way of making worries overt. Having participants stand rather than sit (for those who are able) during the warm-up activities quickened the pace, allowing participants to speak without lingering too much. Once the warm-up exercises made worries overt, the Directors

facilitated action to reveal and resolve worries between family members, with special attention to recognizing behavioral cues of internalized worry and carrying out an action plan to comfort the other.

Immigrant adolescents are often troubled by worries even more than their parents are. After immigration, younger adolescents pick up the new language faster than adults. For the first time, they begin to have the unsettling realization that their parents are vulnerable and sensitive in the U.S. cultural system. Most of the adolescents we have worked with respond to this challenge with resilience and newfound maturity, becoming cultural brokers and guides for their parents in a dramatic role reversal. This is a difficult new role that immigrant adolescents struggle with. Some take the cultural-broker role with caring and sensitivity, but others feel resentful and angry.

Psychodrama methods are particularly useful for exploring these intense feelings and reactions so that family members can increase their skills in coping with acculturation stressors, provide support for one another, and continue to bond as a family. Each action structure described in this article allows behavioral practice to help create new habits for adaptation within the U.S. cultural system. The warm-ups and action structures bring attention to worry cues—behaviors that parents and adolescents consciously or unconsciously use to cope when they are worried—and how to shift into actions of support. Once the worry cues are identified, families can move forward with behavioral practice for new strategies of support. It is critical that these new behaviors are practiced in and outside of the group to become habitual.

Using symbols, pictures, and metaphors can be quite useful and nonintimidating in helping immigrant adolescents and parents express themselves with each other. Some immigrant parents were not able to access formal education in their countries of origin. Consequently, the Directors found other ways to document their concerns: Drawings, symbols, and even the metaphor using rocks infused meaning while avoiding writing or reading. It is critical for the Directors to continually assess the group's sociometry during all phases of the session. The warm-up activities and action structures allow opportunities for collective parenting. Collective parenting builds upon the identity of Latino families being united, strong, and willing to help each other. Parents will give each other suggestions and resources, and will mentor adolescents from other families in the group. This is an invaluable source of sociometric support that the Directors should tap into in all phases of the session.

The acculturation web of worries functions similarly to family secrets. They are not often shared, but consistently lie just out of the family members' focus of attention. Parents and adolescents become reactive to each other but cannot explain why. They rarely address these worries with one another. It is all too common to internalize the anxieties and move on with daily activities. In this way, family members suffer the burden of their anxiety alone, and with few resources for coping. EDM Session 2 seeks to break this isolation, providing support across generations and from peers. Through the Directors' support for voicing concerns, the group participants see that they are not alone with their worries; these

concerns can be shared, recognized for their burdensome weight, and acted on by the group to bring comfort.

In one interaction, Director 1 asked a male adolescent his age, and he said he was 19. When she asked, "Do you think you have more worries than other 19-year-olds?," he responded yes and said he has more worries because he and his family are immigrants. Director 1 asked him if he realized before that he had so many concerns about his mother. The adolescent replied that although he knew he got worried about her every day, he didn't realize how many worries he had. Director 2 noted that the immigrant parents in the EDM group tended to think of their children as not having any worries about them, but Session 2 showed them that they do. One of the mothers asked in the group if this was particular to Latino parents because they do not share a lot of information with their children. The Directors asked the other parents what they thought, and many agreed that because immigration has caused major changes within the family, the parents have a heightened need to protect the children. As a result, they do not talk about the changes nor the worries they are undergoing together yet alone.

Clearly, there is more work to be done on the issue of worries as immigrant families go through the complex process of acculturation in the United States. Psychodrama techniques can provide safe, supportive, and culturally respectful ways to engage in this dialogue between family members.

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