A Photovoice Evaluation of Coping Mechanisms among Children of Immigrants
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BACKGROUND

International migration has increased and introduced unique stressors for US-citizen children. Life stressors are associated with children's mental health and school performance. Coping mechanisms are usually a product of childhood social-environmental health. Major Depressive and anxiety disorders are the two mental health conditions with the highest prevalence among Latino youth.

50,000 people are documented in the city of Philadelphia. Hispanics comprise the largest subgroup of those children living in Poverty in Philadelphia and approximately 48% of the undocumented Latino workers have less than a high school education and this may be associated with little understanding of the complexities of mental health disorders.

Limitations

• Social determinants of health such as poverty and dynamic family structures children may experience stress.

• To help children reduce their stress levels parents must make themselves available and be able to provide proper rest and nutrition.

• Latinos are often reluctant to seeking out mental health services because they rely on their faith and religion.

• In parental stress, the demands of parenthood exceed the perceived personal and social resources available to deal with challenges.

• In this research, parental stress stems from fear of deportation and detection that could lead to family separation and powerlessness in protecting children from impact and stigma of immigrant status.

• This study aims to explore how immigrant Latino parents' lifestyles impact the coping mechanisms of US-citizen children.

METHODS

• Photovoice methodology

• Site: Southwark Elementary School, South Philadelphia PA

• Convenience sampling: n=8

• Recruitment: After-school program offered by Puentes de Salud (non-profit organization based in South Philadelphia)

• Participants varied in ages from 7 to 12 years old, 4th through 6th grade

• Research was proposed during drop-off and pick-up of after-school program

• No constraints on where they could take their photographs

• Each student was given a disposable camera consisting of 27 frames

• Research question: What do your friends and how they respect me and how they are nice to me?

• Study was divided into 5 sessions:

  • Session 1: In depth informational session of research and consenting process

  • Session 2: Unconventionally done by follow-up on phone to all parents whom were interested

  • Session 3: Gave out cameras to participants

  • Session 4: In depth discussion and dissemination of photographs with the SHOWDo method

  • What do you See here?

  • What's really happening here?

  • How does this relate to our lives?

  • Why does this problem or situation exist?

  • How could this image Educate others?

  • What can we Do about the problem or situation?

  • Session 5: Showcase of photographs to participants friends and family

RESULTS

The three major themes transpired were: Family and Friends, Culture, and Puentes de Salud (the after-school program). The top five most used words in their interviews of their photographs were: Mexico, happy, brother, Puentes, and play.

Culture

Family and Friends

Puentes de Salud

RESULTS

DISCUSSION & LIMITATIONS

Discussion

• Culture

  • Culture is heavily embedded in these children's lives, in many aspects that were explored in their photographs.

  • A subtheme explored was the joy that comes with the preparation and/or eating the food they respect me and how they are nice to me (left).” “She is my tutor at Puentes and takes care of me and is also very nice to me (right).”

  • Puentes de Salud

    • The participants implicitly advocated on the importance Puentes de Salud has been to some participants expressed the positive impact the volunteers have been to their friendship.

    • Others demonstrated in the photographs the opportunity Puentes gives them to assist each other with homework and to vent emotional well-being.

• Friends and Family

  • Family is a staple and a foundation in the Latino culture, one that is taught to value and protect.

    • The participants cherish time spent with the friends and family because they feel respected, understood, and safe from judgment.

    • Many of the participants interpret their friendships as extensions of their family’s because with those they can also speak their native tongue and share similar experiences that their non-Latino peers will not understand.

Limitations

• Time allotted for participants was 5 days to take their pictures. However, not all may have been exposed to a “tough” time of the timeframe.

• A variety of children in every age group of the program could have yielded more evidence and support for the themes discussed.

• Every participant interpreted the prompt question differently, however this was expected.

• Sample size and population was very particular, interfering with the ability to apply results to other vulnerable groups.

• Inability to interact with participants everyday could have impacted results if they needed additional guidance, focus, or any questions surfaced.

CORE COMPETENCIES

• Fluency of Content Knowledge

• Research Methodology and Information Literacy

• Critical Thinking

• Communication

• Contribution to the Discipline/Profession

• Technical Proficiency

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