

Stress Management in Hispanic Migrant Students

Group Proposal

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Hispanic migrant populations are one of the minority groups that experience high levels of stress due to the stressors encountered as for working in farms, agricultural fields, and traveling (Chappell, 2005). As first generation Hispanic migrant students, many report experiencing poverty, low levels of self-esteem, fear of failing and not belonging, and high levels of stress during their first year in higher education institutions (Reyes, Valles, Salinas, 2011). This poster presentation provides a stress management group proposal geared towards Hispanic migrant populations.

A stress intervention program is beneficial for migrant students because they experience high levels of stress. A study conducted by Reyes, Valles, and Salinas (2011), investigated migrant student's stressors while attending higher education institutions. The major stressors that emerged revolved around social and family dynamics, conflicting social expectations, and tensions between family members. In addition, Hudgins (2005) conducted a study that showed that after participating in the stress management group intervention, migrant students showed an increase of personal growth initiative, reduced anxiety levels, and attended fewer individual counseling sessions compared to their baseline data. Group therapy, as oppose to individual therapy, would be beneficial for this population because increasing social connections can be therapeutic for migrant student. A study conducted by Oosterhout (2011) examined how social networking affected migrant students in college. Students reported that increasing their social networks on campus greatly increased their confidence in succeeding in college and made them view college as a safer environment.

The theoretical approaches selected for this stress management group therapy are composed of Person-Centered and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (Corey, 2012). Person-Centered therapy was chosen because it would allow migrant students to disclose their own

personal experiences with more freedom. Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) was chosen because it can help migrant students form constructive perceptions about their capacities for succeeding in college. The stress management therapy group will be conducted with migrant students during their first year of college. Migrant students aged 18 years or older are eligible to participate in this stress management group. Participants will be selected from Western Michigan University. The stress management group will meet once a week for one hour for 10 weeks. In order to assess results, participants will be administered the Perceived Stress Scale and Beck Depression Inventory prior to starting group therapy and at the end of group therapy (Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mock, & Erbaugh, 1961; Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983). In addition, participants will be interviewed on their perception of the group process after they complete group therapy. This interview will not be structured and provides open ended questions to obtain their experiences and reactions, perceptions of the group process, opinions on what worked and did not work in group, as well as future group therapy suggestions. Group therapy will allow migrant students to form connections, increase their social support, and learn coping skills for managing stressful situations. The implementation of this multicultural group will support the promotion of mental well-being among migrant populations and expand the counseling field.

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