than pathological. Latinos/as are also willing to forgo and even sacrifice material comfort in the pursuit of spiritual goals. Yamamoto and Acosta (1982), for example, suggest that the Latino/a church emphasizes that sacrifice in this world promotes salvation, that one must be charitable, and that wrongs against the person should be endured. Sue and Sue (1999) assert that because of such beliefs, "many Hispanics have difficulty behaving assertively. They feel that problems or events are meant to be and cannot be changed" (p. 290). This relates in turn to a time orientation to the present that is shared by most Latinos/as. Focus tends to be on the here and now, not on what has happened in the past or what will happen in the future. Present-oriented cultures place special value on the nature and quality of interpersonal relationships as opposed to their history or functionality. Such an orientation is psychologically related to a kind of fatalism and particularly common in peoples who suffer economic deprivation and powerlessness and find themselves at the whim and mercy of those with more power. The family and cultural values identified in this section are still true in current literature (Adames and Chavez-Dueñas, 2016).

Our Interviewee 11-3

Roberto Almanzan, M.S., is a counselor, teacher, trainer, and consultant on diversity and multicultural issues in the San Francisco Bay Area. He has worked with schools, corporations, mental health agencies, and various nonprofit organizations. He also teaches in the multicultural program at the Wright Institute, Berkeley. He has trained with Stirfry Seminars in Berkeley and was a key participant in the film *The Color of Fear*—produced in 1994 and probably the most widely used film in training and education on racism—and participated in the production of *The Color of Fear 2* and *The Color of Fear 3* as well as a number of other documentaries on racism, privilege, and social justice.

The Interview

Question: First, could you begin by talking about your ethnic background and how it has impacted your work?

Almanzan: I am Mexican, and this ethnic and cultural identity has been an influential factor in most facets of my life. It was my experiences as a Mexican American in a white-dominated society that really motivated me to do the kind of work that I do, much of which involves healing in the lives of people of color and in the relationships between them and with people of European descent. I'm the second generation born in the United States. My grandparents on my father's side migrated from Chihuahua in the north of Mexico to El Paso, Texas, on the border. My grandfather was a carpenter. He married my grandmother in Parral,

Chihuahua, and in the early 1900s in search of work, he went to El Paso, Texas, where he found employment. Shortly, he brought his wife and first child to El Paso. My father and other children were born there, and in gradual steps over ten years, the family moved to Los Angeles, where my father grew up.

My mother's family came from Sonora, a northern state on the western edge of Mexico and settled in Douglas, Arizona, another border town. I don't know much about my maternal grandparents. They both died before I was born. I do know that my mother's father was a successful businessman. My mother's family was large, like many Mexican families. My maternal grandfather owned a large general store and stables in Douglas. All the children, including my mother, were born in Douglas, so the family was settled there. My grandfather was able to send his eldest son, Jose, to Stanford University in 1915. However, when the United States entered World War I in 1917, my grandfather feared that his son was going to end up in the U.S. military fighting in the war. He did not want his son to go to war in Europe, so he pulled him out of the university and brought him home. He sold everything in Douglas, moved his family back to Mexico, and settled in Mexicali, a city on the border with California.

In the 1920s in Los Angeles, my father was the first of his family to graduate from high school. Some of his classmates from Polytechnic High School went to Stanford University. After hearing about Stanford from his friends, he set his mind on joining them. He was accepted at Stanford, and although he had to drop out for a while due to lack of finances, he graduated from Stanford as a civil engineer in 1933. Racism and the Depression made it very difficult for my father to land an engineering job. He finally ended up working for an American company that was doing some surveying in the agricultural area around Mexicali. My mother was living there with her eldest brother, Jose, and his family. By a miraculous coincidence, the kind that only happens in real life, my father was placed on a survey crew led by my mother's brother, Jose. It wasn't long before Jose introduced my father to his eligible sister, Bella. My father met my mother, courted her, and they married. I was their first child, born in Calexico, again on the border in California.

This was the history of my family, a border existence, back and forth, living on both sides. I grew up in Los Angeles but with family in Ensenada, Mexicali, and as far south as Mexico City. We visited our relatives in Ensenada and Mexicali often and occasionally our relatives in Mexico City. They visited us, sometimes staying for extended periods of time. I always thought of all of us as Mexicans. I was a Mexican that lived in the United States *(en este lado*—on this side) and they were Mexicans that lived in Mexico *(al otro lado*—on the other side). I was not aware of the differences between us and the privilege that I had growing up within the United States. So, I was shocked the first time my Mexican cousins called me a *pocho*, which is a derogatory term for Mexicans who have become Americanized

by living in the United States. They could easily see and hear a difference in me and my life, but I couldn't, not for a long time. I thought I was Mexican. I didn't want to think of myself as different and therefore separate from them. But I was and am a *pocho*. I realized that I was culturally different from my relatives in Mexico.

I grew up in a Mexican barrio in East Los Angeles. We started out in Boyle Heights and moved eastward as I grew older. All the teachers, counselors, principals, police officers, anyone in authority in East Los Angeles then was white. Although there was racism present and a white power structure, I felt fairly protected and supported in my identity, as most of the people in my environment were Mexican, and I was enveloped in my extended family. It was a white world, but in some way, I did not really see that until I graduated from Garfield High School and, following my father's footsteps, went to Stanford University. That was fifty years ago. There was no diversity on the Stanford campus then. The need to include American students of color in universities or the benefits of a racially integrated student environment did not exist and were not known. The only ones I could see who were non-white on campus were the international students from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. I ended up hanging out at the International House because, in a way, I felt more at home there and more included.

Question: What led you to become a human service provider and involved in the kind of diversity training you do?

Almanzan: It's kind of a jagged history. When I graduated from Stanford with a degree in international relations, my first job was working for the State Department of Employment (now EDD) in one of its newly created Youth Opportunity Centers. There were at the time various efforts to locate satellite offices in minority communities in San Francisco and other cities and target youth of color for intensive counseling and support services in finding employment or vocational training. I worked in these programs for several years—at first excited by what seemed to be a shift in attitude and a desire to do more for people in minority communities. In time, however, I grew discouraged with things that were going on around me. Many of the people we had trained were coming back through for another vocational training program. It seemed like the programs were not working, and we were just going through the motions.

My disenchantment led me in another direction. It seemed to me that what we needed was to build our own economic institutions, engage in economic development for the community, start businesses and employ people from our communities, and train them in business practices and leadership. I started a business importing handcrafted sterling silver jewelry from Mexico and wholesaling to retailers. I managed to sell to retailers from the East Coast to Hawaii, but the

business never became the multimillion-dollar enterprise that I had envisioned. I worked in this business for twenty years, and it supported me and my family, but in a way, it was not deeply fulfilling. Yet, I did not know what other work I could do or how I could transition.

In the mid-80s, I was drawn to the men's movement and attended several men's groups and conferences. I liked that men were encouraged to talk openly to each other about their inner lives in ways that men don't usually do. It was referred to as "men's work," although almost all of the men who participated were middle class, white, and heterosexual. I thought if we are really doing "men's work," where were the black men, the Latinos, the Asians, or the Native Americans? I met other men of color and gay men who wanted more diversity. Together, several of us went to the organizers of a large upcoming conference and challenged them to change it in ways that made it more accessible and attractive to men of color and gay men. After a bit of resistance, they agreed, and we created the most diverse men's conference I had ever seen.

My interest in these diversity issues led to a career change. I applied to CSU East Bay (Hayward) to enter their master's program in counseling. Shortly after, I was accepted, and before classes started, I was asked to participate in a documentary film about a racially diverse group of men talking about race and ethnicity. That documentary film was *The Color of Fear*. After earning my master's, I worked with immigrants, particularly Latinos, at The Center for New Americans in Contra Costa County. I kept getting requests to facilitate dialogue based on *The Color of Fear*, and these increased to the point that I had to make a choice between continuing my work with immigrants or to focus on dealing more directly with diversity issues. Although working with Latino immigrants and their families was very satisfying, I decided to focus on the diversity work because it connected me deeply with issues I had been dealing with all my life.

Question: Who are the Latinos and Latinas, and what characteristics do they share as a group?

Almanzan: ***Latinos*** refers to people whose ancestry lies in the nations to the south, who were originally conquered by Spain in the early sixteenth century, with the exception of Brazil, which was occupied by Portugal. Except for Brazil, where Portuguese is spoken, and a few other countries with historical connections to other European nations, all share Spanish as a common language. Although many Latinos in the United States today are immigrants or children of immigrants, some Latinos have lived in the United States for many generations. Some families have lived in the Southwestern part of the United States since before it was taken from Mexico in 1848 in the U.S.-Mexican War. Even though many of

these Latinos have lost their Spanish-language skills, they still share many cultural traits with recent immigrants.

Latinos, first of all, share a deep belief in and connection to their extended families—a sense of family loyalty and honor that's very powerful. Often, extended family members live in close proximity to each other, and family members visit with each other often. When I was young, we visited my grandparents every weekend and sometimes during the week. Other members of our extended family would visit at the same time so that we spent a lot of time with our uncles, aunts, and cousins. This is different from what we see today in the dominant U.S. culture where the nuclear family and individualism are most valued. Among Latinos, the family is often more important than the individual. Extended family members often help each other in whatever way is needed. Sometimes, for economic or other reasons, children may live with an uncle and aunt for a while. In my family, we had different cousins and an aunt live with us at different times.

Latinos also share a sense of basic respect for the person—a sense that everyone merits respect and dignity whatever their status socially or economically. Elders especially merit respect and honor. Elders live within the family, are looked after and consulted, and treated with great dignity. My paternal grandmother, who survived my grandfather, was definitely the head of the family while she was alive. Interactions with Latinos need to convey a sense of respect in order to communicate effectively.

There is also a personal warmth that is expressed between people that often includes physical expression and connection. Latinos are much more likely to embrace, to touch, to kiss on the cheek, to connect with each other physically. There is also a certain generosity and willingness to share what one has with others. Often, this is expressed through food. When someone comes to the home, they are always offered something to eat, no matter who it is. In fact, if you are working with Latinos as a provider, it would not be unusual to be brought some kind of food during the relationship, and it has no meaning other than an act of kindness, gratitude, and respect.

Latino culture is hierarchical. Latinos hold authority and those with it in high esteem: doctors, priests, lawyers, therapists, counselors, and any other providers of services. Their authority is respected and listened to because it is assumed that they hold special knowledge that can be beneficial. They are likely to pay close attention to and follow the directions of such authority figures as long as those don't conflict with their values and traditions.

Latinos also tend to be religious—the majority of them Catholic. I remember that my mother always had an altar somewhere in the house where she lit candles and prayed, perhaps with an image of *la Virgen* (the Virgin Mary), a crucifix, and a rosary. Evangelical Christians are not uncommon, and one also sees in some areas elements of the Catholic religion with native Indian traditions, practices,

and beliefs. In Cuba, Dominican Republic, Brazil, and elsewhere, Catholicism is mixed with African religions. Santeria is the most common and is a melding of Catholic and Yoruba beliefs.

Time also takes on a different flavor than in dominant white culture. Latinos tend to be more flexible about it and tend to experience the precision and narrowness of the white definition of time as overly rigid and often problematic. They don't think of time in such rigid concepts, and this can be a source of conflict. Latinos may not show up for appointments at the exact time specified. Punctuality does not have the same importance and value for Latinos or often for other people of color as it does for the dominant culture. Time does not take precedence over other matters, such as greeting others or attending to personal relationships.

A final difference has to do with gender roles and the concepts of *machismo* and *marianismo*. For men, the concept of machismo has been very much distorted and corrupted in the popular media in United States. In its purest form, it refers to the sense of responsibility the male feels to care for and protect his family and those around him. Especially in the United States, it has come to mean a sense of bravado, being loud, aggressive, and tough. This is really its shadow side. Latin America itself has been influenced by this distorted image through the media and has come to increasingly see machismo in this way. I remember growing up with this image of Mexican men from the movies I saw and was shocked when I asked my mother, and she told me this was not machismo. She said that machismo means that "you must make sure that your wife and children are safe and cared for and that you always show respect to your elders." Similarly, *marianismo*, the role of women in Latino culture, has come to be wrongly defined by its extremes. It is the tendency in women toward self-sacrifice and a focusing on the needs of others for the benefit of the family as well as to acquiesce to their husband's role as the head of the family.

Question: Could you now talk a bit more about the various names that different Latino and Latina subgroups use to describe and identify themselves?

Almanzan: The two most commonly used names today are Hispanics and Latinos/Latinas. ***Hispanic*** is a term that was adopted by the federal government in the early 70s for census and administrative purposes in order to create a single category for all the people whose origins are in Latin America. It seems to have been adopted more by people in Texas and on the East Coast. It is less popular in California. I prefer the term *Latino*. *Hispanic* doesn't acknowledge our indigenous past, and that's an important part of who I am. I identify more with the indigenous part than the Spanish. My family comes from Mexico, as do the majority of Latinos in the United States. I call myself Mexican American. Many people from Latin America are *mestizos*; that is, of mixed race that may include indigenous, African, Spanish, Portuguese, Jewish (Jews who converted to survive), Asians,

and other Europeans. Identification as a mestizo is less common in parts of South America, where there is more of a tendency to identity with Spanish roots and with other Europeans. Some immigrants from these countries do not connect with the concept of being Latino or being a person of color.

A final term is ***Chicano*** or ***Chicana***. Its origins probably go back to the 1920s and was developed by Mexican Americans who found themselves no longer from Mexico but also not clearly from the United States. It tended to be taken on by the young, coming out of the streets, and spoken with a sense of pride and assertiveness. I am Chicano. I am this hybrid. Those of the middle and upper classes tended to look down on them. They didn't want to be associated with being called Chicano. In the '60s and early '70s, there was a real sense of pride when Mexican Americans called themselves Chicanos. The term was associated with a struggle for civil rights and social justice. It is not widely used by Latinos whose origins are not in Mexico. The majority of Latinos today, if asked how they identify, would probably refer to their country of origin—I'm Mexican or Guatemalan or Peruvian or Colombian—or where their parents or ancestors came from. There is so much variety that one needs to ask a Latino or Latina how he or she identifies.

Question: Could you describe some of the shared history that Latinos and Latinas bring with them to the United States?

Almanzan: An important piece of our shared history is the fact that we were all colonized. We come from countries that were colonized and did not gain their independence until the nineteenth century. Historically, that's not very long ago. Along with this, there is a sense—that many immigrants carry with them—of having been bullied and oppressed by the United States. There is a long political history of the United States running roughshod over the interests and the peoples of Latin American. One-third of Mexico was in fact taken as a result of the War of 1848. This represents the whole of the U.S. Southwest: Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah, and parts of Colorado and Wyoming.

Even though this may seem like ancient history to many in the United States, it is still very much alive for Mexicans in Mexico. I remember growing up and being aware of a statue in one of the main parks in Mexico City of the cadets who were the last holdouts when the Americans invaded Mexico City. They all committed suicide, jumping from the highest tower of the national military institute—one wrapped in a Mexican flag—rather than surrender. This sense of pride in their history and connection to the past is something that is important to many. For some Latinos— those from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and Peru—this sense of history stretches back thousands of years to indigenous civilizations that predated the invasions of the Europeans.

Many Central American immigrants—who have come more recently—share a history of war, repression, imprisonment, and torture at the hands of regimes that were supported by the United States. Many fled for their lives from their Central American countries and carry emotionally stressful memories of what happened to themselves, their families, or neighbors.

Another shared experience, which we will be talking about at greater length later, is the process of migration.

Question: Let's switch our focus and begin to look at issues related to providing services to the Latino community. Could you talk about factors that influence how Latinos and Latinas go about seeking help when they have problems?

Almanzan: First, it is important to keep in mind the great diversity within Latino culture. When I talk about aspects of service delivery—how members of the Latino community go about looking for help, for example—I will be making generalizations that cover many but not all Latinos. What I will be sharing are general guidelines, but these may vary from case to case.

The Latinos most likely to be looking for help or finding themselves with problems are recent immigrants and first-generation born in this country. Latinos will turn to their own extended families for help first. After that, they will usually go to their church for help. The church plays a powerful role in their lives, so when they encounter problems, it is often the first place they turn to outside the family. As much as possible, they will first try to solve their problems within the family. If there is a respected elder available, they might speak to him or her. If the problem revolves around issues of physical or mental health and the family believes in folk healers, they might consult a *curandera* or *curandero*. But, in general, they are more likely to first approach their priest or clergyman.

If they are willing to approach an agency, it is usually one that exists in their community and one with which someone they know and trust has had some experience. They have seen the agency and know of its existence in the community. They may know some of the people who work there or people who know people who work there. They may have family members, neighbors, or friends that have received services there. In some way, there needs to be a personal connection and credibility, often through word of mouth. They are less likely to seek services outside their community or speak to people who are strangers and not of their community. Referrals to unfamiliar agencies are most likely to be successful if they are made by someone familiar to the client's family.

In relation to mental health services, the less acculturated the individual or family, the less likely they are to look for mental health treatment. For many Latinos, mental health problems are manifested through physical symptoms.

More obvious emotional problems—anxiety, depression, paranoia—are understood as having had the evil eye put on them (*mal ojo*), been cursed by a witch (*bruja*), or a case of irritated nerves (*ataque de nervios, susto*). They don't usually look for therapy and to do so is often considered shameful.

I have sought therapeutic help at various times in my own life. My mother was scandalized when I told her that I had gone to see a therapist when I was at Stanford. She was perplexed and really outraged. "How can you do this? What are you talking to them about? You're going to talk to somebody outside the family? What do you think I'm here for? What do you think your father's here for?" It was scandalous and even offensive to conceive that someone outside the family would know about any problems within the family. In her declining years, before her death, my mother was living alone, having a hard time, but refusing to move. She would not leave her house, and we could only visit her every few days. We had a social worker come to see her once every week to listen, converse, and offer help. My mother wanted to believe that she was a friend coming by to talk, which meant she could then talk personally with her. My mother would put out coffee and some food and have a social visit with her. It took her about a year to realize that this was in fact counseling, and she immediately cut it off. Many Latinos—depending on class, education, and acculturation—are just not open to mental health approaches, especially nondirective therapy. If they do find themselves seeing a therapist or counselor, what they expect is good advice, not a free-flowing dialogue or therapeutic reflections. They want to be told what they need to do, what they should do, or where they can access resources.

Question: What are some of the common problems that Latino clients might bring to you as a counselor?

Almanzan: Many problems have to do with the process of immigration—coming to this country and not knowing how the system works. How do I do this? I got this letter from immigration—where do I go? Where can I get some legal assistance? What to do about food stamps. Very much related are the difficulties of learning and understanding English and, as a result, being taken advantage of, for example, by landlords. Being ripped off for their deposits or having their rent raised or given short notice to vacate. Not getting plumbing or roofs or other repairs taken care of. Then, there are problems related to dealing with the government and its bureaucracy: driver's licenses, taxes, Social Security, etc. All of these are issues that have to do with a lack of familiarity with American culture and how to operate within it. Also, employment and the fact that new immigrants can only get menial jobs that don't pay a lot and don't have benefits and that they often have to hold two or three jobs at once and require all family members to work in order to survive.

Many of the clients I have seen are here illegally and are incredibly fearful that they will be picked up and deported by Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). But even those who are here legally can have continuing difficulties with INS. They get bureaucratic letters concerning actions they must take. Many of them can't read them, let alone understand them. Most of the time when they try to follow through by calling INS or going there, they can't get any resolution. The phone lines are always busy. The lines at the offices are blocks long. They can't afford to spend all day waiting. Most don't have leave of any kind. If they miss work, they don't get paid.

There are also social problems. With migration, children tend to acculturate more quickly than their parents. They are in school, exposed more extensively to an acculturated environment, learn English more rapidly, are attracted to the ways and values of the nonimmigrant children. This inevitably creates separation and conflicts with parents, especially when the values and behaviors that the children are adopting are in conflict with family values. And there are often relationship issues between husbands and wives due to changing gender roles and women having to work outside of the home and children getting involved in delinquent activities, antisocial behavior, maybe even gangs and drugs. All of these social and migration issues are translated into stress, culture shock, self-esteem issues, depression, anxiety, etc.

Question: How do socioeconomic and class issues affect the psychological lives of Latinos?

Almanzan: I have already talked about those who are poor and from lower socioeconomic classes. Often, Latinos who were professionals in their country of origin migrate to the United States but cannot work in their professions here. I have met lawyers and medical doctors who have menial jobs in the United States as janitors and warehousemen because they can't get anything else. For such middle-class people, the experience of such loss—of being reduced in status and income—can be very debilitating. They are more likely to seek help, including mental health treatment, because they tend to be more sophisticated about modern culture, having already acculturated in Latin America. They are also in a better position to assimilate because they tend to be more steeped in modern ways and knowledgeable about bureaucracies. Generally, with each generation here and the more education, economic stability, and acculturation they gain, Latinos tend to avail themselves of mental health services when they are needed.

Question: Could you talk about issues of identity and belonging in different generations of Latinos in America?

Almanzan: The majority of immigrants I have worked with say that they are here only temporarily and have come only to make some money and will then

be returning permanently to Mexico or Guatemala or wherever. Often, several family members come together and send money back to the rest of the family. They truly believe they will be doing this for only a few years and then going back. But many of them never go back. I've talked to Latinos who have been living and working here eight, ten, twelve years and contend that they are not here permanently, but there's no evidence of any planning or intention to go back. One consequence of this dynamic is that it keeps them from putting down roots, really learning English, improving their education, and establishing a presence and identity here. For those who do not have the legal paperwork, it makes some sense; they could be deported at any time. For the others, it may have to do with a hesitancy to give up their cultural identities or acknowledge the emotional loss and separation that is involved. There are two things that can tip the scales. The first has to do with those who have children that are born here or have spent several formative years here. Their children do not want to go back. They were raised here, identify as Americans, and are used to the lifestyle. To propose a return to the country of origin creates an enormous conflict in the family. People who have been here for a while also get used to the higher standard of living and know that they will have to give this up if they return. Single men who have worked here for a long time often become attached to the new lifestyle and in time separate emotionally from their family back home. They may go home to visit but always seem to return. This conflict in going and coming—in never really separating or attaching—often is never resolved until the next generation.

Question: Next, let us talk about some of the factors that you see as important in assessing a Latino client. What kind of things would you look for? What kind of information do you need?

Almanzan: First, I'd notice if they spoke to me in Spanish or English. My Spanish is not completely fluent, but it's good enough to make myself understood. I would speak Spanish with them if they spoke Spanish. I'd try to find out whether they were born here or immigrated. Each represents a very different type of experience. I would assess their degree of acculturation.

What country did they come from? What is their immigration story? Did they come alone? If they joined family members that are already here, I would know that they are more secure and settled. If they are alone and their family is in Latin America, I would ask how long they have been away. If from Central America, I would try to ascertain if they immigrated because of the conflicts in their country. If they have fled a conflict, I would look for evidence of emotional distress.

If they are here with family and settled with children in school, I would expect that more acculturation has occurred. As the relationship develops, I can

become more personal. I can find out what kind of home life they have, whether they observe more traditional relationships within the home between men and women, the value placed on education and who is to become educated. I also ask about religion. Are they religious? Most Latinos say they're Catholic, but do they actually go to church and follow the precepts of the church, and how big a role does it actually play in their daily lives? (See Chapter 3, page 45, for more information regarding ways to assess culturally diverse clients.)

Question: What suggestions might you have for providers about developing rapport with Latino clients?

Almanzan: When Latinos come to see a provider, they expect to see someone with authority—someone who is knowledgeable and appears professional. They want to see someone who is well dressed, not wearing casual clothes. A male provider should wear a dress shirt, tie, and jacket; for a woman, a dress or blouse and skirt. They want to be treated warmly, respectfully, greeted, and made to feel welcome. It would be good to inquire about the well-being of their family and to engage in social conversation before addressing the issues that bring them into the office. They don't want to be made to feel anonymous, or invisible, a nameless person in the system. They don't want to feel that they are being rushed. They want to see someone who will look them straight in the eyes, introduce themselves, shake hands, and make inquiries about their family. It helps if they feel listened to empathically. At the same time, they expect to be provided with some concrete assistance. It is very useful to develop a list of referrals and resources of services specifically tailored for Latinos, for instance, to help with legal and immigration issues, rent, even food. If you can provide some immediate concrete help with their situation, they are more likely to come back and trust that you will be able to help them next time. It is preferable if you can address them in Spanish—in a formal attitude but with warmth. At the end of the session, I would walk them to the door and offer regards and greetings to their family even though I hadn't met them.

I would be prepared for the person who is coming in with the problem to not come alone but to bring other relatives, a husband or a wife, an uncle, even children. Again, conveying warmth and genuine interest is critical. It is also helpful to self-disclose. I would say things about myself and my own experience with some of the issues being discussed, even though it may not be done traditionally in therapy. Two last points. If you aren't bilingual, use a translator—but someone who is truly familiar with Latino culture rather than a European American who has learned Spanish. Also, be very aware of appropriate sex role customs. And if you see a couple with a wife with the presenting problems, make sure you spend adequate time giving the husband a chance to speak and a place in the counseling if possible.

Question: Do you feel that there are any therapeutic approaches that are better matched with certain Latino subgroups?

Almanzan: I think that any approach can work well with someone who is acculturated. With more traditionally oriented people, I would use a more directive style and would take my lead from them. It is very important to be able to understand their problem from their own perspective, not that of the counselor, and communicate that understanding. Also, be very careful to not unintentionally pathologize them or their behavior. Try to get a sense of why it is problematic for them from their cultural perspective and normalize it.

When I first began therapy in my twenties at Stanford, I was still living at home with my parents. The counselor questioned my living situation, and his questioning made me feel that there was something wrong about that. I came to feel very bad about myself and that this reflected my thwarted development. In retrospect, I am aware that there was nothing wrong with the fact that I was living with my family at that time. It is a very normal behavior in my culture, and I had been pathologized because of his cultural ignorance.

Question: Are there any subgroups within the Latino/Latina community that are at particular risk for mental health problems?

Almanzan: Research has documented that the closer one is to the immigrant experience, the less mental health issues one has. The longer one has been living in the United States, the more likely that mental health issues will crop up. I find that very interesting. I have already talked about the stress of the immigration experience, but there is also the daily stress of living as a Latino, an immigrant, and a person of color in this country and experiencing the impact of racism and discrimination. Together, they wear on one's self-esteem and sense of who one is and what one's values are. But there is more. When people come from Latin America, they have coherent worldviews and coherent cultural values. Living here, these cultural identities and worldviews are taken apart, picked at, and strained. In time, they lose this coherent sense of who they are. They try to assimilate to improve their situation. They are pressured to adopt some of the cultural values and perspectives of the dominant culture, and this sets up a lot of conflicts within them and adds to their stress and internal confusion.

As far as specific groups at risk, I think first of the teenage children of immigrants. They are probably experiencing continuing language problems. They may well be doing poorly in school and getting a lot of negative feedback. They are prime candidates for getting involved in gang activity, drugs and alcohol, illegal behavior, and dropping out of school. The dropout rate among Mexican Americans is over 50%. One of every two young persons will not finish high

school. Even fewer will go on to college. This is an incredibly high rate and a damning statistic when it is known that education is such a key to an individual succeeding in this culture.

Question: Last question. You've shared a lot of rich information with us. Could you finish by presenting a case that shows how it comes together in work with a client?

Almanzan: I would like to talk about a Latino woman I saw for depression whose husband eventually joined her in the treatment. I remember seeing this female client for depression, and it soon came out that there were serious relationship issues between her and her husband. At first, she came by herself for two afternoon sessions. She was in her mid-thirties, Mexican. They had been in the United States for less than ten years—probably around eight. They were lower socioeconomic class, with limited education, and had three children: one girl and two boys. The girl was sixteen; the boys twelve and ten. She came in complaining of depression, of hopelessness. Much of it revolved around surviving financially. She was desperately looking for work without success. Then, she found some work, and I didn't see her for a while.

After several weeks, she called and made an appointment to see me in the early evening because she was working in the day. Her husband came with her but sat in the waiting room as if he was only there to give her a ride in the evening. I was very conscious to attend to him with a sense of respect and to acknowledge that this was his wife that I was working with. There can be a lot of fear and jealousy in such a situation, and I wanted him to know that I respected him and his family.

She complained that her husband often spoke of going back to Mexico—that they were here just temporarily. Even after eight years in the United States, this was an ongoing conversation in the household. The children said they wouldn't go back. The girl, the oldest, had become rebellious and was staying out late and ignoring their rules. The daughter and what to do about her out-of-control behavior became a central issue in the parents' escalating conflict. The daughter worked at stimulating the conflict between her parents. The mother, though very worried about where her daughter's out-of-control behavior was heading, sided with her daughter because the husband was being increasingly violent with the kids.

She and I talked about what other resources that she might have available to her, about problems with her daughter, about speaking to school authorities about her two boys, and making sure they continued in school. Finally, she asked her husband to join us, and he did. He seemed quite scared initially, but he talked tough in the session. He said he was going to straighten out all of the

kids and then was openly abusive toward his wife. I intervened, telling him that his behavior was not acceptable. I talked to him about his abusive behavior at home and how that was the source of many of the problems they were having. I tried to help him connect the abusive behavior with his own feelings about his work situation, which was sparse, and his inability to support his family. This was delicate because it was touching on his identity as a macho male who could provide for and protect his family. This was very hard for him to face. He didn't really want to go back to Mexico because there was nothing waiting for him, but he wasn't making it here for his family. I had him talk about the different perspectives on staying and leaving.

The process we went through helped them communicate a little better and lessened the tension in the household. But it did not totally change everything. He still had outbursts of violence, and she eventually decided to leave the relationship. I had given her information on an organization helping battered women earlier, and she had contacted them. She left him while he was at work and took the children with her. She spent some time in a battered women's shelter, then some transitional housing, before going on her own.

I saw him alone for two sessions afterwards, and we talked about what had happened, why she left, and how he was going to carry on. I can't say this therapy was totally successful. They were able to communicate better; she found the courage to move out and hopefully become helpful to her teenage daughter. I felt particularly proud that he was willing to meet with me and open to understanding why she had left, for it would have been very easy to blame others, me included, and not return. It was his style to externalize his anger, disappointment, and helplessness, all of which were made worse by his lack of work, the increasing loss of control at home, and his related migration experiences. I did feel he was able to relate his wife's leaving to his own behavior, and that was a big step in understanding what had happened. He left after the last two sessions, and I didn't hear from him again. I would have liked to see both of them longer, but in this kind of work, clients are often transitory, and it is important to appreciate the small successes and little victories in such difficult situations.

SUMMARY

In sum, Latinos/as are not the largest racial minority in the United States and growing. They face unique circumstances that put them at risk for experiencing physical and psychological difficulties: bilingualism, immigration, acculturation, adjustment, cultural conflict, poverty, and racism. Robert Almanzan explained that Latinos/as culture is collectivistic—the whole is more important than the individual. He continued to