

Adapting Marriage Education Curricula for Low Income Hispanic Families

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&
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What We Try To Do

- The history of our team (PREP and Within My Reach) is rooted in the desire to discover better answers as we proceed on the best available answers today.
- We act on what we know and take action to know more.

The Messenger Matters

- Those who will be most effective with couples from diverse backgrounds are those who:
 - Live and work in the same communities (like religious leaders)
 - Or
 - Have a basis for understanding the issues and dynamics affecting the identified group
- Keys are trust, adaptation, and flexibility.

Diversity: Hispanic, Latina, Latino

- While there are important average differences between Anglo and Latino couples in the U. S., there is also great diversity in types of Latino couples.
- This diversity makes tailoring marriage education efforts particularly challenging.

Variables Relevant to Marriage Education Efforts

- Language
- Immigration status, history, and generation
- Degree of acculturation
- Degree of traditionalism and role expectations between partners
- Discrimination
- Legal Status
- Familism

Variables Relevant to Marriage Education Efforts

- Staggered migration, and resulting tensions between partners
- Age at marriage
- Income and economic stress
- Education
- Cohesion, attachment models, independence

My Favorite Candidates for Universals

Universal Desires, Universal Needs

- The desire for life-long, secure love and companionship is universal.
- Like nutrition, essential needs are universal but there is great cultural variation in how to meet those needs.

Two Major Universal Themes

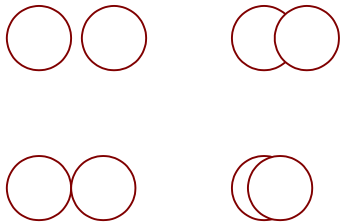
- Safety (multidimensional)
- Sequence

Safety: A Universal Construct Framing “Healthy” Marriages

- Type One: Physical Safety
- Type Two: Emotional Safety
- Type Three: Commitment Safety and Security
- Type Four: Environmental (context)

Commitment Example: Couple Identity

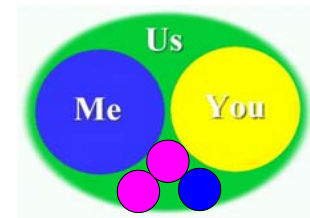
Cohesion Preference: Cohesion circles illustration from Rolando Diaz-Loving



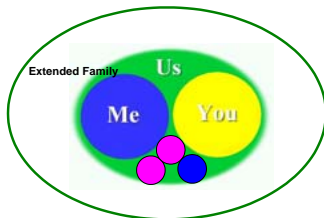
Couple and Personal Identity: Is there a Universal?



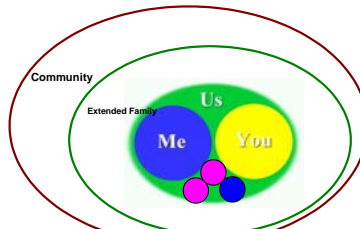
Family Identity



Family Identity



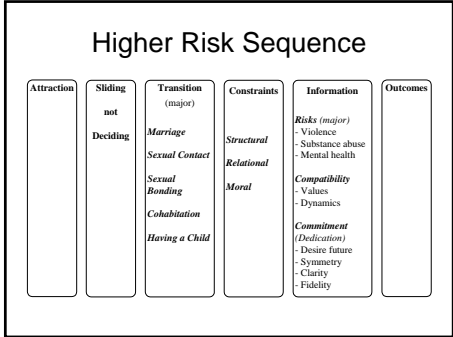
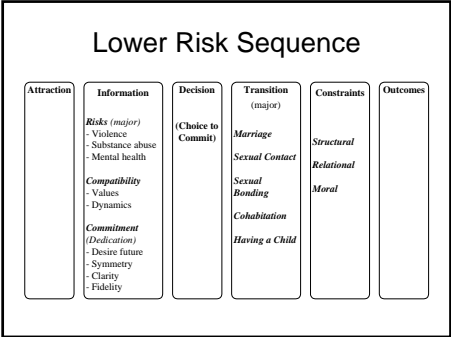
Family Identity



Example: Commitment

- Long-Term View
 - Linkages to sacrifice in men
 - Positive elements of dimension of Machismo
- In Union vs. Marriage
 - Policy issues
 - Psychological dimension

Sequence



- ## Risk Management
- The key is to having information about the risk level of a transition BEFORE one has gone through it and foreclosed options.
 - Sliding-relationship transitions, not decision-based, are becoming common if not the norm for all economic groups . . .
 . . . BUT lower income individuals have fewer resources to cope with a loss of any options on a higher risk path.



Adaptation of Marriage Education Programs and Curricula

- ## Capacity Building
- Building infrastructure for lasting change
 - Thoughts about **Tracks** and **Trains**

- ## Curricula vs. Programs (Distinction Made by Mary Myrick)
- Curricula: Materials and strategies for teaching skills, knowledge, and influencing attitudes.
 - Programs: The context of the total system of services in which curricula are placed.

Special Emphases and Special Issues

Examples

Special Emphasis

- Role of man and woman
- Expectations and clashes in expectations
 - Degree of acculturation
 - Generation of immigration
- There is not one model of these roles that we can expect to see. Tension and conflict
- Classic PREP expectation model: Awareness, Reasonableness, and Communication (in some way) between partners

Special Emphasis

- Support system and network
- Familism

Special Emphasis

- Emphasis on strengths
- A focus on the barriers to achieving aspirations
- Goal is to address many vulnerabilities, but in context of these as barriers to aspirations, not immutable risks.

Special Issue

- Children and family identity
 - Implications for program
 - Implications for curricula

Special Issue

- Language

Special Issue

- Locus of control
- Implications for communication styles and how to improve them
- We do not have the luxury, most of us, of homogeneous groups or even partners.
- A pathway

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