



Help Seeking Behaviors & Concerns

Facts on Intimate Partner Violence Among Latin@s

Help Seeking

Low rates of reporting and self-help seeking among Latinas experiencing IPV may create the illusion that IPV services are not needed by this population. However, understanding the specifics of help seeking behavior among Latinas can create a more cohesive picture.

- Latinas reported seeking access to shelters less than women from other ethnic/racial groups; this is especially true for immigrant Latina survivors.⁹
- Of the Latinas who experience abuse, about half of them never report the abuse to authorities.³⁴
- Latinas prefer to tell family members,⁷ female friends, or neighbors about IPV (i.e. utilize informal resources for help)^{27,28} while non-Latinas may be more likely to tell health care workers or clergy.^{9,34}
- Nearly half of Latinas in one study did not report abuse to authorities,³⁴ possibly due to a variety of reasons, including fear and lack of confidence in the police,²⁵ shame, guilt, loyalty and/or fear of partners,⁸ fear of deportation,²¹ and previous experience with childhood victimization.²⁸
- One of these studies found that about 4% of participants had fled their countries of origin in search of protection and safety from IPV.³⁴
- Low-acculturated Latinas (both abused and non-abused) are less likely to seek and use formal social services than their more acculturated counterparts.^{11,27}
- Non-immigrant Latina survivors contact formal services for IPV resources more often than immigrant Latinas.⁹

Commentary

Latina survivors' help-seeking behaviors are closely tied to their level of acculturation and other cultural factors.

More recent immigrant Latinas are usually unaware of the laws, options, and possibilities regarding their experience of abuse.

Latina survivors who have been in the United States for a longer period of time or were born in this country have had the opportunity to learn about resources and are more likely to use them. However, where they seek help varies from other ethnic/racial groups. Latina survivors are more likely to depend on family members and friends, rather than health care workers, clergy, and police.

Concerns

The concerns identified by Latina survivors point to the importance of culturally appropriate resources and approaches to assist Latin@ families experiencing IPV. Below is a list of concerns identified by Latina survivors and community advocates.¹⁷

Information about:

- Rights as a survivor
- Legal services

- IPV
- Help when going to court
- English lessons
- Protection/safety
- Transportation
- Education for independence
- A place to stay
- Someone to talk to in private

Commentary

Despite the focus on shelters as the preferred mainstream strategy to assist IPV survivors, Latina survivors did not mention shelters among their most urgent needs. This finding should be viewed in the context of not only the potential unawareness of the existence of shelters in this country but also the reluctance of Latina women to leave their community for a variety of reasons. This in no way negates the need for Latina survivors to have access to emergency shelters and housing to address their experience of IPV.

*For cited works, please visit the References section of the Casa de Esperanza website