

Acculturation Continuum

Casa de Esperanza developed the following acculturation continuum as part of a comprehensive manual, *Latino Families and Domestic Violence* (2003). The following chart demonstrates stages of acculturation. Each stage presents Latinos with unique challenges and opportunities. Because the chart represents a continuum, there are many shades and nuances within the stages.

It is important to note that there is no natural progression in this tool. It is not assumed that “assimilation” is the goal of acculturation. It is also not assumed that individual members of a Latino family are at the same stage of the acculturation continuum. Some factors that will affect acculturation stages include: age at immigration, interaction with mainstream individuals and institutions, relationships that are maintained with the country of origin, and choices about customs/ languages practiced at home.

The continuum is to be used as a tool to: increase understanding of Latino realities; increase awareness of the opportunities and challenges inherent in acculturation; and improve your organizational response to Latino communities. Visit our website at www.casadeesperanza.org for more information on the acculturation continuum and other tools available through Casa de Esperanza.

Stage	Feelings, Thoughts, Actions	Examples
Isolation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Feeling disconnected 2) Feeling depressed 3) Culture shock 4) Marked language difficulties 	Marco comes to Minnesota from El Salvador. To protect his family from the uncertainty of this new place, he leaves his wife and children behind. He has few friends and is having difficulty finding a job because he speaks Spanish.
Adaptation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Increased comfort with immediate surroundings 2) Maintaining own traditions 3) Increased ability to teach others from one’s own culture about mainstream culture 	Oscar plays in a weekend Latino soccer league. Each Saturday his teammates ask his advice about problems they encountered during the week in this new country.
Biculturalism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Feeling equally comfortable in one’s own group and the mainstream culture 2) Maintaining important traditions from one cultural group and incorporating new traditions from mainstream culture 	Ana works in a large corporate office where she is a successful sales manager. She is also comfortable at home with her family and cultural traditions. Speaking English at work and Spanish at home— she moves easily between her two worlds.
Assimilation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) No longer practicing traditional cultural activities 2) Language of origin is not the language most spoken at home 3) Surroundings and social group reflect majority culture 	María and her family celebrate Anglo cultural traditions and holidays. She maintains no connection with her homeland or distant relatives there.