Chapter 2

Just Eat!
The Case of the Martinez Family

Kristen N. Dickens
Georgia Southern University, USA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter explores the application of the 2015 Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC) in conjunction with an eclectic family systems when counseling a Latin@ family. The Martinez family was referred to family counseling due to concerns of one of the children’s school counselors, regarding a possible eating disorder diagnosis. The case study includes a rich description of the first session with the Mexican-American Martinez family, and examines family dynamics around the identified client, Javier. The Martinez family includes the following members: (1) Mañuel, Javier’s 41 year-old father who owns his own construction business; (2) Camila, Javier’s 38 year-old stay-at-home mother; (3) Alejandro, Javier’s 17-year-old brother; and (4) Isabella, Javier’s 12 year-old sister. A discussion of the author’s cultural background, counseling approach, and use of the MSJCC lens when working with the Martinez family is also included. Initial goals and prognosis for treatment are considered.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-0022-4.ch002

Copyright © 2020, IGI Global. Copying or distributing in print or electronic forms without written permission of IGI Global is prohibited.
INTRODUCTION TO THE CASE

This chapter explores the application of the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC; Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2015) in conjunction with an integrative family systems approach when counseling a Latin@ family. The Martinez family was referred to family counseling due to concerns of one of the children’s school counselors, regarding depressive symptoms and a possible eating disorder diagnosis. The case study includes a rich description of the first session with the Mexican-American Martinez family, and examines family dynamics around the identified client, 15-year-old Javier. The Martinez family includes the additional following members: (a) Mañuel, Javier’s 41-year-old father; (b) Camila, Javier’s 38-year-old mother; (c) Alejandro, Javier’s 17-year-old brother; and (d) Isabella, Javier’s 12-year-old sister. Mañuel and Camila were both born and raised in the United States. Mañuel’s parents were born in Mexico and are currently deceased; Camila’s parents were born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States before Camila was born. A discussion of the author’s cultural background, counseling approach, and use of the MSJCC lens when working with the Martinez family is also included. Initial goals and prognosis for treatment are also considered.

Use of the Term “Latin@s”

_Latina/o and Hispanic_ are two terms historically used to describe individuals living in the United States with ancestral ties to Central and South American Spanish and non-Spanish speaking countries (Sue, Sue, Neville, & Smith, 2019). Furthermore, some individuals prefer specific ethnic descriptors that speak to the certain countries (e.g., _Puerto Rican, Cuban, Chicano_), despite the U.S. Census usage of the term _Hispanic_. In recent years scholars advocated for gender neutral ethnic identifiers such as _Latinx_ and _Latin@/@s_ rather than the gendered terms _Latina_ and _Latino_ (Ratts and Pedersen, 2014; Sue et al., 2019). In this chapter the term _Latin@/@s_ will be used as the ethnic descriptor for the client.

Counseling Latin@s

The literature on counseling Latin@s is vast; however, in this chapter I will share brief information on this client population, including cultural values and characteristics and implications for counseling. The African diaspora, the immigration of individuals from Asian and European countries, combined with the blending of indigenous people in Latin America led to a broad continuum of physical traits and phenotypes, and influenced which ethnic labels individuals use as self-descriptors (U.S. Census...