

EVALUATION REPORT

Promotoras Contra La Violencia



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A special thanks to our partners:

Instituto Para La Mujer

Lideres Campesinas

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Most importantly, we extend our gratitude to all the participating Promotoras who make this work a part of their Lives.

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INTRODUCTION

Funded by the Blue Shield of California Foundation's *Supporting and Promoting Cultural Competency in California's Domestic Violence Field for High-Need, Underserved Populations* grant, the East Los Angeles Women's Center (ELAWC) implemented and expanded the Promotoras Contra La Violencia (PCLV) curriculum-training model. In response to the emerging need to provide culturally competent prevention services, ELAWC implemented the Promotoras Contra La Violencia (Promotoras Against Violence) training program to empower and improve the overall well being of Latinas and their families impacted by domestic violence (DV).

A second aim of the project was to ensure trauma informed culturally competent services for Latinas impacted by violence. To this end, ELAWC served as lead agency and expanded its reach by developing collaborative partnerships with Instituto Para La Mujer (Institute for Women) in Orange County, Lideres Campesinas (Agricultural Farm Worker Leaders) throughout the state and YWCA of Greater Los Angeles-Compton. These partners serve Latinas, work in the community and work with domestic violence survivors.

ELAWC served as Lead Agency and coordinated capacity building activities. *Year 1* activities included evaluation of the existing ELAWC Promotora Program; information sharing among partners regarding their use of volunteers to engage in outreach and education related to DV; training on effective outreach and a webinar on outreach plans; ELAWC trained all three organizations on the Promotoras Contra La Violencia curriculum, evaluation and data collection methods. Additionally, partners participated and presented in a conference hosted for Promotoras. In *Year 2* partners implemented effective practices, participated in a second conference for Promotoras and social service providers. Although these agencies have collectively implemented peer-led education programs for 15 years, they have not had the opportunity to share training materials and lessons learned, collaborate to refine their models, or conduct evaluation to identify best practices. This project expanded and enhanced the capacity of the partners to implement and evaluate Promotora programs that integrate DV prevention and services among low-income, Latina women throughout the state of California. Through this grant partners shared their expertise in domestic violence, advocacy, financial literacy, working with farm workers, working in diverse communities and prevention.

CURRICULUM *Promotoras Contra La Violencia*

Training for Promotoras: The Promotora candidates receive a 12-hour curriculum training in English or Spanish. The training is conducted in four 3-hour sessions using a group format and is facilitated by staff and Lead Promotoras. Promotora candidates receive a culturally competent approach to: (a) increase knowledge on violence against women and girls with a focus on interpersonal violence and sexual assault (b) develop specific strategies for coping with the negative effects of violence, and (c) increase capacity to become a Promotora and facilitate peer to peer education and outreach in the community.

Promotora candidates were trained using the following curriculum:

SESSION I *Mujeres: Our gender, our culture and our experiences shape our identity.*

The session begins with a Cultural Exercise, which allows each participant to share their experiences and define their culture as they know it; and, discuss Latino values such as: familiarismo/ family, respeto/respect, personlismo/personalized, carino/care, confianza/trust, dignidad/dignity.

Through evaluation participants shared the following:

"I realize that sexism and oppression is embedded in our culture."

"As women, we are strong enough to make changes."

"I learned how to use outside relationships for support ie: faith base, friends, family."

SESSION II *Violence Against Women.* Content details types of violence (domestic, dating, sexual assault, stalking); gender roles promoted by Latino culture, inequalities among men and women, how violence is perpetrated among men and women, dynamics of power and control, self-esteem issues, and human rights.

Through evaluation participants shared the following:

"I now know where to access domestic violence counseling and support."

"I learned how to walk away from a potentially dangerous situation."

SESSION III The Effects of Rape and Sexual Assault. Rape Trauma syndrome, definitions of rape, rape myths and facts, safety and prevention, what to do if someone discloses sexual assault, issues in disclosure, and how to access immediate response. Cultural issues will include: virginity issues in Latino culture, and, exploring the “Me Robo” concept – the cultural belief in “damaged goods.”

Through evaluation participants shared the following:

“I learned the different types of sexual assault.”

“I now know how to access law enforcement and file a police report.”

SESSION IV Your Future as a Promotora. Training offered on public speaking and resources offered by ELAWC, its partners and the larger community. Participants make a small presentation to the group and begin to schedule future presentations.

Through evaluation participants shared the following:

“I felt empowered with all the public speaking tools I received. I feel prepared to go out to my community and do this work!”

“I really learned something new from the different presentations by the new Promotoras.”

The Promotoras Contra La Violencia model empowers both the Promotora and the individuals she educates in her community. Promotoras are the fabric of the communities they live in and create safe places in their homes, their worship centers, parent centers, and other places where women meet and dialogue. Promotoras are typically regarded as trusted and respected community members, creating a pathway to effective culturally sensitive education and outreach that result in greater access to those most impacted by violence. This model utilizes a holistic, relational approach that creates a collective

or supportive circle, supports the development of a Latina's identity, creates self-empowerment, and builds on existing strengths while acquiring new skills, and ultimately helping create a community free from violence. The curriculum is founded on the Relational-Cultural Theory, which uses relationships as a vehicle to initiate changes without forming a separate, independent self, but rather the ability to participate actively in relationships that foster the well being of everyone involved (Jordan, 2000).

ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTION

LEAD ORGANIZATION *East Los Angeles Women's Center*. ELAWC has over 38 years of experience engaging community members and survivors of domestic violence through a variety of approaches. ELAWC strives to help women find *esperanza* or **hope** in their lives, and empowers them to attain a quality life that is safe and healthy for themselves and their children. Using a holistic and family-centered approach, ELAWC delivers bilingual, culturally relevant services. These programs are built on a foundation of best practices including interdisciplinary evidence-based models. The organization's work incorporates individuals, groups, communities, and partnerships to end violence against women and girls and HIV.

The agency has implemented the Promotora Program, since 1997, recognizing the difficulties of reaching Spanish-speaking Latinas and immigrant women who are at risk of HIV. The agency adapted a theoretical model that combined AIDS risk reduction with the Empowerment Model based on Paulo Freire's education model. This model seeks to promote health by increasing people's feelings of power and control over their lives. Through training and Power Circles (socio-educational support groups), the Promotoras are empowered to make personal changes and to dialogue with other women in the community to sustain change, develop awareness and build skills. ELAWC has expanded this model to respond to women facing: inter-personal violence, domestic violence and sexual assault. Through the Blue Shield of California Foundation grant, ELAWC expanded the Promotora model to diverse groups of Latinas living in rural and urban settings. Partners were trained on implementing the Promotora Contra La Violencia curriculum and participated in numerous capacity building activities during the grant period.

Partners

Instituto Para La Mujer's (IPLM) mission is to empower women, by elevating their voices, their economies and their leadership and breaking the cycle of poverty and violence in immigrant communities. IPLM primarily works in Orange County and provides a seven-week course focusing on personal life skills development for Latinas. IPLM has integrated financial literacy into their work with Promotoras because of the interrelation of domestic violence and finances. Topics in their financial literacy training range from financial abuse within abusive relationships to communication about money matters. In the training participants discover new income generating options as they explore their personal needs and the importance of generating savings for the future and as a means to leaving the abusive relationship, but continuing to generate income for their family's sustainability. IPLM implemented the PCLV curriculum and trained 24 Promotoras who began facilitating workshops about domestic violence in the community almost immediately. These Promotoras reached 164 women in the community over a six-month period. Through this partnership, IPLM was able to increase its capacity to implement a Promotora program. In trainings IPLM learned about trauma, its effects on women and decided they need to build capacity to facilitate a support group for women. As a result of this collaborative, IPLM developed and implemented a 3-part, financial literacy training for Lideres Campesinas' members. The staff served as mentors to Promotoras, and maintains ongoing communication with them. In the future, IPLM will continue to collaborate with ELAWC on other programs to ensure sustainability of their Promotora program.

Lideres Campesinas (LC), is a statewide organization with 7 active chapters of farmworkers trying to improve the lives of farmworking communities. The mission of Lideres Campesinas is to develop leadership among campesinas (farmworkers) to serve as agents of political, social and economic change in the farmworker community. The approach emphasizes capacity building, democratic decision-making, advocacy, peer training and leadership development as well as a mixture of traditional and innovative education, outreach and mobilizing methods such as house meetings, arts, and theatrical presentations at community venues. Lideres Campesinas has broadened their knowledge and relationships through this partnership and hired IPLM as consultants for financial literacy courses. The capacity building trainings were very beneficial for LC and as a result have expanded their Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault training curriculums to include self-care for their members and staff. Additionally, they have developed tools that explain their unique leadership

and outreach cycle and how to assess the efficiency of their current strategic plan implementation process through a new lens. The development of an outreach plan was particularly useful for LC as they were able to dedicate some time to the development of a written outreach plan. Through this process they realized that in their organization outreach is cyclical and crucial to accomplishing not only their mission, but also the long-term relationship with and commitment of their members and staff. They have concluded that implementing the outreach plan is important for the overall sustainability of their statewide farmworker model.

The YWCA of Greater Los Angeles is rooted in the essential mission of eliminating racism empowering women, they strive to create and execute community-focused programs that make a significant difference in the lives of women, children, and families. The YWCA office in Compton provides prevention and intervention services to Latina and African American survivors of sexual assault. Through this partnership ELAWC and the YWCA have built a stronger collaboration. ELAWC has provided technical assistance to the YWCA as they build the capacity to implement a Promotora model. Through additional funding the ELAWC and YWCA have established a collective of Promotoras at the YWCA-Compton site. A collective is a group who has a shared interest (purpose) and works together practicing horizontal leadership to advance its mission. The Compton collective is made up of 25 Promotoras that provide a community based approach to addressing sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking in a culturally grounded manner. The collective builds cohesiveness and support among the Promotoras and the community. With the addition of a Healing Circle (support group) for survivors at this site, the collective focuses on 2 distinct areas: awareness/prevention and intervention/support.

EVALUATION PLAN

The goals of the evaluation focused on testing the efficacy of the Promotora curriculum and its impact on increasing knowledge, advocacy skills and outreach skills among participants completing the Promotora training. A second goal included formative assessments of capacity building activities among the collaborative partners. The evaluation plan included a repeated measures design to assess increased knowledge after completing the 12-hour Promotora Training.

Data Collection & Analysis

An intake screening was completed for each participant prior to enrollment. The intake obtained demographic data and screened for risk factors. A 25-item survey was developed to assess the curriculum content areas. The survey was administered at baseline (program enrollment), at post-test (completion) and 3 months after training completion (follow-up). The survey was available in English and Spanish. The survey used a 5-point Likert type response set and tapped into the topics discussed in each of the four sessions. Descriptive statistics were used for the participants' demographic variables and risk factors. Mean scores were obtained from baseline to post test for the total sample and ANOVA one-way statistics were applied to the three time points. Site visits were conducted at each of the partner agencies to understand the agency's capacity to implement a Promotora program. An outcome survey was distributed and completed by partners to assess their experience in the partnership. Promotora interviews and focus groups were conducted.

Evaluation Results

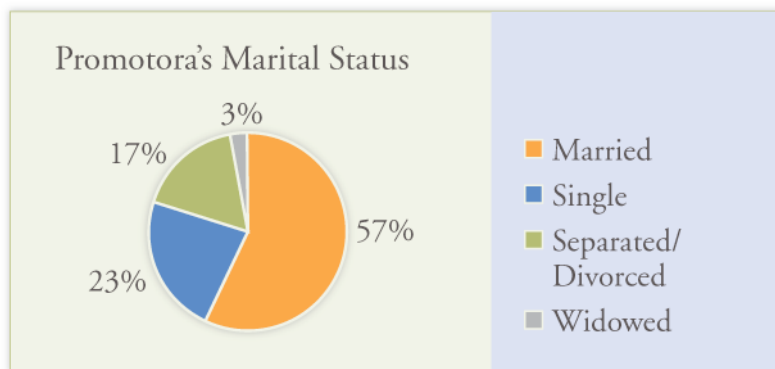
A total of 201 participants were enrolled in the Promotora Training and 181 completed the 12-hour curriculum training. The project's retention rate was 90%. The ELAWC trained 12 cohorts of Promotoras with a total sample of N=157. The project's collaborative partner, Instituto Para La Mujer trained two cohorts and had a total sample of N=24. The retention rate was 68%. The evaluation results below are reported for the East Los Angeles Women's Center. Results for the Instituto Para La Mujer included demographic variables. IPLM pre/post data was included in the total sample for the ANOVA analysis.

Who Are Promotoras?

Promotoras are Latinas and ranged in age from mid thirties to forties with a mean age of 41 years. Marital status and education levels appear in Charts 1 and 2. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of Promotoras were married or living with a partner and 40% were single, separated or divorced. Education levels varied from less than six years to some college credits. Specifically, 25% reported attending elementary school only, 12% attended middle school and 34% completed high school. Some college credits were stated for 29% of participants.

The demographic profile for participants attending the training at the IPLM site slightly differed from the ELAWC. While 100% of women were Latinas, 80% were from Mexico and 17% from South

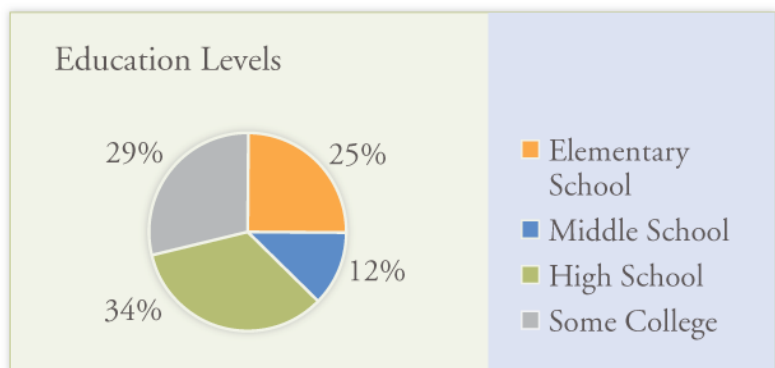
CHART 1 | Marital Status (N=157)



America. Only one woman was born in the U. S. Education was much lower for this group. Thirty percent (30%) had no education, 62% attended elementary school and only 8% attended middle school. The majority of women, 85% were monolingual Spanish-speaking and 15% reported being bilingual (English and Spanish).

Household income levels were obtained for the sample. Monthly income ranged from three hundred dollars (\$300) to seven hundred (\$700) with a mean income level of \$436 for the group. The source

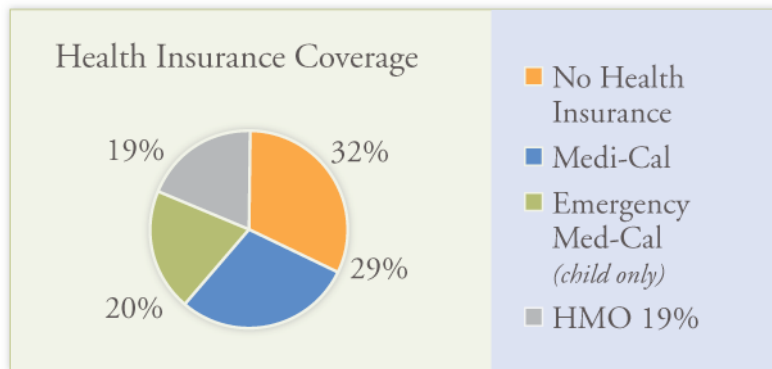
CHART 2 | Education Levels (N=157)



of income for most women was from Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Food stamp benefits were reported for 65% of the sample with the monthly average benefit of \$324.00

Based on the federal mandate (effective October 2013), health insurance was obtained. Overall, one third of our Promotoras are in need of health insurance. As shown, 32% of Promotoras and their children had *no health insurance* and 68% of women reported some type of coverage. Among the sample, 29% had state MEDI-Cal, while 20% only had emergency MEDI-Cal for their children and 19% reported having an HMO plan.

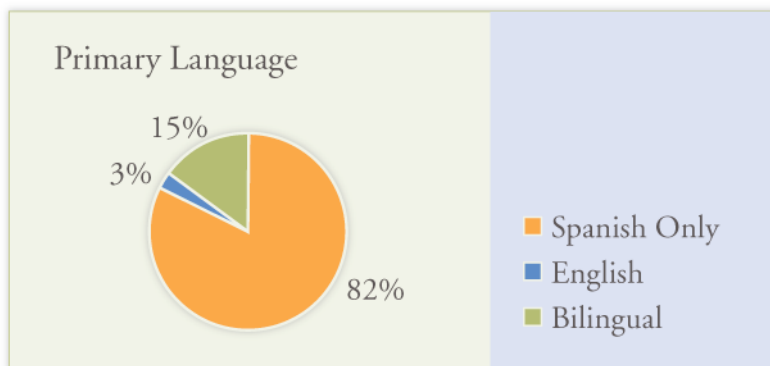
CHART 3 | Health Insurance (N=157)



Socio-Cultural Characteristics

In an effort to apply a culturally competent program design and evaluation, culture-specific factors were identified during the intake process. These included primary language, years in the U.S. and country of origin. This data appears in Charts 4 and 5, respectively.

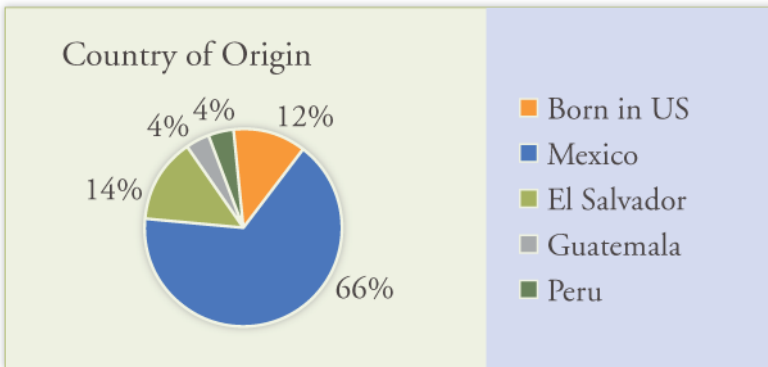
CHART 4 | Primary Language (N=157)



Monolingual Spanish-speaking only was reported by 82% of Promotoras and 15% reported being bilingual in English and Spanish (see Chart 4). Only 3% of the sample stated English as a primary language. The Promotora Trainings were conducted in Spanish for all 12 cohorts.

Migration patterns indicated that the majority of women, 66% migrated from Mexico. As shown in Chart 5, 14% of participants were from El Salvador and 4% reported Guatemala and Peru as their country of origin. Participants born in the United States was 12%. The average number of years in the

CHART 5 | Country of Origin (N=157)

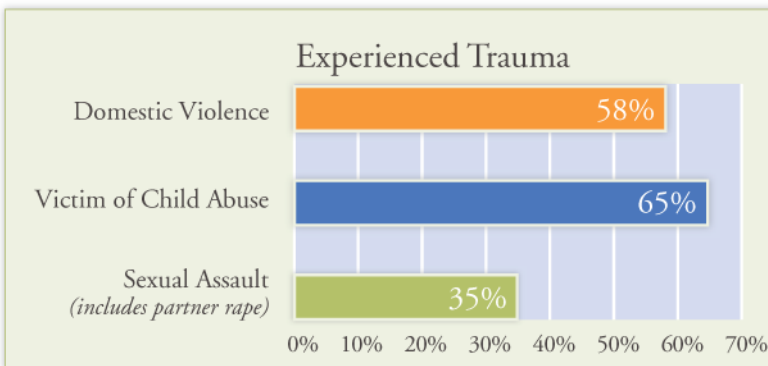


United States was 22 years for this sample. A quarter of women (26%) were newcomers to the U.S. In contrast, 30% of Promotoras resided in the United States for more than 25 years.

Risk Factors

During the initial intake process, Promotoras were found to have experienced in their lifetime multiple risk factors. 85% of the women reported they had experienced symptoms of Post Traumatic

CHART 6 | Trauma Experience (N=157)

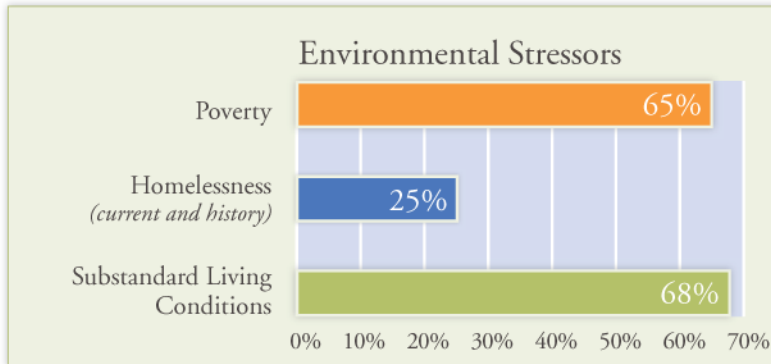


Note: Participants identified more than 1 stressor.

Stress. Trauma due to violence was more commonly reported. The types of violence reported appear in Chart 6. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of participants experienced domestic violence, 65% were victims of child abuse and 35% reported sexual assault including rape by a partner.

Financial and environmental stressors were identified for participants. The majority of women and their children have lived in poverty. As previously stated, the annual income ranged from \$5,232.00 to \$8,200. Chart 7 displays environmental stressors reported by Promotoras. As shown, 65% of mothers were poor and 68% lived in substandard housing conditions. Substandard housing was

CHART 7 | Environmental Stressors (N=157)



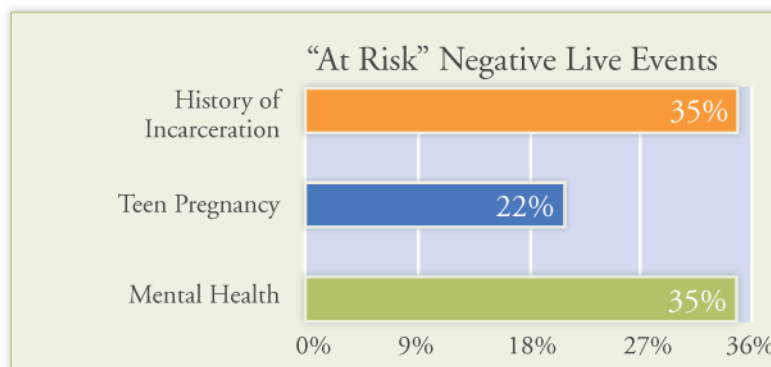
Note: Participants identified more than 1 risk factor.

described as not having a single residence, living with other family members/friends or renting a room. History of homelessness or currently homeless was reported for 25% of sample.

Promotoras disclosed several negative life events in their life journeys. These appear in Chart 8. 35% of the participants had a history of incarceration related to immigration and domestic violence.

History of teen pregnancies was reported for 22% of the sample. Past or current mental health

CHART 8 | "At Risk" Negative Live Events



disorders were found for 35% of women. Promotoras also faced challenges associated with financial stability. For example, 15% reported poor job skills while 10% were illiterate in their primary language (Spanish).

Promotora Training Curriculum: One-way ANOVAS statistics and paired t-tests were used to assess pre-test to post-test changes, and to assess post-test to follow-up changes. The results for the

TABLE 1. | ANOVA RESULTS

Means	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.737	2	.869	3.909	.021
Within Groups	81.983	424	.222		
TOTAL	83.720	436			

Note: N=181, IPLM group included.

ANOVA analysis appear in Table 1. The ELAWC and the IPLM participant samples were used for these analysis and included N=181 at pre-test, N=157 at post-test and N=112 at follow-up.

The results from the paired t-tests showed an increase from pre-test to post-test ($t=-5.11$, $p<.000$ for ELAWC and $t=4.62$, $p<.05$ for IPLM). This indicated that participants increased their knowledge of the four content areas discussed in the Promotora Training sessions after completing the 12-hour

FIGURE 1.



Note: N=181, IPLM group included.

training. The results from the ANOVA statistics (Table 1) were found significant ($P<.021$) indicating durability effects for the 12-hour training. Promotoras were able to retain concepts of the training sessions three months after completion. The means at each time point are displayed in Figure 1.

Qualitative Evaluation Results

CURRICULUM CONTENT Descriptive statistics were used to examine the formative data obtained for the four sessions of the Promotora Training curriculum. Participants completed a questionnaire after each session and were asked to rate the session content and training process. The qualitative data obtained for the four sessions indicated that 80% to 90% of participants agreed that the session topics were adequately covered and that facilitators were knowledgeable of the content areas. Participants, 60% to 75% reported that they improved their knowledge (of topics) after each session.

PROMOTORA OUTREACH PRESENTATIONS More than one third, 41% of Promotoras conducted formal workshops on violence against women in their respective communities. 59% of Promotoras did not conduct formal community presentations, however, out of those Promotoras 25% of them shared the information from the training informally with family members, friends, neighbors and other parents.

Promotoras were recruited to complete a telephone interview and/or participate in a Non-Presenters Focus Group. The formative data obtained was categorized into two groups: Non-presenters and Presenters. The results from telephone interviews and focus groups are summarized below:

Non-Presenters were found to be less likely to engage in formal group presentations due to the following:

- 75% reported time constraints and family obligations prevented presentations.
- 35% completed the training for their experience or benefit.
- 25% of women were apprehensive about misguiding or misinforming peers.
- 25% of Promotoras shared the information from the training informally.
- Most women lacked experience in public speaking and were fearful of presenting to a group that was not familiar.

Presenters - 41% of Promotoras completed presentations in the community to 887 members. The average number of presentations was 3 that occurred within the following three months. It is likely that this group scored higher on the 3-month follow-up survey and sustained durability of the knowledge. Some notable reasons for conducting presentations were provided:

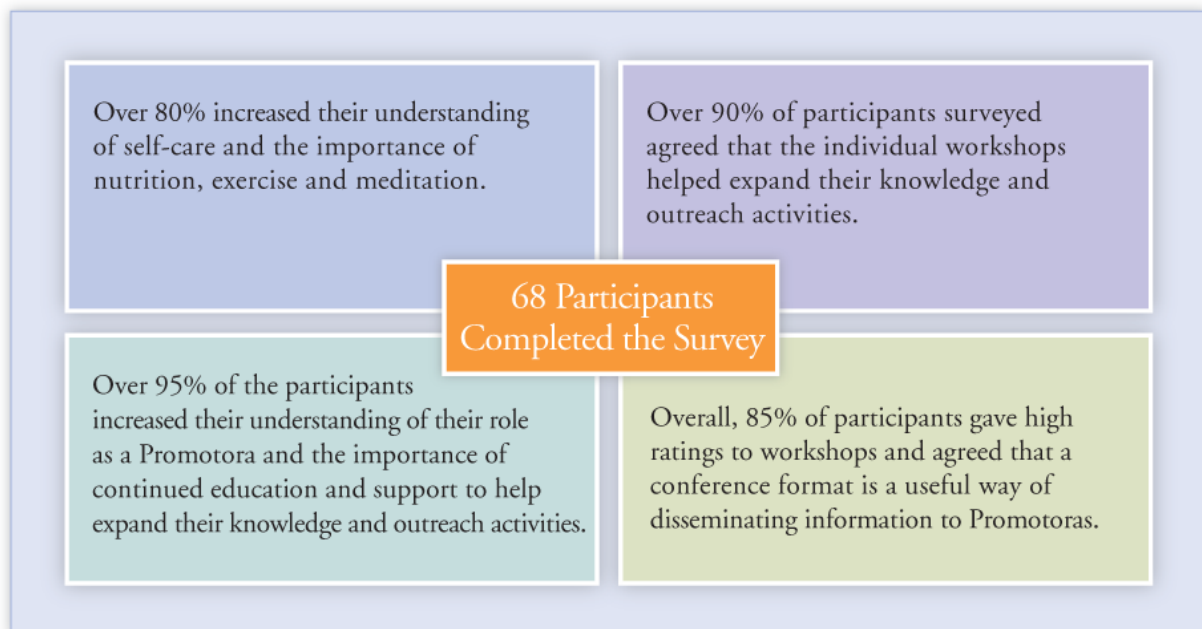
- 75% of women stated they were confident in conducting presentations.
- 65% believed that the knowledge they obtained was important to share with Latina peers.
- 50% expressed that they enjoyed being an “educator” in the community.
- Promotoras as a whole, believed that the training topics were sensitive issues and that their ethnicity (Latina) helped with discussing this information with peers.
- The majority of Promotoras felt empowered by reaching other Latinas, it also provided a healing opportunity for those impacted by violence.

Although a large percentage of the participants have experienced trauma and have endured environmental stressors in the pre-screening interviews over 95% stated they were motivated to become Promotoras because of the following reasons:



PROMOTORA CONFERENCE 2012

During Year 1- ELAWC along with Lead Promotoras organized a Promotora Conference for 99 participants representing various communities across Southern California. Both Instituto Para la Mujer and Lideres Campesinas presented at the conference. Six workshops were offered for the Promotoras. Workshop topics included: Finding Your Personal Leadership, Time for a Change: The Formula for Success in Your Personal and Professional Life, Immigration Options for Survivors of Domestic Violence, Living a Healthy Life, Cultural Context: Attitudes, Behavior and Knowledge and Reproductive Health.



QUOTES FROM PROMOTORAS

“This conference was very important and after today I feel reinvigorated to continue the fight against violence!”

“Putting together this conference from beginning to end helped me grow as a Promotora and provided me with a lot of leadership skills.”

“It was great to see so many old friends and come together for a great cause, to heal as Promotoras and take care of ourselves so we could help others.”

Partner Outcome Survey

East Los Angeles Women's Center administered an online survey to all the partners in an effort to assess the partnership's success.

80% of the partners stated that the outreach plan webinar increased their knowledge about outreach plans. 100% of partners implemented the outreach plans they developed as a result of the project.

One partner commented that the outcome of the outreach plan was very successful as they were able to introduce additional community members to their culturally responsive services.

One partner shared the outreach plan webinar with leaders at each chapter and a written outreach plan in being produced by each of their chapters and progress is being assessed every three months and reported to their Board of Directors.

100% of the partners felt that partner cross trainings increased their knowledge about partner programs and areas of expertise. 66% of the partners incorporate other partners' services or strategies into their own programs.

Most partners commented that they implemented some of ELAWC's strategies and components from the Promotoras Contra la Violencia curriculum. One partner commented that their participation in the partnership allowed them to increase their capacity to articulate a message and information about domestic violence based on this peer led model.

Training on trauma informed services was ranked amongst the most popular.

Another Partner noted that the overall impact was very positive and that the project allowed them to build human capital to address the issues of domestic violence in Spanish speaking communities.

One partner commented that what they gained from the Promotoras Contra la Violencia Model pushed them to revisit their current practices to ensure they are providing all the necessary tools for their members to succeed in reaching out to other farm worker women once they are trained with their 5 module curriculum. This includes re-evaluating how they follow up with member and document/assess the real impact of their work with their peers and agencies.

100% of partners agreed that the overall project increased their capacity to build a strong culturally competent community response to domestic violence.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The East Los Angeles Women's Center was effective in expanding a culturally competent training in the areas of domestic violence and sexual assault.

The Promotoras Contra La Violencia Training successfully certified 157 Promotoras.

The PCLV curriculum proved effective in providing content based knowledge over a 12 hour period.

The majority of participants enrolled in the Promotora Trainings were impacted by violence and wanted to help end violence in their own communities.

Promotoras were found to significantly increase their knowledge from baseline to post-test and at three months after completing the training. Importantly, 41% of Promotoras provided outreach and education to Latina peers in their respective communities.

The qualitative data indicated that each of the four sessions were adequately implemented and met the content objectives. Participants reported that facilitators were knowledgeable in each of the topics contained in the curriculum.

Lessons Learned

Based on the information gathered from evaluations, surveys and focus groups ELAWC will add a fifth session to the curriculum that focuses on public speaking and helping Promotoras build the capacity to design presentations.

ELAWC will also add a tool kit to the curriculum that includes a breakdown of how to facilitate a presentation on domestic violence, sexual assault, teen dating violence or stalking. These additions could provide Promotoras with the skills and confidence they need to conduct formal presentations in the community.

From this partnership ELAWC learned that organizations at different stages of development can implement the Promotora Model.

We need to measure the impact that Promotoras are having the community. We are committed to implement this phase of the evaluation in the next two years.

This model can be replicated in communities that include; diverse populations, urban and rural settings and farmworker communities.

PROMOTORA INTERVIEWS

Rosa, Promotora

When and why did you become a promotora?

I became a Promotora nine years ago through Planned Parenthood; I admired them and the topics they presented to the community. I began as a volunteer in schools. I wanted to grow in my community, be someone; I felt that I didn't have any power or education and that this was a way to earn that.

Becoming a Promotora opened doors for me, my husband was initially very controlling but he allowed me to take the classes, obtain a certificate and begin to do presentations. This empowered me and I began to question why he was being so controlling. As a teenager I was in an abusive relationship.

What impact has being a Promotora had on you, your family and community?

The program has given me freedom; I've learned to stand up for my rights as a woman. I've learned to have a better relationship with my husband; we don't fight in front of the kids. I talk to my sons about women's rights, and domestic violence. I can't believe the overall impact the promotora program has had in my life; there are no words to express how I feel. I'm grateful that I'm able to help my community. People come up to me now and ask me for advice on leaving an abusive relationship or simply to say that their eyes have been opened up to the abuse they are living in, I've referred women to East Los Angeles Women's Center and they have been able to leave their abusive relationships.

How did the Promotoras Contra la Violencia program empower you?

I feel that the more presentations I give, the more empowered I feel. I also feel that there have been results in my community and that makes me feel proud.

What do you take with you from the curriculum training?

I've shared the information with the community and become more comfortable speaking in public; I've gained self-assurance and more knowledge of the material.

In one word describe your experience in this program.

Hope-Esperanza

Additional Comments: Why do you think some of the women don't become active Promotoras?

You have to have that inner motivation to serve your community, to grow and the desire to serve. It's working for you, giving yourself the power.

Magda, Promotora

When and why did you become a Promotora?

I became a promotora in 2007 at Planned Parenthood, before that I was a parent volunteer at Head Start where my daughter was enrolled. I initially began as a Promotora to help my family be healthier; at Planned Parenthood I learned about drug and alcohol abuse. I soon found that I wanted to share the information I learned with others in her community. I became a Promotora for East Los Angeles Women's Center in 2010.

What impact has being a promotora had on you, your family and community?

Being a Promotora has changed the way that I look at my life, especially the topic of domestic violence which really hit home. I believed that it was normal until the training taught me otherwise. The training also raised my self-esteem, I no longer wanted to be silent about the abuse and valued myself; all of this empowered me. The income that I receive as a lead promotora has been a motivating factor; I'm able to earn an income yet still have the flexibility I need to take care of my kids. Today I want to move forward and show others that it's possible to live life without domestic violence. My past, I feel; allows me to speak to and identify survivors better. Looking back I realize I stayed with my abuser to maintain stability for my kids, not wanting them to move schools etc., I knows I also did a lot to protect him.

I grew up in a home with domestic violence and that is why I normalized it. I now speak to my kids about it along with self-esteem, sex, drug abuse. I feel I have a very healthy relationship and communication with my children. I only wish that had been the case with my former partner, instead the more I tried to have a healthy relationship the more we argued and the more violent our household became. My ex-partner now says that I'm brainwashed and that only because he allowed it; was I able to become a Promotora.

My motivation to become a Promotora was initially my kids. I didn't want to physically hit them but I often felt that was the only way to discipline them, I saw a flyer that said "discipline without violence" and I enrolled at Planned Parenthood. Taking the classes was also an escape from the violence in my home. I ultimately saw that the violence in my home was hurting my children although they weren't experiencing it firsthand.

Community- I once did a presentation where a woman had an abnormal pap smear result and had never returned for a follow-up appointment. I explained to her the importance of her health and why

it was important to find out what had caused the abnormality rather than ignore the problem. The lady eventually went, it turns out she had cancerous cells but they were able to remove them in time. I feel I made a difference in that woman's life.

As a Promotora Contra la Violencia; I feel that I help people recognize that they are suffering domestic violence in their relationship and they are able to learn their basic human rights. The community asks to hear my story, how I left my abuser, this encourages others to do the same or to simply open up about the abuse they are suffering, I've received thank you notes for sharing my story.

Overall I feel that the community presentations and support groups not only inform but provide a safe space for women to disclose.

How did the Promotoras Contra la Violencia program empower you?

The program has allowed me to share my story and know that I'm not alone. The hotline training gave me the tools I needed to ultimately leave my abusive spouse; I knew where to go, how to obtain a restraining order, etc... Since then I've grown, changed and become stronger. I became familiar with the services available to me and have been able to use them. Looking back, I now know I wanted to save my relationship and that's why I stayed, I had that hope that he would change as most women who stay. Now, I put myself first, creating goals and achieving them.

What do you take with you from the curriculum training?

I take with me all the information and resources. Overall I learned that we live in a patriarchal society, because of this I know how to better educate my children; I taught them to have respect for others' thoughts, opinions and ideas. I understand sexism and why domestic violence exists; I now have zero tolerance for it.

In one word describe your experience in this program.

Strength and courage

Additional Comments

I feel grateful for the support and help of East Los Angeles Women's Center. I was always quiet and shy; I never imagined that I would be comfortable with public speaking either in large groups or one-on-one.

Beny, Promotora

When and why did you become a promotora?

I initially learned about the Promotora training through a parent's group 3 years ago, I have always wanted to help my community and to stand up for women's rights. I like that the material presented was in Spanish and that I had the freedom to do the presentations on my own schedule.

What impact has being a Promotora had on you, your family and community?

People often tell me that I've changed; I'm now empowered and more self-assured to make decisions. People tell me that I appear more confident, outspoken and vocal. I've reached community members and family on topics like domestic violence. People look to me as a community leader; I feel that I'm the bridge for the resources, before I felt that I was only a housewife, now I'm a voice for the community. My family is very proud of my accomplishments. In the community I can offer resources through the crisis hotline in Spanish, this makes the community more comfortable and more apt to use the resources. I live in a mostly African-American community but recognize that Latinos have a voice. I've also achieved a good relationship with my sons; I'm open with them about dating and often speak to them on the topics that I learn. I feel that my family will never suffer domestic violence, I have broken that cycle. I know that I shouldn't look at what needs to be done but at what has been accomplished.

How did the Promotoras Contra la Violencia program empower you?

The program has helped me to learn more about the community needs and how I can help, I feel blessed to be able to learn and to help. The workshops I've attended through the promotora program have taught me that I can be more than just a housewife; I've broken barriers, stereotypes and grown. I no longer let obstacles stand in the way of my personal growth and I'm amazed at the opportunities I've received because of the agency. I've learned to be more sensitive to other's situations and understand why a woman would stay in an abusive relationship.

What do you take with you from the curriculum training?

I've learned from the curriculum that there aren't any limits to the things I can achieve and that there is strength in numbers when community members unite.

In one word describe your experience in this program.

Freedom-When you have knowledge you have freedom.

Adriana, Promotora

Why and when did you become a promotora?

I became a Promotora in 2005 at Planned Parenthood. I was a volunteer at my son's Head Start program. As part of my volunteer work I had to participate in trainings. When PPLA offered training at my son's school I immediately signed up. I was eager to learn since I never had the opportunity to go to school. At the time I had no idea what a Promotora was or what they did. In 2010 I became a Promotora of East Los Angeles Women's Center. Taking the Promotoras Contra la Violencia training was a big awakening for me. My life had been a routine that consisted of being a housewife, taking care of my kids, cooking and cleaning every day.

What impact has being a promotora had on you, your family and community?

Being a Promotora changed my life in many ways. I felt empowered to make personal changes. One of the first things I learned about was self esteem; a word I never knew existed. I learned to love myself. First personal change I did was to lose 70 pounds. Being a promotora also changed the life of my family. I learned to do new things with my children other than routine. Now, I have family days where I'm able to spend quality time with my kids. I've learned to be more patient, to listen and have better communication with my husband and children.

How did the Promotoras Contra la Violencia program empower you?

Being a promotora has had a huge impact in my community. As a promotora I have outreached to over 1000 community members bringing awareness on violence against women and girls. East Los Angeles Women's Center has given me tools and empowered me to be a stronger leader in the community unlike any other agency. I was given the opportunity to take the 54 hour sexual assault training and I am now an advocate on the 24 hour sexual assault hotline. East Los Angeles Women's Center provides ongoing support for promotoras. The Promotoras Contra la Violencia training has empowered me by providing me with tools, trainings, flexibility, support and most importantly it has allowed me to be me in the community.

What do you take from the curriculum training? I take with me the design of the different strategies I can use to educate other women on violence issues. I also take with me the basic information that was easy to understand like the Power and Control Wheel and the Cycle of Abuse. From the curriculum I have learned to become more alert and aware, I have gained knowledge on topics like sexual assault that I didn't have before. The Promotora training has allowed me to be myself and happy like no other program has. Trust is something I feel was given to me.

Describe in one word your experience in this program. Motivation!! Successful!!