

PROYECTO MAMÁ

An Assessment of Perinatal Mental Health Resources and Needs
Among Latina Mothers in Milwaukee, Wisconsin



Artwork by Sophie Casson

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About Proyecto Mamá

Why: *Proyecto Mamá* was developed to comprehensively assess the perinatal mental health resources and needs of Latina mothers in the Milwaukee community. Research has indicated that the mental health of pregnant and postpartum mothers is associated with critical outcomes for the child, family and community. *Proyecto Mamá* was driven by the belief that promoting the mental health and well-being of mothers is critical for a strong community.

What: *Proyecto Mamá* was funded by a Marquette University Women and Girls of Color Grant and was implemented from 2017 through 2020. Using an asset-oriented approach to community assessment, the project engaged community members (mothers, health professionals and faith leaders) through focus groups and interviews about perinatal mental health. *Proyecto Mamá* provides foundational knowledge to inform future programming that can positively impact Latina mothers in our Milwaukee community.

Study Findings

Strengths and Resources

- Cultural traditions
- Family and social support
- *Cuarentenas* (postpartum recovery period)
- Herbs, soups and teas
- Community clinics and programs for mothers with culturally-relevant services

Barriers to Service

- Financial (e.g. insurance, cost of counseling)
- Lack of transportation and/or childcare
- Lack of resources (e.g. bilingual services)
- Fear of children being removed by CPS
- Stigma/judgment
- Undocumented status

Risk Factors for PPD

- Financial stress
- Marital conflict
- Trauma
- Lack of social support
- Baby's health concerns
- Immigration/political stress

Services Needed

- Affordable/free services
- Therapists trained in perinatal mental health
- Support groups
- Flexible services (e.g. open groups, childcare)
- Bilingual therapists

Recommendations

INCREASE CULTURALLY-INFORMED PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH (PMH) TRAINING FOR KEY PERSONNEL WHO WORK WITH LATINA MOTHERS

- Pediatricians, OB/GYNs, midwives, doulas
- Faith and other community leaders
- School personnel, social workers & counselors

INCREASE ACCESS TO CULTURALLY-INFORMED PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR LATINA MOTHERS

- Bilingual and bicultural services
- Childcare at service sites
- Education about mental health during pregnancy and postpartum
- Support groups with clothing shares
- Offering incentives (e.g., gifts donated by community stakeholders, gifts for moms bringing other moms)
- Bus passes or coordinated transport (e.g., ride shares)

INCREASE ENGAGEMENT WITH PARTNERS/ FATHERS

- More research about role of father in PMH
- Services for fathers and couples
- PMH education resources for the family

ADVOCACY REGARDING HEALTH CARE POLICY

- Extending BadgerCare Plus Prenatal coverage (health insurance for undocumented mothers) to one year. Note this coverage is currently only provided until the end of the month in which the baby is born.

DEVELOPMENT OF A REFERRAL DIRECTORY

- Directory describing agencies, services provided, staff skills (e.g., language, PMH), and what to expect for clients

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