Optimizing the Health of Monolingual Spanish-Speaking Latinos in Region 1
Familias Unidas

An Evidence Based Preventive Intervention for Hispanic Youth and their Families
Behavioral Health Impacts

- By 2020, mental & substance use disorders (M/SUDs) will surpass all physical diseases as a major cause of disability worldwide.

- One-half of U.S. adults will develop at least one mental illness in their lifetime.

- U.S. 2006: M/SUDs were 3rd most costly health condition behind heart conditions and injury-related disorders.

- Mental illness and heart diseases alone account for almost 70 percent of lost output/productivity.
Adolescent Behavioral Health Prevention

2009 IOM Report Preventing Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders among Young People: Progress and Possibilities

- Among adults, half of all mental, emotional and behavioral (MEB) disorders were first diagnosed by age 14 and three-fourths by age 24. MEB disorders among youth as commonplace as fractured limb.

- Risk and resiliency factors can be addressed.

- Common, early, consistent, multi-sector, continuous, community-based PUBLIC HEALTH approaches work.

- Environmental, policy, culture and individual approaches work.
What is Familias Unidas?

- Familias Unidas is a family-centered, evidence-based substance use and sexual risk behavior prevention intervention for Hispanic youth and their families. It is a multi-level intervention that targets risk (e.g., poor adolescent communication) and protective factors (e.g., parental involvement) at the family, peer, and school level.
Familias Unidas Logic Model

Key Inputs
- **Staff**
  - Julissa Soto - Director
  - Family Coordinator
  - Youth Coordinator
  - Promotoras
- **Organizational support**
  - Mental Health staff
  - Shawn Davis, Evaluator
- **Partnerships**
  - Various community coalitions
  - Various FQHCs
  - School districts
  - Other nonprofit organizations
  - Public Health Dept
  - Mental Health facilities
  - Suicide Prevention and Substance abuse prevention
  - County dept. of human services
- **Evidence-based Curriculum**
  - Familias Unidas
- **Funding**

Key Activities
- **Outreach/Recruitment**
  - Active, in-person outreach in communities, including door-to-door canvasses and recruitment in schools, churches, bakeries, etc.
  - Community workshops
  - Referrals from partners
  - Extensive tailoring of outreach materials to Latino culture
- **Familias Unidas Curriculum**
  - Family needs assessment
  - 12 week, evidence-based family centered curriculum (8 group sessions, 4 family sessions)
  - Parent-school meetings
  - Parent-peer meetings
  - All classes and activities conducted in Spanish with high attention to culture

Key Outputs
- **Neighborhood Cohesion**
  - # of community trainings
  - # of referrals
  - # of outreach sessions
- **Community & School Involvement**
  - Build stronger communities & supportive environments
  - Support from promotoras
  - Supportive school environment
  - Social connectedness
  - Family Support Networks
- **Data collected**
  - Family functioning
  - Acculturation and stress
  - Behavioral health
  - Problem behaviors
  - Risk behaviors

Outcomes
- Increased awareness and knowledge about...
  - Social Competence
  - Emotional wellbeing
  - Protective factors and risk factors
  - American systems
- Increased self esteem
- Improved emotional well-being
- Improved resilience
- Increased positive peer relations
- Improved family functioning
- Decreased problem behaviors
- Decreased stigma and discrimination
- Decreased social isolation
- Decreased distress
- Decreased risk behaviors

Longer-term Outcomes

Impact
1. Ecological-developmental perspective
2. Cultural Beliefs and Practices
3. Empowerment
4. Focus on the family
Program Components

1. Evidence-based, culturally-informed intervention for Hispanic youth and their families

2. Parent-centered

3. Delivered through 8 family-centered, multi-parent groups that place parents in the change agent role and through 4 family sessions
## Goals, Activities and Expected Effects of the Familias Unidas program

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Program Phase</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Activity/techniques</th>
<th>Expected effects</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement</strong></td>
<td>• Enhance parent perception of program as credible and responsive. Increase parental motivation to participate</td>
<td>• Home visits • Joining • Problem solving barriers</td>
<td>• Strong alliance with parent and facilitator • Increased likelihood of participation</td>
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<td><strong>Group Formation</strong></td>
<td>• Establish supportive alliances among parents. Build cohesive group</td>
<td>• Parent support network • Participatory dialogue about family, school, and peers • Role plays to build parenting skills</td>
<td>• Effective working relationships for empowerment processes • Group cohesion</td>
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<td><strong>Cognitive change/skills building</strong></td>
<td>• Learn about adolescent development extend attitudes and beliefs • Enhance parenting skills</td>
<td>• Family meeting/home visits • Supervised peer activities • Parent-teacher/parent counselor meetings • Parent-adolescent discussion circles • Adolescent activity groups • Tutoring • Social skill building</td>
<td>• Increased knowledge about risk and protection for adolescent development • Group cohesion • Enhanced parenting skills for family, school, and peer domains • Enhanced parenting efficacy • “Action plans” for restructuring activities</td>
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<td><strong>Restructuring</strong></td>
<td>• Improve interactions between parents and Adolescent and other family members • School personnel • Adolescents peers and peers parents</td>
<td>• Family meeting/home visits • Supervised peer activities • Parent-teacher/parent counselor meetings • Parent-adolescent discussion circles • Adolescent activity groups • Tutoring • Social skill building</td>
<td>• Increased family cohesion, decreased conflict, improved conflict management • Strong parent-adolescent relationship • Strong parent-school relationship • Strong parent-peer network • Improved adolescent social competence, academic achievement • Positive interactions with prosocial peers</td>
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Familias Unidas targets multiple problem behaviors among youth in schools, community organizations and the juvenile justice system. Hispanic youth in Familias Unidas report:

- 28% less drug use
- 38% less depressive symptoms
- 50% less alcohol dependence
- 60% less unprotected sex
- 88% less cigarette use

What is the evidence?
Familias Unidas: Exemplary Research Proven Intervention
• Instills hope in parents
• Places parents in positions of leadership
• Strengthens parental investment/collaboration with adolescent worlds
• Creates support networks for parents
• Provides skills to effectively deal with youth substance use and risky sexual behaviors
• Restructures interactions with family, school, and peer relationships

Parent Centered
Clinical strategies:

1) Joining techniques (to develop the family-facilitator relationship).

2) Group process techniques (e.g., building a cohesive group environment).

3) Participatory learning (learning through dialogue, posing questions, rather than instruction).

4) We prepare facilitators to record their sessions and receive supervision during implementation.

5) Each facilitator is responsible for half of the families in his or her group.
Familias Unidas empowers parents to better communicate with their adolescents.
• 8 Group Sessions
• 4 Family Visits
• Parent-School Personnel Meetings
• Family Supervised Activities
• Family Homework Activity

Clinical Activities
Clinical Strategies

- Blend of Cognitive Change Strategies
- Behavioral Skill Training
- Empowerment Processes
• Family Visit #1: Engagement and Orientation to Familias Unidas
• Group Session #1: Family Functioning: Parental Investment in “Adolescent Worlds”
• Group Session #2: Family Functioning: Enhancing Communication Skills

• Family Visit #2: Family Functioning: Enhancing Communication Skills
• Group Session #3: Family Functioning: Supportive Relationships / Behavior Management
• Group Session #4: Family Functioning: Parental Monitoring of Peer World
• Group Session #5: Adolescent Drug Use/Peer Pressure

• Family Visit #3: Parental Monitoring of Peer World / Drug Use
• Group Session #6: Parental Investment in School
• Group Session #7: Adolescent Risky Sexual Behavior

• Family Visit #4: Adolescents Risky Sexual Behaviors
• Group Session #8: Prevention Has to Be Achieved All Over Again Everyday
The sessions

• The multi-parent groups meet in 2-hour sessions. Each group has 12 to 15 parents with at least one parent from each participating family. Group discussions aim to increase parents’ understanding of their role in protecting their adolescent from risky behaviors, such as substance use and unsafe sexual behavior, and to facilitate parental investment in the adolescent’s worlds. Additionally, four one-hour family sessions are guided by a facilitator and provide parents with an opportunity to apply the skills learned in the group sessions with their adolescent.
Familias Unidas has been evaluated in five randomized trials (Pantin et al., 2003; Prado et al., 2007; Pantin et al., 2009; Prado et al., 2011; 2012; Estrada et al, under review).

Familias Unidas has been shown to:

- Reduce behavior problems, drug use and risky sexual behaviors
- Increase family functioning
How else do we maximize the impact of Familias Unidas?

Create a community Culture Capable of Reducing Drug Abuse and Sexual Risk Behaviors
Contact Us

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