

BIENVENIDO

Bienvenido Program Summary

Theoretical Base - The Bienvenido curriculum is a strengths-based educational curriculum to enhance awareness of mental health, clarify a participant's personal goals for an enhanced quality of life, and develop skills to reduce risk for emotional and behavioral risks associated with mental distress. In particular, Bienvenido seeks to reduce reliance on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs for individuals at risk for abuse and dependence due to stresses associated with immigrant traumas and ongoing marginalized community social status. The Bienvenido curriculum is appropriate for use in various community settings, including behavioral service settings, schools, and outpatient mental health centers.

The Bienvenido curriculum is based on an expectation of short, intermediate and long term outcomes that reflect greater sense of empowerment. The healing element for this model is based on four premises:

- 1) assisting clients in their acknowledgement of the trauma they have suffered during immigration and current stigmatized social status helps them to recognize sources associated with maladaptive behavior;
- 2) educating clients about mental health and enhanced quality of life introduces the potential of hope for a better standard of living;
- 3) using a group format for presentation of information and group discussion creates a supportive peer network;
- 4) increased community integration and social status will follow greater awareness of behavioral risks and assets.

Curriculum Content – Each module of the nine week Bienvenido curriculum provides information about topics related to development and sustenance of mental health and enhanced quality of life. Modules are ordered to first introduce participants to potentially new knowledge about mental health, clarify their understanding of risk and protective factors associated with mental health and quality of life, and develop skills to enhance effective social functioning and community integration.

Participants are encouraged to describe their immigration experience, and group discussion provides acknowledgement and support. Acculturative stresses and local values of cultural diversity are topics that provide examples of on-going risks for emotional distress, and potentially adverse behavioral consequences. Application to daily functioning is addressed by modules on anger management and effective communication. Clients are encouraged to seek mental health as a family goal.

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