High Rates of Domestic Violence Victims among the Hispanic Culture in San Benito County.

Lauren Bertero

Capstone Proposal

Collaborative Health & Human Services
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Abstract

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, from 2007 to 2010, Hispanics experienced higher rates of violent victimization in new Hispanic metropolitan areas (26 per 1,000) than in other areas (16 to 20 per 1,000). Within San Benito County the Hispanic culture makes up more than half of the population, and with the population on the rise it is important to target the Hispanic culture and make sure they are receiving the up to date resources and the valuable information that can better their needs. By working with the San Benito County Probation Department, a domestic violence survivor questionnaire was created to determine if the barriers exist among the Hispanic families in San Benito County. The questionnaire will better help the domestic violence probation officer’s on how to move forward with their clients and identify which services and programs will best suit the victims by receiving the help they need.
Problem Description

Problem Definition:

The term domestic violence is defined as a pattern of physical, psychological or sexual abuse, threats, intimidation, isolation or economic coercion used by one person to exert power and control over another person in the context of an intimate relationship (Barcajlioni, 2010). The rate of domestic violence recidivism among Hispanic and Latinos in San Benito County is increasing, many of the abusers have more than one account of domestic violence on their record. Even though the San Benito County is small, with a population of 58,267, one of the fast growing ethnic groups is Hispanic/Latinos. As of 2014 Hispanic/Latinos make up more than half of the population of 58.3%. 20.5% of women and 15.5% of men in Hispanic households suffered partner violence (CDC, 2008). From a case load of 77 domestic violence cases in 2015, now up to 93 cases, it is important to be able to provide the victims with the appropriate resources and services they might need to make sure themselves and their families are safe, as well as making sure their abuser is seeking the help he/she needs and is paying for the consequences of their actions.

Problem Causes:

Hispanics face many barriers when trying to get free from domestic violence. There are numerous contributing factors that can lead to domestic violence among the Hispanic culture to be unaware of their rights and resources. Language barrier, cultural norms and threat of deportation are all contributing factors. According to the 2014 U.S. Census, the Hispanic population of California is 38.6% (U.S. Census, 2014). Between 2009 and 2011, while other types of homicides decreased, domestic violence fatalities in California increased by 11%. Domestic violence homicides comprise 11.8% of all California homicides (Shaw, 2015).
**Language Barrier**

Domestic violence is just as predominant in the Hispanic community as it is with other cultural and racial groups. Domestic violence within the Hispanic community face many barriers, a lack of English proficiency can prevent victims of knowing what resources are available to them to provide help and shelter. An inadequate knowledge of English can pose a barrier for the victim to fully understand what the resources entail and how to access them. There are bilingual domestic violence prevention programs and domestic violence shelter programs in San Benito County that accommodate to the Hispanic community and families, such as; Emmaus House, Battered Women’s Shelter and Community Solutions.

**Threat of Deportation**

Immigration status can play a big role in domestic violence, the threat of deportation is a form of control. “Lack of knowledge about their rights and immigration law creates great worry and anxiety for victims, who are very often controlled with their abuser’s threats to contact USCIS. Abusers may make threats like “you will be deported”, “the government will take the children”, or “the children will be given to me” (Barcajlioni, 2010).” With the concern of being deported many victim’s refuse to seek help or contact law enforcement creating more harm to her/himself and the family as well.

**Cultural Norms**

A tough barrier Hispanic victims overcome is related to being a part of a culture where family is a key component to the way of living. Keeping one’s family intact is valued and many times it might be the only support system that the affected women have. It is believed that it is a Hispanic mother’s responsibility to keep the family protected and together, other than separated. Many cultural families still practice their cultural norms even when living away from home,
many are unaware of the resources and laws that are provided to them. Laws from their native home can prevent many Hispanic women from seeking the services she may need.

“In Mexico, a law called ‘abandono de hogar’ punishes women who leave their homes, even to flee violence. Women convicted of ‘abandoning the home’ often lost custody of their children. Some Mexican women who immigrate to the U.S. erroneously believe that this law applies here (Eyler, 2006).”

Without the knowledge of the resources, Hispanic victims will stay quiet on behalf of their abuser to make sure their family is not threatened or the fear of separation.

As shown below in Figure 1, language barriers, threat of deportation and cultural norms are all forms of contributing factors that lead to high rates of domestic violence among Hispanic cultures. Without reporting the domestic violence case it can lead to problem consequences like, low income, unreported domestic violence cases and negative impact on the children that are exposed to the domestic violence within the home,
Problem Consequences

Low Income

Perhaps the most common consequence when it comes to victims of domestic violence that go unreported is the financial dependency on the abuser. It is known that in Hispanic culture that the man is the one who works to provide for the family. Many Hispanic women rely on their abusers income to support their households and families, which is why they fear the need to report the crime. While financial dependence traps a woman who is battered, other methods of economic abuse provide the abuser with more power to control her actions. Domestic Violence is a major cause of family homelessness, a large percentage of all women and children living on the streets became homeless because of domestic violence (Medina, 2008).
Domestic Violence Cases Not Reported

Due to the dependency on the abuser, domestic violence is one of the most chronically unreported crimes. There is a lack of information on Hispanic culture domestic violence cases due to the barriers that the victims face, in order to protect their family and themselves. Hispanic women might try to find help through the courts, the police or social service agencies but they are unable to get in contact with someone who speaks their language well enough to really help. Asking for advice from family, or friends might be nonexistent because they might live back in their home country. Many reasons and barriers come into pay when living outside your cultural norm and not having any insight on how to go about reporting the abuser or making sure their family will be safe after they do report the crime. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2006–2010 it stated that Hispanic/Latino made up of 51% (394,600) of unreported violent victimizations against women.

Negative Impact of Domestic Violence on Children

75% of domestic violence victims have children under the age of 18 at home (U.S. Dept. of Justice, 2009). Many children that are exposed to domestic violence within the household are suffering from long term health and emotional effects. Exposure to domestic violence can include watching or hearing the violent events, direct involvement (for example, trying to intervene or calling the police), or experiencing the aftermath (for example, seeing bruises or observing maternal depression) (Holden, et al., 1998). Most children exposed to domestic violence are too young to even adapt or understand what domestic violence is and why it is happening. Exposure to domestic violence in childhood has been linked to a similar set of outcomes, including low self-esteem, social withdrawal, depression, and anxiety, aggression,
violence, and delinquency (McCloskey, et al., 2003). Resources are available to the children that come from domestic violence backgrounds, because it is important to eliminate the negative long term effects before they become permanent.

**Agency Description**

The San Benito County Probation Departments mission is to protect the community, provide services to the court; and assist clients to change their criminal behavior. The populations served at the Probation Department are adolescents, and adults of San Benito County. San Benito County has a population of 58,267, and the Hispanic culture makes up about 58.3% of that population. The services provided differ whether they are an adult or a juvenile and are offered in English and Spanish. The adult services are; Adult Supervision, Intensive Supervision, Drug Intensive Supervision, Treatment Referrals, Restitution for Crime Victims, Court Report Services, Deferred Entry of Judgement, Domestic Violence Program, Community Service Program, Electronic Monitoring Program (EMP), and Family Preservation Program. The juvenile services are as followed; Juvenile Supervision, Intensive Supervision, Juvenile Placement Services, Treatment Referrals, Restitution for Crime Victims, Court Report Services, Juvenile Traffic Court, Court School Truancy Programs, Home Supervision, and EMP (San Benito County, 2016).

**Capstone Project**

The process of the project will begin by writing up an optional questionnaire that will be provided to victims of domestic violence who reside within San Benito County. The individuals will have received or currently receiving services from a Community Based Organization (CBO) or have been contacted by Probation as a victim of a violent crime. The participants may elect to take part in the questionnaire and are not obligated. None of the participants were provided with
any form of compensation. The questionnaires will be provided at three locations; San Benito County Probation, Community Solutions and Emmaus House.

Participants are allowed to either complete the questionnaire on their own or if they need assistance, it will be provided. In order to better reach get a better understanding of victims, the questionnaire was provided in English and Spanish. Below is a copy of the questionnaire that will be provided to the victims.

“My name is Lauren and I am student at California State Monterey Bay. I would like to ask you some questions. My hope is that with your help in answering these questions, I will make some recommendations in how we may better serve survivors of domestic violence.

You deserve to be safe and feel supported. Your opinion is important to me. Thank you for your time.

This is an optional questionnaire.

1. How long have you been in a relationship with your partner?

2. What are some barriers that you encountered when considering or when leaving your partner?

3. What is the worst abuse you have suffered from your partner?

4. How do you feel this abuse has impacted your child or children’s life?

5. How do you feel you have been treated by the legal system?

Age: ____
Gender: ______
Race/Ethnicity: ______________

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Back side in Spanish.

By reviewing the responses from the victims, it will give some valuable insight on the barriers and what the victims struggle with when trying to leave their abuser. The questionnaires
will remain on hand in the three locations it will be provided until the Fall 2016 semester, and will be picked up monthly if there are any completed. During the implementation of the project, the findings of the questionnaires will be logged and documented based on the answers provided. The answers will be compared to the causes and consequences that were researched to be the main barrier reasons of domestic violence in the Hispanic culture within San Benito County. By working with the domestic violence probation officer, the answers to the questions will also give her an insight on what she needs to watch and look out for when contacting the victims and also dealing with the defendants of domestic violence.

After the implementation of the questionnaire, all the remaining questionnaires will then be collected. All data will be filed and researched. After reviewing all completed questionnaires, all the answers will then be taken into consideration on how to better manage and what areas need to be addressed when coming into contact with the victims and defendants of domestic violence. The main areas will then be addressed and recommendations will be made on how the San Benito Probation Department and Community Solutions may better serve survivors of domestic violence.

Community Solutions and the San Benito Probation Department would like to see how well the project was implemented because if the outcome of the questionnaires is helping their victims and their process of receiving information and feedback from victims, then both agencies would like to continue the questionnaire and make it a part of their outreach.

Below in Figure 2, is an implementation diagram that presents a timeline on the process of implementing the domestic violence survivor questionnaire.
Figure 2: Project: Domestic Violence Survivor’s Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>Curriculum Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background Research</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Plan Preparation</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation Preparations</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about purpose of questionnaire with agencies</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire Implementation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location Search</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Questionnaire</td>
<td>Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Survey Questionnaire for Participants</td>
<td>Purple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect Surveys Weekly/Monthly</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Input</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Justification

The purpose of this project is to pinpoint the barriers that the Hispanic culture in San Benito County faces when becoming a victim of domestic violence and to also find ways for the survivors to retrieve the correct resources when in need. With a social problem like domestic violence it is important to perpetrate the abuser, it is more important to make sure that the victim is receiving the valuable resources and information they need to do whatever is necessary to make sure the abuse does not happen again. The Hispanic culture seems to have higher rates of domestic violence cases than other ethnicities in San Benito County, and with the barriers they may face the questionnaire will help the victims speak out about their attack and why they either choose not to leave their abuser or the troubles they may come into contact with. The
questionnaire will also help the advocates of domestic violence and the probation officers in ways to better address their needs and provide them with the appropriate resources. The probation department also wants to better serve its community by understanding their clients and the community’s needs, in hopes to decrease the amount of victims of domestic violence recidivism. Below in Figure 3, is the problem model that describes the causes and consequences that the domestic violence victims face, and the proposed outcome of the questionnaire.

**Figure 3. Problem Diagram Assuming Questionnaires Impact**

**Problem Diagram**

- **Problem:** High rates of domestic violence among the Hispanic culture in San Benito County.
- **Causes:**
  - Language Barrier
  - Threat of Deportation
  - Cultural Norms
- **Consequences:**
  - Low Income
- **Cases Not Reported**
- **Negative Impact of DV on children**
- **Project:** Barriers become the focus for immediate change in the victim process, and case.
Implementation

Project Implementation

In May the capstone project implemented was a Domestic Violence Survivor Questionnaire. An optional anonymous 5 question questionnaire was created for the victims of domestic violence who reside within the San Benito County. The individuals will have received or currently receiving services from a Community Based Organization (CBO), or have been contacted by Probation as a victim of a violent crime. The participants can choose whether or not they would like to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was translated into Spanish being that there is a large number of domestic violence victims in the community that only speak Spanish. With researching locations to provide the questionnaire to, it was important to make sure the locations dealt with victims of domestic violence specifically. The questionnaires were provided to three locations that provide services to domestic violence victims; the San Benito County Probation Department, Community Solutions in Hollister, and Emmaus House in Hollister. The three locations will explain the questionnaire to the survivors in detail and give them an opportunity to complete it. All questionnaires are anonymous, and the only identity questions are; age, gender and race/ethnicity.

In April the questions were established based on the some of the barriers known among domestic violence within the Hispanic culture, whether or not they have children, and if they are aware of the services provided to them. Along with the negative impacts that domestic violence leaves behind for any member in the household. After finalizing the questionnaire, Lisa Saucedo who is the probation officer of the domestic violence caseload from the San Benito County Probation Department, was able to translate the English version of the questionnaire into Spanish. Lisa was going to make sure to provide the questionnaire to every victim that came into
the Probation Department, and give them option to complete it or not. After taking 50 copies to Community Solutions, it was told that the questionnaire needed to be approved by the director first, in order to be able to give them to the victims that come in. Only a few weeks is what was discussed that it would take to get the approval. Taking another 50 copies to Emmaus House, Suzanne the manager reviewed the questionnaire and said she would be happy to hand out to the victims that came in.

By having the three locations offer the questionnaire to their clients/victims, monthly pick-ups for the completed questionnaires was scheduled. The questionnaire will remain at the three locations until the last week of November. After collecting the completed questionnaires, the new findings have been logged and documented based on the answers provided. The answers that have been given were compared to the causes and consequences that have led to domestic violence in the Hispanic culture. A copy of the completed questionnaires has also be given to Officer Lisa Saucedo so that she is familiar with the answers, and what she now needs to watch and look for when coming into contact with the victims and their perpetrators.

The 5 completed questionnaires that were received was from the Probation Department. Community Solutions has yet to approve the questionnaire, and Emmaus House has yet to complete one questionnaire. The input of information is limited at this point, and hopefully by the end of November there will be at least another handful of completed questionnaires.

**Implementation Obstacles and/or Unexpected Circumstances**

One of the greatest challenges faced during the implementation of the capstone project was the limited amount of responses from the participants for the questionnaires. Being that domestic violence is not discussed as much as it should be, many of the victims choose not to
report or discuss after the fact. With the limited amount of responses, there is not enough data to collect nor analyze. Many of the victim’s that were asked about taking the questionnaire declined participating.

Another obstacle faced was that after visiting Community Solutions to go over the proposed capstone project, they were very interested in participating and were happy to collect responses from their clients that come into their office. After developing the questionnaire, and giving Community Solutions 50 copies, it was then brought to attention that they would need to get the questionnaire approved by the director first in order to be able to hand out. Being that receiving the approval was never mentioned beforehand, it became a waiting game and months began to go by without any response from Community Solutions on the approval.

Providing the questionnaire to Community Solutions in May, and by August it still was not approved, it was clear that it was going to be a challenge. That challenge being that none of the clients will be aware of the questionnaire nor be able to provide their feedback or responses. After visiting Community Solutions once more regarding the approval, the manager was out on vacation and the other employees mentioned they have not heard anything about the questionnaire. The result of that obstacle was that there was not going to be any information or data on the victims of domestic violence from Community Solutions.

The third obstacle faced was that even though Lisa Saucedo was the probation officer of the domestic violence department, she worked mainly with the defendants and not so much the victims, and many times the victim is not identified in the case. Being that Lisa meets with the perpetrators, it is difficult at times to contact the victim let alone meet with the victim. Due to the lack of contact with the victims, the questionnaire receives very little attention which leads to very little responses. More times than most, if the victim is present than they are willing to
protect the defendant and remain silent, rather than discuss the harmful things their partner has
done to them. So this obstacle adds to the limited amount of responses from the victims.

**Evaluation**

**Outcomes:**

The three expected outcomes of the questionnaire was one, that it would increase the
knowledge of the domestic violence victims of the services that are available to them. Another
expected outcome was expanding the understanding and recognizing the negative impacts that
domestic violence has on their children in the household. The final outcome was to increase
awareness of domestic violence in the victim’s life and whether or not the negative impacts exist
within the home.

**Measures & Methods:**

How the questionnaire was measured was by having an informal interview with Lisa
Saucedo, from the San Benito Probation Department. Officer Saucedo came up with a few pros
and cons of the questionnaire and the implementation process. She discussed how the
questionnaire was very well put together to focus on the targeted population of domestic violence
victims and the locations that were given the questionnaire were great since they provide the
necessary services to battered women and men. Some of the cons that were present, was that
many victims of domestic violence do not like to speak out on their cases, especially if they are
still involved with their perpetrator, so it was going to be hard to get a decent amount of
questionnaires completed. Another con was that Officer Saucedo mainly deals with the
perpetrators that are on probation, and not so much the victims, so it was primarily Community
Solutions and Emmaus House that would be relied on for the questionnaires to be filled out.
An improvement that was discussed that would provide the victims with the knowledge and awareness of how to retrieve help and services for themselves and their families would be by holding a workshop for domestic violence survivors within San Benito County. By holding the workshop many of the victims would receive valuable information that could benefit them and their families, and allow them to feel safe and important. The workshop would also give insight on why the workshop exists instead of answering personal questions on a sheet of paper for someone they do not know. Overall, Lisa mentioned that the questionnaire got the agency involved and it became clear that certain questions need to be asked in order for the probation officers to better help their clients and the victims.

**Results:**

The results of the questionnaire were not successful due to the low turnout. Out of the three locations, the Probation Department was the only location to retrieve 5 completed questionnaires. Below in Figure 4, shows the amount of complete and incomplete questionnaires that were collected. Out of the 100 questionnaires that were handed out, only 5 of them were completed. With 95% of the questionnaires incomplete, it was hard to neither quantify any results nor recognize whether the barriers exist among the domestic violence victims in San Benito County.
From the collected questionnaires, it was hard to collect that data that was received due to the fact that the participants that did participate mainly put yes or no answers instead of giving a little bit more information. It was difficult to really understand if the barriers existed to the victims.

Since the San Benito County Probation Department worked on the questionnaire as well, it became apparent that there was a need for more victim interaction and the appropriate questions being asked so that they can better help their clients and the victims. With that being said, the probation department has now come up with an ODARA Risk Assessment that involves both parties and not just the offender. The ODARA was created to pinpoint certain areas that will better help the probation officers decide which services their client needs. Some of the questions asked pertain to prior domestic assaults, prior jail time, probation, threat to harm or kill, how many children are involved, if the victim fears for their safety, substance abuse and the barriers that the victim faces with in contact with domestic violence. The results from the ODARA are able to determine if the offender is likely to recidivate or not.
**Future Recommendations:**

For future recommendations regarding the capstone project, I think I would have really put a lot more time into the questionnaire, or maybe even went a different route and did a workshop to be even more hands on. With the questionnaire, it would have been a good idea to make two separate ones, one for the victims and one for the offenders. Two questionnaires would have provided more information and data to collect when trying to determine the barriers that come with domestic violence among Hispanic families in the San Benito County. I also believe that the probation department should have more contact with the victims once the case is reported, it would also better help the officers to guide their client into the appropriate programs and classes they would need to seek help.

What went wrong in my capstone project was the lack of communication from agency to agency and the time management that came along with trying to get the questionnaire approved and my mentor being reassigned to a new caseload away from domestic violence. I believe all in all, many things were not all put together correctly and it hurt the outcome of my capstone project. What I recommend to future students, is to really love your internship. Make sure it is the internship you want to grow and be a part of for 3 semesters. If you find out you do not like it your first semester, then really make sure your next choice in your second semester is the right one, because you need as much time that you can get for your capstone. What I also recommend, is to come up with what you want your capstone to be on in your first semester of your internship and communicate your ideas to your professors and mentors so they can help guide you in the right direction.
Furthermore, make time for yourself and your friends and family, because you will need it. Take a step back and really analyze what you have accomplished, because it is a lot and you will get through it.
References


Appendix

Below is a version of the questionnaire in Spanish that will be given to the domestic violence survivors. There will be an English and Spanish version given to make sure all needs are being met, especially to those that only speak Spanish and face the language barrier. In all hopes to bring awareness to the community and pin point the causes that follow with domestic violence.

______________________________________________________________________________

Mi nombre es Lauren y soy estudiante en la bahía de la Universidad de Monterey. Me gustaría hacerle algunas preguntas. Mi esperanza es que con su ayuda en contestar estas preguntas, puedo hacer algunas recomendaciones de cómo la comunidad puede mejor servir a sobrevivientes de violencia doméstica.

Usted se merece sentirse segura y sentirse apoyada. Su opinión es importante. Gracias por su tiempo.

Cuestionario opcional.

1. ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva en una relación con tu pareja?

2. ¿Cuáles son algunas de las barreras que encuentra al considerar o al salir de su relación con su pareja?

3. ¿Cuál es el peor maltrato que ha sufrido de parte de su pareja?

4. ¿En que forma Piense que el maltrato hacia usted hay impactado a su niño/niños?

5. ¿Cómo piensa que el sistema legal la hay trato como una sobreviviente de abuso?

Edad:
Género:
Origen étnico:
***CONFIDENCIAL***