

Counseling from the Heart

by Jose A. Cruz, BA, MSW candidate

Counseling clients can be a challenging yet rewarding endeavor. You have the ability to collaborate with, and create an effective therapeutic intervention which assists clients to realize their goals. That is practically common knowledge for those who are blessed with the ability to work with individuals in this way. What I get from working with clients is meeting their sons, daughters, mothers, significant others, etc. They too become our allies in the struggle against tobacco addiction. I consider myself incredibly lucky to be invited into a world where the client and I celebrate successes and see failures as an opportunity to develop and grow.

Being from a Latin family, I am familiar with the struggles we face as a people and the strength which bonds us together. In order to effectively serve Latino clients, you must immerse yourself into savoring all the nuances, idiomatic quality of the language, and way of life from this culture as a whole as well as from each Latin American country. From personal experience, my family adhere to the precise amount of medicine that would end an ailment as quickly as possible. Follow up and scheduled check-ups are not usual. By anticipating my clients' belief that they could be "cured" from smoking within a prescribed amount of time using just the patch, I made sure to emphasize the need for follow-up with my clients. During our sessions, we focus on how dealing with this addiction takes time, how it affects each person differently, and the importance

of using other short-term Nicotine Replacement Products. In addition to this, the necessary bond formed between client and clinician is also highlighted to produce a trusting relationship which may be difficult to create due to immigration, acculturation, etc. Therefore, it is necessary to be familiar with the qualities Latinos share and also with the distinct qualities that make each client from a specific country unique. The commitment of entering into a lifelong process where I am willing to learn about each client and understand their experience in the United States is essential in creating a valuable treatment plan.

There is a Spanish-speaking population which continues to grow within New Brunswick, shaping its style and spirit. The Tobacco Dependence Clinic has noticed the immediate and crucial need to provide culturally appropriate essentials against a savvy tobacco industry focused on a Latino consumer base.

Having worked with various cultures throughout my life, I have been able to appreciate the complexities and fascinating qualities of all types of clients. While working with Proyecto Vida, I have been able to target a population close to my heart. It is one which reminds me of my family and how they are linked through language, culture, and struggles with Latinos in other Latin countries as well as those who have made the United States their home.

Middlesex Partnership Against Tobacco (MPAT) Activities



On April 26th, UMDNJ sponsored a Take Your Kids to Work Day. Dr. Michael Steinberg explains the benefits of helping people quit smoking!



At UMDNJ-Dental School's Event at the Turtleback Zoo

