



Safety Planning

to support Latin@
LGBTQIA2S+ survivors of
intimate partner violence



LOS
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Esperanza United and Los Angeles LGBT Center join to create this resource centering the safety and well-being of the Latin@¹ LGBTQIA2S+² community. Since 1969, the Los Angeles LGBT Center has cared for, championed, and celebrated LGBTQIA2S+ individuals and families in Los Angeles and beyond. Esperanza United mobilizes Latinas and Latin@ communities to end gender-based violence (GBV). Formerly Casa de Esperanza, the National Latin@ Network, Esperanza United was founded in 1982 by a small group of persevering Latinas as an emergency shelter in St. Paul, Minnesota.

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¹ We acknowledge that terminology is continuously changing within communities, and that there are various terms people of Latin America and their descendants use to identify themselves. This can include Latina, Latino, Latin@, Latinx, Latine and more. Esperanza United has chosen to use “@” in place of the masculine “o” when referring to people or groups that are gender neutral or both masculine and feminine. This decision reflects our commitment to gender inclusion and recognizes the important contributions that women, men, and gender-nonconforming people make to our communities. Esperanza United uses Latin@ as a gender expansive term within the organization’s work and respects that others may use alternative and/or additional terminology to identify themselves.

² LGBTQIA2S+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and 2 Spirit. The “+” is a symbol used to reflect that language is constantly evolving and expanding, and there are many sexual orientations and gender identities out there that are still part of the community even if they’re not represented in the acronym.



Introduction

The Los Angeles LGBT Center³ and Esperanza United⁴ are organizations dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ folx, especially those who have experienced or are experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV).

While there are tools that raise awareness about the impact of IPV in the LGBTQIA2S+ community, there is still a great need to highlight the intersection of cultural needs, health, and the well-being of Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ survivors. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to uplift cultural analysis of Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ in violence prevention, advocacy, treatment, and safety planning.

Safety planning is a tool that service providers, advocates, and survivors can use to determine a set of actions to increase the safety of a survivor whether they are wanting to stay in the relationship, preparing to leave, or actively leaving an abusive relationship. Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ survivors face unique and specific factors that shape their experiences in navigating safety and obtaining resources. This resource is a guide for service providers and advocates to safety plan with LGBTQIA2S+ survivors while accounting for subtle differences and lived realities.

³ Learn more about LA LGBT Center at <https://lalgbtcenter.org/>.

⁴ Learn more about Esperanza United at <https://esperanzaunited.org/en/>.



Glossary of terms

Cisgender: A term used for those who identify with the gender and/or sex they were assigned at birth.

Cisnormative: An assumption that everyone identifies as the gender and/or sex that they were assigned at birth and all the attitudes associated with this assumption.

Familism/Familismo: A central cultural value that is typically present in cultures that have high collectivist tendencies, such as Latin American cultures. It consists of a set of norms and attitudes that dictate how family relationships are expected to be. The main components of familism include norms and expectations around closeness, commitment, prioritizing the family unit over oneself, and support; as well as, fulfilling obligations to family, using family as referents for decision-making, and providing support to the family.

Fatalism/Fatalismo: A deterministic belief that the events and outcomes of life are dictated by destiny and/or other external forces (ex: unseen power) and that generally, these outcomes are inevitable rather than at one's own will.

Gender non-conforming: A reference to a person who does not follow other peoples' ideas or stereotypes about how they should look or act based on the gender and/or sex they were assigned at birth.

Heteronormative: An assumption, that is often subconscious, that everyone is heterosexual and the attitudes associated with this assumption.

LGBTQIA2S+: Acronym that represents people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and/or 2 Spirit. The '+' is a symbol used to reflect that language is constantly evolving and expanding, and there are many sexual orientations and gender identities out there that are still a part of the community even if they are not represented in this acronym.

LGBTQIA2S+ inclusive training: Comprehensive training for staff members at an organization on how to provide culturally responsive care to LGBTQIA2S+ survivors that meets their unique and specific needs. This is a crucial step for organizations to take to ensure that LGBTQIA2S+ survivors are receiving trauma-informed and culturally responsive services.

Transgender: A term used to describe people whose identity differs from the gender and/or sex they were assigned at birth.

Neurobiology: The science behind how the brain and nervous system function. The neurobiology of trauma is the study of how the brain and nervous system respond to trauma and are chemically altered by traumatic events.

Nonbinary: An inclusive, umbrella term that describes identities that don't fit the traditional binary of man and woman, and rather exist beyond, in-between, or reject the binary dualism of traditional gender constructs. The nonbinary spectrum is diverse and can range from people who are agender, gender-fluid, genderqueer, and third gender, among others.

Trauma: An event, series of events, or circumstances that result in physical and/or emotional harm, and threaten the wellbeing and/or survival of a person or group of people. This can include domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, hate violence, and more.



Defining intimate partner violence (IPV)

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is described as abusive behaviors used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. These abusive behaviors cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm.⁵ Behaviors include and are not limited to physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological and emotional abuse, and other controlling actions. IPV can occur in any intimate relationship regardless of racial or ethnic identity, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, immigration status, or arrangement between partners. IPV contributes to a number of chronic health problems⁶ and often limits survivors' ability to manage other illnesses like diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and injuries caused by IPV.

Deconstructing the “perfect” survivor

IPV survivors have varying experiences and trauma responses. Unfortunately, survivors often face victim-blaming behavior or disbelief when they disclose their experiences and responses to trauma. For example, survivors that react in self-defense while experiencing abuse or freeze during sexual assault, often get chastised. The concept of the “perfect survivor” dehumanizes survivors and fails to account for the impact that trauma has on the neurobiology of the body.

The neurobiology of trauma

Identifying the connection between trauma and neurobiology, such as understanding the function of the amygdala in the fight, flight, freeze, fawn response allows for compassion and improved treatment of Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ survivors.^{7,8} The following table describes the Four F's of trauma and provides examples of the different trauma responses.

5 World Health Organization. (2020, December 5). Violence Info – Intimate partner violence. <http://apps.who.int/violence-info/intimate-partner-violence>

6 Futures Without Violence. (2019). Healthcare and Intimate Partner Violence: The Facts_Nov-2019-Final.pdf. https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/Healthcare-and-DV-fact-sheet_Nov-2019-Final.pdf

7 Hopper, J. (2020). Important Things to Get Right About the “Neurobiology of Trauma.” Part 1: Benefits of Understanding the Science. End Violence Against Women International.

8 The Sexual Trauma & Abuse Center. (2016). Neurobiology of Trauma. <http://stacarecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/The-Care-Center-Neurobiology-of-Trauma-Nov-2016.pdf>

Table 1: The four F's of trauma: Reactions to experiencing IPV

The four F's	Scenario	Examples
Fight: The fight response leads to intense and aggressive behavior from the survivor in an effort to establish security and control.	The abusive partner keeps verbally abusing and invading the survivor's personal space. This behavior triggers the survivor's fight response, and as a result the survivor begins to yell and display feelings of anger with clenched fists.	Yelling, shouting, crying, feelings of anger and rage, displaying physical aggression/ defense, clenched fist, or desire to attack.
Fawn: The fawn response leads the survivor to protect themselves from threat through placation.	A survivor shares a frustration with the abusive partner around another individual. The abusive partner starts to minimize the survivor's emotions and blame them for being paranoid. The survivor begins to apologize profusely.	Over apologizing, difficulty saying no, neglecting one's needs, pretending to agree with others, or excessively flattering the other person.
Freeze: The freeze response leads the survivor to dissociate or shut down physically/emotionally.	As a survivor is experiencing sexual violence by their intimate partner and their body begins to shut down. They can not speak and their body feels heavy.	Sense of stiffness, heaviness, restricted breathing, feeling stuck in some part of the body, dissociation.
Flight: The flight response leads the survivor to run or flee from the stressful situation physically or metaphorically.	At a family reunion where everyone knows about the abuse, someone asks the survivor how their abusive partner is doing. The survivor avoids the question and ends up leaving the family reunion early.	Feeling fidgety, anxiousness/shallow breathing, avoidance of locations or conversations, dissociation, restless legs/ feet, numbness in legs, or avoiding confrontation.

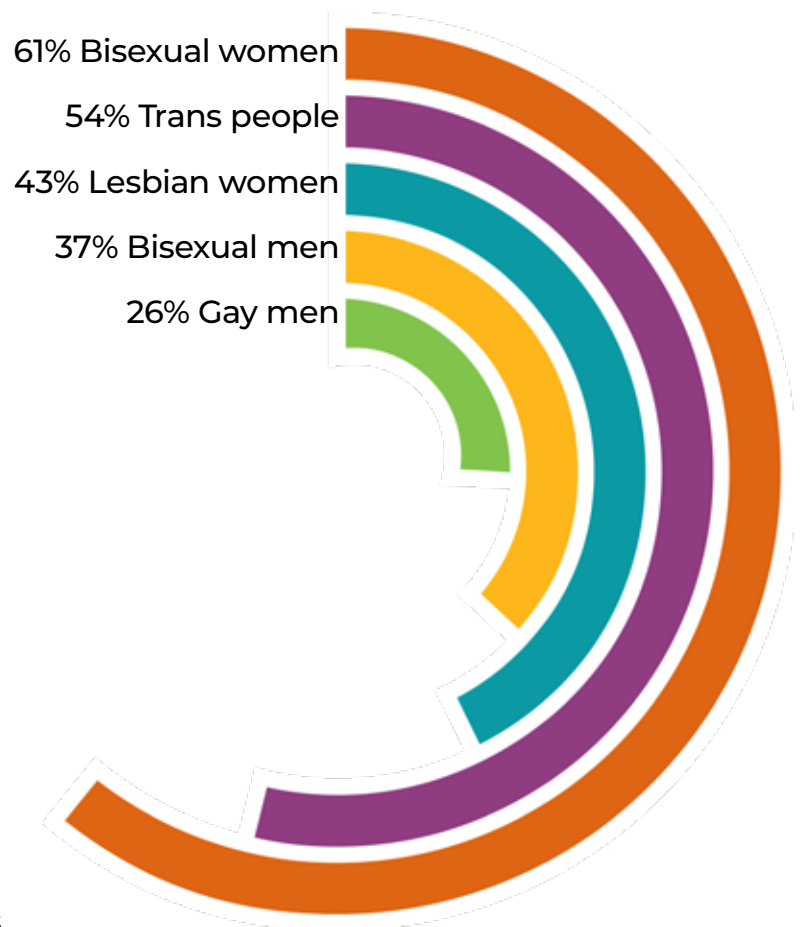
It is critical for providers to understand the different trauma responses in order to best support survivors. LGBTQIA2S+ survivors who respond with a "fight" trauma response are often incorrectly assumed to be the abusive partner. An act of aggression from a survivor could be in self-defense, retaliation, and/or a trauma response to a prolonged exposure to abuse. In order to properly support survivors, it is critical for providers to contextualize acts of violence and assess whether or not the violence forms a behavioral pattern executed to have power and control over another person.



Impact of IPV in LGBTQIA2S+ communities

LGBTQIA2S+ people experience domestic violence at similar rates—and in many cases, higher rates—than non-LGBTQIA2S+ people due to the compounding impact of anti-LGBTQIA2S+ bias and oppression. Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) LGBTQIA2S+ people, transgender people, and bisexual women are at high risk of experiencing IPV. For example, 61% of Bisexual women, 43% of Lesbian women, 37% of Bisexual men, 26% of Gay men,⁹ and 54% of Trans people experience IPV in their lifetime.¹⁰ A study conducted by TransLatin@ Coalition, found that 47% of transgender people are sexually assaulted.¹¹

Despite the presence of IPV within LGBTQIA2S+ communities, there is still a severe shortage of tailored trauma-informed and culturally specific LGBTQIA2S+ services for victims and survivors nationwide. Many mainstream programming services for LGBTQIA2S+ survivors are provided in the context of traditional heterosexual programs that are neither adapted nor modified to meet the needs of Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ survivors. This can result in inadequate and ineffective services; which can aggravate the situation.



⁹ Walters, M.L., Chen J., & Breiding, M.J. (2013). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_sofindings.pdf

¹⁰ James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality. <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>

¹¹ Esperanza United. (2021). Supporting Trans Latinas in Gender-Based Violence Services: A Call to Action. https://esperanzaunited.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CalltoAction_TransLatinas-2.pdf

IPV in Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ communities

IPV in Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ communities remains under-researched and unaddressed in the public health and healthcare field. Intersecting layers of oppression, such as internalized and societal forces, impact the availability of resources and influence the help-seeking behaviors of Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ survivors. Internalized shame, guilt, and anti-LGBTQIA2S+ bias affect Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ survivors' ability to seek help. Even once a survivor has reached out for support, they will still experience societal barriers during their help-seeking process. This includes but is not limited to homo/bi/transphobia, racism, xenophobia, and discrimination by service providers, law enforcement, and others. For Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+, these barriers will be exacerbated by complex immigration laws, anti-immigrant sentiments, and language access issues.

Transgender and gender non-conforming Latin@ survivors face additional barriers due to transphobia affecting their help-seeking process. Research conducted by Esperanza United found that more than half of Transgender Latinas may experience some form of GBV in their lifetime.¹² Despite the impact of IPV, few GBV services provide specialized support for Trans Latin@ survivors. It is important that service providers familiarize themselves with the additional barriers that Transgender and gender non-conforming Latin@ survivors face and how they can best provide support during the safety planning process and beyond.

It is important to note that there is limited research regarding the experiences of gender non-binary Latin@ survivors. Gender non-binary folx do not identify within the gender binary (male or female). When working with gender non-binary Latin@ survivors, it is important that providers use the name and pronouns the survivor identifies with best. Additionally, gender non-binary Latin@ survivors also face elevated risks and challenges during their help-seeking process related to discrimination from law enforcement, medical providers, shelters, and other services. It can be exhausting for gender non-binary Latin@ survivors to navigate systems that misgender them or do not recognize their identity at all.

How familism can affect Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ survivors

As advocates and service providers that support survivors, it is important to recognize the specific cultural perspective of Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ survivors. There are components, such as familismo or familism and Religion, within Latin@ culture that may influence a survivor's decision to disclose.

"Familismo" or familism is a Latin@ belief and cultural value system that is composed of implicit and explicit expectations that drive thoughts, behaviors, traditions, and dynamics through centering, prioritizing, and upholding the family unit (as a collective and whole) over oneself (individual). Generally, familism consists of a collection of beliefs and actions that reflect how family is at the top of a hierarchical scale in terms of urgency, priority, and dedication. In Latin@ culture, the family serves as the source of attachment, support, loyalty, and obligation.¹³ These views can foster the space for support, close emotional connections, attachment and/or family subjugation – the idea that one's attitudes and behaviors reflect on the family (i.e., family as referents, respect for family) and should bring honor to one's family.

¹² Esperanza United (2022). Factsheet: Transgender Latinas of gender-based violence. <https://esperanzaunited.org/en/knowledge-base/factsheets/factsheet-transgender-latina-survivors-of-gender-based-violence/>

¹³ APA PsycNet (2021). Familism values and adjustment among Hispanic/Latino individuals: A systematic review and meta-analysis. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2022-22515-004>

In some scenarios, familism has been implicated as a protective variable against mental health problems and fosters the growth and development of children.¹⁴ Familism has also been found to moderate some variables of stress (i.e., acculturative stress).¹⁵ According to research done in studies by Mora et al., 2016, and by Cahill et al., 2021, familism may serve as a protective factor - especially for immigrant individuals and families who are growing up in the United States, navigating acculturative stress, and experiencing psychological distress.

For LGBTQIA2S+ Latin@ survivors, familism and its common relation to conservative religious views may make individuals hesitant to disclose their sexual orientation, and/or gender identity, and the violence they are experiencing. Survivors may also fear being outcast and/or losing a sense of safety, community, and/or connection to their culture. It is important to note that family in Latin@ cultures expands beyond the traditional non-Latin@ North American white nuclear family unit. This expansion of family includes community members, elders, aunts, uncles, siblings, cousins, family friends, leaders, and other figures. LGBTQIA2S+ Latin@ survivors often fear they will face repercussions from their families, religious, and/or spiritual communities simply for disclosing their gender identity and/or sexual identity.

Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ survivors require culturally specific services and/or culturally inclusive services from LGBTQIA2S+-trained organizations to support their health and well-being as they create a safety plan together.

¹⁴ Zeiders, K. H., Updegraff, K. A., Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Wheeler, L. A., Perez-Brena, N. J., & Rodríguez, S. A. (2013). Mexican-origin youths' trajectories of depressive symptoms: the role of familism values. *The Journal of adolescent health : official publication of the Society for Adolescent Medicine*, 53(5), 648–654. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.06.008>

¹⁵ Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Updegraff, K. A., & Gonzales-Backen, M. A. (2011). Mexican-origin adolescent mothers' stressors and psychosocial functioning: examining ethnic identity affirmation and familism as moderators. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 40(2), 140–157. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-010-9511-z>



Barriers impacting disclosure

Esperanza United recognizes that Latin@ communities use terms such as “machismo” and “marianismo” to describe patriarchal values. However, these terms require further conversation as they may encourage stereotypes.¹⁶

Patriarchal values are not unique to Latin@s and exist in other cultures. Patriarchal systems and values denounce the existence of LGBTQIA2S+ people and promote discrimination and violence. Additionally, survivors have reported that their disclosure of abuse was met by disbelief, a lack of concern, marginalization, and/or discrimination by Latin@ and non-Latin@ law enforcement, first responders, and medical professionals. These experiences were especially pronounced among survivors from the LGBTQIA2S+ community who were in same-gender relationships as well as the members of targeted ethnic/racial groups.¹⁷ It is evident that there is a larger sociocultural value that is not inclusive of Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ realities and as a result impacts the health and wellness of survivors. Service providers should be knowledgeable of cultures and uplift their positive aspects, such as collectivism, familismo, and spirituality to support help-seeking behaviors and health decisions.

¹⁶ Nuñez, A., González, P., Talavera, G. A., Sanchez-Johnsen, L., Roesch, S. C., Davis, S. M., Arguelles, W., Womack, V. Y., Ostrovsky, N. W., Ojeda, L., Penedo, F. J., & Gallo, L. C. (2016). Machismo, Marianismo, and Negative Cognitive-Emotional Factors: Findings From the Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos Sociocultural Ancillary Study. *Journal of Latina/o psychology*, 4(4), 202–217. <https://doi.org/10.1037/lat0000050>

¹⁷ Ravi, K. E., Robinson, S. R., & Schrag, R. V. (2022). Facilitators of Formal Help-Seeking for Adult Survivors of IPV in the United States: A Systematic Review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 23(5), 1420–1436. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838021995954>



Impact and benefits of safety planning

Safety planning is a tool that survivors, along with advocates and service providers, can use to determine a set of actions a survivor can take whether they are wanting to stay in the relationship, preparing to leave, or actively leaving an abusive relationship. This safety planning document can support survivors and their support system to ensure that a feasible plan and preparation are in place. Planning ahead of time, preparing to carry out the safety plan, and rehearsing it can help prevent the worst outcomes.

It is important to note that prior to safety planning, survivors should receive survivor/aggressor differentiating education and training to increase the security of these materials and, ultimately, increase the safety of survivors. Perpetrators, abusers, and aggressors may utilize services and resources intended for survivors to gain access and maintain power over the survivor.

When developing a safety plan, please keep in mind:

- Safety plans lay out the groundwork that can support life-saving measures and decisions.
- Security is key - safety planning should not be shared openly
- Safety plans are made for all different scenarios including travel¹⁸
- Most importantly, safety plans must be survivor led and customized to the self-identified needs of the survivor. Safety plans that do not include the knowledge, wisdom, and lived experiences of survivors, increase danger and lethality.

To begin developing a safety plan, please review “Groundwork safety planning” in [Appendix 1](#)

Safety planning development within the Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ community

There are unique components to creating and supporting safety plans for the Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ community. A study from The TransLatin@ Coalition in 2012 found that immigration status and legal documentation were key concerns, with 99% of participants reporting having a legal immigration status as very important.¹⁹ Due to the oppression and violence that the Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ community faces in a cisnormative, heteronormative, xenophobia, and racism, there are additional safety concerns that must be considered

¹⁸ For guidance on safety planning while traveling, please review <https://www.iglta.org/destinations/travel-guides/lgbtq-safety-guide/>

¹⁹ Esperanza United. (2021). Supporting Trans Latinas in Gender-Based Violence Services: A Call to Action. https://esperanzaunited.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CalltoAction_TransLatinas-2.pdf

such as not involving law enforcement without the survivors' consent, seeking alternative support services, understanding cultural and religion impacts decision making, variations in immigration status, and language access.

Understanding and approaching coming out and outing

“Coming out” is an ongoing process by which a person shares aspects of their identity with others. Mainstream notions and values (i.e. individualism and independence) placed on coming out do not directly translate in Latin@ cultures. It is important that service providers do not impose on survivors the need to come out to their family, even if the survivor expresses having strong family ties. Additionally, many people navigate relationships with friends, family, and workplaces that may be unsafe, unwelcoming, or uncomfortable for sharing aspects of their identity. Coming out can be complex and varies from individual to individual. **Everyone has a right to share information about their identity with those in their life on their own terms.**

“Outing” is when someone shares information about another individual’s sexual orientation, gender identity, HIV status, immigration status, or other aspects of their identity or health without their consent.

Outing someone, whether intentional or not, is harmful and often a tactic of abuse:

- An abuser/perpetrator may threaten to out a survivor to prevent them from leaving or to control their behavior
 - › These threats can cover outing the survivor to the community, friends, family, strangers, or workplace
 - › Outing may be apparent and explicit such as: “If you leave me, I’ll tell your employer or family that you’re gay” or it may be guilt and coercive such as “If you really love me, you’d tell your parents about us”
- For LGBTQ youth, these threats can pose particularly dangerous problems as 40% of homeless youth are LGBTQIA2S+ due to lack of family acceptance, and 27% of Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ youth experience homelessness or housing instability²⁰

Outing others has an impact on a survivor’s networks, emotional and social support systems, housing stability, job stability, and health and wellbeing.

For someone who is not out about their identity with their closest friends or family members, it takes a lot of courage to come out to you. If someone does come out to you, **thank them for trusting and confiding in you.**

Safety planning strategies for outing and coming out

It is critical to provide a non-judgmental space for survivors who are safety planning around abuser/perpetrator threats of outing. Start with appreciation, validation, and support. In addition, be mindful of cultural, spiritual, and religious nuances and concerns related to other aspects of their identity as you support the survivor. Modeling a supportive reaction can be a healing and important experience that sets the tone for the treatment that they deserve. Some strategies for safety planning around coming out and outing are featured in the table below.

20 DeChants, J.P., Green, A.E., Price, M.N., & Davis, C.K. (2021). Homelessness and Housing Instability Among LGBTQ Youth. West Hollywood, CA: The Trevor Project. <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/research-briefs/homelessness-and-housing-instability-among-lgbtq-youth-feb-2022/>

Table 2: Proactive strategies to effectively support Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ survivors

Identify and explore what safety concerns around outing are relevant for the Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ survivors that you are working with	Proactively take steps to understand what safety could look like if they were to be outed or come out
Support survivors in assessing risks and benefits around outing and to whom	If the survivor is considering coming out to someone to navigate a threat, discuss the risks and benefits of this situation. This aids in helping the survivor make an informed decision
Examine areas in which you could take a supportive role. This may involve:	<p>Mapping out supportive people who can come with the survivor to disclose abuse. Aid in pod mapping to examine relationships and support systems</p> <p>Role-playing what the conversation would look like. This may involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting in writing a letter that they can read to the person they are coming out to if they chose to • Acting out the situation they believe they may be facing and navigating responses <p>Connecting the survivor, despite their age, with referrals to parent support resources that they can give to their parent or caregiver</p> <p>Identifying a safe place to stay if their home is no longer a safe space or if they are kicked out or removed from their home</p> <p>Informing survivors of their rights and connecting survivors to labor rights organizations if they are worried about retaliation from their employer</p>
Respect the survivor's decisions around coming out. The survivor knows their safety best, and we must respect survivors' decisions about who they come out to and how they would like to share their identity	



Pod mapping for the community

Pod mapping is a component of safety planning developed by Mia Mingus of the Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective (BATJC)²¹ as a community-building tool to address violence. It allows the individual to critically analyze their social environment and support systems. Identifying support people is key in safety planning as it allows for Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ survivors to reach out to trusted individuals while maintaining a sense of safety and security in their situation. Additionally, pod mapping aids in identifying gaps and vulnerabilities within the individual's community and creates opportunities for trust-building. Multiple pods can exist for various situations and outcomes – pod mapping is a tool that recognizes nuances.

To learn how to develop a pod map with a survivor, please see [Appendix 2](#).

Guidance for pod mapping for Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ folx

While pod mapping allows for individuals to reflect on their environments, it is important to recognize how cultural values and nuances impact who we consider is in our community or a “part of the pod” and at what moment.

Support the Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ survivor in pod mapping by understanding that ideas of community are not concrete, nor limited to geography, and have various implications regarding time, space, and interactions. Note that collectivism and familismo are two values highly ingrained within Latin@ culture and can heavily influence help-seeking behaviors, pod development, and relationships. For example, an individual who is in the bolded outlined circle may be moved to other spaces based on a situation where disclosure occurs and the perpetrator is a close family member, friend, or partner.

Concerns around accessing law enforcement

Many LGBTQIA2S+ survivors – particularly those who are BIPOC and/or Transgender – do not feel safe accessing law enforcement, restraining orders, social services, or even domestic violence agencies for fear of being met with bias, discrimination, or violence. This lack of resources and support can make it more dangerous and difficult for domestic violence survivors, especially undocumented LGBTQIA2S+ survivors, to exit abusive relationships safely and rebuild in the aftermath of abuse.

²¹ To learn more about pod mapping and updates made over time, please review: <https://batjc.wordpress.com/resources/pods-and-pod-mapping-worksheet/>

A report done by the STOP Violence Program at the Los Angeles LGBT Center found that many of the LGBTQIA2S+ survivors whom they served were afraid of reporting to police.²² Even for those survivors who did report to police, there were frequent reports of dissatisfaction with the police officers' homophobic, and/or sexist treatment, and many felt their cases were not taken seriously.²³ A recent study of gay and bisexual men found that 40% believed that contacting the police in response to a violent incident from an intimate partner would be unhelpful or very unhelpful, and 59% believed that the police would be less helpful to a gay or bisexual man than to a heterosexual woman in the same situation.²⁴ Additionally, 46% of Transgender people reported being uncomfortable seeking police assistance.²⁵

22 Holt, S., & Whirry, R. (2020). Finding Safety. Los Angeles LGBT Center. https://stopviolence.lalgbtcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Finding_Safety.pdf

23 Holt, S., & Whirry, R. (2020). Finding Safety. Los Angeles LGBT Center. https://stopviolence.lalgbtcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Finding_Safety.pdf

24 Mallory, Christy, et al. "Discrimination and Harassment by Law Enforcement Officers in the LGBT Community." Williams Institute, 2 May 2020, <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/lgbt-discrim-law-enforcement/>.

25 Mallory, C., Hasenbush, A., & Sears, B. (2015, March 15). Discrimination and Harassment by Law Enforcement Officers in the LGBT Community. Williams Institute. Retrieved December 21, 2022, from <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/lgbt-discrim-law-enforcement/>



Implementation of a safety plan for Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ folx

Creating culturally relevant safety plans for Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ realities ensures health equity and compassion in their care, especially when facing IPV and other violent situations. In recognizing the help-seeking aspects and behaviors of Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+, safety planning can become more effective in implementation and customized for the individual. The table below provides tips on implementation and consideration for providers and advocates to apply to safety planning with Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ survivors.

Table 3: Safety plan implementation for Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ folx

Situation: Safety planning while in a relationship (whether or not the survivor wants to leave)	
Implementation	<p>Safety at home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Know and map out safe home exits to leave: safe stairs, room with phone, safe window• Be aware of spaces in which the survivor could be cornered or where weapons may be, such as the kitchen, closet, bathroom <p>When meeting with the survivor and providing documentation, ask if it is safe for them to take paperwork home (e.g. signed forms, flyers, brochures, business cards) to review at their own convenience</p>

Considerations	<p>Variety in immigration statuses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with local legal aid service providers that advocate and work with LGBTQIA2S+ immigrant survivors <p>Cultural and spiritual nuances - familismo (familism)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validate survivors' feelings towards their family, culture, or religion as it is a strength and protective factor for their well-being <p>Language access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide written and verbal information in survivors' preferred language <p>Gender affirming language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure to use the pronouns the survivor identifies with as you provide support.
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Situation: Safety planning around leaving an abusive relationship

Implementation	<p>See Appendix 1 and revisit these items with the survivor to ensure they are updated post-relationship exit (after the survivor leaves the relationship)</p> <p>Obtaining a protective order</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the survivor does not have one in place and wishes to have one, offer to connect them with an advocate who can assist with navigating the court system • Help the survivor assess whether they believe a protective order could exacerbate the lethality of the perpetrator or not. Also note that filing for protective orders in LGBTQIA2S+ IPV relationships may risk outing a perpetrator and/or the survivor • Find them information on how to obtain a protective or restraining order, if they choose to do so <p>Financial and electronic trails</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the survivor of the many ways a former partner could access their information, identify those that need to be changed or updated (e.g., work with the survivor to change financial and electronic information including pins, bank cards, addresses, phone numbers, email address, and other identifying information) <p>Health resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a list of LGBTQIA2S+ inclusive support groups and health providers with experience in navigating trauma (hypervigilance, PTSD, dissociation, etc.) from IPV
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<p>Considerations</p>	<p>Variety in immigration status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how a survivor's immigration status may impact their decision to go forward with an order of protection or contact the police. Abusive partners may threaten them with deportation if they disclose abuse, which can prevent a survivor from accessing support. Survivors may also face a risk of having their immigration status jeopardized if the police are called and they are incorrectly assumed to be the abusive partner. Because LGBTQIA2S+ survivors face incorrect arrest and dual arrest much more often than non-LGBTQIA2S+ survivors, this presents a particularly dangerous risk • Know that some Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ folx may have had to flee their home countries due to LGBTQIA2S+ violence and discrimination and are seeking asylum. • When providing support, offer to connect the Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ survivor to legal assistance regarding asylum-seeking²⁶ or obtaining U/T-Visa certifications as regulations differ between states²⁷ • Acknowledge that professional roles in the survivor's home country may have different responsibilities in the United States, such as notary public roles. For example, notarios in Latin America are attorneys. A non-attorney is not considered a notario in Latin America. In the United States, the Secretary of State issues notary commissions to non-attorneys and attorneys. Notario fraud is prevalent in the United States and negatively affects immigrant survivors of crimes <p>Cultural and spiritual nuances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For some survivors, seeking a restraining/protective order may not align with personal and collective values. In that case, provide alternatives for safety in community/public spaces (distancing in public, limited interaction, notifying trusted family members when comfortable) <p>Language access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For survivors with limited language access, navigating the court system and other systems may discourage them from seeking support. Provide support by seeking a professional who speaks their preferred language and shares similar cultural experiences
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²⁶ We encourage advocates to stay updated on the current regulations of asylum-seeking and how the procedures for requesting asylum may vary by state and presidential term. Please see more information on asylum seeking and the LGBTQIA2S+ community at <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Asylum-LGBT-Claims-Mar-2021.pdf>

²⁷ While not required for obtaining a U-visa, it is helpful to have a police report as it would supplement the application and support police investigation. The U-Visa was created to protect non-citizens of the U.S. and promote cooperation between survivors/victims and law enforcement. More information on U-Visas is available at https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/guides/U_Visa_Law_Enforcement_Resource_Guide.pdf

Situation: Safety planning around health and wellbeing (ongoing safety planning)

Implementation	<p>See Appendix 1 and revisit these items with the survivor to ensure they are updated per the survivor's preferences.</p> <p>Health resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a list of LGBTQIA2S+ inclusive support groups and health providers with experience in navigating trauma (hypervigilance, PTSD, dissociation, etc.) from IPV • Help survivors of different immigration statuses complete health forms and help the survivor access forms in their own language.
Considerations	<p>Variety in immigration status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how a survivor's immigration status may make it difficult to access further support and resources. For example, a survivor may need support accessing healthcare services due to limited language access or immigration status • Consult with an immigration attorney to see if your client can safely apply for government benefits under Permanently Residing Under Color of Law (PRUCOL). Folx with pending Asylum, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ), Temporary Protection Status (TPS), U Visa / T Visa, and Violence Against Women's ACT (VAWA) petitions are protected under (PRUCOL) and not subjected to public charge issues. Legal Permanent Residents and Naturalized US Citizens are also not subject to public charge issues • For support, please refer to the Esperanza United Community Toolkit²⁸ to receive guidance on language access and locating federally qualified health centers • Access the public charge tool available at: https://www.ilrc.org/resources/public-charge-education-outreach-toolkit • For assistance in finding nonprofit immigration legal service providers, view the National Immigrant Legal Services Directory available at: https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/ <p>Culture and spirituality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in with the survivor if alternative community/public spaces and methods suggested during safety planning are working for them <p>Language access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to survivors by seeking a professional who speaks their preferred language and shares similar cultural experiences

28 Esperanza United. (2023, April 17). Community Care Tool: Advocacy for Latin@ Survivors of IPV in Health Systems. <https://esperanzaunited.org/en/community-care-tool-advocacy-for-latin-survivors-of-ipv-in-health-systems/>

Planning for non-consensual police involvement

There are occasions in which non-consensual police involvement occurs and as advocates, you have the power to support Latin@ LGBTQIA2S+ survivors when that happens. Below are strategies to aid in safety planning when non-consensual law enforcement takes place.

Table 4: Strategies for non-consensual law enforcement involvement

Planning for non-consensual police involvement	
Who would they call?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal rights organizations (ACLU) • LGBTQIA2S+ inclusive attorney • Civil rights activist • Local LGBTQIA2S+ inclusive domestic violence organization • National Domestic Violence Hotline • Designated Consulate, however, consult with an immigration attorney if the client is an asylum seeker
What would they say?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the officer for their card, if they refuse, write down the officer's name and badge number • Know that you have the right to ask to speak with a supervisor among others. The ACLU provides a guide on knowing your rights when you are stopped by the police²⁹ • Verbally ask "Am I being detained? Am I free to go?" If law enforcement confirms that you are being detained, respectfully ask, "What is the reason that I am being detained?" • In the case law enforcement is contacted, and a police report will not be made, confirm with the officer that they are refusing to take a police report (for Domestic Violence Restraining Order (DVRO) violation)
Can they record or loop in a witness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While this is dependent on state and local regulations, filming and recording in a public space is permitted, especially during the commission of a crime • Witnesses can record and also safely call 911 or the non-emergency number to make a report

²⁹ See the ACLU guide on Knowing Your Rights: Stopped by the Police at <https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/stopped-by-police>

Have conversations in advance with support networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore if the survivor is open to having proactive conversations with neighbors, friends, and family about if and when the survivor would like them to call the police or what other types of responses the survivor would like from the support network instead
Additional information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request the card and number of the agency • Know that Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grants have nondiscrimination requirements³⁰

³⁰ COPS grants fund over 13,000 of the 18,000 law enforcement agencies in the United States. This grant, along with other funding sources from the United States government have nondiscrimination requirements. For more information please see, <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/lgbt-discrim-law-enforcement/>



Conclusion

Advocates and service providers are encouraged to let their clients know that they are in a safe space and are not alone. With consent, connect survivors to culturally responsive services or to your local rape crisis center and / or domestic violence program. There are also national resources available to provide support and guidance such as the National Domestic Violence Hotline . The Trevor Project Hotline is also available to provide 24/7 suicide prevention and crisis intervention for LGBTQIA2S+ young people.

With meaningful collaborations, we have a greater impact and can one day eliminate GBV.



Appendix 1: Groundwork safety planning

The following table below is informed by Forge, an LGBTQIA2S+ organization leading the LGBTQIA2S+ arm of a major Office for Victims of Crime project, the National Resource Center for Reaching Victims, and is supported by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice.

Identifying services and support	Have a list, either with you or a support person, of who can help when you need it. Specifically, write out the services that are available for LGBTQIA2S+ individuals
Recording your experiences	Having a safe record of your experiences, through journaling or photo/video if possible, can aid in seeking legal or medical support such as a restraining order or treatment plan. Ensure that these records are kept safe, either in a safety deposit box or password-protected software
Supporters and codes	Connect with individuals who are not related to or friends with the abuser/perpetrator. If you feel comfortable, share your situation and ask if they can support you. Set up a code word or phrase with your trusted supporters to communicate dangerous situations and action steps to reach safety

<p>Collecting and safekeeping documents</p>	<p>Maintain copies of important documents in a safe location, either with a friend, workplace, or in a password-protected space. Important documents include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification cards, also indicating name and/or gender change: IDs, work ID/work permit, social security card, visa, immigration papers, passport, birth certificate, adoption records, paternity/custody records • Medical documents: Surgeon's letter, school and vaccination records, medical records, insurance cards • Home and social services documents: Home deed, lease, welfare identification, EBT/food stamps card, WIC card • Legal records: Restraining order, marriage license, divorce papers, court order for name and/or gender change, a will, advanced directive, immigration paperwork, and USCIS receipt notices
<p>Develop a safety bag</p>	<p>It is valuable to have an emergency safety bag for when dangerous situations arise. It is recommended you include the following in a safety bag:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finances: Cash, ATM card/credit card, checks, digital account records • Daily necessities: Keys, medications including glasses/contacts, doctor and pharmacy information, cellphone and charger, medical assistance devices, transportation card, clothing, gender-affirming care items such as hormones, binders, prosthetics, HIV medication • Record keeping: Photos or videos of perpetrator(s), journal of experiences • Items listed above in "Collecting and Safe Keeping Documents" • Sentimental items: Jewelry, photographs, comfort items, heirlooms



Appendix 2: Pod mapping steps

Mingus shares that the pod is made up of people you would call on to support you if you experience violence, abuse, or harm. Furthermore, it is also a tool of accountability; you can place people in the pods who you would reach out to if you have been or are a victim/survivor of abuse, witnessed someone else experience harm, violence or abuse, and/or if you've inflicted harm and/or abuse. Here is how to map out your pod:

1. Identify the situation - Determine if it's about an experience, accountability, or concern
2. In the **center circle**, place your name
3. In the **bold outlined circles**, add people's names who are in your pod for the situation. For this part, it is best to add actual names and not general names like "church" or "team"
4. Next in the **dotted circles**, add the names of people who could be involved in your pod, but require more time, relationship building, or trust
5. In the **outermost circles**, add organizations, networks, communities, and/or groups that could be resources for you
 - a. Examples of this could be your church, DV direct services organizations, or community centers
 - b. It is important to support LGBTQIA2S+ survivors in navigating what spiritual and religious groups make them feel safe or safer, while empowering them with information about that group's LGBTQIA2S+ inclusion and IPV practices



Appendix 3: Call to action

In collaboration, Esperanza United and TransLatin@ Coalition developed a resource to support GBV services for Trans Latin@ individuals. This [document](#) provides guidance and suggestions to improve and expand services in the areas of practice, policy, and research. To understand more about how to be respectful and supportive to gender non-binary folx, check out [this sheet](#) provided by the National Center for Transgender Equality.