

Key Informant Interview  
Marisol Muñoz-Kiehne, Ph.D.

Dr. Muñoz-Kiehne offers consultation and training to the PEI mental health Promotores, which work throughout Marin County and provide outreach, education and support to the Latino Community. She also leads six weekly psycho-education and behavioral activation groups in Spanish on a year-round basis, which can be accessed on an on-going or drop-in basis. Examples of these are a parenting class and a Latina women's group. Dr. Muñoz-Kiehne also supervises bilingual bicultural doctoral level psychology interns, which provide outpatient treatment and are key to service provision throughout the county. Since 2014 Doctora Marisol has been funded to broadcast a live, weekly, interactive educational Spanish radio show on health and wellness, which is also aired online: "Cuerpo Corazón Comunidad" (Body, Heart and Community), where she covers topics from mental health, parenting, coping with stress and where to find needed resources. This award-winning show reaches many individuals who would otherwise be isolated. Included in the shows are discussion with panelists, informational capsules, PSAs, skits, songs, and pre-recorded interviews with the "person on the street." She also does a weekly segment on mental health and wellness on a Univision TV morning show.

I was referred to the "Portrait of Marin", which was produced in 2012 and documents the poverty of these working class individuals who are an invisible minority and live in the shadows of the affluent residents of Marin. In addition to those established in San Rafael, there are Marin Latinos in Novato and Marin City. The majority of more recent immigrants come from Guatemala. These recent immigrants all fall within the public sector safety net for services. These individuals experience many pressures created by stressors, both past and present. Their struggles include violence related trauma, intergenerational child abuse, both physical and sexual, intimate partner violence, gang related violence, chronic stress and substance use issues.

The children of migrants attend schools in Marin and experience many inequities, the heightened expectations of this community and the lack of opportunities. When asked where the pockets of these individuals and families go to school, San Rafael City Schools and Novato Unified School District schools were named. Marin County Office of Education also serves 600 students a year in alternative education, where students are served who are truant, chronic social/behavioral difficulties, are on juvenile probation, have been expelled, pregnant and parenting teens, homeless youth, those in foster care and students which need to support themselves. A large number of Latino students are served in these schools.

Throughout the Latino population of Marin County many suffer from trauma related conditions. The PhQ-9 has been used, though not uniformly, to measure the level of depression and anxiety in those served through the programs supervised by Dr. Muñoz-Kiehne.

I asked Marisol about services in West Marin and she explained that, many of the Latinos who live in West Marin are from Jalos, Jalisco, Mexico and have been working for

several generations in this isolated area of Marin on the farms and dairies. When new, younger immigrants arrive, the older workers are often displaced and lose their housing, which occurs as a result of their employment. This housing is often substandard. There have been two persons who died recently by suicide within this isolated and at times devalued community. The Mental Health Clinic in West Marin operates from 9-5. Often individuals work hours which prevent them from accessing services, within the available timeframes. The Coastal Health Alliance clinic staff reportedly at present has some limitations, which impact the treatment of domestic violence cases. This lack of capacity seriously restricts individuals from some of the most critically needed services. There is a need for bi-lingual bi-cultural staff in this area. Another issue, which arises in this small community, is confidentiality of service and the stigma associated with accessing mental health services in a setting, which is easily identifiable.

The children attend Nicasio School, West Marin School, San Geronimo School, Tomales and Lagunitas Schools. “Cafecitos” are operated in West Marin Schools and offer Latino parents an opportunity for support and connection at school sites. Family Partner Kim Cottrell supports the parents, which attend Cafecitos. There is also an active ELAC (English Learner Advisory Committee), constituted primarily of Spanish Speaking Parents.

Maria Niggle, MSW, who works for Social Services at Point Reyes Station, is part of Abriendo Caminos, which provides support to the undocumented through Social Justice, Empowerment and education by organizing to address their needs.

Family Partner Gloria McAllister facilitates NAMI Latino groups twice a month at the Health and Wellness Campus, and has lead the (mostly Latino) Sunshine team on the most recent NAMIWalks.

**Needs Identified:**

- More bi-lingual bi-cultural staff in the Marin Community Clinics
- Bi-lingual staff in Psychiatric Emergency Services
- More Peer Providers to work with the Latino Community
- Consider offering services in non-stigmatizing settings, WIC, or expanding mental health services in schools
- Latinos seem to be disproportionately not served at certain levels of care e.g., Casa René, STAR.
- More Bi-Lingual Bi-cultural staff on the Mobile Crisis Team