

## Meeting Minutes

### Latino UsCC Subcommittee Meeting

**Date:** May 20, 2025

**Time:** 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

**Location:** Virtual Meeting (Microsoft Teams)



**Participants:** Ana Villaseñor, Angelina Mendoza, Coach Afi G; Danny Jestakom; Dr. Eric Hernandez; Dr. Luis Guzman; Elsy Molina; Gabriela Gonzalez; Gabriela Velasquez; Gustavo Loera; Irma Velasquez; Ismael Maldonado; Jennyfer Ibarra-McMahon; Jessica Valadez; Jonathan Aleman; Maria Elena Arauco; Sara Z. Mijares; Sophia Zarco

**DMH/Translators/Captioners:** *Brenda Monzon Garcia; CAPTIONER Richard; Claudia Fierro; Claudia Ribota Lindgren (translator); Dr. Carla Jaramillo; Dr. Chiyah Lawrence; Dr. Evelyn E. Espinoza; Dr. Jennifer Alquijay; Francisco Meza, Interpreter; ; Maria Guerra; Martha Ortiz; Melissa Pantoja; Mirtala Parada Ward; riKu Matsuda; Yailin Noriega; Zuleima Molgado*

**Co-Chairs:** Maria Elena Aruaco & Gabriela Gonzalez

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### 1. Welcome & Opening

- **Dr. Evy** - Participants were reminded to check their forms and verify attendance eligibility.
- **Land acknowledgment was given.**
- **Initial reflections on mental health awareness** – Maria Elena and Gabriela

### 2. Mental Health Presentation & Discussion

**Topic:** Understanding Mood, Depression, and Emotional Wellness

**Speaker:** Dr. Nonie Reaño

- Discussion on common triggers of low mood: stress, grief, lack of support, trauma, etc.
- Identified symptoms of depressive states including sleep disturbance, appetite change, isolation, and negative thinking.
- Encouragement to seek professional support if symptoms persist beyond two weeks.
- Emphasized the importance of physical activity, nutrition, mindfulness, and spiritual practices.
- Caution against overconsumption of sugar, flour, and alcohol, which may worsen symptoms.
- Encouraged expressive outlets (talking, journaling) and exploring diverse therapy options.
- Short guided exercise with self-affirmations was conducted: "I am a unique and wonderful soul... I deserve the best the universe has to offer."

### **3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

- Dr. Guzman motioned to approve minutes with a request to separate DMH staff from community members in attendance lists.
- Eric seconded the motion

### **4. Priority Area Updates & Discussion**

- Discussion on revitalizing the five priority groups identified during past retreats.
- Concerns raised about:
  - Low engagement and unclear responsibilities among group members.
  - Immigration fears and accessibility to DMH services.
  - Need for services targeting children, the elderly, and disabled Latino community members.
- Agreement to:

- Reinforce clarity around group roles and expectations.
- Re-establish group structure and provide training to support participation.
- Dedicate 30 minutes in each meeting for group updates.

## **5. Community Engagement Challenges**

- Participants shared concerns about unwelcoming attitudes in prior in-person meetings.
- Experiences of feeling excluded and discouraged after proposing initiatives.
- Emphasis on the need for inclusive practices and support for new participants.

## **6. Nomination of Co-President**

- Dr. Eric Hernandez accepted nomination to serve as new co-president starting July.
- Shared his background as an immigrant, therapist, and long-time advocate for mental health access and equity.
- Dr. Guzman suggested adding a third leadership position as a backup.

## **7. Epigenetics & Meditation**

### **Presenter: Coach Afi G**

- Explained connection between trauma, gene expression, and emotional health (epigenetics).
- Discussed benefits of consistent mindfulness practice, including stress reduction, emotional regulation, and improved clarity.
- Emphasized the importance of reconnecting with personal power and healing intergenerational trauma.
- Advocated for accessible, culturally relevant practices to support community healing.
- Proposal for a second, more complete presentation at a future meeting was welcomed.

## **8. Closing Remarks**

- Reminder that June's meeting will include responses to open questions and suggestions.
  - Appreciation extended to all speakers and participants.
  - Acknowledgment of Black labor and generational trauma in closing reflection.
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### **Next Meeting:**

**Date:** June 17, 2025

**Time:** 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

**Location:** Virtual (Microsoft Teams)