

Enhancing Fotonovelas to Leverage Informal Networks and Improve Connections to Services (Foto-LINCS)

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Background

Violence exposure reliably increases risk for many common mental health disorders

Hispanics face significant disparities in violence exposure and mental health service utilization

Based on prior findings depicted in Figure 1 Foto-LINCS will develop a *fotonovela* to improve utilization of mental health services and increase support for victims of violence. Specifically:

- Violence exposure increases the risk of stress-related mental health outcomes (1)
- Perceived peer support:
 - Reduces the effect of violence exposure (Path 2)
 - Increases the likelihood of seeking services (Path 4).
- Perceived peer stigma appears to:
 - worsen mental health symptoms (Path 3)
 - reduce service utilization (Path 5).
- Peer MHL may be necessary to recognize mental health symptoms and service need (Path 6).
- Peer social support and stigma may exert direct effects on stress-related symptoms, particularly depression and PTSD (Paths 7 and 8), with social support resulting in symptom alleviation and peer stigma leading to worsened symptoms.
- MHL likely reduces peer stigma (Path 9).

Testing interventions within social network approaches is critical because each mechanism entails a directional effect within a social relationship.

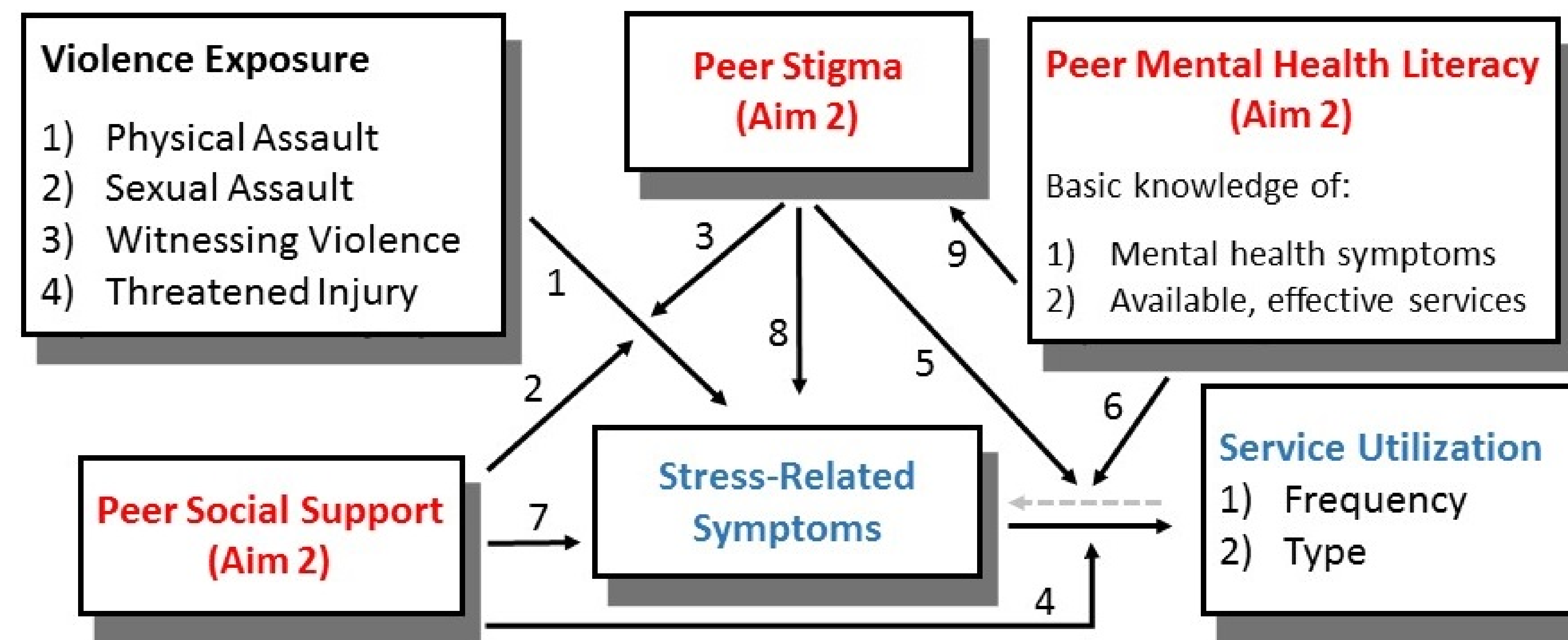
Purpose

Develop a social network-based, fotonovela intervention focused on naturalistic peer relationships that can facilitate service utilization and improve peer support in a sample of Hispanic victims of violence

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Figure 1. Model of Peer Mechanisms and Individual Outcomes



Specific Aims and Timeline

- 1. Develop fotonovela for network dissemination** (months 1-24). Aim 1 will focus on adapting components of established *fotonovela*/storytelling programs for use within network contexts.
- 2. Analyze network simulation of intervention targets** (months 25-30). Aim 2 will focus on recruiting the sample for the pilot intervention trial in Aim 3 (N=~200) and conducting initial analyses of the social network.
- 3. Conduct pilot trial of the refined intervention** (months 25-48). The final aim will provide feasibility data for a larger R01 trial.

Approach: Procedures and Phases

Phase 1 (Aim 1): Alpha and Beta testing with Hispanic victims of violence (n=20)

- Fotonovela* and dissemination protocol will be developed.
- Will focus on common violence-related disorders: depression and PTSD.
- Dissemination protocol will mimic data-driven components of efficacious network interventions:
 - Sharing the *fotonovela*/storytelling
 - Using the material to facilitate new supportive connections based on social network principles of homophily and network transitivity.

Phase 2 (Aims 2 and 3): Respondent-driven sampling (RDS) and randomized dissemination of the refined *fotonovela*.

- Interviews for baseline mental health and service utilization data.
- Network recruitment data will be analyzed to outline diffusion of social support, stigma, and MHL to service utilization among peers.
- As participants collect compensation for peer-recruitment efforts under RDS, they will be randomly assigned to a network-enhanced *fotonovela*/storytelling or to a basic pamphlet group.
- Follow-up assessment will be completed one year after to determine large-scale feasibility.

Current Status/Next Steps

Project is in preliminary phases, but has completed the following:

- Hiring of project manager
- Training of undergraduate research assistants
- Outreach to community partners to facilitate recruitment
- Improvement of recruitment materials (e.g., professional flyers)
- Review of methodology and submission of IRB change requests

Next Steps and Deliverables

- Alpha testing with n = 20 victims of violence
- Storyboarding based on Alpha testing
- Initial fotonovela development by month 12

Figure 2. Fotonovela Example

