Documenting Fears Among Latinx Immigrant Survivors of Gender-Based Violence

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Background
Tahirih Justice Center
- A national non-profit organization
- Serves, protects, and supports immigrant women and girls fleeing gender-based violence

Immigration & Gender-Based Violence
- The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) helps undocumented victims of domestic or sexual violence
- 60 – 80% of female migrants traveling through Mexico are sexually assaulted along the way, including those coming from Central and South American countries (Parish, 2017)
- Domestic violence, sexual violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, human trafficking, honor crimes, or torture are all considered forms of gender-based violence

Methodology
Sample: Former Tahirih clients
Individual Interviews/Focus Group
- Semi-structured
- Conducted in Spanish
- 3 from Mexico and 1 from El Salvador; 3 out of the 4 total participants also participated in the focus group

Engaged Research Question
What fears exist among Latinx immigrant survivors of gender-based violence, despite having attained legal status in the United States?
How can Tahirih Justice Center help?

Findings

Violence
- Ingrained in many Latin American cultural norms

Stress
- Stress living under the current administration, not wanting to lose legal status

Fear
- Fear of the police, the government, anti-immigrant policies, and deportation

Support
- Social support from friends, family, and Tahirih Justice Center helped minimize their fears

Education
- Necessary to reduce judgment and stigma around being a victim of gender-based violence

Victim ➔ Survivor ➔ Advocate

Recommendations
- Need for more pro-bono immigration attorneys
- Widespread education about gender-based violence and immigration
- More resources on where to find help, especially for undocumented immigrants
- Competency among the staff who work with those who have experienced gender-based violence
- More ways for survivors to engage in advocacy

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