

Questions Asked During Live Webinar Broadcast on 09/04/2014



Q: Do you have suggestions on how to apply these preferences to gang-affiliated youth? Also interested in insight as to how their involvement reflects and/or impacts cultural ideals. Thank you!

A: Applying these cultural pieces with gang-affiliated youth can be challenging but effective. In our curriculum aimed at delivering services in gang areas, one of the biggest and most crucial areas is connecting (engagement). Getting buy in from important members of gangs such as shot callers and leaders is an effective way of building rapport. In order to appropriately connect with Hispanic and Latino gangs, many factors must be considered and taken into account. The first part is the cultural part of being Hispanic and Latino that includes acculturation/assimilation and linguistics. Then there is the culture of youth where there are developmental, emotional and generational areas unique to young gang members. Finally, there's the subculture of gangs which is a culture all of its own. The three aforementioned areas have multiple issues associated with them and applying cultural elements within these areas is contingent of the skills of the practitioners and the ability to take into account cultural pieces.

As a practitioner/worker in the area, cultural ideals within the gang subculture can be significant. The gang ideals are strong and oftentimes take the place of what mainstream society might not look at as appropriate. For example, the gang takes the place of the family structure in some instances for gang members. Therefore, when a practitioner is aware of the potential for such dynamics, they are better able to determine how to proceed with an appropriate course of treatment. This is not to say that all gangs function the same or that all individuals look at their gang involvement in the same manner. As with everything, the person can be informed with some general information that helps to orient the person in a way that they have a starting point when it comes to navigating the complex area of Hispanic and Latino gangs. The key piece is the connection to the Hispanic and Latino background gang members have.

Q: A client of mine uses Hierbas to cure his stomach illness. He was paying some jail time with work release. He "cured the herb" with ethanol (rubbing alcohol) and drank the potion within his food. His UA results was positive and client had no clue why it was positive as according to him he did not had a drink. By questioning client step-by-step what is what he had during the day, he explained about this concoction so I understood what happened. With release of information I reported this issue and client was not punished. Comments?

A: It is important to take into account belief systems and home remedies in virtually everything we do. When it comes to adhering to laws and rules according to the systems in which some of our clients may find themselves, we have to be vigilant and carefully look into some of those practices as stated in the above question. Herbal remedies within the Hispanic and Latino community are not uncommon as we often see "Yerberias" which are small establishments devoted to herbal remedies in some Hispanic and Latino communities such as the community where I live. It is not out of bounds or inappropriate to confront one of our clients if they place themselves at risk of violating their probation or parole or having the court confront them in a CPS case due to using natural remedies congruent with their belief systems. This is a case-by-case basis scenario and addressing the use of rubbing alcohol is probably understandable on a one-time basis but as an ongoing issue, the courts could be less understanding.