

More Than “Si Se Puede”: Tackling the Mental Health Needs of Latinx Teens

Case Example.

Identified patient is Jesús, a 16-year-old cisgender male who presents to therapy in the context of a recent interaction with a friend where he shared suicidal ideation. His friend contacted his parents and when they approached him, he asked to be in therapy.

He has a younger sister who is 13yo and an older brother who is 20 and in college.

Mother is a first generation, Mexican American woman. Father immigrated when he was 10 and is from El Salvador. They met in Los Angeles and moved to the area about 15 years ago. They shared that Jesús had persistent and unpredictable explosive behaviors as a child which led to conflicts within the family and also with family friends. They sought help from a nutritionist and found that certain foods would impact Jesús' behavior. Per report, after a diet change he started to feel and behave better for many subsequent years.

Jesus reported that he's been feeling sad and feels misunderstood by his parents. He loves soccer and wants to play it in college.

What questions can help you write a sensible bio-psycho-socio-cultural formulation?

How do you imagine you can engage Jesús in therapy and help his commitment to participate?

What's your plan for parents? Will they be part of therapy? Why or why not?
How could you engage them in therapy if you felt that was necessary?

What might be one of the first interventions you choose and how will you present it?
