

BHWell

Center for Behavioral Health & Well-Being Research

Dr. Iris Cardenas

What is the goal of your research in culturally responsive and healing-centered practice with victim-survivors of intimate partner violence?

My research aims to develop and promote trauma-informed, culturally responsive interventions for intimate partner violence (IPV) survivors, particularly within the Latinx/e community. By focusing on the unique cultural, social, and behavioral dynamics of this population, I seek to improve the well-being of survivors and enhance the effectiveness and acceptance of support services. Through the development, testing, and validation of culturally sensitive measurement tools and intervention strategies, my goal is to ensure that these services accurately reflect the experiences and meet the needs of Latinx individuals.

How do you see your research making an impact in intimate partner violence prevention?

My research contributes to IPV prevention by enhancing our understanding of the socio-ecological factors influencing IPV disclosure and service engagement. By identifying barriers and facilitators to help-seeking behaviors and service (continued in the next page)



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utilization, my work informs the development of targeted interventions that can prevent IPV or mitigate its impact. Furthermore, by advancing culturally responsive practices, my research helps in creating a more inclusive and effective framework for preventing IPV in diverse communities.

How do you see your research affecting social work practice in general?

My research influences social work practice by emphasizing the importance of culturally responsive and tailored interventions in addressing IPV. By highlighting the significance of culturally validated tools and interventions, I advocate for a more nuanced and effective approach to social work practice that respects and integrates the cultural backgrounds of individuals and communities. This shift towards a more culturally attuned practice not only improves outcomes for IPV survivors but also enriches the field of social work with deeper, more comprehensive engagement strategies and aligns us with our social work values.

What is one thing you would like social work practitioners to take away from your research?

I would like social work practitioners to recognize and utilize the critical role of cultural responsiveness and a strength-based approach in effectively addressing IPV. It's important to move beyond deficit-focused models and embrace practices that identify and leverage the inherent strengths and resources within communities and individuals. By recognizing and building upon these assets, practitioners can foster resilience, empowerment, and a greater capacity for survivors to navigate and overcome challenges. This approach not only respects and values the cultural and individual identities of those we serve but also actively contributes to more sustainable and effective outcomes. Practitioners should be trained to see the resilience and capabilities in the communities they work with, thereby promoting an environment that empowers IPV survivors through their own cultural and communal strengths.

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