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Review of *Working with Latino Youth: Culture, Development, and Context* by Joan D. Koss-Chioino and Luis A. Vargas

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Working with Latino Youth: Culture, Development, and Context. Joan D. Koss-Chioino and Luis A. Vargas. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers, 1999. xx+236 pp. Notes, index. \$34.95 cloth (ISBN 0-7879-4325-8).

The mental health problems Latino youth face in the United States are often misunderstood and viewed as a lack of willingness to assimilate or contribute to society. Some mental health practitioners and administrators have a hard time understanding that Latino youth, more often than not, don't "fit" the diagnosis and psychological interventions they use working with youth from dominant racial and ethnic groups. Providing, as it does, a comprehensive approach to understanding the problems Latinos and Latinas encounter growing up in US society, *Working with Latino Youth* can help rectify this lack of understanding.

Koss-Chioino and Vargas successfully achieve a contextual and cultural vision in assessing Latino youth problems, a vision emphasizing the analysis of both the social contexts in which persons interact and the relation of those persons to the context of their history and culture. The experiences of Latino youth are analyzed within four major contexts: the

microsystem (face to face settings), the mesosystem (two or more linked settings that include the individual), the exosystem (two or more linked settings, with only one including the individual), and the macrosystem (which overarches the other systems). Each context, examined in detail with theoretical, historical, and empirical insight, is followed by particular accounts of cases of interventions with Latino youth.

In keeping with their contextual model, the authors make clear that Latinos are a diverse group with different cultural traditions and experiences. Throughout their analyses, they lay out the diverse cultural practices and behaviors unique to different ethnic groups and describe the inter-group conflicts Latino groups face, such as the cultural identity problems that US-born Mexican Americans encounter compared with those of recent immigrants from Mexico, and the group identity conflicts of black Puerto Ricans that can lead to depression, poor school performance, and social isolation. *Working with Latino Youth* also touches upon gender roles, family roles, sexual behaviors, immigration patterns, and assimilation. The authors suggest as well that individualistic intervention techniques often used in mental health practices do not always square with actual child development settings and experiences. This is an extremely important warning for practitioners who, perhaps lacking cultural knowledge, are dealing with a diverse group of Latino youth.

With the growing percentage of Latinos/as in the Great Plains region, this book is of immense value not only for mental health practitioners, but the general public, school administrators, social workers, and anyone working with culturally diverse children, adolescents, and families. *Working with Latino Youth* makes a significant contribution to mental health research, offering support for developing intervention techniques that are sensible to the experiences of different ethnic minorities. **Fernando I. Rivera**, *Department of Sociology, University of Nebraska-Lincoln*.