

# Addressing Health Disparities in Mental Health Treatment:

## *RAICES/Promotoras Field-Initiated Research Project*

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### PURPOSE AND GOALS:

- To develop and test a service provision method that integrates the promotoras model of outreach with the locally-funded school-linked case management teams known as FASST (Family and School Support Team)
- To engage families and other community representatives in defining how FASST will serve Latino children and families in coordination with the community and school system
- To develop a model that links to the community through the work of promotoras and to schools and service providers through FASST
- Creation of a FASST training curriculum that includes promotoras model for future replication and distribution

### SUMMARY:

The RAICES project targeted limited English speaking and Spanish monolingual Latino families, whose children are enrolled in grades K-5 and experience serious emotional disturbance or are at-risk. The geographic areas served are rural south Hillsborough County and the West Tampa neighborhood in the central city area. RAICES or “roots” symbolizes building healthy families upon the foundations present within the family and the community. Promotoras, or community educators, are community members who use their knowledge of local resources and local health and social issues to promote healthy living and help community residents access needed health and social services. Case management programs such as FASST face challenges in identifying, mobilizing and sustaining informal resources to support families. The promotoras model offered an effective vehicle for modification of local services through development of more culturally competent methods for linking and engaging Latino families with FASST and schools.

### PARTICIPATION:

The RAICES/Promotoras project was coordinated and managed through the University of South Florida's Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, in collaboration with the Hispanic Services Council, Childrens Future Hillsborough, Inc., the School District of Hillsborough County, and the Children's Board of Hillsborough County. Dissemination of the training curriculum for model implementation was coordinated through a planning group that included service providers, family members, school system administrators, project personnel and funders.

### PROJECT OUTCOMES:

Results of the study have been shared with mental health professional and community audiences through presentations, a published curriculum and published articles describing the promotoras model related to increased access and utilization of mental health services for Latino populations. A model distribution plan documented all phases of the project to facilitate national dissemination and implementation of the model. Preliminary research indicates that targeted communities have experienced an increase in services to Spanish monolingual and limited English speaking families and improvement in the cultural competence of local provider systems