

Working with Low-Resource and Culturally Diverse Audiences

Linda Skogrand, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist
Utah State University

Karen Shirer, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist
Michigan State University



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Objectives of Presentation

- Provide educators with an understanding about how to learn about and partner with low-resource and culturally diverse audiences.
- Provide ideas about how relationship and marriage education might be developed for low-resource and culturally diverse audiences.

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Background for Extension Educators

- We must serve all people in our increasingly diverse communities
- We must expand programming to reflect the population groups in our communities.
- We must develop partnerships with low-resource and culturally diverse audiences in developing and implementing programming.

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Learning about Audiences

There are varying degrees of research available about different audiences to inform the development of programming. The strategies we use to learn about an audience, therefore, will vary.

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Relationship and Marriage Education for Low-Resource Audiences

- Diane and Kevin, a case study
- Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study
- Suggestions for recruiting low-resource audiences

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Diane and Kevin

- Recently had a baby together
- Each lives with their parents
- A desire to get married and live together
- Not enough money to be independent

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Use These Principles for Developing Programs

- Examine the research literature
- Review existing curricular materials
- Talk to potential facilitators and participants
- Conceptualize a theory of change for the program
- Evaluate the program
- Change and adapt the program

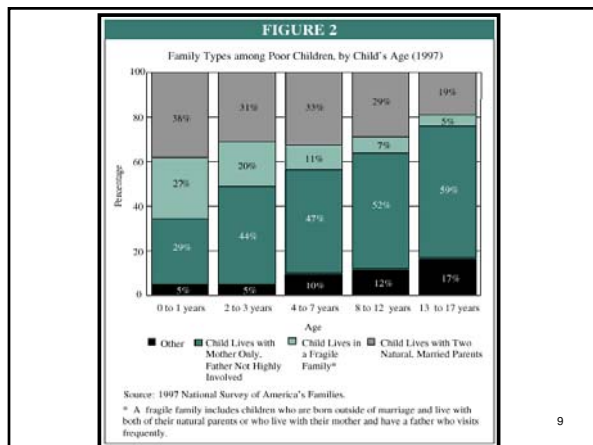
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The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study

A fragile family refers to an unmarried couple with a new baby who is:

- Usually poor
- Are living together or romantically involved, if not living together.

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Study Goals

- Unmarried parents conditions and capabilities
- Relationship between unmarried parents
- How children fare in fragile families
- Impact of policies and environmental conditions

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So what does it mean?

- Most fathers are highly engaged with their child's mother at the child's birth.
- Unmarried parents experience a "magic moment" at the time of a child's birth.
- This is a good time to intervene with education.

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Barriers to a Stable Marriage

- Lack of education and training
- Unstable employment and low income
- Health limitations
- Substance abuse
- Having children with multiple partners
- Relationship problems

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Marriage+ Approach

- Recommended by Ooms and Wilson, 2004
- An estimated one-third of Fragile Families would benefit from relationship and marriage education alone
- Most need a comprehensive approach that includes continuing education, employment assistance, mental health treatment, and step family education

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Promising Practices for Relationship and Marriage Education

- Determine realistic goals
- Focus on specific target audience
- Experiment with innovative recruitment
- Select and train “credible” facilitators

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Determining Realistic Goals

- Not about getting participants married
- Focus on development of personal and interpersonal skills
- Help participants to see the benefits of a healthy couple relationship for children

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Focus on a Target Audience

- Consider race, ethnicity, community, and other differences
- Use a Marriage+ Approach
- Address domestic violence

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Innovative Recruitment Approaches


- Use men to recruit men
- Find comfortable locations and times
- Build community referral networks
- Recruit from other organizational programs
- Review curricular materials with the target audience
- Provide educational extenders

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Find the Right Facilitators

- Personal qualities
- Well trained
- Negotiate the line between therapy and education
- Involve men as co-facilitators

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CARING FOR MY FAMILY
Building Healthy Relationships
through Supportive Education

- ❖ Help mothers and fathers of newborns learn about building healthy relationships with each other and their children through a series of interactive educational experiences.
- ❖ Equip unmarried mothers and fathers with skills for making healthy decisions and to explore future options for their relationship including the potential of getting married.

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Developing Partnerships

- There may be a history of lack of trust of the dominant culture.
- This lack of trust may be especially true of culturally diverse audiences.

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Developing Partnerships (cont.)

- Begin with an attitude that members of diverse audiences have much to teach us.
- Share leadership with those who have relevant information and work close to the issues.
- As we begin to learn about a population we may identify people and organizations that could become partners in programming.

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Why Members of Diverse Audiences Do Not Attend Programming

They do not come because we are not developing and implementing programming that is meeting their needs or is consistent with their cultural values.

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Strategies for Learning about Diverse Audiences

Using academic resources to learn about the population

- Books
- Journal articles
- Online materials

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Strategies (cont.)

- Listen to media and read newspapers created by and for the population
- Attend cultural events sponsored by the population
- Visit locations frequented by members of the diverse audience

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Strategies (cont.)

Identify a *cultural guide* to teach us about the audience. A cultural guide can answer questions and explain the cultural values

- Compensation should be consistent with cultural values
- Show respect for the cultural guide's way of teaching

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How Might Learning Be Different in Diverse Cultures?

Learning for culturally diverse audiences might look very different from traditional Extension programming.

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Questions to Consider

- How do members of this diverse audience learn?
- Who participates in learning?
- Where does learning take place?

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Lack of Research about Relationships and Marriage in Diverse Populations

- Scholarly materials are available about *cultural themes and features* of diverse populations.
- *Research* about relationships and marriage from a strengths perspective is very limited.
- Couples from diverse audiences do not attend, do not benefit, and we may "cause harm."

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Study: Strong Marriages in Latino Culture

- The findings from this study can help us create culturally relevant relationship and marriage education for Latino couples
- This study was done in partnership with the community
- This study was done with respect for the cultural values of the community being investigated

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Components of Strong Latino Marriages

Children were the "glue" that kept the marriage and family together:

- Children were the reason for getting married and the reason for staying married
- Marriage was not separate from family life

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Components of Strong Latino Marriages (cont.)

Communication was a necessary component of a strong marriage:

- They needed to spend time together and talk often
- This helped them understand each other
- This understanding resulted in greater love between them
- Communication was necessary to solve problems and make decisions

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Components of Strong Latino Marriages (cont.)

Religion was a necessary component of having a strong marriage

- It provided guidance to stay on the right path in marriage
- It provided spiritual strength to cope with crises
- It helped them stay committed to their spouse

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Implications of Latino Study for Relationship and Marriage Education

We need to include the entire family in education about relationships and marriage. We may need to reframe the programming as being for the family and include information about couple relationships.

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Implications (cont.)

Communication in marriage should be included as content, but should be addressed from the perspective of the findings from the Latino study. It may not be appropriate to use content about communication that is effective with the dominant culture.

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Implications (cont.)

Religion is an important value:

- Content about the benefits of religious affiliation might be included
- Content about how a spiritual connection might be helpful in couple relationships
- Programming in partnership with religious organization would be effective.

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Native American Audiences

Working with Native American tribes are likely to result in a very different kind of programming. In addition, there are specific processes regarding research and programming that must be adhered to when working with Native American tribes.

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In Summary

- The needs, values and teaching techniques are different for low-resource and culturally diverse audiences.
- This creates new challenges for Extension educators.
- We can all contribute to this body of research and literature.

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