

LATINX PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

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Summer/Fall 2025

Rooted in la Resistencia: The Borderland as a Site of Latinx Strength Amidst Immigration Challenges

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FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Dear NLPA Familia,

The leadership at NLPA has been working diligently to ensure our organization remains steadfast in its mission: **to foster a supportive professional community that advances psychological education and training, science, practice, and organizational change** — all in service of enhancing the health and mental wellbeing of Latinx populations.

Even in these uncertain times, our mission has not wavered. In fact, we are more motivated than ever to harness psychological and health science to illuminate the realities of our communities and advocate for meaningful change.

It was wonderful to see so many of you in person at the APA Annual Convention this August in Denver. The energy at our NLPA gathering was inspiring, and it was a proud moment to witness NLPA members presenting on the APA main stage, featured panels, and across leading divisions and committees. Our strong representation is both encouraging and essential. Now, more than ever, we must be present at the tables where critical decisions are made—decisions that directly impact our profession and the communities we serve.

Looking ahead, the NLPA Summit Planning Committee has been hard at work preparing a timely and impactful conference this October. This year's Summit will take place in South Texas — a predominantly Latinx, underserved region where the immigrant journey often begins or ends. The setting is both meaningful and symbolic, aligning perfectly with our 2025 conference theme: **"Psychology at the Border: Resilience, Mental Health, and the Immigrant Journey."**

I am proud that NLPA continues to lead with science and community at its core. I look forward to gathering with many of you in person as we come together to reflect, learn, and continue our collective journey toward equity and justice.

Con cariño,

Alfonso Mercado, Ph.D.
2025 NLPA President



OUR MISSION

To create a supportive professional community that advances psychological education and training, science, practice, and organizational change to enhance the health, mental health, and well-being of Hispanic/Latinx populations.

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Message from the Editor

Frances R. Morales, PhD

Editorial

We, the new NLPA editorial team, are excited to bring you the Summer/Fall 2025 issue of *Latinx Psychology Today* (LPT). We are thrilled to relaunch the NLPA LPT with the intention of uplifting the voices of our comunidad during these challenging times.

The *Latinx Psychology Today* is NLPA's official bulletin. LPT offers an exclusive inside look into the world of our querida NLPA familia and contributes to the growing and evolving ideas of Latinx Psychology. In addition to the events and accomplishments of NLPA and its members, each issue features content centered on topics aligned with the values of our membership. LPT aims to provide a space where students and professionals can contribute thought-provoking information that reflects the depth and diversity of our people and field, enhancing NLPA's mission to advance Latinx Psychology.

Without question, this year has brought numerous challenges as we learn (or try to learn) to live and stand firm in a world that is plagued by ongoing attacks on our well-being, rights, and collective voice. The year 2025 has undeniably challenged us and stretched our resilience, but also deepened our understanding of what truly matters. Against all odds, we continue to show up in comunidad, demonstrating tremendous resilience as we balance life-work demands and relentlessly advance the field of Latinx psychology.

My first issue as LPT editor comes with deep gratitude for the contributors and editorial team, whose time and effort made both this relaunch and this issue possible. I extend my gratitude to the NLPA community for your dedication to Latinx Psychology and for reading this issue. The editorial board hopes this issue fosters a sense of connection to our professional familia, to the values that unite us, and to our shared purpose of advancing healing with the communities we serve.

This issue is a collaborative effort by graduate students, early-career, mid-career, and established members of NLPA, aiming to highlight individuals whose leadership and advocacy promote the well-being of Latinx communities. The issue also provides a preview of the amazing keynote speakers at this fall's NLPA Summit: Psychology at the Border Resilience, Mental Health, and the Immigrant Journey. Thank you to Dr. Alfonso Mercado and his outstanding team for organizing a very special gathering held right on the U.S.-Mexico border.

We hope that this issue of LPT motivates and keeps us all actively connected and caring for each other especially during a time in our country where Black, Indigenous, People of Color, Immigrants, Women, Queer Folks, and other historically marginalized groups are actively being vilified, criminalized, and dehumanized. Through grassroots organizing, activism, and solidarity we find ways to survive and strengthen our union in these challenging times. Mil gracias.

Address correspondence to: Dr. Frances R. Morales, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Department of Psychological Science – 1201 W. University Drive, Edinburg, TX 78539 E-mail: frances.morales01@utrgv.edu





UTRGV * TEXAS
OCTOBER 17 & 18 * TEXAS



Psychology at the Border, Resilience,
Mental Health, and the Immigrant Journey



Registration Now Open!

Register at: <http://bit.ly/46FZ1y1>



Life in the Border: Complexity, Culture, and Resilience

Frances R. Morales, PhD

Borders can be drawn by politics—through imperialism and colonization, or segregation—dividing land and people with physical boundaries and legal definitions. But they can also emerge naturally, shaped by mountain ranges or rivers. In our case, the United States and Mexico share a 2000-mile-long border, from San Ysidro–Tijuana to Brownsville–Matamoros, and is home to approximately 15 million people on the U.S. side of the border.

To think of the border as a mere binary separation tied to nationality or location is to oversimplify the layered identities shaped by political and social convergence. Growing up and living along the U.S.–Mexico border is a singular experience—deeply personal, difficult to explain, and impossible to fully capture from the outside. Understanding life in border regions requires us to look beyond physical markers and consider their historical roots and psychological impact on the communities that live within them.

In border regions, American mainstream and Mexican traditions and values coexist, shaping everything from food and celebrations to education and community values. Thus, living along the border means existing in a liminal space, not fully here nor there, suspended between where you come from and who you are becoming. It's a life shaped by dual cultures, shifting expectations, and constant negotiation of identity.

While this area is often portrayed in national media as a site of division and danger, the reality for its residents, sometimes referred to as *fronterizos*, is quite different. For us, the border is not a line of separation, but a space of coexistence and connection. In many border communities, crossing between the two countries is a part of daily life. People travel back and forth for work, education, shopping, or to visit family. These regular crossings blur national lines and create a sense of shared space, rather than separation. English and Spanish are spoken interchangeably with people constantly shifting from one language to the other, either from English to Spanish or from Spanish to English. English and Spanish are not only languages spoken in this region, but they are also factors of identity and culture.

And while poverty and other challenges may be ubiquitous along the U.S.–Mexico border, particularly in the Texas-Mexico border region, border regions thrive as a cultural crossroads. Communities along the U.S.–Mexico border demonstrate remarkable resilience. Despite facing ongoing national scrutiny and remaining central to national political discourse, border residents remain deeply rooted in their strong cultural identity and sense of belonging. Ultimately, the U.S.–Mexico border is far more than a line drawn on a map. It is a dynamic, living region where cultural richness meets structural hardship. To understand it fully is to embrace its contradictions and listen to the voices of those who call the border region home.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Restoring Human Dignity: Mental Health and Migration

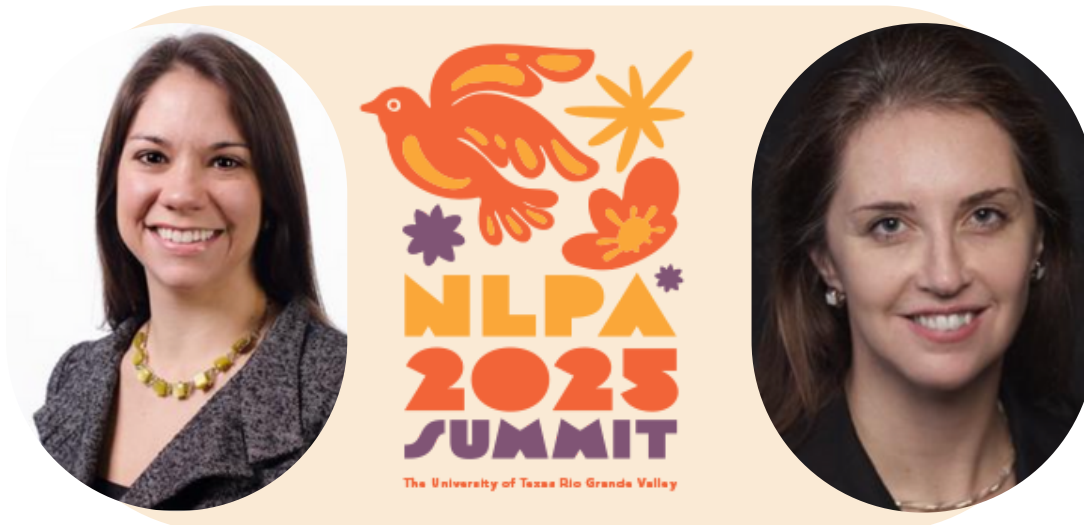


Sister Norma Pimentel is one of the most recognized leaders in the nation. As Executive Director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, she oversees the charitable branch of the Diocese of Brownsville. Sister Pimentel has over twenty years of experience in providing oversight to a diverse set of ministries and social services in the Rio Grande Valley such as homeless prevention, disaster relief, clinical counseling, pregnancy care, food assistance, and humanitarian relief to immigrants. In 2014, during the influx of immigrants entering the United States through the Southern Border, Sister Pimentel with the support of the local community, established the Humanitarian Respite Center, providing a safe space for immigrants to rest before continuing their migration journeys. The Humanitarian Respite Center is the largest respite center in the country, welcoming over half a million immigrants in the course of ten years. Sister Pimentel is a voice for immigrant families, advocating for their rights, respect, and dignity. Sister Pimentel holds a bachelor's degree in fine arts from Pan American University, a master's degree in theology from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas, and a master's degree in pastoral counseling from Loyola University in Chicago. She also holds over five honorary doctoral degrees from some of the most prestigious universities in the nation such as the University of Notre Dame. Furthermore, known as the Pope's favorite nun, Sister Pimentel is also an artist whose paintings have captivated numerous audiences.

Immigration Enforcement and Asylum-Seeking Parents and Children



Luis H. Zayas, Ph.D. is Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, where he is also a professor of social work and psychology. Prior to joining UTRGV, Dr. Zayas was dean of the School of Social Work at the University of Texas at Austin from 2012 to 2022. He has held faculty appointments at Columbia University, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Fordham University, and Washington University in St. Louis. Dr. Zayas holds a bachelor's degree in economics and liberal arts from Manhattan College, and a master's degree in social work and PhD in developmental psychology from Columbia University. He has lectured nationally and internationally, recorded a popular TEDTalk, and has appeared in numerous media outlets. With over 140 scientific publications and three books, including two on immigration (*Forgotten Citizens: Deportation, Children, and the Making of American Exiles and Orphans*, 2015 and *Through Iceboxes and Kennels: How Immigration Detention Harms Children and Families*, 2023), Dr. Zayas has remained an active clinician.



Attachment Rupture & Repair in Immigrant Families: Restoring Connection

Amanda C. Venta, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Psychology and a licensed clinical psychologist at the University of Houston, where she also directs the Youth & Family Studies Lab. Her program of research focuses on developmental psychopathology in children and adolescents, with a particular emphasis on understanding how close relationships—especially caregiver-child attachment—can serve as protective factors in the context of risk. Her work is grounded in attachment theory and incorporates both clinical and developmental perspectives to examine how interpersonal, cognitive, emotional, and biological factors shape youth mental health trajectories. Dr. Venta has established a robust research agenda centered on the mental health of immigrant youth and families. Her studies explore how experiences such as acculturative stress, family separation, discrimination, and trauma impact the psychological well-being of recently immigrated adolescents, particularly those from Latinx backgrounds. She is especially interested in how these stressors interact with family dynamics and attachment security to influence outcomes such as emotion regulation, suicidality, and the development of internalizing and externalizing disorders. Dr. Venta has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals and her research has been supported by federal and foundation funding. She is widely recognized as a leading scholar in attachment, trauma, and immigrant youth mental health.

Carla Sharp, Ph.D., is a John and Rebecca Moores Professor and the Associate Dean for Faculty and Research in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Houston. She directs the Developmental Psychopathology Lab and the Adolescent Diagnosis, Assessment, Prevention, and Treatment Center, where her research centers on developmental risk and resilience processes in youth. Dr. Sharp is internationally recognized for her contributions to the study of social cognition, attachment, and personality development in adolescence. Her work focuses on the role of mentalizing—the capacity to understand one’s own and others’ mental states—as a key mechanism linking early attachment disruptions to the emergence of psychopathology, particularly borderline personality disorder. Her research has helped to clarify how attachment insecurity and impaired mentalizing contribute to emotional dysregulation, interpersonal dysfunction, and self-harm in youth. Her program of research spans over 300 peer-reviewed publications and multiple books, combining behavioral experiments, clinical assessment, neuroimaging, and cross-cultural field studies. She has led clinical trials in both the U.S. and globally, including interventions for orphaned children in South Africa that target caregiver sensitivity and attachment-based caregiving. Dr. Sharp’s translational work has reshaped how clinicians and researchers understand and treat emerging personality pathology in adolescents. She has received multiple awards recognizing her impact on the field and currently serves as Associate Editor for *Personality Disorders: Theory, Research, and Treatment*.

Reimagining Psychology's Impact in a Changing World



Maysa Akbar, Ph.D., ABPP is a board-certified clinical psychologist, best-selling author, and a transformative leader in the field of psychology. She currently serves as Chief Diversity Officer and Chief of Psychology in the Public Interest at the American Psychological Association (APA), where she leads the organization's strategic efforts to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). In this role, Dr. Akbar has been instrumental in embedding EDI principles across APA's policies, programs, and culture, and in developing metrics to track meaningful progress. Dr. Akbar is widely recognized for her development of the Urban Trauma framework and the Ally Identity Model. Her books, *Urban Trauma: A Legacy of Racism* and *Beyond Ally: The Pursuit of Racial Justice*, explore the psychological effects of systemic racism and outline pathways to healing and transformative allyship. These works have positioned her as a thought leader on racial trauma, culturally informed care, and structural change. Prior to her leadership at APA, She served as an Assistant Clinical Professor at the Yale School of Medicine, where she trained and mentored future clinicians. Dr. Akbar continues to work with institutions, communities, and public service agencies to promote racial equity and mental health justice. Through her scholarship, advocacy, and leadership, she has helped shift national conversations around racism, trauma, and psychological well-being.



Beyond the Clinic: Advocacy as Empowerment for Clinicians and Communities

Germán A. Cadenas, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of clinical psychology at Rutgers University Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology. He is also the associate director of the Center for Youth Social Emotional Wellness (CYSEW) at the same institution.

Luz Maria Garcini, Ph.D., MPH is a Baker Institute Rice faculty scholar and an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychological Sciences at Rice University. Her research, community, advocacy and policy work focus on identifying, understanding and addressing the health needs of historically marginalized immigrant communities from a biobehavioral and sociocultural perspective.

Selma Yznaga, Ph.D. is a Professor in the Department of Counseling at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Her clinical work, advocacy, and scholarship are directed at the treatment of immigration-related trauma at the Texas/Mexican border. She was recently appointed as the Coordinator of Clinical Services for Texas/Mexico Projects by Counselors Without Borders.

NLPA 2025 SUMMIT

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

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NLPA 2025 SUMMIT CO-CHAIRS



Michelle Alejandra Silva, Psy.D., is a licensed clinical psychologist and Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the Yale University School of Medicine. She also serves as Director of the Connecticut Latino Behavioral Health System—an academic-community partnership focused on increasing access to behavioral health care for monolingual Spanish-speaking residents of greater New Haven.

Dr. Silva's work sits at the intersection of clinical care, education, and advocacy. She collaborates across disciplines to promote health equity for immigrant and underserved communities. Her professional interests include the psychological impact of immigration and trauma, integrating community health workers into the mental health system, and advancing social justice through interprofessional training and practice.



Dr. Alejandro L. Vázquez, PH.D., is a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Counseling Psychology and licensed psychologist in the Department of Psychology & Neuroscience at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where he serves as the co-director of the THRIVE Lab. His research program is dedicated to advancing mental health equity for Latinx youth and families.

His work spans measure development, culturally responsive intervention science, and advanced quantitative methods—including network analysis and machine learning—to illuminate and address disparities in access to care. Through collaborative, applied, and community-centered scholarship, Dr. Vázquez is committed to building culturally grounded knowledge that informs equitable policy, training, and practice.

As Co-Chairs of the NLPA 2025 Summit, Drs. Silva and Vázquez look forward to fostering connection, shared learning, and collective action that uplifts Latinx voices and drives positive social change. They are committed to collaborating with NLPA's membership to create a conference that showcases important and timely work impacting our communities.

NLPA 2025 SUMMIT

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

OCTOBER 17 & 18 - TEXAS

THURS, OCT 16 – PRE-SUMMIT WORKSHOPS

Pre-Conference CE Workshops

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Advocacy in a Rapidly Changing Political Environment

9:00 AM – 4:00 PM | Conducting Immigration Evaluations: An In-Depth Training for Psychologists

Evening Bienvenida – Old Hildago Pump House Museum and World Birding Center

5:00 PM | Keynote: Sister Norma Pimentel – Restoring Human Dignity: Mental Health and Migration

6:45 PM | Border Wall Trolley Experience

FRI, OCT 17 – SUMMIT DAY 1

Opening Session

7:50 – 8:50 AM | Keynote – Dr. Luis Zayas: Immigration Enforcement and Asylum-Seeking Parents and Children

Program Sessions

9:00 – 10:00 AM | Session 1a

9:00 – 11:00 AM | Session 1b (Workshops)

10:15 – 11:15 AM | Session 2

11:30 – 12:30 PM | Lunch & Keynote – Beyond the Clinic: Advocacy as Empowerment for Clinicians and Communities

12:45 – 1:45 PM | Session 3

2:00 – 3:00 PM | Posters & Cafecito

3:15 – 4:15 PM | Session 4a

3:15 – 5:15 PM | Session 4b (Workshops)

4:30 – 5:30 PM | Session 5

5:45 PM | Noche de Cultura

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SAT, OCT 18 – SUMMIT DAY 2

Opening Session

8:00 – 9:00 AM | Keynote – Drs. Amanda Venta & Carla Sharp: Attachment Rupture & Repair in Immigrant Families: Restoring Connection

Program Sessions

9:15 – 10:15 AM | Session 1a

9:15 – 11:15 AM | Session 1b (Workshops)

10:30 – 11:30 AM | Session 2

11:45 – 12:45 PM | Lunch & Keynote – Dr. Maysa Akbar: Reimagining Psychology's Impact in a Changing World

1:00 – 2:00 PM | Posters & Cafecito

2:15 – 3:15 PM | Session 3a

2:15 – 4:15 PM | Session 3b (Workshops)

3:30 – 4:30 PM | Session 4

4:45 – 5:45 PM | Session 5

Closing Celebration

7:00 PM | Awards Dinner – Western Theme at Embassy Suites

SUN, OCT 19 – OPTIONAL COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Location & Time

TBA

NLPA 2025 SUMMIT

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

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PRESIDENTIAL PROGRAMMING

Lead Author	Presentation Title
Ignacio Acevedo et al.	U.S. Latine Psychology and indigeneity; Provocations across mestizaje, Abya Yala, and Turtle Island
Lisa Flores et al.	Protest to Practice: A Social Justice Tool Kit for Psychologists
Lisa Flores et al.	Getting your Research Published: Journal of Latinx Psychology
Diana Formoso et al.	Who Supports the Caregivers? Support Needs and Family-Focused Interventions Among Caregivers Raising Migrant Youth
Milton Fuentes et al.	Council of Past Presidents
Eleanor Gil-Kashiwabara et al.	Psychology at the Border: Addressing Mental Health through Artistic Expression and Storytelling
Joseph Hovey et al.	An Examination of Suicide Risk and Protective Factors for Suicide Behavior in Latina Youth from the Rio Grande Valley
Mutsa Majero et al.	Bridging Cultures, Building Resilience: Inclusive Mental Health Strategies for Refugees and Migrants
Carina Marques et al.	Humanitarian Research and Practice efforts of the Human Mobility Institute on the U.S. Mexico Border
Will Martinez et al.	Fuerte: School-based Behavioral Health Prevention Programming for Newcomer Latinx Students
Gerardo Mireles et al.	The Business of Psychology: Successful Latinx Founders of Mental Health Clinics in Underserved Communities
Kim Nguyen-Finn et al.	Healing Hands: A Workshop on Trauma-Informed Therapeutic Expressive Arts Activities for Vulnerable Immigrant Children
Bryan Rojas-Arauz et al.	Imigrantes en Nuestra Tierra: Training Students to Support Latine & Indigenous Wellness in Times of Humanitarian Crisis
Julia Roncoroni et al.	Cocina Libre: Food-Based Decolonial Research at the Borderlands of Identity, Migration, and Community Healing
Dana Rusch et al.	From Barriers to Bridges: Understanding and Overcoming Barriers to Treatment for Migrant Youth
Rebecca Toporek et al.	Healing Justice: What We Can Learn About Solidarity, Empowerment and Social Change from Rio Grande Valley Community Organizations
Carmen Valdez et al.	Sociopolitically and Trauma-Informed Public Health Approaches for Latino Immigrant Families in the United States
Amanda Venta et al.	APA Presidential Taskforce on Immigration and Health: What is next?



Travel Information



LOCATION

The Rio Grande Valley (RGV) in Texas is a four-county region located at the southernmost tip of the state, bordering Mexico. It is a vibrant area known for its subtropical climate, rich cultural heritage, and growing economy. McAllen is the third safest city in the U.S., and we are excited to host the NLPA 2025 Border Summit.

Conference sessions will be held at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

AIRPORTS



McAllen International Airport (MFE)

Located just 20 minutes from the UTRGV Edinburg campus and 5 minute drive to the Convention Center



Valley International Airport (HRL)

Located 45 minutes from the McAllen Convention Center.

HOTELS

Hotels are nested in the McAllen Convention Center, a 20-minute drive to UTRGV. There will be shuttles that will transport attendees to the NLPA Summit.



EMBASSY SUITES

800 Convention Center Blvd, McAllen, TX
(Deadline for reservations: September 18th)
Our main event will take place at this hotel.
Reserve your room [here](#).



CAMBRIA Hotel McAllen Convention Center

701 S Ware Rd, McAllen, TX 78501
(Deadline for reservations: October 10th)
Reserve your room [here](#).



ALOFT McALLEN

511 W Expressway 83, McAllen, TX 78501
(Deadline for reservations: September 24th)
Reserve your room [here](#).



HOME 2 SUITES by Hilton

525 S Ware Rd, McAllen, TX 78501
(Deadline for reservations: September 24th)
Reserve your room [here](#).



NLPA Student Leadership and Special Interest Groups Spotlight

NLPA Student TRIO Student Representatives

The **NLPA Student Trio** is composed of the Current, Elect, and Past Student Representatives. They represent the voice of student members within the organization and at NLPA leadership executive meetings. They foster communication and collaboration among students, helping facilitate the student committee in planning student-led events for all members. The trio works to ensure that student members are engaged, supported, and have a positive experience within the National Latinx Psychological Association.

NLPA Student Past Representative



Tatiana Vera (she/her/ella) recently graduated with her PhD in Counseling Psychology and is now completing a postdoctoral residency at Sharp HealthCare in San Diego, where she provides inpatient therapy and supervises practicum students. Her research focuses on Latinas in STEM and the power of culturally affirming mentorship, a theme that shaped her dissertation and two current book chapters. Tatiana's commitment to mentorship is deeply personal, rooted in her Ecuadorian family's journey and her clinical work with trauma survivors and underserved Latinx communities. At Sharp, she's spearheading a resource library of Spanish-language tools for the behavioral health team and helping improve access to interpreter services. She finds joy in surfing, hiking, and paint-by-numbers kits. Being part of NLPA has been a grounding space for professional identity, community, and advocacy.

NLPA Student Representative



Sandra Gomez (she/her/ella) recently graduated with her PhD in Counseling Psychology with a bilingual concentration from Columbia University. During her time here, she co-founded *Café, Consulta, y Chisme* with her advisor to create a space where Spanish-bilingual students could consult and discuss cases in Spanish, as support for these students remains limited. She completed her pre-doctoral internship at the University of Miami Counseling Center and will be completing her postdoctoral fellowship at Stanford Medicine. Here, Sandra will work with athletes, the Latine community, and family/couples work. She is interested in continuing to provide culturally responsive and accessible bilingual services to the Latine community, focusing on community needs and family strengths. Her research expertise is in ethnic identity, acculturation, and career development of Latine immigrants and their children. Her dissertation was focused on Latina immigrant factory workers in the Midwest, inspired by her own mother. Sandra enjoys running, evidenced by her participation in track and cross country in college. She grew up in both Durango, MX, and a rural town in Illinois. Sandra enjoys traveling and is working on regaining her yelp elite status now that she has defended her dissertation. NLPA has been Sandra's home since 2018. She states, "It has been an honor to develop a leadership within a beautiful organization."

NLPA Student Representative-Elect



Anyoliny Sanchez (she/her/ella) is a first generation fifth-year doctoral student in Counseling Psychology at Arizona State University. She will be completing her final year of doctoral training at the University of Florida for her internship. Anyoliny is serving as the NLPA student representative-elect and was the recipient of the interdisciplinary enrichment fellowship and ASU presidential fellowship. She is a member of the PLENA research lab under the mentorship of Dr. Capielo Rosario, where her research interests focus on the psychological impacts of colonialism, colorism and acculturation among Afro Latinx communities. Additionally, she is committed to identifying the needs of adolescents from Latinx communities and exploring interventions to improve their quality of life.



NLPA Student Member Spotlight

Alondra Lopez

PhD Student in Counseling Psychology

My name is Alondra Lopez, a second-year PhD student in Counseling Psychology at the University of Georgia. I co-lead the Bienestar Research Lab, founded in 2005 by my advisor, Dr. Edward Delgado-Romero. Our work centers the mental health and well-being of immigrant communities in Georgia and across the Southeastern U.S.

While I spend much of my time as a student and a lab leader, I view this work as part of a larger commitment to use my training to advocate for and stand alongside immigrant communities. I am often called an advocate, but I struggle with that label. Sometimes “advocate” can imply hierarchies that distance others from the work we should all be doing as humans, and as professionals. In psychology, we are accountable to one another.

In *Lak’ech*, tú eres mi otro yo, you are my other me.

When I witness entire communities whose rights are violated, simply for existing, I see myself and my family. I hear our stories reflected back to me. And I ask: What is my role in addressing the systemic violence that harms immigrant communities?

Over a year ago, I began volunteering with *El Refugio*, a nonprofit that supports families impacted by immigration detention. I started as a weekend volunteer at Stewart Detention Center, visiting people held there. Many were in long term detention, often isolated from family or without anyone able to visit. Over time, I realized how my background positioned me to offer something important: a safe, human interaction. Even through a glass screen and over a corded phone, conversation can be therapeutic.

Although not in my role as a therapist, I drew on my basic helping skills, trauma-informed listening, grounding techniques, and simply being present. After some visits, I noticed that people’s energy shifted—they seemed lighter, less alone, just by being seen and heard.

Since then, I’ve invited friends, classmates, and other lab members to join. We’ve created a growing network of volunteers, including mental health professionals-in-training, who lend their time and knowledge to support people in need. And it doesn’t stop there. There’s a ripple effect as volunteers take these stories back into their communities, raising awareness about the presence and

conditions of detention centers many people don't even know exist.

It's a reciprocal exchange. I've been deeply moved by the stories people share filled with faith, hope, and perseverance, even in inhumane conditions. At the hospitality house, I've spoken with families visiting loved ones. I've seen them rejoice and seen their generosity. They ask how they can help, even when they have so little. They cook meals. They ask how to volunteer. They want to pass forward the love they receive.

When Georgia passed HB 1105, a law that made it easier for local police to detain immigrants and transfer them to ICE, friends and I from the lab responded by organizing rides for community members, folks without a license who still needed to get to the doctor, to immigration appointments, and to the grocery store. This wasn't a formal program; it was a spontaneous response to an urgent need. Since then, this effort has grown into a community ride group of nearly 100 volunteers. We continue to offer rides, accompaniment, and connection to people navigating systems that too often exclude them.

After the murder of Laken Riley and the arrest of a suspect of interest, a Venezuelan immigrant, anti-immigrant rhetoric surged on campus. Much of it went unaddressed by the university. In response, our Bienestar research team partnered with Hispanic student-serving organizations to provide mental health workshops for students experiencing racial stress and fear. These workshops were not planned, we simply responded to a need. Even as many of us

were also targets of this rhetoric, we used what we knew to care for our peers. This continued throughout the year, even as institutional support remained limited.

As a researcher and practitioner in training, these experiences continue to shape me. They challenge me to stay grounded in community-engaged work, to reimagine what mental health looks like for immigrant communities, and to radically claim my role not as a "healer," but as an accompaniment. To walk alongside.

I believe our field still has a long way to go. But if we are to move forward and stay true to our values, we must find ways to integrate research, advocacy, and practice in a manner that preserves the dignity, humanity, and beauty of immigrant communities.

Georgia Immigrant Support Networks

- [UGA Support](#)
- [Athens Rides](#)
- [Athens Immigrant Rights Coalition](#)
- [El Refugio](#)



NLPA Professional Member Spotlight

Edward Delgado-Romero, PhD

President of the Society of Counseling Psychology
Division 17 of the American Psychological Association

In the summer of 2025, I was elected to be the president of the Society of Counseling Psychology (SCP), Division 17 of the American Psychological Association (APA). I am the first male Latino president in the history of the division (stretching back to 1947) and the most recent Latina president was Melba Vasquez in 2002. SCP is known as one of the social justice divisions of the APA and one of the host divisions of the National Multicultural Summit and Conference.

My presidential theme and program for the 2027 conference in San Francisco, CA will focus on U.S. Latinx people and connections to counseling psychology. The connections between SCP and NLPA run strong as many NLPA members and leaders are counseling psychologists. I guest edited a Major Contribution to The Counseling Psychologist (Delgado-Romero et al., 2012) that highlighted the connection of SCP to the Ethnic Minority Psychological Associations including NLPA (Chavez-Korrell et al., 2012).

As a first-generation college student my path to the Ph.D. was not a direct one (Delgado-Romero, 2010). I received the most traditional psychological education that one can imagine, I literally ran rats through mazes and made pigeons dance for food. The issues of race and ethnicity were nowhere to be found in my studies. It was not until I read the

work of Patricia Arredondo on multicultural competency that I began to find words and concepts that added the importance of race and ethnicity to the human experience – and I began to relate my life as a child of immigrants and cultural/language broker as relevant to psychology. From that date forward I began to pursue multicultural training, eventually culminating in my internship at the MECCA (Multi-Ethnic Counseling Center Alliance) program at Michigan State University. As the multicultural revolution took hold, I focused my work on Latinx college students at the University of Florida Counseling Center and was lucky to attend the very first NMCS in 1999 and meet Marta Bernal, the first US Latinx psychologist. My experiences at the NMCS led me to become involved with SCP through the Section on Race and Diversity (SERD) which I chaired. I eventually became a Fellow in SCP/APA and used my experiences with SCP to help start (with many colleagues including Patricia Arredondo!) and develop NLPA where I served as president for the 2010 conference.

Now I'd like to circle back and bring the wisdom of NLPA to SCP. I'd like to build upon work such as the TCP article (Miville et al., 2017) where former NLPA Presidents explained culturally grounded leadership. Working from a strengths-perspective I

believe there are many things that NLPA and the Latinx culture can teach counseling psychology, especially in the present day where Latinx people are the targets of mass deportation and discrimination. I would like to address issues such as current research and practice around immigration, Afro-Latinx or Afrodescendientes (Sena & Shannon, 2023) Latinx people who make up 25% of the U.S. Latinx population, and the role that Latinx psychologists play at the federal level in advocacy, in VA hospitals, prisons and training programs relative to the highly diverse and intersectional Latinx population. It is vitally important to humanize and make visible Latinx populations because of what we are all facing. Latinx people as students, clinicians, researchers and clients deserve to be integral to the mission of psychology and SCP and I plan to highlight us.

As I put together my team and priorities, I ask for the input of NLPA members. You can email me at: edelgado@uga.edu. I welcome your thoughts and ideas, and I hope to see many NLPA members participating in SCP. My twenty years of work and fellowship in NLPA has prepared me to take on this significant leadership role in psychology, and I want to see us and our culture celebrated.

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Latinx Communities and Opioid Use Treatment: A Brief Review

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NLPA Science Spotlight

Despite consistent opioid misuse, opioid overdose fatalities have soared in Latinx communities (SAMHSA, 2020), linked to increased prescriptions (e.g., occupational needs) and synthetic opioid availability (e.g., fentanyl) (Saxon et al., 2018). Understanding sociocultural factors can help mental health professionals address misuse (Yaugher et al., 2020). Specifically, therapeutic contexts, especially when strong rapport is established, can improve treatment uptake among minority groups (SAMHSA, 2020). This literature review examines Latinx characteristics for Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) treatment and the use of Medication Assisted Treatment by mental health providers.

Latinx People with Opioid Use Disorder

Opioid misuse and overdose rates are increasing among Latinx people in the United States (U.S.), though they remain lower than other groups (Brenes et al., 2020). This may stem from negative views on pain medication (Katz et al., 2011; Monsivais & Engebretson, 2012), religious beliefs that pain is punishment and prayer is a cure (Katz et al., 2011), and a cultural tendency towards stoicism when experiencing pain (Ruiz-Calvillo & Flaskerud, 1993).

In 2019, 1.7 million Latinx individuals aged 12 and older misused substances nationally (SAMHSA, 2019). Despite lower overall rates compared to other groups, Latinx youth show higher drug use.

In 2018, Latinx eighth graders reported the highest substance misuse across all substances, and Latinx eighth and tenth graders had a higher percentage of opioid misuse than White non-Latinx and Black non-Latinx peers (NIDA, 2019).

The circulation of synthetic opioids poses a significant threat, escalating overdose rates due to their heightened potency and common tampering (Hart & Hart, 2019; SAMHSA, 2020). This has led to an alarming 617% increase in overdose deaths within Latinx communities by 2017 (SAMHSA, 2020). Beyond these physical concerns, understanding Latinx sociocultural factors is crucial for effective opioid misuse treatment.

Latinx Sociocultural Factors Associated with Substance Use Treatment and Access Barriers

Latinx people are heterogeneous as an ethnic category (Roth et al., 2019). Nevertheless, some similarities in their sociocultural factors impact participation in and receipt of substance use treatment. Some of these factors (i.e., familismo, religious/spiritual practices, heterogeneity, intergenerational substance use) influence whether Latinx people will engage in treatment while other factors (i.e., immigration issues, discrimination, language barriers, stigma) are considered access barriers and should all be considered.

Familismo

Familismo is critical to substance use treatment and prevention efforts in Latinx communities due to the importance of family within this cultural group. Familial support of treatment is critical in Latinx communities as most Latinx people utilize their family as support when experiencing difficulties. According to McCrady and colleagues (2013), the family unit is not prone to speak about their issues to parties outside of their family. Thus, as a mental health practitioner, gaining buy-in from family helps outcomes, especially in treatment for an OUD diagnosis (McCrady et al., 2013).

Religion/Faith/Spirituality

An estimated 82% of Latinx people identify with a religion (Pew Research Center, 2014). According to the Department of Health and Human Services (2001) religion and spirituality can be a facilitator or barrier to receiving treatment. Due to religious leaders' established rapport with Latinxs experiencing substance misuse, they may be able to encourage these individuals to seek evidence-based support. However, religion can also emphasize the moral model of substance use treatment, where substance misuse is seen as a personal failing by an individual (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001).

Heterogeneity of Latinx Populations

The combination of all Latinx people into one ethnic category overlooks and oversimplifies the diversity of Latinx communities (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2016). Latinx individuals can trace their ancestry to Africa, Asia, Europe, or the Americas (Satcher, 2001). Overlooking the variability, even within one Latinx family, impacts the understanding of access concerns and barriers (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2016).

For example, because members of a Latinx family might belong to different races (i.e., White and Black), they may experience discrimination at different levels of psychological and physical intensity. Differences in immigration status also limit access to necessary services for some family members. Lastly, country of origin impacts the cultural understanding of substance use, which can vary widely (Satcher, 2001).

Intergenerational Substance Misuse/Poly Substance Use

In the U.S., there is a phenomenon where substance use issues are passed on through generations of families, whether intentionally or unintentionally (SAMHSA, 2020). Latinx families are often composed of multigenerational households. Elders in the household might take opioids as prescribed, modeling normative use. However, they may also be giving family members opioids for pain management without an understanding of how misuse of opioids occurs (SAMHSA, 2020). If treatment can be instituted in one generation of a Latinx household, this pattern can be interrupted (SAMHSA, 2020). Other Latinx psychosocial factors to consider are thought of as treatment access barriers.

Immigration Issues

An increasing number of Latinx people are immigrating to the U.S. due to civil unrest, poverty, economic insecurity, and natural disasters in their home countries. For example, two million Latinx people sought refuge in Mexico, the U.S., and Canada during the civil wars in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala (1990-1997) (Satcher, 2001). Such experiences can lead to trauma and mental health diagnoses (Turrini et al., 2017; Satcher, 2001).

Recent immigration laws, including Executive Order No. 13767 (2017) and the 2020 Proclamation Suspending Entry of Immigrants, have expanded Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) ability to detain and deport Latinx individuals, further exacerbating trauma and mental health risks for them and their families (Enriquez, 2015; Martinez et al., 2015; McGuire, 2014). The 2020 Proclamation, in particular, prioritized U.S. citizens for jobs during the COVID-19 outbreak, without considering immigrants' work visas.

Discrimination and Mental Health Concerns

Discrimination faced by Latinx people may trigger flashbacks of previous trauma (SAMHSA, 2020). Discrimination related to Latinx people's ethnicity and immigration status is linked to being diagnosed with substance use disorders (Ornelas & Hong, 2012; Otiniano Verissimo et al., 2014). In 2018, an estimated 1.34 million Latinx adults had a co-occurring substance use disorder (SUD) and mental health diagnosis (SAMHSA, 2019). Researchers have reported a correlation between people diagnosed with mental, personality, and substance use disorders and the nonmedical use of prescription opioids (Katz et al., 2013).

Language Barriers

Language barriers hinder opioid use treatment in Latinx communities due to a scarcity of bilingual providers and materials (SAMHSA, 2020; Bermúdez et al., 2019). Despite federal law, (Executive Order 13166, 2000) mandating interpreter access, these services are often unavailable, leading families to rely on unqualified children for translation, compromising informed healthcare decisions (SAMHSA, 2020).

Stigma and Misperceptions about Substance Use Disorder

As stigma is a sociocultural factor both within and outside of Latinx communities, it is important to explore how stigma interacts with other treatment barriers.

Stigma and Other Barriers to Substance Use Treatment

High stigma toward individuals with OUD and medication-assisted treatment (MAT) in the U.S. (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019) leads to discrimination (Link & Phelan, 2001). Public opinion on opioids is complex (Barry et al., 2014; Kennedy-Hendricks et al., 2017), with OUD from prescription misuse being the most stigmatized condition. People with OUD are often blamed for their diagnosis (Kennedy-Hendricks et al., 2017), and there is public support for punitive responses (Kennedy-Hendricks et al., 2016). Stigma and misunderstandings of MAT hinder access to services (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019).

Research consistently shows stigma surrounding psychosocial intervention for OUD and other mental health diagnoses among Latinx individuals with OUD (Brenes et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2019; Satre, 2015; SAMHSA, 2020). OUD is often viewed as a moral failing, leading to high stigmatization within Latinx communities (SAMHSA, 2020). A survey revealed only five percent of Latinx people with SUDs believed treatment was necessary (Pinedo, 2020). Latinx individuals generally hold negative views toward MAT (Bergman et al., 2020; Zaller et al., 2009), sometimes seeing it as drug substitution (SAMHSA, 2020). A study on Black and Latinx MAT attitudes found most Latinx believed methadone use brought shame (Zaller et al., 2009).

Latinx patients with OUD also reported a lack of cultural considerations in treatment, impacting adherence (Stahler & Mennis, 2018).

MAT and Psychological Services in the Latinx Communities

A review found only three U.S. studies on MAT included Latinx participants. Coffin et al. (2017) found REBOOT decreased overdose rates by 14% in Latinx patients with OUD). Haddad et al. (2013) studied buprenorphine maintenance therapy (BMT) integration in federally funded health centers where 56% of patients identify as Latinx. Of the 266 participants, 56.8% were retained in BMT and secondary analyses revealed that continued on-site substance abuse counseling was positively correlated with retention.

Lam and colleagues (2019) used a brief video intervention, similar to psycho-educational services, to modify incarcerated participants' attitudes toward MAT. While 36% of the 80 participants were Latinx, their OUD diagnosis was not a requirement. No specific data on Latinx participants was reported due to invalid racial/ethnicity data. However, non-Hispanic Black participants showed more positive attitudes about MAT than non-Hispanic White participants, which contradicts prior research. The lack of research on Latinx individuals with OUD highlights limited awareness and evidence-based services for this population.

This review sheds light on the lack of information available regarding MAT outcomes for Latinx clients with OUD and aims to serve as a call to action for mental health providers to include Latinx individuals in OUD treatment outcomes research. Without further research efforts in these populations, Latinx people will continue to experience OUD without access to the evidence-based resources and treatments already provided to other racial and ethnic groups in the U.S.

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To Live in the Borderlands

BY GLORIA ANZALDÚA

To live in the borderlands means you
are neither *hispana india negra espanola*
ni gabacha, eres mestiza, mulata, half-breed
caught in the crossfire between camps
while carrying all five races on your back
not knowing which side to turn to, run from;

To live in the Borderlands means knowing
that the *india* in you, betrayed for 500 years,
is no longer speaking to you,
the *mexicanas* call you *rajetas*,
that denying the Anglo inside you
is as bad as having denied the Indian or Black;

Cuando vives en la frontera
people walk through you, the wind steals your voice,
you're a *burra, buey*, scapegoat,
forerunner of a new race,
half and half—both woman and man, neither—
a new gender;

To live in the Borderlands means to
put *chile* in the borscht,
eat whole wheat *tortillas*,
speak Tex-Mex with a Brooklyn accent;
be stopped by *la migra* at the border checkpoints;

Living in the Borderlands means you fight hard to
resist the gold elixir beckoning from the bottle,
the pull of the gun barrel,
the rope crushing the hollow of your throat;

In the Borderlands
you are the battleground
where enemies are kin to each other;
you are at home, a stranger,
the border disputes have been settled
the volley of shots have scattered the truce
you are wounded, lost in action
dead, fighting back;

To live in the Borderlands means
the mill with the razor white teeth wants to shred off
your olive-red skin, crush out the kernel, your heart
pound you pinch you roll you out
smelling like white bread but dead;

To survive the Borderlands
you must live *sin fronteras*
be a crossroads.



Biography

Gloria E. Anzaldúa (1942–2004) was a visionary Chicana queer scholar, writer, and activist whose interdisciplinary work continues to influence psychology, education, and cultural studies. Born in Raymondville, Texas, to a family of migrant farmworkers, Anzaldúa's early experiences with labor, discrimination, and language repression in the South Texas borderlands shaped her lifelong inquiry into identity, power, and belonging.

Her groundbreaking book, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), introduced the concept of "borderlands consciousness", a framework that speaks to living in-between cultures, languages, and identities. Through poetic narrative and theoretical insight, she offered a powerful lens to understand resilience, internal conflict, and new mestiza consciousness. Anzaldúa also co-edited *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981), a foundational text uplifting voices of women of color and challenging dominant paradigms of feminism and identity.

A self-described "theorist of the flesh," Anzaldúa called for embodied, spiritual, and decolonial approaches to knowledge, long before such perspectives were common in academic discourse. Her work resonates deeply with psychologists focused on liberation, intersectionality, and culturally grounded healing. Gloria Anzaldúa's legacy is one of radical inclusion, creative resistance, and intellectual courage, urging us to imagine more just, compassionate, and expansive ways of being in the world.

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Meet the Editorial Board



Frances R. Morales, PhD (she/her/ella) received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). She is currently an assistant professor in the clinical psychology doctoral program within the Department of Psychological Science at the same institution. Her academic interests focus on the study and advancement of multicultural mental health as well as efforts to enhance the academic outcomes among Latinx students in higher education. In her free time, Frances embraces an active life, spending time outdoors, going to the beach, and connecting with her loved ones.

Charmaine Mora-Ozuna, PhD (She/Her/Ella), *de raices Mexicanas*, earned her PhD in Counseling Psychology from the University of Georgia. She completed her predoctoral internship at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center within the El Paso Psychology Internship Consortium and her postdoctoral fellowship at Emory University. Her clinical and research interests center on trauma and resilience, particularly in the context of gender-based violence. Dr. Mora-Ozuna is committed to decolonizing psychology by expanding access beyond academia and mentoring the next generation of bilingual and bicultural clinicians. She finds joy in time with loved ones, traveling, and savoring good food!





Camila Tirado, M.S. (She/They) is a 4th year Counseling Psychology doctoral student at Virginia Commonwealth University in La Esperanza Research Program. Their research and clinical work center on strength-based approaches, integrating mindfulness, compassion, and contemplative practices to promote healing, address trauma, maladaptive coping, and addiction. They find joy through artistic expression such as painting and dancing, along with spending time with her spouse, dog, family and friends.

Jordan Paris is an undergraduate at NYU, majoring in Global Public Health and Biology with a minor in Spanish. As a rising junior on the premed track, she hopes to become a pediatric cardiologist and work with underserved communities to improve access to quality care. She enjoys exercising, traveling, and spending time with her family and friends.



Cameron McCauley, M.A. (she/her) is a second-year Clinical PsyD student at Rutgers University and researcher in the Lab for Immigrant Rights and Mental Health. She earned her Masters in Mental Health Counseling from Boston College and practices as a therapist part-time. Her research and clinical interests focus on cultural humility and trauma-informed practices in working with marginalized identities and communities. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, traveling, exercising, and spending time outside.

Ashley Bautista, M.A. (she/her) is a 5th year doctoral student in Clinical Psychology at the University of Houston, where she conducts research in the Youth and Family Studies Lab. Her work centers on Latinx mental health, with a particular focus on parent-child relationships, sociopolitical stressors, and health disparities affecting immigrant populations. In her free time, she enjoys attending music festivals, exploring film, and spending time outdoors with friends.



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Call for Submissions

Dear NLPA members,

We are happy to announce that submission guidelines for the Spring 2025 issue of the NLPA bulletin, **Latinx Psychology Today**, will be shared next month.

The NLPA bulletin aims to highlight and celebrate NLPA members' academic, professional, and community contributions that reflect the organization's mission and the theme of each issue across different sections including:

- Student Leadership and Special Interest Groups Spotlight
- Student Member Spotlight
- Professional Member Spotlight
- Science Spotlight

The different sections are designed to uplift diverse voices, journeys, and efforts both within and beyond traditional academic settings, showcasing inspiring members engaged in impactful work—from students and career professionals to those involved in grassroots, community-based participatory research, or applied practice.

We invite submissions that share recent or noteworthy research, publications, projects, and community initiatives relevant to our mission and readership, with the goal of sparking interest, fostering connection, and promoting visibility of the work being carried out by our members. **Stay tuned for full details in our upcoming call for submissions!**

We are excited and look forward to including your piece in the next NLPA bulletin issue. Please email your questions or concerns to nlpanewsletter@gmail.com

P.S. You can visit all previous LPT issues at <https://www.nlpa.ws/latinx-psychology-today-bulletin>

Sincerely,

The NLPA Editorial Board