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### Mental Trauma from the Migrant Journey: Mental Health Services Available to Migrants

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# Mental Trauma from the Migrant Journey: Mental Health Services Available to Migrants



UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

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## Research Questions

- How do Latino migrants seek mental health services to cope with the traumatic stress reactions or common responses to trauma after crossing the border?
- How accessible are mental health services for Latino migrants in rural communities of Colorado?
- What strategies can be implemented to destigmatize and humanize the access to mental health services in Latino migrant communities?

## Methods

- **Qualitative inquiry** will be conducted in the form of interviews
- Sample population will be Latino migrants
- Both **documented and undocumented** living in the United States (4-6 individuals between 18-50 years of age)
- Through phone calls, Zoom calls, or in-person
- **Guided** through **6 specific questions**
- **collection of data** through **recordings and writing**
- each interview be **transcribed and translated**

## Quotes from Participants

- “Cuando vas en camino, lo unico que tienes en mente es tu mete de sobrevivir para llegar a tu destino” – Participant 1
- “Recuerdo ese amanecer cuando me fui de mi rancho porque fue duro para mi, yo venia a un pais que no conocia” – Participant 2
- “Camine 4 dias por el desierto en huaraches porque estabamos comiendo (descansando) y me quite los zapatos, en es momento llego la migra, me eche a correr y no alcance agarrar mi mochila con mis zapatos”... “uno sube monatañas, por las piedras y espinas en tierra caliente”... “cuando llegue, aun a los cinco meses todavia me salian espinas de los pies” - Participant 2
- “Llegando aqui, te conformas con cualquier trabajo, maltrato, o lo que sea porque lo menos que quieres es llamar la atencion”- Participant 1

## Preliminary Findings

In the transcribed interviews, it is apparent that many migrants strongly remember their journey, and it is an event that strongly affected their life. The participants faced economic struggles in their country of origin, which pushed them to take on the journey to the United States. During the travel across the border, they faced hardships that left a mark on them. However, none of participants sought psychological help from professionals due to lack of awareness and resources.

## The Migrant Journey

- **Violence** (gangs, rape, etc.) has pushed many migrants to **flee** their hometowns
- **Traumatic events** including violent acts, sexual violence, death threats, murder of family members, extortion, and kidnapping were **common** in their **place of origin**.
- **Traveling to the United States** tends to be the hardest and most traumatizing part of the journey
- Encounter many **obstacles** such as dehydration, injury, pain, violence, fear, and/or death
- **Exposure** to physical, verbal, psychological, and sexual violence during the **migration crossing** has been **reported**
- Fences, bridges, drainage structures, observation zones, remote video surveillance, etc. are used by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection as **tactical infrastructure**
- Migrants are pushed into **geographically and environmentally difficult** desert and mountain areas
- Rely on **guides that tend to lead** to robberies, kidnapping, physical abuse, and rape

## Mental Health Services Barriers

Legal Status

Health Care Access

Language

Cultural Factors

