

## **Cultural Competency and Communication for Construction Workers**

This investigation specifically targets NORA Goal 8.3 in construction that supports the creation of partnerships with construction stakeholders to develop and disseminate effective intervention measures for improving safety and health culture to enhance the safework practices and conditions in construction operations. The goal of this research-to-practice project is to enhance communication about safe work practices between Latino construction workers and non-Latino workers and supervisors to reduce the disproportionate risk and injury burden suffered by the Latino minority group and provide safer work conditions for all workers. Investigators propose to develop a two prong approach to improving safety and communication in constructions worksites: Specific aim 1) Enhance awareness, understanding and insight about the Latino and Anglo cultures, and expectations relating to the construction worksite. Approach: This first aim will be addressed by developing a cultural assessment, awareness and education enhancement program targeted to Latino and Anglo construction personnel and supervisors. Specific aim 2) Enhance oral communication between Spanish and English speaking construction workers and supervisors. Approach: The second aim will be addressed by providing construction personnel with basic training necessary to improve jobsite safety communication by teaching job-specific Spanish to non-Spanish speaking construction personnel and job-specific English to Spanish speaking construction personnel. The project is an active collaboration between community partners, and the Departments of Environmental and Radiological Health Sciences and Construction Management. This project follows research done by Dr. Lopez del Puerto and Dr. Gilkey regarding differences in safety culture and risk perception between Latino and non-Latino Construction workers. Dr. Lopez del Puerto has developed a Latino Construction Workforce course that addresses cultural issues such as the major Latino holidays that impact the construction industry, the role of religion in the work life of Latino workers, and other points of potential misunderstandings and conflict between Spanish and non-Spanish speakers. The course also provides construction personnel with knowledge necessary to improve jobsite communication and safety by teaching job-specific Spanish to non-Spanish speaking Construction personnel Lopez del Puerto & Slattery, 2007). Investigators have been assured access to both Latino and non-Latino construction workers and supervisors by community partners through established partnerships with the Department of Construction Management. The first phase of this research-to-practice project will be to develop the training program, which will include both the cultural and language components. The language component will be developed using OSHA's English-to-Spanish construction dictionary. A draft of the training program will be evaluated using a series of three focus groups of Latino and Non-Latino construction workers. The second phase will consist of conducting a pilot training program. Dr. Lopez del Puerto and Dr. Gilkey will conduct the workshop. The training program will be offered to 30 participants (15 Latino, 15 non-Latino). A pre-test and post-test will be given to participants to measure the change in their level of cultural awareness and second language proficiency. The third phase will consist of follow-up surveying participants three months after they have completed the training to assess the impact of the training program. The results of the assessments will be incorporated into the training program for our next proposed study. We believe that reducing the cultural and language barriers will improve the climate in construction worksites and reduce injuries and fatalities among all construction workers.