

***Exploring Human Stories of Illness:  
Health Humanities Portrait Project***

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**Identity at the Intersection of Gender and Religion among  
Mexican-American Women in Chicago**

**Interview Transcript**

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**The Little Village Research Project**

The assigned interview excerpts were conducted in the neighborhood of Little Village in Chicago. In Little Village:

- 85% of the population is LatinX, majority Mexican
- 32% do not have health insurance
- 41% are born outside of the US
- 40% speak Spanish more than English

This interview is related to a larger community-based needs assessment study with Telpochcalli Community Education Project (TCEP) and the City of Chicago to understand the ways in which health decisions are made and to explore the greatest health concerns *expressed by community members*.

### **Interview (names of interviewees are pseudonyms)**

**Joanna:** Joanna Michel, PhD, is the interviewer. She received her PhD In Medical Ethnobotany and has been doing qualitative research on the use of plants to treat illness since 2000. She is of German-Irish descent and born and raised in Chicago, but began studying Spanish at the age of 11 and considers herself bilingual. Since the age of 9 she began spending Christmas in Mexico with her family and has had a deep love and appreciation for the culture ever since. She has conducted research in Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia and Chicago. She is a single mom of one daughter, age 12.

**Ana Maria:** At the time of the interview, 34-year-old Ana Maria had been in the United States for four years. She is the mother of two children, both boys: one age five and the other age two. She is originally from a rural region and then moved to an urban environment. She had studied in college in Mexico and worked in education until she had her first child. In the US, she began as a volunteer while looking for work and had recently begun working as a coordinator of education. She is learning English and understands it moderately well but doesn't feel comfortable speaking it.

**Beatriz:** Beatriz was 43 years old at the time of the interview. She has worked for 30 years in the US, currently as a crossing guard. She has five children: 4 sons and one daughter. She understands a little English but doesn't know how to speak the language.

**Cristina:** Cristina, age 36, came to the US from rural Mexico twelve years prior. She has three children: one son and two daughters. She occasionally works as a housecleaner, but primarily cares for her children and home. She understands a little English but does not know how to speak the language.

### **Interview setting**

**Joanna:** *I walk in through the doors of the elementary school and greet the security guard. I sign in and get a sticker label that says "Visitor." This is my third time visiting the organization, so I know where to go: down the hall past the kindergarten classrooms and the coats and lunch boxes hanging in open lockers. A class of first graders comes into the hallway, and the male teacher motions them to the side so I can pass. The walls are lined with murals of traditional Mexican scenes and characters: Pancho Villa, Frida Kahlo, Aztec ceremonies and pyramids (I took pictures of them). I*

*walk in to the smell of coffee. Ana Maria and Cristina are sitting at a table talking about their kids and school while eating Mexican pastries. There are two toddlers in the corner where there is an area full of toys, a play kitchen and books for children, and there is another older woman watching over them. Ana Maria invites me to a coffee, and I sit with them at the table. They continue to talk. I see handouts of presentations and fliers and notice that they are about how to handle aggression. Cristina enters about five minutes later. We all say good morning. She sits down with a cloth bag with a crossing guard vest inside of it.*

*They continue their conversation (in Spanish). They all seem to be parents of the school as they are discussing something one of the teachers told them. Cristina joins in on the conversation. They talk for another few minutes, and I wait for the conversation to die down before I begin.*

*I have a few blank sheets of paper in front of me. I explain who I am and that I am interested in talking with them about their thoughts on wellness; what wellness is to them and what they think is important to ensure wellness in their families. I explain that I would like to record our conversation so that I can remember everything word-for-word, but we won't use names and they don't have to answer anything if they don't want to. They all agree.*

*I begin the tape recorder and ask the first question...*

### **Excerpt 1**

**Joanna:** What does wellbeing mean to you?

*[They all look at each other and there is an awkward pause.]*

**Ana Maria:** For me...well-being means to have what is needed to be daily ok and I am especially worried if we have savings; if tomorrow me or my husband cannot work, to have what's needed to continue. If we can pay for the house, if we are up to date on our monthly bills; this is on one side. On the other is health. That my kids are healthy, my husband is healthy, and that I am too.

**Beatriz:** Well-being is to be healthy. For myself, if I am ok then I think my kids will be healthy too. And that they are healthy too. If someone is healthy then there is so much stress that you can't be well. When one is healthy then everything else comes after that.

**Joanna:** And for you?

**Cristina:** Well-being, for me, like the others said, to be well, in health, economically, or if there isn't any money, I know that in case of emergency, that you have somewhere to go to get work. In my case I only have the support of my husband, so if something happens to my children, to have some place to go to make money. Or, in the reverse case, if something happens to me and my husband ends up alone, that he has some way to get help. Also, well, to be good with the people that surround us, no? To be in good communication, or in everything. You know there may be some people we encounter that we don't like very much, but you know, not taking this too personal....like....be...um... ...how can I say this... one priority to have in mind y know how to deal with things, same thing with other people, maybe to have better communication

*[children talking in the background]*

**Joanna:** And in this case, if someone doesn't have these good relations with those around us, what might be something that could happen

**Cristina:** Continue, no? Continue on.

**Joanna:** If someone has a challenge, or bad feeling, what can be one of the effects to well-being?

**Ana Maria:** Emotionally it affects you because, if you don't have the sort of relationship you were hoping for, you could feel rejected. If this bothers you, you can feel rejected, you don't feel involved or taken into consideration, and that affects you emotionally, and it affects the dynamic of the family. Because now you're not paying attention to the things that are really important, because you're thinking about why someone didn't accept you for the way that you want to be accepted. So, it takes time and energy thinking about the other people instead of doing what's important

*[Joanna senses a distance, or separation, between herself as researcher, and the women being created by her note taking and feels that it is having a negative effect on the flow and comfort of the conversation - at this point she stops taking notes]*

## **Excerpt 2**

**Joanna:** Earlier you spoke of "standards", what are these standards that you all think that you should follow, and are these standards mostly for women specifically?

**Ana Maria:** For the most part, yes, for the women, because in our culture, men, they don't have problems, because if they had problems they don't act like that because, you know, everything can be fixed, they're "macho" they, everything can be fixed, no,

so instead they hide behind a bottle of liquor. And there, they deal with it, and as a woman, she is “weak” she spends all her time crying, but really you are reflecting what you feel, or what you aren’t allowed to say because you’re considered weak, so these standards are that all the time the woman is “chismosa”- a gossip, or she spends all her time crying, you are lazy, you have nothing to do so you spend your time crying, you aren’t doing anything if you have time to cry or feel bad or feel sad, so the woman always has to be active so she is considered well. If she is active, you are considered well.

**Beatriz:** Yeah

**Ana Maria:** If you don’t stay busy then you have the time to cry, complain. If nothing has happened. They say to you “look, you’re not dead yet, you’re fine. So when I do die

**Joanna:** Hah

**Ana Maria:** Then that’s when something really has happened.

**Joanna:** Hah

**Ana Maria:** So it’s like “everything is fine, you have no reason to be complaining, in life there are problems. So if you are complaining, then it is you that’s breaking something, so this is the standard: that we shouldn’t complain. Because we are alive.

**Joanna:** So this is a standard of woman and man, or how is it different?

**Ana Maria:** Yes, because like me, as a man, I have the same problems, but look at me I don’t complain, so I am fine. But that doesn’t mean that you don’t have problems. That’s the difference. Because for us, that’s why they say to us “look at you, why are you complaining, I also have problems, but I am not complaining”. Well you aren’t complaining verbally, but more likely your frustrations are being reflected in other ways; you are drinking, you’re more aggressive with the kids, [*desquitandose*] giving me a hard time that I shouldn’t be complaining because you’re quiet about it so you expect me to be too.

**Beatriz:** Si. Asi es

**Ana Maria:** So like “you shouldn’t be speaking either, you shouldn’t talk, that’s a thing of crazy people”

**Beatriz:** Si

**Ana Maria:** If you go with a counselor, or a psychologist. If you say that something is going on in your life but you are crazy, you are exaggerating.

**Joanna:** Were you wanting to say something?

**Ana Maria:** Another thing that I think about when it comes to standards, it makes me think about the way we are supposed to dress. Like the way a woman should and should not be. In our culture a woman should not be out all the time on the streets. It has happened to me here, the comments like “why do you spend so much time out on the street” “what are you doing” or like because the woman has to be in the house

**Beatriz:** Ha, si

**Cristina:** Si

**Ana Maria:** The woman always needs to be in the house because that way they have control. If not, then what will happen tomorrow to your family. So the woman doesn't have the right to travel, or to travel alone, or if she does only if her husband is with her, and leaving the children, no, because if you do it's your fault, because if the husband does something wrong, or it's like the woman is the mother of her children, but also of her husband. If the husband does something or forgets to do something, it's your fault...

**Joanna:** Hmm

**Beatriz:** Ah Si

**Ana Maria:** You as a woman you have to be the one responsible

**Beatriz:** Yes

**Ana Maria:** If he didn't do something this, it's because you didn't make him do it

**Beatriz:** Ha asi es.

**Ana Maria:** If he does something it's because you didn't set limits , so all of this falls on the woman, everything. My husband said to me one time, we were talking about this and he told me “it's just that the major part of the responsibility is on you” and I said “no but it's both of our responsibility because they are your children and mine” and he said “yes they are both of ours, but you have more responsibility” so it's like as

much as they may want to open up their mind, they fall into the same thing that the woman is responsible for everything

**Beatriz:** yeah like if the kids don't do well in school, if they get bad grades

**Ana Maria:** Good or bad, it is you that takes all of it, even when it comes to them. You are responsible for them too. And then it's like "mmm look how you are dressed" Like now you got married and you're wearing a skirt just a little bit shorter, "why are you dressing like that if you have your husband" no it's not for that. If you arrive a little later than normal it's like "but whyyyy". If you don't make food it's like "but why" or it's like the woman has her roles super defined and they are in the house, and with a submissive attitude. And if you don't then you aren't a woman, you aren't a good woman.

**Beatriz:** Yeah and above all of this like what happens to a lot of us is that you um you now, you work and get home to the house, and it's like me right now I left work at 9:30, I work here outside, and my husband sent me a message, I just talked to him over the phone because I had a question and he didn't answer, because maybe he fell asleep because he woke up early to take our daughter to school, and so he's tired, but now he writes me a message "where are you, how come you aren't here yet"

**Joanna:** Ha ha

**Beatriz:** So for me this makes me stressed, it makes me nervous, I mean really, there is food in the house so why.... This makes me feel bad, it makes me nervous, it makes me stressed.

**Joanna:** Yeah I wanted to ask how you feel about that....

**Ana Maria:** Uh huh, si

**Beatriz:** *(talking over Joanna)* Really, it's true, it makes me stressed

**Joanna:** About that pressure

**Ana Maria:** Ha, ha si si.

**Beatriz:** *(talking over C)* Tired, pressured

**Cristina:** I say to my husband, they're *(inaudible)* men

**Ana Maria:** And other thing, now that she said something about working, sometimes I have heard things even from other women, from women themselves, that say “but why are you going to work, what your husband makes isn’t enough, your husband isn’t enough of a man to...or tell my daughters that they need to find a man so that they don’t have to work” and I say it is not for comfort it is for personal satisfaction to be able to say “I can do it”, no? Because the money will be for what it’s for...

**Cristina:** Si

**Ana Maria:** Because you should also look for something meaningful, to get ahead. Not depend on someone. But even the woman, I think it’s for so much, as if, it’s like if your husband makes enough to support you

**Beatriz:** why go to work

**Ana Maria:** Then that’s good. How good everything, and you stay in the house, but I don’t think this is....happiness

### **Excerpt 3**

**Ana Maria:** As a woman is, so are your children. They bring with them the idea of what their role is, they’ve had it with them since they were little girls, and then with marriage, and everything, so now my sister in- laws (*cunadas*) they come and say “no you have no reason to...or it’s like they see it (*al contrario*) from the opposite point of view, they do it the opposite way; “you have no reason to be in the house, no reason to be doing this thing and the other thing”. It’s like they go to the other extreme.

**Joanna:** Hmm

**Ana Maria:** They are independent, I go to work. I have no reason to come home and do anything...but anything for anything. You are in the house and even though I tell you that you have the same rights as I do, mama, you do the same, and now I play the role of the man too, or the daughters put (*toda la carga*) all of the responsibility on the mama.

**Joanna:** Hmmm

**Ana Maria:** Even though they tell her that you have no reason not to be doing stuff, you too can go out and work, you too can do it, you the same rights as them but they repeat the same (*patron*) role as the *machista* father, or it’s like the woman is also part of this same *machista* thinking, no? I don’t know if I am explaining myself?



**Joanna:** Hmm

**Ana Maria:** Or see it's because they grow up here, with a mom who was brought up in Mexico, or they always let her, she was always the one making the food, the one doing the things of the house , so now okay you do everything and you are also going to do all my stuff and I am going to go out and work and not do anything.

**Joanna:** Ohh the girls

**Ana Maria:** Yes so they repeat the *patron, the boss role*, of their papa.

**Joanna:** Hmm

**Ana Maria:** They're in the house and the mom is passing the broom underneath their feet, and the girls do absolutely nothing. The mom has to make the food otherwise there is nothing to eat, if not they just go out to buy it, *toda comprada* they buy everything, because they work so "I have money, so I don't do anything at home, I don't clean, personal things, I don't do anything". But why "Well because I don't, I am not gonna let these domestic chores humiliate me

**Joanna:** Hmmm

Ana Maria: Not , as if it is something beneficial for you, for your cleanliness, to be comfortable, instead they see it as something humiliating, as if they see it as humiliating,

**Joanna:** Oh as if now the woman shouldn't...

**Ana Maria:** Yes shouldn't have to do anything

**Joanna:** Oh like now the woman shouldn't lower herself to this level...

**Ana Maria:** I've went off to study, I prepared myself I shouldn't have to touch anything related to the home

**Joanna:** But they still expect this of their mom

**Ana Maria:** They expect it of their mom. But they also expect that their dad won't tell their mom what to do (boss her around).

**Joanna:** Ahhh

**Ana Maria:** “You dad, you shouldn’t make demands of my mom that she make food, papa you shouldn’t demand of my mother that she have everything ready for you, you dad shouldn’t expect that my mom has to be here when you want her to, but me, as daughter, I do expect her to be here when I get here, Me as the daughter, I do expect that my mama has everything ready, me as the daughter I expect that that she keeps the house organized...

**Joanna:** Interesting

Ana Maria: And if I have a kid, have my mom take care of them and I am going to relax on the weekends, I am going, my mom was just here, let her do it. So this is how I feel conflicted, or yes you are *superando* achieving things, but why do you want you mom to stay in the same situation, why don’t you help her.

**Joanna:** And in this conversation today a lot came up about the challenges with girls..

**Ana Maria:** Yes

**Joanna:** More than with

**Joanna and Ana Maria together:** More than with the sons,

**Joanna:** that the boys are helping her, that they want to help her, “don’t let my mom do all this”

**Ana Maria:** Si

**Joanna:** And then in contrast

**Ana Maria:** Now it’s like

**Joanna:** The girls don’t want to do it

#### **Excerpt 4**

**Joanna:** Speaking about these differences in gender, how do you feel about religion, or the beliefs about religion, Catholicism or something more spiritual, thinking about these rules and standards. Is there a *corriente*- currently related to religion?

**Beatriz:** Ha ha. Well my husband is of some religion, who knows what that religion is, they don’t have that here but my husband says that in Mexico they do, and I am Catholic. But he has never told me that I shouldn’t go to church, or mass, or that I can’t

pray at night and when we baptized our children, because we baptized them, and they had their first communion, he was there at the church. So in this there hasn't been much of a conflict. He respects that, up until now we have been okay with this

**Ana Maria:** I think the religion has a lot to do with how men act like this. Because sometimes it brings to light, I don't know why because sometimes they don't like it. Sometimes, men don't like to go, they're not really in love with the idea of going...

**Beatriz:** To church

**Ana Maria:** to church but they know the bible

**Beatriz:** Yes

**Ana Maria:** Not by chapter or verse but they know in general terms what the bible says because sometimes they will say "you have no reason to be on the street because in the bible it says that the woman is here to be in her house". There is a part that says that the woman lives to be fertile in her house, with her husband and

**Beatriz:** Uh huh

**Ana Maria:** Taking care of her kids that God gives her. The kids that God gives to you, not the kids that you wish to have. But the husband doesn't say that they should do that, that's where they get it from to be able to say "in the bible it says that you should stay in the house, in the bible it says that the woman shouldn't do this thing and the other. Look here the Virgin Mary didn't dress like that, so it is like they shield themselves a lot behind what the religion is to justify their behavior.

**Beatriz:** Well those that know about the bible, because there are many that don't even know

**Ana Maria:** Yes

**Beatriz:** For those that read it, no. Ha ha. Or actually it could be that they know it because it is what their parents have told them, no, that the bible...

**Beatriz:** Of course, and the more kids you have

**Cristina:** More complicated, no?

**Beatriz:** Yes

**Cristina:** And then having *eeejole* a man that is *machista*. In my case, my husband isn't the machista he is, like when you were talking about religion. Oh he loves it. If he hears that there is going to be an event by the church, and if I haven't told him, oh he gets upset like "why didn't you tell me"

**Joanna:** And do you think this helps with mental health?

**Cristina:** Yes

**Joanna:** Personally or for your husband?

**Beatriz:** Yes

**Cristina:** Because he tells me that in Mexico, he is from Mexico City, he was born there, his *abuelita*- grandma, his mom they made him participate a lot. And then he, to be in a city is really different than being in *un rancho* and I said, oh yeah here we didn't do that, and then Sunday comes and he is like "Ayyy we missed Mass, lets' go to the one at 6", regardless of what we have to do we go. Before anything else I have health, I have problems, this that and the other but everything I have because of my God. I don't know, he says, but if right now I get sick and only that's when I remember, or when I don't have work, or he says, if I just accumulate accumulate accumulate money and never remember because I have too much money in the bank then I won't remember of God and it shouldn't be like that

**Beatriz:** And does it help with mental health? And I say it does. Because they say for us the prayer is really powerful

**Cristina:** It's healing, no?

**Beatriz:** Yes. And my husband always says that one should pray. If someone feels bad or even if one doesn't feel bad, just on arising one needs to pray and give thanks to God. So I think that mentally this helps a lot, a lot. Because I have seen this, with my son, the oldest, I had a lot of problems with my son when he was in high school. But, me, everyday, I would pray I would ask God that if my son was bad I asked to put him on the right path and now he is in college and I told this other women "I do believe in God" because physically, mentally it has helped me because I was really bad with my son and it helped me. No, I do believe in miracles, I do believe in all of this because it helped me a lot. Every day every day don't forget about him because he doesn't forget about us

**Ana Maria:** Yes, religion is really important. I don't know anything else about outside our culture, but within our culture, which is what I know, it is *really* important. Religion.

**Joanna:** For well being

**Ana Maria:** Mmm hmm for the well-being. Me with my kids every day at night before we go to bed we kneel and we pray and we give thanks, and sometimes we forget. For whatever reason, maybe we had a problem with them and we punished them or something and sometimes my son will wake up and say "mami I am having nightmares, I can't sleep, mami please let's pray to my *Angel de La Guardia* so that I stopped having nightmares. And he will pray in the middle of the night and that I have to accompany him because if not I am going to have nightmares mama, so help me pray. And the next day he will wake up and say "mami what do you think? I didn't have any more nightmares. Tonight we better not forget to pray to *mi Angel de La Guardia*" and I say *ok hijo*.

So this is also something that one is taught from a young age

**Cristina:** The *ninios* already know, no?

**Ana Maria:** Yes to console oneself, well that there is someone superior that helps us, no?

**Beatriz:** Of course of course

**Cristina:** Yeah or even with tests my son says, "Oh mami I had a tough exam" as now he is isn't going so much to English now, but last year he was and he says "Ayyy no, I have noticed that when I pray I get an A"

**Beatriz:** Yeah that happens. If one has a lot of faith in God

**Cristina:** Oh faith, I believe it

**Beatriz:** When my daughter, when she was in 8<sup>th</sup>, she couldn't pass the Constitution test

**Joanna:** Mmmm

**Beatriz:** And you know this is crucial to pass the grade and this day she woke up and said that she had to pass the exam and before I left for work I went to where I have the Virgin Mary and the son Jesus and I prayed for her, and yes she passed!

**Cristina:** Ha ha

**Beatriz:** And she says to me Yes I passed. And I said, do you know why? Because I prayed for you and she said, really and I said yes in the morning I prayed for you and it is something, (eyes watering) oh my God

**Cristina:** Really miraculous

**Beatriz:** So powerful

### **Excerpt 5**

*Beatriz and Cristina have other obligations and need to leave Tcep. We all say our goodbyes and I continue speaking with Ana Maria.*

**Joanna:** the only other thing I was curious about, let's see if I can say it clearly ummm the idea about, uh, it interests me to understand how health professionals confront or treat what is mental health here in the US, their way of treating it the way...culturally the way of treating mental health how is this different, or how is this concept or how does it conflict with what you all spoke about a little today, about being crazy or about looking for services. Or..

**Ana Maria:** Here in the US the idea of mental health is more natural, in Mexico, maybe because of the places that we come from, which are rural, there are less services, less access to these sorts of things. But here it seems more natural and even in the school they refer to. Or if your kid has even the slightest detail they refer you to mental health or if you go to the clinic and there is a minimum detail, like he isn't talking, or something or its like they are really on top of every stage of development of the child.... and it's like it makes you enter into this sort of dynamic because here it's about taking the *nino* in every month, every month to the clinic for an assessment. In Mexico, no in Mexico if you get sick then you take them in, if not, then everything is fine. And here no, it's like once they are born every month, every month until they are 1. So that is where they start evaluating, asking you questions, and if they note even the slightest detail they send you to a specialist. So that way you start entering into this dynamic where you see it as more natural.

**Joanna:** Mmm hmm

**Ana Maria:** So like it's no big deal, and if there is something out of the ordinary, you address it early and that's much better

**Joanna:** Mmm hmm

**Ana Maria:** And they will have a normal development. And it makes you feel less guilty if something does happen because perhaps in our culture, we are like, if a child is born sick or present some sort of disorder, psychological or mental, we are at fault because we did something, we weren't paying attention or something happened and we weren't paying attention. But here, no here we see it as more natural. These things can happen and if you catch it on time everything can be resolved.

**Joanna:** Mmm hmmm

**Ana Maria:** So I think it has to do with the dynamic that one enters into here in the US that is, it's seen in a different way. And there, in Mexico, speaking about religion, if something happens, if your child presents with some sort of disorder we are often inclined to go to the *curandera*- healer or prayers, or we go to the priest, we find a lot of refuge in this religion so that the Padre speaks with the person that is having the problem, or if the child is presenting some sort of ups and downs we ask that the priest helps us, gives us advice because we see him as wiser, but we don't like to recognize, or that it's hard for us to recognize that we had some sort of psychological problem because immediately after we categorize it into this idea of being crazy.

**Ana Maria:** I don't know if I responded?

**Joanna:** Yes yes, no and the part about going to the *curandero* uh what does that consist of?

**Ana Maria:** Okay I am going to give you an example. For example if you go to the doctor and for as much medicine that he is giving you, you keep having the same symptoms, then it's like "you know what, go to Don Juan or Dona Lupe and they know how to give a good cleansing and the rest" and then they pray over you with plants, they cleanse you, sometimes they ask for photographs. Because a lot of times they say that it is because of *brujeria*- sorcery.

**Joanna:** Hmmm

**Ana Maria:** Have you heard about *brujeria*? That there are these bad things that people do to you with their vibration and bad energy. So they say that sometimes it's not because of an illness but rather what someone else does to your body. And this is when one is inclined to do to the healer *curandero*. Or sometimes, or better said, they always are the ones more accessible because there, there are 2 or 3 in one small place so that is where you turn to instead of going to the doctor or to the psychologist because over there, there aren't any. Equally if...

**Joanna:** There aren't any there or it's a different concept of...?

**Ana Maria:** There are, there are, but there are very few, in rural areas, and they are really expensive. So ultimately there have begun to be a few more, but it is with help from the government, from the municipalities, they bring people, there is one psychologist, or its' like we are talking about having 1 therapist for 300 children over there, and 1 psychologist for 5 or 6 villages, so that's like for 5,000 people. So why is that? It is because it really isn't seen as a necessity, as a priority. If the child isn't learning or if something is going on, it is because you're *flojita*, lazy. Or because you aren't giving him all the attention that he needs. I don't know it's not like it's about the kid and something has to be done. That is like the last resort, to go to the doctor, or then it is when, categorically (*de plano*) you went to the curanderos, you gave him the tea that your in law recommended, if you gave them *cinturonazos* (belted them) and it didn't work then, ah hah, lets see if we take them to the doctor, but that is seen as the last resort because, because you can't accept "how is it that I am going to the psychologist, that's for extreme situation", or its like it is still seen as a taboo over there.

**Joanna:** Mm hmm. And here, do you think people still go to the priest, to the curandero AND to the doctor?

**Ana Maria:** Here, no, in terms of going to the priest, I feel like it happens less because now there isn't a connection. Because the villages are smaller the parents have time, they know, or it's like there is time to build this relationship, this connection. Here, no, there are different cultures, you aren't always in the same church, because you are moving, or because they frequently change the priest, so it's like there isn't this connection.

The *curanderos*...pause. Well by distance they do it. Now, it is more like from here they send the photo to Mexico and from there they are doing work on you.

**Joanna:** Ahhh using the photo?

**Ana Maria:** Uh huh using the photo, tell me your age and everything, give me a photo and from here I am curing you. But now it's like it has transformed into a business

**Joanna:** Mmm

**Ana Maria:** it's like now the *curanderos* charge a lot. Like "oh where is the patient from, the US? Okay I am going to charge you 5 or 6,000 pesos (\$300 US in 2019). 20,000. Or it is now a big business because they are curing from a distance. With a photo. But so much so much here, I don't think so because it's more like they refer you



to a clinic or they refer you to places where you need to go and sometimes, if one person uses alternative medicine and you get to the clinic they scold you. Haha...

**Joanna:** Oh it's like...

**Ana Maria:** "Why didn't you come sooner? Why did you use that? It made it worse". So now it's like we have this reservation, "oh maybe I better not use this" because then "the doctor"

**Joanna:** Hmmm

**Ana Maria:** What are they going to say to me? Or with the kids, here they are so taken care of, or the care of children, you now are afraid to give them tea because the doctor told you that you shouldn't give it to them. So now if you give it to them and then I go to the clinic and something happens then they are going to be on top of you. So now it's not like teas like it is Mexico, *los tesitos*, massage them with a certain plant so that their *golpe* injury gets better. Here it is like right away you go to the doctor.

**Joanna:** Uh huh

**Ana Maria:** But now it's more due to this fear, that if something happens to my child and I am not attentive, they immediately come after you like "what were you doing, you were mistreating them.

**Joanna:** Mmm hmmm

**Ana Maria:** Like it's more something, like they always have their eye on...and it's so weird because so many things that happen to kids and one being watched all the time so it's like sometimes, I don't understand it here.

**Joanna:** Ahh so it's that perhaps people here still believe in the teas or in other community practices, let's say, but it's because of the fear of...

**Ana Maria:** Yes

**Joanna:** That something

**Ana Maria:** That something could happen.

**Joanna:** That maybe they would call, maybe

**Ana Maria:** Yes

**Joanna:** authority?

**Ana Maria:** Yes, Exactly.

**Joanna:** Like DCFS?

**Ana Maria:** Yes

**Joanna:** That they are being mistreated, or not taking care of

**Ana Maria:** Not attentive to them adequately. So sometimes you limit yourself because you think “No what could happen if I give it to them and something happens.”

**Joanna:** Or are there times that they give it to them but don’t say

**Ana Maria:** Exactly.

**Joanna:** They don’t share it with their doctor

**Ana Maria:** No. It’s more like if you give it to them, you don’t say anything to the doctor.

**Joanna:** yeah

**Ana Maria:** And it is like *un acuerdo*, an agreement made in the house that if you give it to them you don’t tell the doctor

**Joanna:** Yeah. And what could the doctors do so that there isn’t this fear or so if they do use it they aren’t afraid to say anything.

**Ana Maria:** Maybe it’s to have this opening up with the community, give it time to get to know the way the community works with something happens in the house, and not see it as something negligent

**Joanna:** Mmm hmm

**Ana Maria:** Or ignorant on the part of the community. Take the opportunity to get a little more involved with community work. Why do they do it, and really get to know the patients that you are attending, because it’s like it is so fast, and we are like numbers, you know? And we know that we all have work to do, no? It’s like they don’t stop to talk or ask what happened, why did you do this? See it as more natural instead of

criminalizing it right away or making someone feel like this. I think it takes a slower practice, more personalized

**Joanna:** mmm hmm

**Ana Maria:** So yeah that's what it would be. To help us to feel this sort of trust. And this is the difference there too. There there are more private doctor, it's not as much about going to the hospital, it's more private doctors, so

**Joanna:** Hmmm. Private as in...

**Ana Maria:** For example, it is a person that studied and then offer their consultations services outside of the clinic

**Joanna:** Uh huh

**Ana Maria:** In their house

**Joanna:** Something more perso...

**Ana Maria:** uh huh something more personal. Exactly. So sometimes it's these doctors that left from this same little *ranchito* and they go to study and then come back to the same *ranchito*. And then they're the first doctor and then they return and ya, the whole world goes but now there is this relationship because they know each other; they know the dad, the mom. There is this community relationship that makes it easier to say "ay doctor I gave them this tea" or they give them this opportunity to share their experiences. Because it is like a more natural relationship because they have already known each other for years. And actually still today not just the healer, you call over there and say "hey I am not feeling well" and they will send things from there over here, because you are afraid here that they are watching.