

Cultural anthropology

with Dr Janet Page-Reeves and the Tertulias team

Talking points

KNOWLEDGE

1. What are the consequences of social isolation?
2. What happens during a Tertulias peer support group?

COMPREHENSION

3. Why do Mexican immigrant women commonly experience social isolation?
4. Why is it important for the team to conduct a randomised controlled trial?
5. Of the data collected from participants during the randomised controlled trial, which are qualitative and which are quantitative?

APPLICATION

6. As Mexican immigrant women are considered a 'hard to reach' population, how do you think the team advertised the Tertulias groups and recruited participants for their randomised controlled trial?

ANALYSIS

7. How have Mexican women living in New Mexico benefitted from the Tertulias groups?
8. How have the life experiences of each team member contributed to their involvement in the Tertulias project?
9. Why is it important to address health-related issues through an anthropological lens?

EVALUATION

10. Have you ever moved to a new neighbourhood or school, or even to a new country? If so, what was it like trying to settle into a new environment? If not, how do you think you would feel if you had to find your place in a new community? In either case, how do you think you could benefit from peer support?

Activities

1. Design a peer support group to reduce social isolation

Elderly people are another group in society who commonly experience social isolation. How would you adapt the Tertulias model to create a peer support group for elderly people in your community?

Consider the following:

- What will happen during your peer support group meetings?
- Where will meetings take place? (e.g., in a community centre, online, etc.)
- How will you advertise your group to elderly people in your community?
- How will you ensure your group is accessible to the target audience? (e.g., Can they travel to an in-person meeting? Do they have the technology to meet online?)
- How do you hope elderly people will benefit from your peer support group?


2. Design a randomised controlled trial to evaluate your intervention

Having designed a peer support group, how would you use a randomised controlled trial to scientifically evaluate whether peer support groups reduce social isolation among elderly people?

Consider the following:

- How many participants will you recruit for your trial?
- How will you recruit them?
- How will you randomly assign participants to either the 'control' arm or to attend the peer support group?
- How long will you run your trial for?
- What data will you collect from each participant before, during and after the trial?
- How will you analyse the data to determine whether peer support groups reduce social isolation among elderly people?
- What outcomes do you expect your data would show?

More resources

- Visit the team's Futurum webpage to find the article and activity sheet in Spanish: www.futurumcareers.com/the-importance-of-community-for-reducing-social-isolation
- The team made this video for participants in their randomised control trial to explain the importance of randomisation:
 www.youtube.com/watch?v=layi60vSQNQ

- The American Anthropological Association has educational resources for teachers and students: www.americananthro.org/LearnAndTeach
- Sapiens is the anthropology magazine, with articles about topics from all branches of anthropology: www.sapiens.org
- The Society for Cultural Anthropology has articles and podcasts about topics related to cultural anthropology: www.culanth.org