Research has revealed that Latina/o students engage in alcohol use disorders at a rate higher than their White, Asian, and African American counterparts. A national survey by SAMHSA found that 24.1% of Latina/o emerging adults engage in binge-drinking. It is estimated that 1 in 5 Latina/os, over the age of 18, have an alcohol use disorder. Alcohol use has major implications for the public health systems. In fact, a study by TRICARE (Military Health System) has revealed that approximately $425 million in expenditures are tied to high alcohol use.

### DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination occurs when an individual is treated differently due to their perceived membership in a social group. Discriminatory behaviors can include negative feelings, attitudes, and stereotyping. Ethnic minority groups, including Latina/os, are typically the targets of discriminatory experiences. High rates of alcohol use among Latina/o college students have been found to be linked to perceived discrimination.

### COPING AS A MODERATOR

Coping is deliberate, conscious efforts to endure stressful situations. Engaged coping is defined as active attempts to manage stress through processes such as problem-solving, social support, and emotional expression. Disengaged coping is defined as removing oneself from the situation and trying to get away from the stress through problem avoidance, self-criticism, and social withdrawal.

Cultural forms of coping, specific to Latina/os, include fatalismo, religiosidad, and familialismo. Fatalismo is the belief that one has no power to change the outcome of events. Religiosidad is the practice of incorporating religious beliefs into everyday life. Familismo is the belief that one’s family is central to success in life. These cultural values and beliefs are important to consider when assessing coping strategies among Latina/o students.

### METHODS

#### PARTICIPANTS
- **n**: 796 Mexican descent emerging adults
- **Age**: 18-25 (M = 19.45; SD = 1.63)
- **Gender**: 66.3% women; 33.7% men

#### INSTRUMENTS
- **Frequency of Exposure subscale** (from Perceived Racism Scale for Latina/os; α = .97)
- **Responses to Stress Questionnaire** (RSQ; α = .86–.88)
- **The Coping Inventory** (unpublished; α = .87–.92)
- **Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test scale** (AUDIT; α = .89)

#### DISCRIMINATION AND ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION BASED COPING ON OVERALL ALCOHOL USE

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#### DISCRIMINATION AND COPING ON OVERALL ALCOHOL USE

Higher reports of discriminatory experiences will be related to increased alcohol use. Higher reports of disengaged forms of coping will put one at risk for stronger associations in the relationship between discrimination and alcohol use. Higher reports of engaged forms of coping will be protective in the relationship between discrimination and alcohol use. Higher coping through family (familismo coping), religion (religiosidad coping), and ethnic identification will be protective in the relationship between discrimination and alcohol use. Higher reports of coping through fatalistic self-talk (fatalismo coping) will put one at risk for stronger associations in the relationship between discrimination and alcohol use.

### RESULTS

#### DISCRIMINATION AND COPING ON OVERALL ALCOHOL USE

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### CONCLUSIONS

Discrimination was negatively related to alcohol use, such that higher levels of discrimination were tied to lower levels of alcohol use. Primary control engagement coping was associated with lower levels of alcohol use. Greater use of fatalismo was tied to greater alcohol use. There was a significant interaction effect such that greater use of ethnic identification based coping consistently placed Latina/o students at greater risk of higher levels of alcohol use when experiencing discrimination.

### IMPlications

Ethnic identification coping may be a risk factor in the face of discrimination on alcohol use for Latina/os. Findings can be used in college counseling centers to identify poor coping strategies amongst Latina/o students to protect against negative effects of discrimination on alcohol use. Meanwhile, adaptive coping mechanisms can be used as preventative measures and taught within therapeutic settings to Latina/os facing discrimination.

### References