

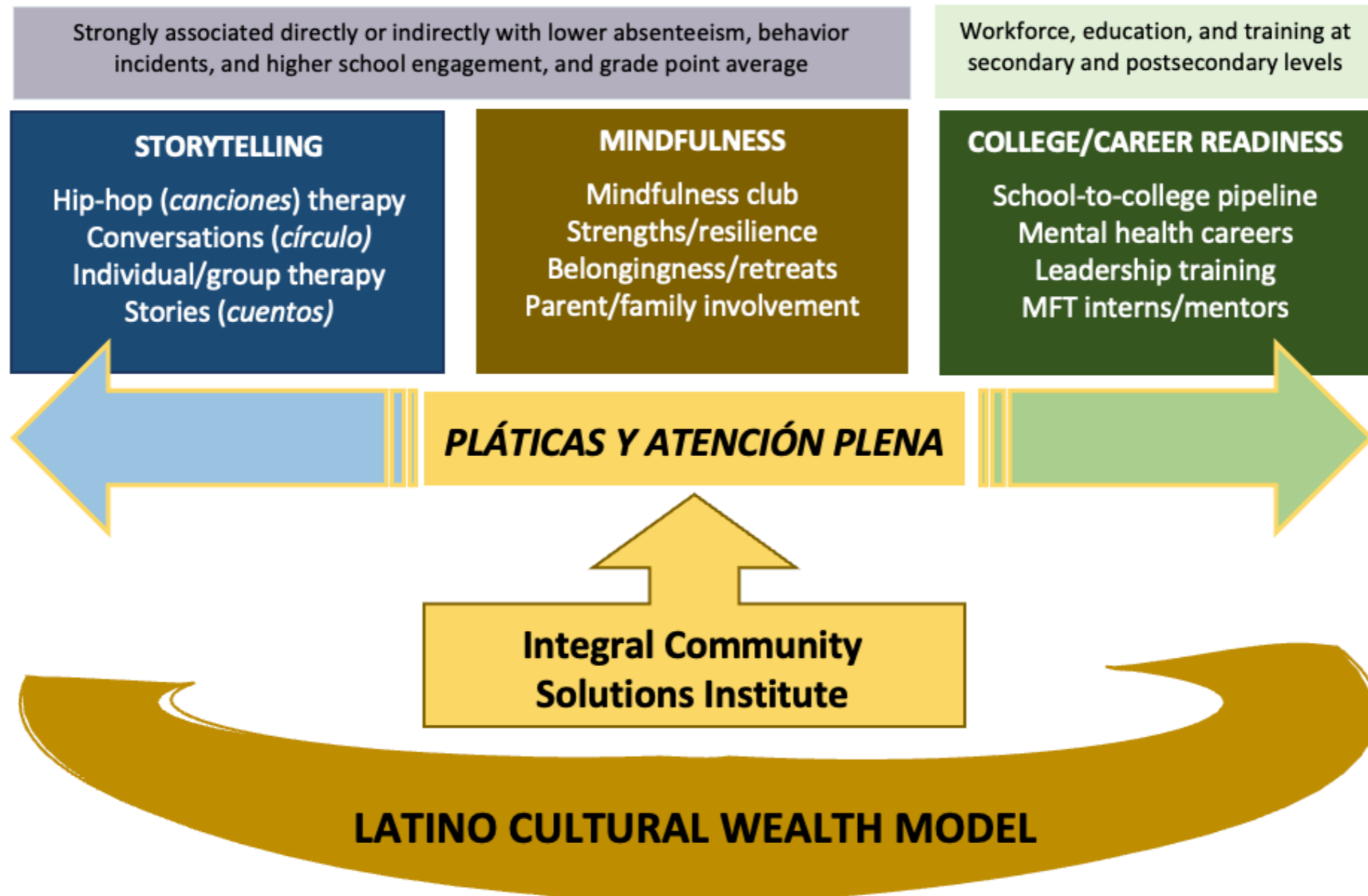


Integral Community Solutions Institute

P*láticas y Atención Plena* is a cultural blend of storytelling and self-awareness. Being aware of our senses and state of mind through our thoughts and emotions. *Pláticas* are a means of supporting youth who feel lost in the educational system and struggling with the many stressors of life. *Pláticas* can be understood as spaces that provide students with opportunities to express themselves and share their stories. *Pláticas* is a culturally and linguistically relevant approach to support the social-emotional aspect of youth's lives. *Pláticas*, help youth stay connected and supported in their school and community.

Pláticas y Atención Plena is guided by principles and practices across multicultural and multidisciplinary areas including storytelling, mindfulness, hip-hop culture and art forms, culturally competent and relevant mental health practices, and the Community Cultural Wealth Model. Mental health services are delivered through individual counseling, small groups, and mindfulness practices.

Atención plena or mindfulness means creating a culture of peace and free of stress through education, practice, and personal development. Mindfulness is associated with reducing psychological distress, anxiety, depression, and negative affect. “*When I came [to this alternative school], I didn't like it... Then I met [my ICSI therapist]... I was seen as a bright student... ever since the first day, I have not been suspended [or disciplined],”* said one student. *Pláticas y Atención Plena* is a youth-centered program. It reaffirms them, empowers them, and builds their self-efficacy to succeed in school. Another student stated, “*Mindfulness [helped me] build self-control, discipline, and resilience... [it] inspires positive change”*.

FIGURE. 1 *Pláticas y Atención Plena* Model

Pláticas y Atención Plena is consistent with the [Latino] Cultural Wealth Model, by focusing on people's strengths and assets and not on deficits. The application of this framework helps youth to align their stories—during storytelling and hip-hop therapy sessions—with their culture and lived experiences. Youth make meaningful connections with other's stories during mindfulness and establish healthy relationships with a shared sense of purpose, to be agents of change and advance healthy communities. See Figure 1.

Pláticas y Atención Plena functions as a protective factor—culture, spirituality, connectedness, presence of a caring adult—that can change the life trajectory of youth by improving their self-esteem and self-efficacy. *Pláticas y Atención Plena* makes it possible for youth to connect or reconnect with their culture through existential experiences and meaningful narration.

YOUTH SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

48%

REPRESENTS THE DROP IN BEHAVIORAL INCIDENTS. THAT MEANS LESS STUDENTS ENGAGED IN BEHAVIORS THAT REQUIRED THEM TO BE DISCIPLINED OR SUSPENDED FROM SCHOOL, COMPARED TO

24%

FROM THE PRIOR YEAR. THE PRESENCE OF A CARING ADULT AND PROVIDING A SAFE SPACE TO SHARE AND LISTEN TO LIFE STORIES ULTIMATELY TRANSLATED FROM CONNECTION WITH THERAPIST TO CONNECTION WITH SCHOOL LIFE.

CULTURE AS A PROTECTIVE FACTOR

76%

OF PARTICIPANTS PERCEIVED THEIR CULTURE AS A STRENGTH AND AS A POSITIVE FACTOR IN HELPING THEM FEEL EMPOWERED AND EMBRACE WHO THEY ARE, COMPARED TO

69%

OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE PRETEST. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT FINDING BECAUSE IT HIGHLIGHTS INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AS AN ASSET DEVELOPED AS A RESULT OF THE LATINO CULTURE.

82%

OF PARTICIPANTS AGREED TO STRONGLY AGREED THAT THEY NOW HAVE PEOPLE WITH WHOM THEY CAN DO ENJOYABLE THINGS. THIS FINDING SUGGESTS THAT STUDENTS ARE FINDING COMFORT, A SENSE OF BELONGING, AND GAINING FULFILLMENT OUT OF *PLÁTICAS Y ATENCIÓN PLENA*.

77%

OF PARTICIPANTS AGREED TO STRONGLY AGREED WITH CARING THERAPISTS CREATE A RELAXING ATMOSPHERE WHERE THEY FEEL AT EASE COMMUNICATING ABOUT THIER LIFE EXPERIENCES THROUGH AN ART FORM.

76%

OF PARTICIPANTS AGREED TO STRONGLY AGREED THAT THEY NOW KNOW CARING ADULTS THAT THEY ARE COMFORTABLE TALKING TO ABOUT THEIR PROBLEMS AND MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES. AND, THESE CARING ADULTS USE LANGUAGE THAT YOUTH CAN UNDERSTAND AND RELATE TO.

76%

OF PARTICIPANTS AGREED TO STRONGLY AGREED THAT INTEGRAL COMMUNITY SOLUTION INSTITUTE'S THERAPISTS HAVE DEMONSTRATED RESPECT AND INTEREST IN THEIR RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL BELIEFS.

IN SUMARY, *PLÁTICAS Y ATENCIÓN PLENA* HAS SHOWN TO INCREASE YOUTHS:

1. SENSE OF PERSONAL VALUE AND SELF WORTH;
2. BELIEFS ON THEIR CAPACITY TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN SCHOOL AND LIFE;
3. MOTIVATION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT;
4. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE RISK FACTORS THEY ARE EXPOSED TO AND STRATEGIES TO CHANGE THEIR LIFE TRAJECTORY TO ACHIEVE MENTAL WELL-BEING;
5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THEIR LIVED/LIFE EXPERIENCES AS RESILIENCE AND NOT A DEFICIT; AND
6. COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS AND ASPIRATIONS TO PURSUE A CAREER IN MENTAL HEALTH.