



Profiles in Pride: Dora Arocho-Rodriguez, PsyD, Psychologist, Sunset Terrace Family Health Center



"A lot of my kids speak English, but the parents only speak Spanish," says Dr. Dora Arocho-Rodriguez, a psychologist at the Sunset Terrace Family Health Center. "Coming from a Latino culture, understanding their backgrounds—sometimes their religious beliefs, or the strong adherence to traditional gender roles—helps me show parents how to be more supportive toward their children."

Celebrating Pride Month

Parades are fun and a festive part of Pride, but there's so much more to Pride Month. Throughout the month of June, *Inside Health* is featuring special coverage of NYU Langone Health events, people, and programs that are advancing health equity for diverse LGBTQ+ communities.

Take Pride in Being HEI-Designated: Join Our Photo Campaign!

For the twelfth year in a row, NYU Langone Health has been designated an LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. Join us in applauding this exciting news and share what it means to you to be an LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader by submitting a photo on the [Employee Recognition Platform!](#)

Get all the details about the photo campaign and learn how to share your photos to help celebrate our status as an LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader [here](#).

In celebration of Pride Month and this year's theme "Reflect. Empower. Unite," Inside Health is featuring members of our LGBTQ+ community who are making a difference for patients and colleagues alike—and advancing health equity for all.

Dr. Dora Arocho-Rodriguez practices psychiatry and ambulatory behavioral health at the Sunset Terrace Family Health Center. She obtained her doctor of psychology degree in Puerto Rico and worked with the team as a staff psychologist from 2011 to 2019, then rejoined us in a full-time remote capacity in 2021. Dr. Arocho-Rodriguez offers care via telehealth from her office in Virginia, working in both English and Spanish with children and families who may otherwise have been unable to get services in person. She and her wife are also raising a daughter, Amelia, 5.

Making a difference, one patient at a time. Initially, I thought of going to medical school, but then I got interested in approaching healthcare within a more social context. So, I switched to psychology. I ended up in New York, and in fact, my first internship was at NYU Langone Health in 2006, though it was then known as Lutheran Medical Center. As a minority, I feel comfortable representing my communities as both a Latina and an LGBTQ+ person. I like to think I can instill hope in the children, teenagers, and families I see and contribute positively to their lives.

Listening and helping teenagers in need. I start with kids as young as age 8, then a full 40 percent of my clients are teenagers, who are growing up today with different pressures than a generation ago. When they don't feel like they meet the expectations of what they see on social media, some can become insecure and down on themselves. We spend a lot of time discussing the fact that social media is very different from reality. I tell them, "If you're having a fight with your brother or best friend, you're not going to post about it, right?" We talk about those kinds of distortions—the true facts vs. what social media is designed to lead you to believe.

Treatment sometimes extends to family members. With my Latino families, I often see parents put expectations on the children—like they need to see these kinds of grades or want them to be that kind of professional. It's a lot of burden and guilt for teenagers, sometimes carrying the family dreams. In my practice, we try to focus on the teenagers' strengths and highlight those, even when they might differ from their parents' wishes. I work with the parents too—that's crucial. A lot of my kids speak English, but the parents only speak Spanish. For me, coming from a Latino culture, understanding their backgrounds—sometimes their religious beliefs, or the strong adherence to traditional gender roles—helps me show parents how to be more supportive toward their children. I have one client, a Spanish-speaking mother, who has a child who is transitioning genders. She is having issues accepting the child's new identity. At the same time, the child is struggling with depression and anxiety and is getting services from a different psychologist in the clinic. The other provider and I do collaborative work, with the family's consent. We are working together to help both family members through this transition.

Creating a safe space for all communities. Minorities can sometimes be suspicious and hesitant about therapy. Some of the obstacles that make them hesitant can come from a real place like maybe they were treated poorly or discriminated against in a hospital setting. I understand that, as I've had some of those experiences myself. NYU Langone is constantly working toward being a more inclusive, culturally sensitive space for the LGBTQ+ community and the Latino community, and especially in Brooklyn. With all the Pride activities, webinars, and training sessions, things have really changed since I was an intern in 2006. With more and younger generations identifying as LGBTQ+ and as gender-diverse, enhancing awareness and providing training among healthcare professionals about LGBTQ+ issues is crucial to providing more comprehensive, sensitive, and respectful care. In my opinion, more training on this front across the healthcare field would be a big step toward equity.