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Health and Well-being: The Role of Tradition

During the last two decades, the United States has experienced an increase in the number of immigrants from Brazil. In addition to Brazilians being one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in the United States (Migration Policy Institute, 2009), these immigrants bring their cultural traditions with them. It is inevitable that we will encounter these cultural traditions in places of learning as well as health care. Developing an awareness of these traditions is integral to providing competent care as well as creating spaces and places of belonging on our campuses.

Diversity is everywhere in everyday interactions. People who come from different

was sold to North America. Most of the population of Bahia is descended from African Slaves. African culture has thrived and permeates the culture of Brazil.

The enslaved brought their cultural practices with them. Many of those traditions have persisted and flourished. One of the traditions that has survived slavery and has flourished in Brazil is the African-based religion of Candomblé. However, Candomblé is more than a religion – it is a resistance place. According to Claudia Santos [Mean Mahenduka] “Candomblé is a way of life... we are not only a religion, we are a people” (Personal Communication, July 13, 2022). Candomblé is a critical element of Afro Brazilian culture, manifested in food, clothes, music, dance and other artistic expressions, ethics, rituals, etc. (Omari-Tunkara, 2005). One of the persons, I interviewed (Alaye Brito) thinks that people continue to overcome adversities and inequities because of their engagement in Candomblé.

Spiritual well-being is a critical component of overall-well-being. A report from the Pew Foundation indicated that approximately 84 percent of the world’s population claim identity with a particular religious tradition (Pew Religious Landscape Study, 2018), and according to Diener et. al. (2011), 68% of people in the world say that religion is a significant part of their daily lives. In Brazil, Candomblé serves as both a place of religion and a health center. Many people go the Candomblé houses (terreiros) for physical and mental healing.

This GPA project has provided an in-depth understanding of the importance of the history of the African diaspora as a social political, and religious feature of current western culture. The goals of this project are to educate by building awareness and an understanding of cultural traditions, particularly Candomblé, an African-based religious practice maintained in Salvador, Bahia. An

