

我爸媽是移民

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I honor and have a deep admiration, love, and respect for my parents and all they have done for me and my older brother, as Taiwanese immigrants to Brazil for almost 60 years.

Hi, my name is Rebeca Luo, I'm a Licensed Professional Counselor Associate (LPCA), under supervision of Lily Lam, LPC-S, and I'm a Social Service and Counseling Minister at Herald Counseling Services of CCHC Houston. And today, I'd like to share with you a bit of my story as daughter of immigrants to Brazil, and foreigner in the US myself. Through my contact with friends and in ministry, I can see that some challenges faced by my family are also present in other immigrant families' stories here in Houston, and I hope that, as you read this, it may resonate with you, your children and/or grandchildren's own past or present experiences, challenges, and emotions, and that you may see that counseling can be helpful to you and your loved ones in this process.

I was born in Brazil in the mid-80s, and was raised there, coming to Houston by myself as an international student in 2019, following God's calling to equip myself with a master's degree in counseling at Dallas Theological Seminary. I graduated in 2022 and have been serving in ministry through counseling since then. I have friends who are like family here, but my entire actual family continues to live in Brazil. So, since coming here, I've got more of a sense of how it feels like to be a foreigner, and it has given me more depth, dimension, and appreciation to what my parents have faced and done for my brother and me.

People become immigrants for a variety of reasons, but I believe that there are some challenges that may be common to most. One of them, that I believe many immigrants face, is the language. My parents immigrated from Taiwan to Brazil in their late teens without knowing how to speak a single word in Portuguese and had to learn it all when already in the new country, having to figure out how to make a living and support themselves as singles, and later, as the family they formed together. Nowadays, they speak fluent Portuguese, may make a mistake here and there, and have a little accent in their speech, but they can communicate overall super well. One of their first actions after arriving in Brazil was to seek to learn the language and complete their education. Here in Houston, I know of parents who already came speaking English fluently, while others started learning as they lived in the country, relying on the help from their community and their own children, who usually pick up the language faster at school.

In addition to language, another challenge I believe many immigrants face is the abrupt cut off from social close contact with people in the country of origin, and consequent need to start to develop new friendships and support network in the country of destination. When my parents

left Taiwan, they were no longer able to see their friends nor extended family members. Some of them later joined them in Brazil, and some others they were able to keep in touch by letter or phone and visit again in Asia many years later. Thus, once settled in Brazil, they had to start developing new friendships. Some of these started in their workplace and school, and there are some dear uncles and aunties today who are not blood related to us but considered families from the heart. Other relationships were developed at church: my parents came to faith in Christ in Brazil separately without knowing each other, then later they met, started to attend the same church, and got married. Being faithful believers was pivotal in their own life journey, with eternal implications, and it also deeply influenced the way they raised my brother and I, born and raised in a Christian family, and in a church environment, to which we are so grateful.

On that note, I believe that not only parents, but children of immigrants also face some of their own challenges, being one of the main ones related to their sense of identity and belonging. Kids are usually quite aware of their parents' culture of origin which is part of their own culture and identity too, celebrating their language, food, holidays, and traditions. At the same time, they are also exposed and part of different cultures, as they are either born or raised from a very small age in the country of destination which then also is/becomes their own country. To give you a concrete example, this is my own reality: I am Brazilian born, and my mother language is Portuguese. At the same time, I have Asian features which make me visually stand out among Brazilian school peers. I speak Portuguese, German, English and Spanish, even though I look Asian. My parents are Taiwanese and Hakka, but I cannot speak any Taiwanese nor Hakka, only Mandarin.

My parents value education so much that they made huge efforts and sacrifices for both my brother and I to have the best education they could provide us, and we are so grateful to them. I learned to speak and understand Mandarin at home, but as a second-generation kid, my parents would speak in Mandarin, and I would reply mainly in Portuguese. All this multicultural formation allowed me to navigate through different circles of people, but not fully fit in any of them, whether Asian, Brazilian, German, or now, American. And this is a struggle I believe many children of immigrants here face as well. It is not an easy task to navigate within multiple cultures, and to develop one's own sense of identity and belonging within these realities.

Personally, after reflecting on this for many years by myself and in conversations with my brother and parents, I came to the conclusion that what has helped and helps me deeply in my identity and sense of belonging is to know that I belong to Christ. The triune God created me, knows me as I am, and is my Lord and Savior. And my identity as a Christian makes me embrace, value, and cherish my story and unique multicultural background, as well as to see and appreciate how Christ unites peoples of all nations, tribes, and tongues.

This is a bit of my story and a few challenges that my family and I have experienced and which I have also observed in other immigrant families. Sometimes we may not value our own stories or think that "there is nothing special" about them, that we are just "doing life". But I'd like to offer you some empathy and express that your family immigration story is very valuable, whether it happened 60 or more years ago, or within the last 10 years, or you just arrived in

Houston. It has treasures within it, in the highs and lows, and amidst challenges.

To be an immigrant and raise children and grandchildren in another country is not easy. It requires a lot of hard work and sacrifice. And sometimes in this process of adjustment facing all these challenges, many thoughts and feelings may arise in you, your children, or grandchildren. Feelings like anxiety about the future, sadness from missing family and friendships, or missing the “old life” in your country of origin. Feelings of anger, guilt, frustration, and shame from feeling misunderstood and getting into discussions with your parents/kids/friends or due to bullying at school or work, or from a desire to belong but a struggle to fully feel like belonging.

And it is in this regard that counseling can be helpful. Sometimes, just to have someone to talk to helps to alleviate our stress and tension. And if that someone is a professional counselor, trained to listen, who is removed from your direct relationship sphere, and creates a safe and confidential space for you to share, this counselor can help you process and reflect on your thoughts and feelings. This counselor can journey with you, and through these conversations, you may find new ways to face or deal with current challenges, may develop empathy towards what you and/or your loved one are/is going through, and may practice ways to communicate your ideas, and the mutual love and affection that exists but that sometimes is hard to express in words and actions to your loved ones.

Thus, if you'd like some help in this process, me and all our Herald Counseling team is here for you and will be very glad to journey with you. To schedule an appointment, access our website www.cchchouston.org and click on “Schedule”.

我的爸媽從臺灣移民巴西近 60 年，因為他們為我和我的哥哥所做的一切，我對我的父母深表欽佩、熱愛和尊重。

大家好，我的名字是羅佩佳 Rebeca Luo。我是一名註冊見習專業諮詢師 (LPCA)，我的監督員是林呂寧華 Lily Lam, LPC-S。我也是 CCHC 休斯頓角聲輔導中心的社會服務同工。今天，我想與大家分享一些我作為巴西移民第二代並身為美國異客的故事。通過我與朋友的接觸以及在事工中，我可以看到我的家庭面臨過的一些挑戰與休斯頓的其他移民家庭面對的問題很相近。我希望當你讀到這篇文章時，它可能會引起你的共鳴，並且你可能會發現在此過程中，輔導會對您和您所愛的人有所幫助。

我於 80 年代中期出生於巴西，在那里長大，2019 年作為國際學生獨自來到休斯頓。我於 2022 年畢業，從那時起一直在輔導事工服務，但我的整個家庭仍然生活在巴西。自從來

到這裡，我對作為一個異鄉異客的感覺有了更多及個人的認知，因此我更感激我的父母為我和我的哥哥所付出的一切。

孤單與關係重建：除了學習新語言之外，我相信許多移民面臨的另一個挑戰是與家鄉的親友突然斷絕關係，因此需要開始在新的國家發展新的友誼和支持網絡。當我的父母離開台灣時，他們再也見不到他們的朋友或大家庭成員。因此，一旦在巴西定居，他們就必須開始發展新的友誼及人脈。這些人有的是從工作單位、學校開始的。今天旁邊親愛的叔叔阿姨，雖然和我們家沒有血緣關係，但卻是發自內心的家人了。其他關係是在教會發展起來的：我的父母在巴西接受基督為生命之主，便開始一家人一同去教會，然後結婚成家。成為忠實的信徒，信仰在他們自己的人生旅程中至關重要，具有永恆的意義，也深深地影響了他們撫養兒女的模式讓我們在基督教家庭和教會環境中出生和長大，對此我們非常感激。

身份認同與歸屬感：我相信不僅是父母，移民的孩子也面臨著自己的挑戰，比如他們的身份認同及歸屬感的落差。孩子們通常非常清楚父母的原籍文化，這是他們自己文化和身份的一部分，慶祝他們的語言、食物、節日和傳統。同時，他們也接觸到部份移民國家的文化。舉個具體的例子：我出生在巴西，我的母語是葡萄牙語。同時，我具有亞洲特徵，這使我在巴西學校的同齡人中特別受注目。我會說葡萄牙語、德語、英語和西班牙語，儘管我看起來是亞洲人。我的父母是台灣人和客家人，但我不會說台語和客家話，只會說普通話，但不會讀寫漢字。

和所有中國父母一樣，我的父母非常重視教育，他們為我和我的兄弟付出了巨大的努力和犧牲，讓我們能夠接受最好的教育，我們非常感謝他們。我在家裡學會說和聽懂普通話，但作為第二代移民，我主要用葡萄牙語回覆。所有這些多元文化的形成讓我能夠穿越不同的人圈子，但不能完全融入其中的任何一個羣體，無論是亞洲人、巴西人、德國人，還是現在的美國人，在人際關係中會產生孤單感。我相信這裡的許多移民兒童也面臨著這樣的困境，生活在多種文化中，但在這些現實中發展自己的認同感和歸屬感，並不是一件容易的事。

超越文化的歸屬感：就我個人而言，經過我自己多年的反思以及與我哥哥和父母的交談，我得出的結論是，對我的身份和歸屬感有深刻幫助的是知道我屬於基督。三位一體的神創造了我，認識我的本來面目，祂是我的主和救主。我作為基督徒的身份使我擁抱、重視和珍惜我的故事和獨特的多元文化背景，並看到和欣賞基督如何團結所有國家、部落和語言的人民。

這是我的故事，以及我的家人及其他移民家庭中經歷過的一些挑戰。有時我們可能不重視自己的故事，或者認為它們“沒有什麼特別的”，我們只是在“過生活”。然而，無論它發生在60年或更久以前，還是最近10年內，還是才到來的新移民，我們人生的經驗無論在高潮和低谷以及其他困難中都具有價值。

作為一名移民並在另一個國家撫養子女並不容易。這需要大量的努力和犧牲。通過面對所有這些挑戰的調整過程，您和您的孩子或後代可能會產生許多不同經驗和感受。諸如對未來的焦慮、因思念家人和友誼而感到悲傷或懷念家鄉「舊生活」的情懷等。由於感到被誤解並與父母/孩子/朋友有爭論，或者由於在學校或工作中受到欺凌，或者由於渴望歸屬感卻被孤立而感到憤怒、內疚、沮喪和羞恥等，有投訴無門的感覺。

正是在這方面，專業輔導會有所幫助。有時有人傾訴有助於緩解我們的壓力和緊張情緒。專業的諮詢師接受過傾聽的培訓，遠離你的直接關係範圍，並為你創造了一個安全和保密的分享空間，可以幫助你處理和反思你的想法和感受。輔導員可以陪伴您一起同行，通過這些對話，您可能會找到面對或處理當前挑戰的新方法，可能會對您和/或您所愛的人正在經歷的事情產生同理心，並且可能會學習傳達您的想法的新方法，對家人和朋友充滿相互的愛和感情。

因此，如果您在移民生活過程中需要一些幫助，我角聲輔導中心團隊都會為您服務，並且非常願意與您同行。讀者若要安排預約，請訪問我們的網站 www.cchchouston.org 並單擊“預約”。