How do parents' drinking affect the likelihood of their children drinking? What are the expectations of the effect of drinking for one's self and for others? What are the perceived benefits of drinking by men and women? What is the relationship between alcohol expectancies and abstinence, level of drinking, and problematic outcomes? What rationales are used for drinking and which ones are used to curb ones' drinking? Do positive attitudes encourage drinking and do negative attitudes discourage drinking? What are the Puerto Rican norms concerning how much to drink and where? How much permission is given for persons to drink at different ages? How do Puerto Ricans view alcoholism and drunkenness? Who goes for help and where?

Alcohol consumption in this society, as in most, is vested with many different and sometimes conflicting attitudes and beliefs as to the
legitimacy of use as well as consequences. These beliefs may be institutionalized, as in the ritual use of alcohol in religious ceremonies and sacraments, societal laws restricting consumption by minors, or reflect safety concerns as in driving under the influence legislation. In addition, alcohol beliefs and attitudes may be loosely institutionalized in secular accompaniments to important occasions such as wedding and bar mitzvah parties, baptism of children, and holidays. Many of these attitudes and beliefs are generationally linked and may invoke the collective traditional system of beliefs and attitudes of one’s religion or ethnicity. These often will vary from one group to another.

Because of societal concerns to prevent problems of alcohol and drug abuse in both the Hispanic and Anglo communities, efforts at changing attitudes in the hopes of altering or preventing undesired behaviors appear to have become routine. Organizations such as MADD. (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) and DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) are national and their messages reach millions. In addition to deliberate societal intervention in the manipulation and formation of attitudes is the fact that most people in the Hispanic and Anglo communities have grown up with sets of attitudes that already are part of their ethnic cultural heritages and have seen and received attitudinal messages concerning alcohol and substance use directly from their parents. In the Hispanic communities, as in this study of a Puerto Rican mainland community, there are strong and often consistent attitudes concerning alcohol that have been known for generations. However, no such clarity exists for other substance misuse that society has deemed illicit; therefore, in this chapter we shall examine Puerto Rican attitudes concerning alcohol use only.