Hispanic and Latino Experiences

Michelle Buenrostro · Maria Ault · Robert N. Rust

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Maria Ault
Your presentations addressing Hispanic and Latino experiences, which I'm happy you do because I'm Latina myself, how do family expectations, language, culture, identity, and access to healthcare influence pregnancy decisions? And what differences have you observed between communities?

Michelle Buenrostro
Yeah. So Latinos are not a monolith. We are vast. We vary by region, generation, religion, immigration status. So I can only draw from my own experiences and from what the research tells us. Those of us who come from immigrant families, we're frequently held to these high, strict standards. So you cannot mess up. You are not allowed to mess up.

Michelle Buenrostro
And in Catholic households such as my own, when I was growing up, sexual education was limited. It was essentially, "Don't have sex until you're married." And there was minimal talk about contraceptions. There's also a lot of shame and secrecy around abuse, unfortunately.

Michelle Buenrostro
And all of these things, the way people talk about mothers out of wedlock, et cetera, can lead to shame and responding to that shame with an abortion. And then for mothers that are facing an unplanned pregnancy, accessing resources when pregnant can be a challenge for Latinas.

Michelle Buenrostro
There can be language barriers, or there can be fear because of immigration status. I know that when I was growing up, I was the official medical translator for my mom, even as a small child. And even when I was getting my prenatal care, for example, I had difficulty conveying to her what was told to me.

Michelle Buenrostro
So someone facing an unplanned pregnancy may not be aware of the help or even trust the help that is available in her community, and this is definitely a need that needs to be met.

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