

Courtyard Conversations S4E4 Dr. Jessica Sánchez Transcript

Doughlas

Welcome to Courtyard Conversations. I'm your host, Doughlas Gutierrez. And today I have with me a very special guest, an assistant professor of practice, Dr. Jessica Sánchez. How are you doing today?

Jessica

I'm good. Thank you so much for thinking of me and excited to be here.

Doughlas

For sure. Well, with the theme and topic of today's episode, I couldn't think of no one better for the embodiment of what it means to be Latina. I love that, thank you. Yeah, I also see wanted to take note of the wardrobe choice of the particular outfit you have on.

I have my Guatemalan jersey on too, but I love if you can speak a little bit about to what you have on.

Jessica

Yeah. I mean, I just consider this right. Like very traditional where handmade. Any time I look at my traditional clothing, I just know it's like the abuelita, the the tia's hands, like the love that has gone into every single piece. Right? And so this was intentionally bought by a Latina vendor, I believe, actually in Fort Worth, if I want to recall, I go to like all the market vendors right? All over DFW, but back like literally tuba haka. So very just like sacred in a way. Right? Every piece that I buy. I just feel like it's sacred to me.

And when we when we thought about this and the collaboration, I was like, oh, what am I going to wear? And then even brought out the doctora earrings. Yes. Made by a Latina in San Antonio. Shout out to my girl Nadia. So yeah, very intentional about showing up today.

Doughlas

I love it, I love it, I love, I love it now they do look like they kind of poke a little bit. Is it a little pokey? I see the spikes.

Jessica

No no no no. I mean if it does turn yes a little bit, but not you just fix it and you're right back to it.

Doughlas

I love it, I love it. Well, let's get into our program. My first question, Dr. Sánchez, as we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, what is being Hispanic or Latina mean to you?

Jessica

That's such a beautiful question. A very loaded question, right? Of course. But when I think of being Latina, specifically Mexican American Chicana, chingona, add in all the identities, I just feel a lot of passion. I feel a lot of just happy. Proud almost that like, I am Latina soy mexicana, soy chingona, going against the grain in a way, right?

I do feel like when it means being chingona and Latina, it really does mean to go against the grain challenging kind of the notions. Maybe some of the patriarchal, you know, cultural gender narratives that can pop out from time to time, specifically within Mexican culture. But I'm just proud. I'm proud of my brown skin. I'm proud of my long, black, beautiful hair, my eyebrows, my full lips, my, you know, just everything that comes with being Latina for me, right?

And knowing that there's a beautiful diaspora of what it means for someone to be Latino/Latina.

Douglas

It'd be nice if I wish I could continue to say I have long, beautiful hair. I just recently cut my hair a couple of months ago and I feel the difference now, but my showers are a lot quicker.

Jessica

Yeah that's fair, so mine are a lot longer.

Douglas

Yeah. And and in terms of speaking on the, the masculine and the feminine of long hair, I will say it has brought a lot of empathy in terms of women's preparation, just to take on the weight of the day, of looking presentable and preparing yourself to take on a day, you know, what's the word? Not not even cosmetically. Just looking sharp, looking presentable and representing yourself well when you step out the household.

Jessica

Absolutely. And you know when you're in your feminine, which I embrace. Absolutely. Being in my feminine. But our hair is our crown. It is our crown chakra. It is our our connection to our spiritual right beliefs, our religious beliefs. And so when I think of my hair, it's very sacred, but also connects me to my indigenous roots.

When people see my long black hair, I know they immediately think maybe Native American, maybe Latina, just appending. And both of those exist for me.

Douglas

Awesome. Speaking of identity, how does Latina identity and culture shape the way women understand themselves, their bodies, and their relationships? You spoke to hair. But if we can emphasize on bodies, themselves, their bodies and their relationships.

Jessica

You know, I think that's it's a very complex question because I think for Latinas here in the United States, a lot of us are. Constantly code switching between the borders. So I said earlier, Mexican American. Right. So I have a Mexican father, a very American. I would say mother in a way. And so, you know, that means, right, like different for every single person, I think of the Chicanos that live in the South and the southwest and how, you know, depending on how many, if they're second generation, third generation and how that shows up for them.

So this constant battle of in my Mexican enough. Am I American enough? And we know in the famous movie, Selena's father is literally. And so I remember growing up and seeing that and feeling so connected, heard and seen and like only eight year old Jessica and I just remember her father saying, we're not Mexican enough for the Mexicans, and we're not white enough for the Americans.

And I was like, oh my gosh.

Doughlas

- That was powerful.

Jessica

Yes, very much right. And so now, as an older, more mature Latina, right. And getting to come into my identity and really reclaim that for myself of, I think even you said it earlier, like, you know, getting to choose what I'm wearing today, getting to decide how my hair will look, getting to even decide.

Am I going with red lipsticks? Am I going with my gold hoops today? No, I want to go with my earrings, right? If I want the heels, I want my chancas. Like whatever, whatever felt right to me. And I think that's what it means, right? Is showing up as much as we can as our authentic selves and embracing the beauty that we have, internal and also external as well.

Doughlas

Beautifully put, beautifully put. You mentioned a connection, and with that, there's an indication of community. How important is community to you?

Jessica

Yes. So, you know, because we're colleagues that I am a therapist and I work with only women, and I constantly remind my clients because I do a lot of sound healing community events. Right. And I will encourage my clients to be in community because I, as a Latina, strongly believe that we no one's ever fully healed.

But I will say we heal faster in community versus being siloed. I agree, and I think back to my culture, even my abuelita the like when I would be sad it wasn't just me and her. She was immediately grabbing anyone else that was in the room. That was usually a woman, right? Or you know, tia, prima, anything like that.

But I wasn't by myself. I was immediately surrounded by the village, and I, I see that every everywhere I go, moving from Nebraska to Philly for grad school and then to Dallas, I know shout out to Philly, but not the Eagles. I've always looked for community, right? I've leaned on community for those times of support, and I've looked for the intentional of who shares a similar last name, who enjoys dancing salsa and bachata.

Right? Who possibly is a therapist and is also Latina. And I've always created that community for self because life is not it's not easy. It throws us curveballs. - All the time. I think of our Dallas signature winter storm that we'll get in. The whole city shuts down, you know, all over DFW. But who do you go to? I immediately go to a community.

What do you need? These are the supplies I have, right? And like, we're not we're not doing it alone. So absolutely. Community is naturally in the DNA.

Doughlas

Yeah, I there's a there's an old show I remember seeing it has to do with indigenous people here during the it whole western front of America. It's a show called American Primeval.

There's a scene where one of the indigenous girls is noticing one of the Pilgrim women crying, and she says something along the lines of, it's better to share the pain or better. Basically, in terms of community, it's better to share the pain, because now when you cry, I can cry with you.

Jessica

-So beautiful.

Doughlas

And when you bear that pain, we also bear it because it distributes.

And there's something powerful about being in a group and having that support. And I think being in a group and having support a lot of times is that X factor to help people break out of their seasons of struggle, to break out of seasons of negative self-perception and to kind of help heal those wounds that, yeah, are very deep and internal.

And I know there's a stigma and it's may leak more into the psychological, therapeutic, therapeutic realm. But there is I, I would assume there's a stigma that sharing one's struggles and sharing one's trauma, is seen like something you're not supposed to do, but in retrospect, when you share it, there is this relief feeling that you have.

Jessica

Yeah, yeah. So I appreciate you speaking to that, because I do feel like the millennial Latinas have really, really rewritten the game when it comes to we're no longer just keeping this within the four walls of the home. I grew up with that very I'm very machismo Mexican father that what happens in this house stays in this house. And as soon as I came into my identity and

realized more and more what I wanted to do, I realize, hey, a part of the healing journey is I have to I have to talk about some of the things that happened in the house, because the moment I started opening up, it was other Latinas.

It was other women saying, dang, me too. I'm not. I'm not alone in this. I share this with you and thank you for speaking out because I felt so by myself. Right. And so yeah, I think millennial women, just overall across any race ethnicity, have really rewritten the game of, hey, we're going to talk about it. We're going to talk about our feelings and which I think Latina culture has always done very, very well.

When I think of machismo and marianismo like marianismo is the women coming together, it is the village. Someone is hurt. All the women come together, we uplift them. We figure out who has what supplies, what can I offer? What can I take off someone's plate whereas at the machismo aspect doesn't necessarily let our men be vulnerable, they don't get necessarily the same rate of community and village with the emotional.

The with the emotional is what I'm saying. Right? Where a roomful of Latino men are going to come and be like, this is what I need right now. Maybe after, you know, a lot of trust and rapport has been built within that probably very small group of men, but there has to be one that's going to be vulnerable.

But I think women, as Latinas, we've always excelled with we need the village. We can't do this by ourselves.

Doughlas

Yes, nor do I think we should. You know, I don't I think life is to be a shared experience with others and I don't. I'm just thinking of the beautiful moments of my life have always revolved around, at least in my anecdotal experience.

I want to share it with somebody if I accomplish a great feat. Yeah, I want to tell my lady. I want to tell my mom. I want to tell my boys if I am struggling with something. Hey, dad, I need your help with something. And there's always that desire to just share it with somebody.

Jessica

Yeah, and I love that. Right? Like, that's like, I feel I hear a man who is very in tune with who he is and knows that he can be vulnerable. And I hope that all Latino men are able to experience that level of vulnerability that you're describing right now.

Doughlas

I also to I, at least in my particular case, this is the product of a few years studying stoicism and philosophy.

Yeah, and full transparency. I have started therapy earlier this year. Okay. So graduations. Thank you. It's, it's still a weird thing. It's still weird, but. Yeah. So at least in my case, I'm a special case of bridging stoicism, which is to refrain. Am I pronouncing that correctly? Refrain from emotions, but then from the vulnerability of practicing in therapy to not see emotion or the display or expressions of your emotion as a weakness, but as a strength.

Yes. So there is that duality of it all.

Jessica

The therapy is working.

Douglas

Maybe, maybe, I want to say it is. I hope that I'm not taking part in something that I think won't work. So there's also that intentional thought process going into it.

Jessica

And even the way you described it. Right. Like when you were like when I accomplished something or I'm just, you know, you have something to share.

You immediately described, right? Familismo like what we are used to in our Latino culture of the family community being very tight knit, right. Like we have our folks that we want to pick up the phone, like you said in our first calls. And I think that connects right between that family aspect and the community piece too.

Douglas Jessica

So you've already kind of alluded to this, but do you think that the community networks are embedded in Latino culture? And I asked us because when I went to Guatemala back in 2023. Yeah, yeah, back in 2023. I remember in my mom's neighborhood, she lives in Guate, the capital. Okay. And a little what they would call is like the suburbia part, the better part of Guate, (Guatemala City).

Okay. Everybody knows everyone on the block. You need your tires changed, you go to El Colombiano down the block in the green house. Right? You need somebody to help you with eggs or some coffee. You go to Maria, who's across the street from you? Yeah. I've always found it interesting, especially from a cultural shock, traveling internationally and then coming back to the states of going into my apartment.

And I don't know who lives next door to me. Yeah, yeah. Like growing up, I grew up telling my parents, kissing my, you know, kissing my family goodnight to now I have to schedule to call them. Right. And then very willingly and freely, I go into my apartment building and there's somebody next door who I don't know.

Jessica

Yeah, yeah. I mean, I think you already answered the question right of you speaking from your experience. Yes. I think it is absolutely embedded in our DNA. When we take a moment to either reflect on our personal family dynamics and what we knew, the neighborhood that we grew up in, or however that played out all the way. If we take it back to our indigenous ancestors and the way they survived right with with putting their all of their strengths then and supplies together and literally the village like raising the child through the village component.

But I hear you, I recently just moved to a new place and my neighbors are Latino, and I felt so at home so quickly with being like, oh my gosh, I'm actually going to know my neighbors for once. Versus my last place was a very transactional hi - bye. There wasn't the social, but they also weren't brown.

Doughlas

Do you think that plays a role?

Jessica

Yes, I do. I think just from my, my experience. Yes. But that I would stand like ten toes down of like, yes, it's in our DNA for sure to look out and be in that village community mindset.

Doughlas

Lovely. Oh this is a good one. The no sabo generation. Okay, let's talk about it. How do we bridge the gap between honoring the culture's very language and our innate nature to evolve and adapt to what most people speak here in the West (United States)?

Jessica

Yeah. So I think that's that's based on your geographic. Right. Because we could be in New York City and it's like English is probably not the predominant if we are in Brooklyn or the Bronx. Right. And then if we're in Nebraska, where I'm from, English is going to probably be the the main language spoken. Right? But if we go to Grand Island, it will be a 50/50 English and Spanish. - Where's Grand Island? Grand Island's very west.

Doughlas

- Is that Cali?

Jessica

No, in Nebraska, Nebraska City and but it's all farming. All of the Latinos have migrated for the farming opportunities. Right. And it has become Grand Island is very much we're like, oh, it's a little Mexico out there, right? But this is my one thing. Like with the I think the no sabo like as a as a Latina who sometimes absolutely identifies as the no sabo. But I have a that's a whole other episode.

But I'm in the process of reclaiming my language. I think what I don't like about it is because it's been turned as this way to for other Latinos to judge someone and immediately deem them as

not Mexican enough, as not Puerto Rican enough is not Colombian enough if they don't speak Spanish. And so I remember getting into a pretty, you know, not like, heated conversation, but I said, I just want to gently insert and remind everyone.

And it was all brown folks, right? Talking about if we are, you know, and mind you, I'm like a 50/50 split here. And I just said, I just want to gently remind everyone that Spanish is a colonized language. All of our ancestors did not speak Spanish. They spoke indigenous. It wasn't until the Spaniards came over specifically within Mexico, right?

Knowing that this is my whole dissertation. So like I was ready to talk about ten toes down of how I even exist because of her survival and because of her. Right having birthing literally the Mexican, the first Mexican. But I said that and they all kind of like everyone just got quiet. And I was like, let's just make sure we're not perpetrating because words, words carry a lot of meaning.

Yeah, they have a lot of power behind. And when you when you're already even going back to how we were saying how a lot of Latinas, Latinos overall in America constantly having to navigate two cultures, two borders. If you are Mexican, right, let's not already bring another community member down. If they don't necessarily speak fluent Spanish, let's not make Spanish.

The know all be all that's connected to someone being Latina enough, right? Because she may be able to throw it out in the kitchen way better than someone else that's sitting in this space. So now is it because she's over here making mole? You know what I mean? Or Menudo or pozole, anything. Like what? And so I think, right, there's a time and a place I think Spanish, it's very sacred.

I say Spanish is a whole other language of of how to feel and be loved. Because I just feel like. Absolutely. Oh, Spanish. It's such again, just going back to that sacredness of it. But I am not one to ever meet another beautiful brown-skinned person and be like, oh, you don't speak Spanish, you can't talk to me.

You can't sit here because that's a direct right. It directly impacts even my own having to work through the trauma of how language shows up for me. So again, I think, however, it shows up for someone that is Latino that shows up for them and they should own that. And if they ever, ever feel empowered to reclaim more Spanish for themselves.

I want to be their biggest fan because that does not define, you know, someone if they're if they're Latino enough.

Doughlas

Yeah. Beautifully put. I, I remember growing up with my own experience. Now I'm, I would categorize myself as a fluent Spanish speaker. However, my lexicon in English has vastly increased. Mainly working here in higher ed. Yeah, yeah yeah.

And there are just words that I would use in my everyday lingo, in English that I just simply don't know how they translate into Spanish. So my level of speaking Spanish is very what I would deem as basic. But when I want to get into like the higher, more intellectual word choice, I'm not there yet. I got so my attempt to keep the flow of a Spanish conversation going.

Yeah, the second I hiccup, I gotcha, my confidence goes down. And I do have that split second of a native Spanish speaker kind of looking down on me like, oh, he's not one of like, yeah, you almost had me. Yeah, but he's not one of us. Yeah. And it's something at least I've appreciated when my parents do like, you know, my parents tease, you know, they're typical Latinos.

You know, they'll tease you. But there was always that educational part of it. Like, if I say, what was that word? Raro, okay, it's (rah-ro) you got to roll that r. But I would always say rao*. okay. And then they would say, raro mijo. So there was always that correction. But like in a gentle way. Right. Versus if it's an outsider like my Hispanic friends, like, look at this dummy.

Like, you know what I'm saying? Like, yeah, mind you, I'm the only Colombian and Guatemalan in my friend group. So in terms of...

Jessica

That's such a beautiful combo. I love that

Doughlas

I like to think so.

So most of my friends are either Caucasian, Mexican or black. Going to an HBCU here in Dallas, I have diversified to get more like African friends. Yeah, one of my college roommates was Cameroonian. Okay. And I didn't know that they spoke French.

Jessica

Wow. Yeah. Thank you for educating me.

Doughlas

In Cameroon, they speak French. Okay, so I learned a little bit of, like, (je me pel), which is my name is. Yeah, but all that to say, I never really had the experience to cultivate a relationship with another Colombian and or Guatemalan unless I meet them out in nature. Yeah, but from a Latino perspective, there are many overlapping characteristics and traits that I, I know, feel home like this is something I would listen to or be around and feel like I'm home.

Jessica

Yeah. Fun fact I am hosting with one of my other amigas, that's a doctora as well. She owns land in the beautiful mountains of Colombia, and we're hosting a retreat for Latinas next summer. So I'll be going to go to Colombia and seeing what all the hype is about. I'm so excited.

Doughlas

Have fun, have fun, have fun. Yeah, I know you said you wanted to mention something about the bilingual.

Jessica

Oh yes. And the way. Right. Because it shows up. That's, I think going back to like the whole no sabo [kids], and if it's like someone wants to reclaim their Spanish, however, that shows up for them. Them feeling empowered. But one way that I have currently been reclaiming my own Spanish is I have younger sisters and they both have two boys, so I have four nephews and they are raising them bilingual and so every time titi is talking to them.

Whether I'm a visit home or we're on FaceTime, I'm being forced to like get back into that flow, right? Because if I want to communicate with my nephews and like a couple of them are only really taking on to Spanish and they're not taking on to English, even though they're in a bilingual daycare and everything. So, yeah, it's a beautiful journey, right?

And that's what it's about, is embracing your own journey and living it on your own terms. Because again, yeah, choose your community intentionally that are going to is going to embrace you for exactly who you are.

Doughlas

Yes. I very much live by the phrase the family you make is a lot more important than the family you come from.

Jessica

My gosh, that's good. Yes.

Doughlas

Yeah. I want to transition a little bit into your research focus. Your work explores pleasure after violence. Elaborate on this notion and the role social workers play in addressing it.

Jessica Thank you for this beautiful question and for intentionally asking about it, because a lot of people will kind of shy away because it's a taboo topic still very much in society when we're talking about, you know, anything sexuality or body related.

Even though I always remind folks, if there's 100 of us in this room, there's 100 definitions of how sexuality shows up for us, because at the end of the day, we are all sexual beings and some type of way. We all have our own definitions. So my work, I work in the therapeutic room, right, with trauma survivors. And like I said earlier, I only work with women.

And so I say, for every ten women that seek me out courageously to start or continue their healing journey, ten of them are trauma survivors. When I talk about trauma, I'm thinking talking about sexual violence. I'm talking about domestic violence. I'm talking about childhood sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and then also including medical and trauma birth. Because of

where we are located in the state of Texas and what is happening to black and brown women's in particular bodies right now while they are giving birth.

And so with that work, I'm very passionate about empowering other educators to be sex positive. I'm not asking them to be sex therapists like myself, but what I'm asking for them to do is when we are going to say that we are trauma informed, and if we are working with trauma survivors that have put on their intake form, this has happened to me or so courageously right opened up in the in the therapeutic space and said, yes, I am a victim and or survivor of said violence when they are admitting that something has happened to the body that they did not consent to.

A lot of therapists will only treat from the neck up, and they will avoid asking about the entire body. Oh, and so I go in and I empower, gosh, my signature training. Let's see. In 2024, I did it at 11 national conferences and really gained a lot of traction on a national scale. I've been a lot more intentional this year and had a lot of people reaching out of, hey, can we get you again?

2025 was great. In 2026, is there now starting to ask for kind of that 2.0 version. Like, how do we keep the work going? Yeah, yeah. So a lot of clinicians, advocates right. Survivors themselves will sit in my session and be like, you're right. How am I going to work with the trauma survivor and not be asking her about her entire body, knowing that what if she's in a relationship?

Or can we just ask about intimacy and say, how is how is intimacy showing up for you right now?

Douglas

Yeah. And and if I may and if I'm going into a realm, please, please, please stop me. Is it when you say from the neck up and neck down, are you referring to retraining the by the mind so that the body can follow that if it's in now a healthy relationship, that whenever they're having sex or being intimate, that their body is reacting positively and not reverting to, oh, this is familiar for when we were hurt, it's more of, no, this is a good thing.

Yes. This is we want to enjoy that. This is good. Yes. Let's sit in this for a minute.

Jessica

So when I with the clinicians, when I say neck up, they it clicks for them because they're like, oh, I'm too focused on the brain. Yes. We need the brain to not we need to get this system out of fight, fight or flight.

We need to have a regulated nervous system. But also, again, if we know that the trauma especially has happened in the womb space between the hips for trauma survivor, we have to ask, how is intimacy showing up for you? Is sex painful? Oh, you had a doctor go against every single thing that you wanted in your birthing plan, and your body is still recovering.

Doughlas

It keeps track of all that.

Jessica

Exactly. Okay. And so now let's start doing some somatic work. So the brain and the body reconnects. It relearns what safety means to your body. So then your nervous system can be regulated. I work with so many women that they believe they're in relationships, but their body is constantly letting them know that they do not feel safe with their partner.

Doughlas

I can just imagine the type of friction that that would cause.

Jessica

A lot until they get to a place of empowerment and they're like, I'm going to listen to my body. Beautiful, right? And so, yeah, it's honoring right, the entire body. If we're going to say we're trauma-informed clinicians, we're trauma-informed advocates, we're trauma-informed social workers, and we're going to work with trauma survivors.

We got to ask we got to ask the questions that shouldn't be taboo anymore. And so that's my whole thing is let's let's make it less taboo. Anytime I'm talking about sexuality, intimacy, I try to get people to laugh as much as possible because I know that the moment they're laughing. So smiling. Exactly. They I'm getting the buy in from them because we don't have to be so serious.

And everyone, you know, and just sitting here taking notes. No, let's have fun. Let's work in some activities. Let's make this completely, you know, less taboo. And also it's a lot of social workers, clinicians having to rewrite their own scripts around. Did my parents tell me that my body was bad? Did my church tell me that sex was a horrible thing?

Did my, you know, school sex education? Was it not as great as I deserved it to be? Right. And so I even challenge them in that way, right. Of like, who told you that your body wasn't beautiful the way it is, right? Who planted that seed first in order for them to be like, oh my gosh, I have a lot more work to do as well in order to pour into our clients, because if we're not doing the work and we don't even believe that our body is sacred, our pleasure is deserving.

It stops at the door. It doesn't funnel into the therapeutic space with trauma survivors. So I get very passionate about it.

Doughlas

Yeah, yeah, I can tell. I was going to say you you have the you were made to be a social worker. Thank you, thank you very social. And there is a very warm presence about you. I don't know if it's the Latina.

I don't know if it's the therapist. I don't know if it's the social worker. But there is a warm presence about you and I. I think that this role in your occupation and your purpose and being a social worker are very much aligned.

Jessica

Thank you. And I love I love when I'm in the classroom because I teach intimate partner violence.

I teach the in-person section every fall with our undergrad students, and I love seeing their faces light up when they're like, wait, I could be a sex educator. I could be a sex therapist. I could be writing consent curriculum for an ISD. And I'm like, you absolutely could, because social workers, we are truly superheroes. We can make anything, you know, work in our favor.

And so I just love when I see those moments with them. And they also get that opportunity to rewrite their own scripts, right, about their bodies and whatnot.

Doughlas

Right. I feel like I can talk to you for hours, Dr. Sánchez, but unfortunately, we're here at the final question of our list. During Hispanic Heritage Month, what do you hope social work students take away about culture, empowerment, healing and the experience of Latinos and Latinos?

Jessica

Yeah. I want to say with the healing piece first. So I just said this actually the other day in class, and I had a couple students get very emotional, hit me, and I let them know. As a therapist, I remind my clients that they need to take breaks from therapy because we were not born to wake up every morning and figure out how we have to heal.

That day. We were born to live, and a couple of the students who had so courageously disclosed that they were in therapy immediate tears. And they were like, dang, I did not anticipate you to say that. And I said, even as a therapist, I have to remind my clients, hey, you've done incredible work. It's time to take a break.

And are you breaking up with me? Not breaking up with you as your therapist. But let's let's give let's give the work that you've done here. You know what your triggers are. You know how to get yourself to baseline. You know what it means to be out of your window of tolerance. Let's focus on living for a little bit.

So I share that. I share that with as many people as I write because we need to. We need to be living every day. But when I think of my culture, when I think of our students, when I think of Hispanic Heritage Month, however, you know, it's marketed. I just hope and I truly believe we have some of the best students in the nation, of course.

But if any time I tell my students, listen, if you, you, you see an event and you feel discomfort, lean into the discomfort and be like, oh, my body's actually telling me, I'm curious, I should go stop at that Latino organization's, you know, event that they're hosting or I'm down in Bishop Arts and they're having salsa night at coca, cocoa and Fire and Ice.

Maybe I should stop by on a Friday and just. I know I've never been a good dancer, but here I am. Here's my opportunity to laugh, let my body move. Maybe meet a new stranger, right? That teaches you a thing or two. And so I just hope that students give, you know, any opportunity they have to expand their lens of our beautiful culture and how much it has to offer.

Because while there's, again, the huge, you know, Latin diaspora, I will never forget going to Puerto Rico this summer. What? And realizing why people immediately love Puerto Ricans because they are so

They are so prideful and you can just feel their energy the moment you, you know, make it to the beach or the moment you make it to your hotel.

And they, they, they, they know exactly who they are as a culture and as a community. And I just, I love everything about about Puerto Ricans and all my boricuas and all of it. And so I wouldn't have had that opportunity, though, right, if I didn't book the flight and take the solo trip and do my thing.

And so anytime they have an opportunity to explore any culture, really say yes to it. Expand your life lens, learn something new and have fun.

Doughlas

Well. Beautifully put. Dr. Sánchez thank you again for agreeing to be a guest on our episode. We appreciate your insight. We appreciate everything you do for our students, for others in the community. And again, I just want to emphasize what a special light you are and the lives of the people close to you and here in the school and in the profession of social work.

And we're excited to see the many other accomplishments that you'll have in the future.

Jessica

Thank you so much. I really appreciate the invite and I will always share space with you anytime, anyplace, anywhere. You're great. I appreciate all that you do as well.

Doughlas

I appreciate you, doctor. Thank you. Well, there we have it, folks. Thank you again for watching this episode of Courtyard Conversations.

I'm your host, Doughlas Gutierrez. I'll see you on the next episode.