

“From Puerto Rico to Chile.”

What Bad Bunny and my Mamí taught me about resilience and finding hope in systems change work

A Reflection from Paula Gonzalez

An unexpected surprise of Sunday’s Superbowl halftime show was the conversation it started with my 73 year old mother, a Chilean immigrant who rarely spoke about politics growing up and is not necessarily on top of popular culture.

I asked her if she watched the Superbowl, and her response was, “**Only Bad Bunny.**”



We began exploring his performance: the cinema of it all (even if the dancing was a bit much for her sensitivities) and the pride we both felt. It opened the door to the often-off-limits topic of politics. We celebrated the hope, the resilience, the resistance others have also seen and appreciated, yet this also brought forward insight into my mother's own struggle navigating the immigration system and finding belonging in her new home, something I did not have words for at the time, being only four and a half years old, but something I viscerally felt.

Now, as a proud Chilean immigrant myself, this halftime performance felt deeply personal to my humanity, centering my identity as an immigrant and the daughter of an immigrant. There was a specific moment that really hit me. At the end of his set, everyone got together, and he was holding the football that said "Together We are America." As everyone was waving flags from all different Latinx nations—together—I felt such a feeling of immense pride, inclusion, and safety. What was amazing about that moment was that he wasn't saying "We are Latinx: we are better than you, you don't belong, you can't understand."

He was speaking clearly to those in the margins that you have value, you matter, and together we make up this beautifully complex society and world. You did not need to be able to speak Spanish to understand the messages of love and unity.

This brought me back to my work as a school based therapist, holding students as they navigated what it meant to be an immigrant in this country. I facilitated groups for kids where we explored what stress and trauma looked like, how they internalized or externalized these impacts. I watched them begin to relate with one another as they verbally expressed what they looked like when they felt overwhelmed or safe, insecure or valued. I watched their confidence grow, and their belief in themselves and who they are begin to expand. I was witness to their growing self-agency

and self-actualization in this world. I hope these students were watching this display of pride and unity, and that they felt the immense power of love on the big screen, remembering that they do belong.

All of this—from absorbing my mother’s journey as a child to working with children who walked that same path—brings me to this moment. As a Senior Coach with Trauma Transformed, these narratives inform my work with organizations to, essentially, bring Bad Bunny’s message of unity, resilience, and belonging to the workplace. His performance modeled the idea that we can either transmit our trauma or transform it. His message, and the talented people that joined in to create this message of hope and unity, is what needs to be on center stage right now. Now more than ever. I was thinking about the partners that I have worked with over the past decade and wanted to shout from the rooftops that this is what we mean by sharing our collective resilience, and that this is what belonging and inclusion looks like, feels like, and even sounds like.

How might we continue to expand on this message?

For human-services professionals feeling the weight of the 2026 political climate, here are two ways we might apply the themes of Bad Bunny’s performance—specifically inclusivity, resilience, and radical joy—to our work:

1. This show was all about resilience and joy, so try creating "Resilience Rituals" in your staff meetings or sessions where the primary goal isn't productivity, but cultural storytelling and becoming our own culture, together. Share a piece of art, a song, or a tradition that grounds you. Build practices to not only know each other, but also create together. We are unique individually, and when we come together as teams in our workplace we craft our own culture by intentionally being in community. This collective practice can shift systems!
2. Bad Bunny was all about the collective, and so consider taking time to audit your internal policies through a belonging lens. For example, move toward participatory budgeting or co-designed programming, where the students and families you serve have a vote on how resources are allocated.

I suggest that these are a few ways we take the themes from this groundbreaking performance and make them tangible in our work, celebrating this moment of joy and unity while continuing to lean into the important work of building trauma-informed systems that uplift belonging, resilience, and joy.

And as a final reflection, Bad Bunny's symbol of handing his Grammy to his younger self was a profound visualization of healing and dreaming of the accomplishments we might one day achieve. For me, this was realized in my recent conversation with my mamá, reminding me that we all carry the power to build the world our younger selves deserve, and today's young people can have. The systems change work I hope to achieve teaches me that we don't do this alone, we do this together.



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