

## **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement**

### **Allison Davis, PhD**

As a Multicultural Women's and Gender Studies doctorate I approach DEI through a framework of intersectionality to understand how lives are shaped by interconnected social categorizations. Equity addresses marginalization that results from power differentials in social categories while inclusion is the corrective justice-centered actions to ensure everyone has equitable opportunities to participate in collective life. As a White, middle-class cis-woman with structural privilege, I experience marginalization as a disabled person. My contribution to DEI is to bring an intersectional lens to my research in developmental psychology and my pedagogy to highlight how disparities form and how to challenge underlying structures that maintain them.

In my current qualitative study of maternal eco-distress, I ask how social categories intersectionally shape experiences of marginalization from the "good green mother" ideal and its associated mental health problems. I also document ways various identities provide mothers with valuable knowledge about how to resist anthropocentric prescriptions of environmental advocacy in their concern for the environment. For instance, a Chinese-American woman shared that she gets tea from China to maintain a relationship with the plants of her ancestry and to affirm she is mothered by many species while she is learning her new mothering role. Attuning to diverse identities while sampling with an inductive approach increases the analytical reliability over time. Attuning to diversity also offers a wider range of strategies people use to resist normative cultural pressures and advocate for social change.

Teaching Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies at Texas Woman's University, a school HSI ranked as the fourth most diverse university in the nation, I drew on feminist standpoint theory to help learners understand how experience shapes knowledge. I began classes by asking students to write a journal reflecting on their varied social categories to the classroom as teaching/learning partners. Part of the journal assignment prompted students to explore how each of us is situated in ways that make us more apt at understanding things within our direct experience and that sharing that knowledge can be a gift for others' development. Finally, we discussed intersectional cultural humility as a classroom value and made lists of ways we might individually self-reflect about power and privilege in our learning community as well as express appreciation for the lessons diversity brings those of us with structural privilege. As a result, a majority of students consistently showed proficiency in the university's multicultural learning objectives and felt more competent applying them to their lives. These included understanding that we can learn about one another through our differences and that cultural experiences are complex and dynamic.

I will continue my DEI work in research and writing. In my research, I will continue exploring a posthumanist understanding of intersectionality through application to maternal psychological development. In my teaching, I will continue centering a feminist pedagogical stance that empowers students to become critical learners capable of creatively addressing inequity in their own work.