**Workshop: Combatting Neurodiversity Discrimination in the Workplace**

**Workshop chairs:**

**Dr. Afra Ahamad** presently serves as the Director of the Masters of Professional Studies in Applied Industrial and Organizational Psychology Program at George Mason University. Her academic journey includes earning her B.A. in Psychology (2008), M.A. (2012), and Ph.D. (2016), all achieved through George Mason University’s top-ranked Industrial and Organizational Psychology Program. Dr. Ahmad’s career path also led her to a Fulbright Fellowship in the United Arab Emirates. In addition, she gained valuable experience working in the College of Business in Dubai before returning to Mason.

Dr. Ahmad has made significant contributions to the field, with a substantial body of scholarly articles focusing on diversity, equity, inclusion and workplace well-being. Her research endeavors include utilizing a wide array of research methodologies as she strives to gain insight into the workplace experiences of various demographic groups. Her research program aims to formulate effective strategies that can empower diverse employees to enhance their work experiences. Additionally, her work provides valuable guidance to organizations committed to fostering tolerance and equity within their workforce.

**Aimee Durrance** is an Industrial-Organizational Psychologist who integrates her experience as a past educator to develop solutions for organizations. While studying under Dr. Afra Ahmad, she researched the impact of neurodivergence on the relationship between psychological need fulfillment and job satisfaction. Aimee’s diverse education and professional background combined with being a neurodivergent individual herself and a proud mom of two neurodivergent children have given her a unique perspective and rich understanding of issues surrounding neurodivergence. Aimee has a B.A. in Social Work from Florida State University, an M.A. in Elementary Education from the University of Florida, and an M.P.S. in Industrial-Organizational psychology from George Mason University.

**Renee McCauley** is a first year Ph.D. student in George Mason's Industrial-Organizational Psychology program. Under Dr. Afra Ahmad's supervision, Renee discovered her passion for I-O research as a Mason undergraduate psychology honors student through her thesis on the intersectionality of accent and gender discrimination in hiring interviews. In graduate school, she has continued to study diversity, equity, and inclusion matters with focus on workplace sexual harassment and bystander intervention under Dr. Yijue Liang. Renee received a B.A. in Psychology from George Mason University where she graduated with honors and received the Psychology department’s most distinguished undergraduate award, the Jeanne C. Mellinger Award.

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**Abstract:**

Despite 15-20% of the population identifying as neurodivergent (Doyle, 2020; LeFevre-Levy et al., 2023), only 7% of organizations consider neurodiversity in their diversity efforts (Universum, 2021). Neurodivergent individuals process information differently than the majority of the population, and when their neurodivergence is unaccounted for in the workplace, they can feel unincluded and their work performance can suffer (LeFevre-Levy et al., 2023). Additionally, neurodivergent individuals may face unique discrimination that intersects with their gender identity. Neurodiversity has historically been underdiagnosed and consequently understudied in individuals assigned female at birth (Centers for Disease Control, 2023) and neurodivergent individuals are more likely to identify as transgender, non-binary, and gender diverse (TNG) than neurotypical individuals (Kallitsounaki & Williams, 2023). In the current workshop, we review several forms of neurodiversity and neurodiversity discrimination, offer practical solutions for organizations to make reasonable accommodations for the neurodivergent, and explore case studies of neurodiversity discrimination.

**Workshop length:** 90 minutes

**Workshop objectives:**

* Understand key neurodiversity terms
* Understand legal frameworks
* Define disability discrimination
* Differentiate types of discrimination
* Identify discrimination across employment stages
* Work through effective strategies to counter disability discrimination in the organization
* Work through individual-level strategies to prevent or combat disability discrimination

**Workshop outline:**

* Introduction
  + Preliminary exercise
  + Speaker introductions
  + Overview of workshop objectives
* Review of neurodiversity
  + Terms
  + Types
  + Intersectionality with gender
* Neurodiversity discrimination in the workplace
  + Discrimination types
  + Overview of legal issues from around the world
  + Discrimination in the employment life cycle
* Neuro-inclusive organizations
  + Psychological needs
  + Strength-focused model
  + Universal design
  + Inclusive climate
* Breakout case study
* Solutions for neurodivergent individuals
  + Know work preferences
  + Use coaches
  + Strategies
* Breakout case study

**References**

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