

## **EDI Conference Stream Proposal:**

Examining Self-Care Practices and Espoused vs Enacted Institutional Values Using an EDI Lens

Stream Chairs:

[Samantha E. Erskine, PhD<sup>1</sup>](#) and [Juanita K. Forrester, PhD<sup>2</sup>](#)

[1-UMass Boston College of Management; 2-Stetson-Hatcher School of Business at Mercer University]

### **Abstract:**

Aligned with the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Conference's commitment to fostering a global, multi-disciplinary dialogue in the workplace, this stream proposes an in-depth global exploration of 'self-care' through the lens of interlocking systems of oppression (Combahee River Collective, 1986) and the matrix of domination (Collins, 1990). Our objective is to transcend traditional views of self-care as merely a personal wellness practice, reconceptualizing it as a framework within EDI and a form of resistance against the pervasive "imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (hooks, 1994: 248). We seek to integrate intersectional feminist epistemologies, champion emancipatory knowledge and praxis, and center critical methodologies that not only facilitate theorizing about self-care across various levels of analysis but also actively work towards dismantling entrenched White, male, elitist, heterosexist, cissexist, transphobic, and settler-colonialist ideologies and structures (Hersey, 2022). Through this stream, we aim to contribute to a richer, more nuanced understanding of self-care, and elevate it from a personal act to a collective, transformative strategy within the broader context of EDI.

### **Self-Care in the Context of EDI:**

Simons (1999, p. 3) described behavioral integrity (BI) as "the perceived degree of congruence between the values expressed by words and those expressed through action." BI reflects how accurately managers represent their motivating values in interactions with employees, encompassing both their ability to act in accordance with their words and to communicate their actions consistently. In this stream, we will extend Simon's (1999) theory of BI to critically

analyze and discuss the concept of self-care, contrasting the well-being values espoused by institutions with actual and conflicting practices within, between, and through organizations. We will also explore the capitalist imperative of labor extraction alongside the necessity of self-care as a modality for self-preservation, survival, and renewal of both individual selves and communities (Lorde, 1988). We aim to delve into the dialectic of self-care and self-advocacy as forms of resistance against institutional norms that often marginalize or constrain our embodiment of well-being, particularly in the context of gender diversity and equity.

### **Research Focus and Theoretical Foundations:**

In proposing this stream, our standpoint is rooted in the belief that understanding barriers to—and practicing—self-care within complex frameworks of power is vital to both challenging and changing intersectionally oppressive ideologies, interactions, and institutions (Crenshaw, 1991). Accordingly, we invite scholarly contributions that offer innovative perspectives, and that encourage a reimagining of self-care as a tool for social justice and organizational change amidst interlocking systems of oppression (Combahee River Collective, 1986), the matrix of domination (Collins, 1990), and imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy (hooks, 1994). This might include examining the following research questions:

- How do intersectional forms of institutional oppression influence individual and collective practices of self-care among women of color?
- In what ways can self-care be redefined and practiced as a form of resistance against systemic power structures within organizations?
- How does imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy shape [or diminish] the perception, values, ideologies, and enactment of self-care practices in the workplace?
- What role might restorative justice play in either facilitating or hindering self-care practices, especially for those belonging to intersectionally marginalized genders?

- Within academia, how do (even well-meaning) senior scholars perpetuate the anti-well-being of students, postdocs, and/or junior faculty through toxic workplaces and publish-or-perish culture?
- In what ways are conceptualizations of self-care co-opted or depoliticized by institutions to effectively deflect responsibility for workers' well-being?
- What specific characteristics of modern industries or workplaces contribute to the development of cultures that hinder self-care, particularly for marginalized populations?
- How are successful organizations integrating intersectional feminist principles to put into practice their espoused support for women who experience systemic gendered racism?
- What imaginative and constructive efforts are needed to realize a world where women of color and other marginalized groups are empowered to embrace self-care and prioritize their personal and collective well-being?

### **Expected Outcomes:**

Participants in this stream will gain a nuanced understanding of how self-care practices can serve as both personal empowerment and a collective liberation against systemic oppression. We aim to bridge the theoretical understanding of intersectionality with practical approaches to fostering inclusive and supportive workplace environments. The stream will illuminate employees' perceived and actual barriers to engaging in self-care within the context of institutional norms (i.e., the ideal worker image - Reid, 2015). Moreover, it will provide a platform for discussing how organizational leaders, mentors, sponsors, champions, allies, and co-conspirators can better align their espoused values of well-being with enacted practices intra-and inter-organizationally, particularly in support of intersectionally marginalized gender identities.

### **Submission and Publication Opportunities:**

We invite contributions that are empirical, theoretical, or methodological in nature, in the form of long abstracts or full papers. Selected works may be nominated for the best paper in our stream

and considered for publication in associated journals like *European Management Review* and *Equality, Diversity, Inclusion: An International Journal*, adhering to their standards.

## References

- Collins, P. H. (1990). Black feminist thought in the matrix of domination. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 138(1990), 221-238.
- Combahee River Collective (1986). *The Combahee River Collective Statement: Black Feminist Organizing in the Seventies and Eighties*. New York: Kitchen Table.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43, 1241–1300.
- hooks, b. (1994). *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations*, New York: Routledge.
- Hersey, T. (2022). *Rest is Resistance: A Manifesto*. Little, Brown Spark.
- Lorde, A. (1988). *A Burst of Light: And Other Essays*. Ithaca, New York: Firebrand Books.
- Reid, E. (2015). Embracing, passing, revealing, and the ideal worker image: How people navigate expected and experienced professional identities. *Organization Science*, 26(4), 997–1017.
- Simons, T. L. (1999). Behavioral integrity as a critical ingredient for transformational leadership. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 12(2), 89-104.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/09534819910263640>.