Commitment to Diversity Statement   Ian M. Johnson

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My research and teaching are informed by activist-scholars. As a critical aging and disability scholar, I am interested in developing research that serves populations in the crosshairs of several oppressive forces— older, unhoused or marginally-housed, experiencing chronic illness and disability, and who have lived personal and intergenerational histories of containment, expulsion, surveillance, and neglect.

I have personal experience as a caregiver for aging family members, not only throughout chronic disease progression and end-of-life, but also during crises at the intersection of aging and serious mental health and substance abuse. This experience as a caregiver has given me personal exposure to the complexities created in aging by interactions by legal, medical, and mental health systems. My formal work experience, first as a nurse's assistant and then through a decade of social work practice largely with older people within the "institutional circuit," has contributed to my awareness of the interplay of these systems, and particularly how racism, classism, and poverty expound the risks my white, middle-class family faced.

Pedagogy

I establish social justice-based learning objectives in each course I teach. Early in each course, I initiate discussion and self-reflection about privilege and oppression, and establish a conversational through-line about how to negotiate the moral distress and conflict that arises when personal values, professional ethical codes, and agency protocols don't align. I utilize journaling prompts and mindfulness exercises to encourage both an exploration of these themes, but also emotional regulation that allows students to be more effective advocates and conscientious practitioners. I make myself available to students through office hours to process the undertaking of a social worker identity—that has looked like connecting students to a peer network of disabled scholars on campus, identifying mental health referrals, sharing frankly about ethical dilemmas in my own social work practice, and engaging with students in unlearning white supremacy. Intentional flexibility in course design allows me to be responsive to the class' process needs. Feedback on evaluations has encouraged me to continue these practices; for example: *"I really enjoyed the additional reading Ian added on queer and Indigenous research"* and *"the instructor included a wide range of content that went above and beyond the basics and gave us multiple opportunities in class to stretch out of our comfort zones*."

Research and Community Involvement

I intentionally co-create partnerships with community members to develop non-extractive research that, in addition to its academic contributions, has local impact. In my doctoral research projects, I have spent substantial time building trust and rapport with leaders of community spaces. My dissertation, an organizational case study of a novel homeless palliative

care team, involved several months of collaboration to ensure a mutually-beneficial research design. My qualifying paper similarly involved building trust with a network of senior center staff through identification of community liaisons and an iterative analysis process with community-based experts. I also wrote and disseminated policy and practice briefs with this project. As part of my accountability practices to my research participants, I have engaged in several mutual aid groups focused on homelessness and have been a part of calls to action to support homeless advocacy and harm reduction, as well as volunteered at a senior men's shelter and a Medicaid-funded assisted living residence. By working alongside social work professors on local reports related to COVID and aging, as well as low-income housing needs among LGBT older adults, I have learned how to offer research skills to address community-identified issues. As an openly queer scholar, I've also had opportunities to utilize my research skills to co-author papers and book chapters with other queer and trans scholars that accurately represent our communities' strengths and needs.