



Navigating Toxic Work and School Environments Self Care & Emotional Intelligence

In the previous chapters we reviewed instances of harassment you have experienced, and learned about identifying bias, harassment, and discrimination. In addition we looked into what is currently being done to address systematic and structural issues related to bias, harassment, and discrimination. All that we reviewed so far is the extent of current efforts to address harassment from a systemic standpoint.

While later in the course we will look into what individual organizations and universities are doing to address these issues, at this time we will be shifting to focus on vital information for you: **how individuals (you) can navigate bias, harassment, and discrimination.**

As a starting point to how you can navigate these difficult situations, I want to review important, but often overlooked, skills that are crucial for everyone, but especially for navigating bias, harassment, and discrimination: emotional intelligence and coping skills.

Emotional intelligence is the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically.

Coping skills are the methods a person uses to deal with stressful situations. These may help a person face a situation, take action, and be flexible and persistent in solving problems. I consider coping skills to be under the umbrella of self-care.

When we navigate bias, harassment, and discrimination, emotional intelligence and coping skills are critical to reach positive outcomes. Therefore, developing your emotional intelligence and learning coping skills and self-care are a critical part of reaching justice as well as maintaining your health and well-being through the process.

First, I must emphasize that emotional intelligence and self-care are very personal areas of growth that are unique to each person. What works for me, or you, may not work for other people. The key is growing your own self-awareness; for this you must look internally rather than ask externally in order to learn more about yourself and what coping techniques work for you. This does not include how others perceive you. This regards your own personal relationship with yourself.

The following lesson includes videos where I discuss how you can grow your emotional intelligence, and provide some coping skills that are effective for me. Due to the nature of this topic, I cannot provide a specific step-by-step guide for you to grow in these areas. **You have to dedicate the time and energy into experimenting with methods to grow your emotional intelligence and cope with stress.** Consider this a starting point in discovering your own methods.