

## **What does diversity mean to me?**

Throughout my time as a student, I have found a sense of joy and peace in recognizing the importance of diversity. To give a personal background about myself, I was adopted from China at nineteen months old. This is a significant aspect in my life that has shaped me into the person I am today and has motivated me to become a better person. Being adopted and part of a minority group and living in a country where I am not originally from gives me a greater understanding of cultural diversity. I find diversity to be something that should be recognized and celebrated.

Growing up, there were many times that I wished I wasn't adopted because I looked different from others. I struggled to fit in and be my true self. I was made fun of throughout elementary school and middle school. I did not like being Chinese or being placed into certain stereotypes. It took me a long time to recognize and accept my identity of being Asian American. In 2019, I had the opportunity to visit China for the first time since being adopted. This was a life-changing experience for me and for the first time in my life, I felt a sense of pride to be Asian American.

These experiences have shaped me into the person I am today and have made me well equipped to enter this field. Growing up, I learned a lot about what it means to put others before myself. My personal struggles have opened my eyes to the field of counseling and the helping profession. They have shown me how important it is to show empathy and understanding towards others, especially those who may be different from ourselves. My story of adoption is only one aspect of my life that I can use to help others realize their strengths and true potential.

Through self-reflection and thinking about my experiences, I envisioned some words that describe what diversity means to me. These words describe my feelings and deep desires for how diversity can be celebrated and achieved.

# D.I.V.E.R.S.I.T.Y.



## D- Discipleship

This is the desire to follow someone else. As social workers, we are in the role of learners all of the time. We need to be willing to learn and disciple one another. We are also leaders and role models for our clients. We are looked up to in some ways, as having referent power because we are well respected and looked to for support and guidance.

## I- Individuality

We all have characteristics that distinguish us from another person. People should recognize this and strive to be confident in themselves.

## V- Value

This is the belief that every person is special and brings value and unique differences to every situation.

## E- Equip and Empower

As social workers, we are equipped with knowledge to become people of change. We equip and empower our clients to reach self-sufficiency, to become agents of change, and to cope with their current situations.

## R- Reconcile

We need to heal broken relationships and reconcile with one another, to forgive and accept that everyone makes mistakes. Restoration is key to healing and mending broken relationships.

## S- Strengthen and Support

Through supporting one another, we can strengthen, encourage, and uplift each other. We can accept each other for our unique differences and strive to help those who may be marginalized or who may need that extra support to keep going in life.

## I- In process

Diversity is ongoing. People see diversity through many different lenses. Diversity is like a continuum that we strive to reach, a place where everyone feels loved and accepted.

## T- Together

In order to achieve a diversity where people feel heard, loved, and accepted, we need to come together as a group to respond to the needs of the people we serve. We need to create synergy and work as a team through collaboration, support, and encouragement.

## Y- Yearn

This represents the desire and longing for diversity to be embraced.