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As instructors, students, or supporting staff for an academic institution we are all very much aware of the power of discussion. In classrooms and lab meetings dialog plays an important role in how we understand and navigate novel ideas or problems. Through conversation we build relationships, connections, and establish intellectual continuity. Fostering a space that is inclusive and equitable for

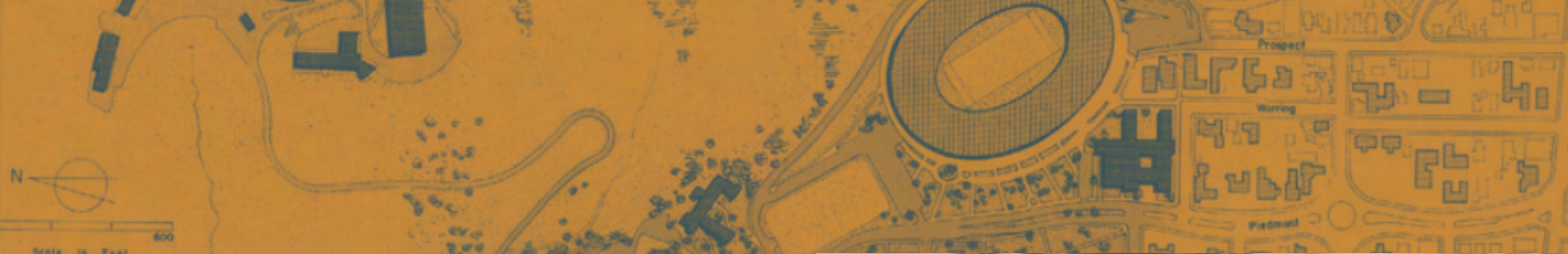
all people relies on these same tools. In the same way that a class or meeting requires a lesson plan/agenda and guidelines for communication, these basic precepts are foundational to how to talk about DEI. In these articles we hope to outline practices that can lead to successful conversation in DEI and build community.

constructive dialogue in dei
blueprints

by Oz Berteroi & K. MacCrantha
IB staff

While honest and frank discourse are fundamental to academic learning and the peer review process in which many of us regularly participate, it is not uncommon to feel discomfort or hesitancy when bringing this same sincerity to conversations that touch on interpersonal or sensitive topics. Conversations that have the potential to trigger, that will give voice to uncomfortable truths, or that acknowledge personal accountability can understandably feel far more high-stakes than discussing the merits of punctuated equilibrium.

Participants in conversations that center on what may be perceived as sensitive topics worry that they may not always have the right words or be in dialog with a receptive and compassionate listener. At the minimum we may worry that we will inadvertently offend someone or appear tone-deaf. At the extreme we may fear reprisal or retaliation from colleagues or supervisors that could impact future prospects. To remediate these concerns and tensions it is important to establish mutually agreed upon guideposts and practices to facilitate a productive, meaningful conversation.



One of the first steps when facilitating any conversation is to establish how participants will contribute their thoughts and ideas. In small intimate groups, such as lab meetings with fewer than a dozen participants, free-form interjection may feel like a natural and easy approach. However, it is important to recognize how inherent power-imbalances may affect the direction and contribution of participants. In free-form discourses, without set speaking order or protocol, outspoken individuals and individuals in positions of authority may have an unwittingly outsized impact on the thesis and shape of the conversation. Unmoderated discourse can also lead to interjection and a feeling that speakers must compete to be heard and listened to. In these scenarios participants are less prone to listen and more prone to focus on what they are going to say next and how they will fit their commentary into the conversation. This approach to discussion can also create a tennis-match between participants that can become more adversarial in nature. To compound, feeling unheard, or that one's grievance or perspective is not being acknowledged can exacerbate existing tension and frustration. Strategies to provide agency and to allow for more active listening include appointing a designated moderator. Prioritizing comments from individuals who may be less outspoken and framing questions and discussion in a way that can cater to richer engagement are tactics many of us regularly rely on when teaching. However, effective moderation takes practice and may not always translate fluidly from the approaches we are more familiar with in a lecture hall or committee meeting. Additionally, conversations that rely on these techniques place pressure on the moderator's performance. And, an active moderator will not be without their own bias which will inevitably guide the discussion or shape power-dynamics within the conversation.



One potent strategy used by the UC Berkeley's **Restorative Justice Center** that can provide important infrastructure to the framework of a conversation is the use of a talking piece. In effect, the talking piece is some object—perhaps a rock, shell or pine cone—that is passed in a set order between participants. In a physical space this will often mean passing the talking piece either clockwise or counterclockwise in a circle, which is why this style of discussion is usually referred to as a **Circle Practice**. In a virtual space a talking piece can be symbolically passed in a set order through verbal recognition of the next person on the speaker list. When a member is in possession of the talking piece they alone have the opportunity to speak and may talk for as little or as long as they wish. When they are done speaking, the talking piece is passed to the next person in the circle. If someone has an immediate response to what was just said and they are not the next person to receive the talking piece they will need to hold on to their comment until the talking piece has cycled through everyone else ahead of them on the speaker list.

While it can sometimes feel frustrating to not have the opportunity to immediately respond to a comment that you may disagree with or feel challenged by, the time delay imposed by the talking piece helps bring composure and deeper reflection to how participants ultimately respond to one another. According to the Restorative Justice Center of UC Berkeley, "The talking piece is a powerful equalizer. It gives every participant an equal opportunity to speak and carries an implicit assumption that every participant has something important to offer the group. As it passes physically from hand to hand, the talking piece weaves a connecting thread among the members of the circle." Not only does the talking piece invite everyone's input, but it does so in a way that allows for thoughtful consideration and active listening. While the facilitator of this style of dialog is still empowered to advance the conversation with questions to prompt discussion and will still need to introduce and overview the format of the discussion, the talking piece itself democratizes the process, by giving participants the freedom to set the tempo and dynamics of the conversation.

Another aspect fundamental to your conversation are community agreements. Beyond the structural framework of the Circle Practice, community agreements provide the etiquette and expect-

ation for how participants will communicate. Community agreements help establish intention and alleviate underlying anxieties, by giving participants an opportunity to reach consensus on shared values. The guidelines you decide upon will be specific to the topics, participants, situation and discussion format. Included below are some common values included in a community agreement and how these community values can create discussions that are both critical and inviting.



Right to be ragged - Remember that we are all human and may not always have the right words or the most polished or well formulated ideas. Just like in science, we don't have all the answers, and that is okay. Confronting an unknown can be scary, but also exciting, a sign of growth and new directions. At the same time, it is important to recognize that intent is different from impact. So, it is important to take ownership and to not immediately go on the defensive if something you have said comes across the wrong way. Be gentle and patient with yourself and others.



courtyard of valley life science building

Use I statements · Own what you say and do not speak for others or project your personal ideas and values onto those around you. Don't assume to know what someone may or may not be thinking, feeling or have experienced. Speak or act on behalf of others only by their consent and/or example.

Call in instead of calling out · We all come to the discussion with genuine intent, something that the community agreements should ideally affirm. Therefore, assume the best intentions in what someone has shared. If someone has said something you find problematic, separate the problem from the person. Ask questions to clarify a comment and promote introspection. Apply the skills of constructive feedback that you have honed as a scientist or peer-reviewer. At the same time, recognize that calling someone in requires a capacity for patience and emotional stamina that may not always be available in the moment, when feelings may be raw. When someone responds to your words or actions with patient and compassionate feedback, recognize that this is a gift.

Embrace learning and personal growth ·

Value constructive feedback, a willingness to acknowledge mistakes, and a compassion for each other and ourselves as essential to the process. Show gratitude for the feedback you receive. Validate other experiences, the legitimacy of what they are feeling and time they have dedicated to the conversation.

Recognize power dynamics · If you are someone who tends to contribute disproportionately to the discussion, create space for others. Take time to engage in active listening. Your undivided attention demonstrates respect for those you converse with and validates and appreciates what others have contributed. If you are someone in a position of authority whose perspective carries particular weight or sets the tone and direction in a space, take time to reaffirm your intention in the space and commitment to community values.

What's said here stays here, what's learned here leaves here · Vulnerability can be fundamental to

learning and growth, and it is important to cultivate a space that allows for dialogue that invites introspection and honesty. Carry the lessons, intentions and community that your discussion generates forward. But, respect the privacy of individuals who may have shared sensitive or deeply personal information.



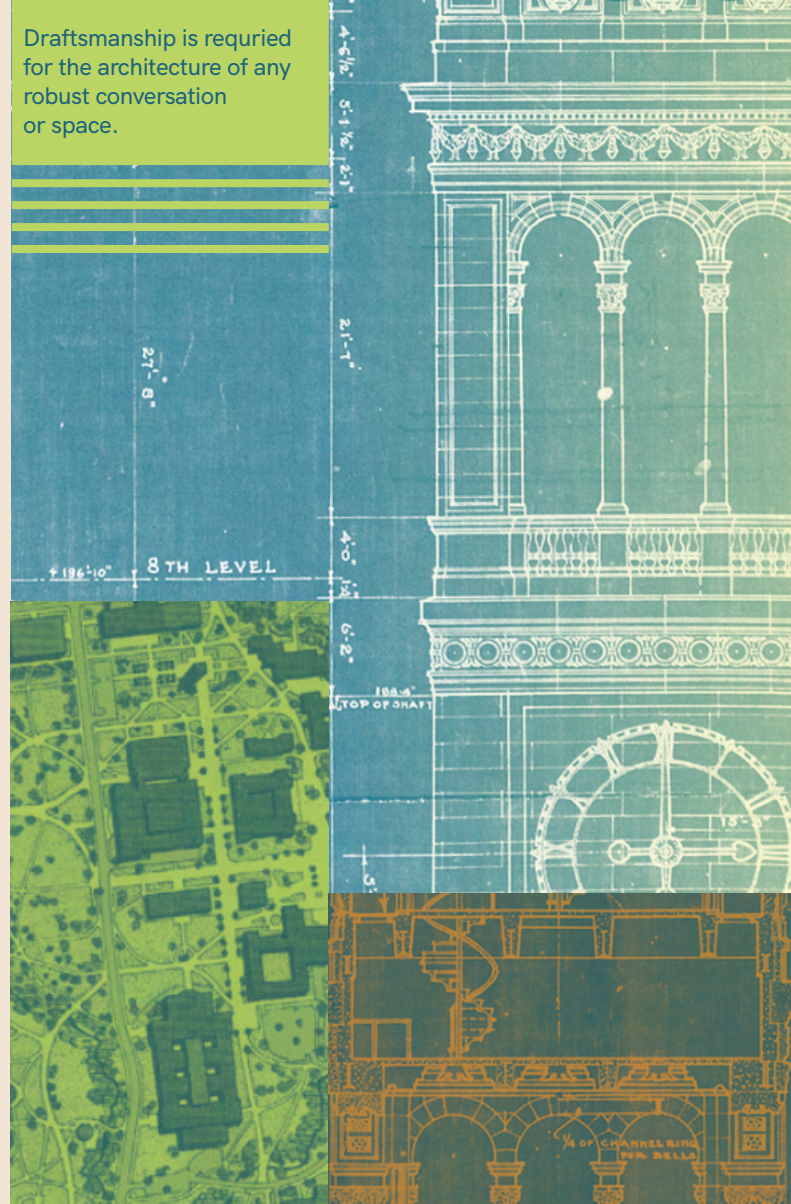
While this is by no means an exhaustive list of community values to be included in your community agreements, it offers a starting point for discussion with your colleagues. Most importantly, the above community values are cornerstones for fostering unambiguous and direct communication while at the same time designed to alleviate the anxiety and uncertainty that can often accompany frank dialogue. It is important that we find shared vocabulary, understandings, and community values before we can expect meaningful and productive conversations about specifics like race, gender or even office politics. The values that best align with your lab or co-workers will no doubt be unique, so you should feel welcome to revise and amend this community agreement list to best meet your needs, through discussion.

To explore how you can apply these discussion strategies consider holding a conversation applying the discussion questions that now accompany main articles in the DEI newsletter. The questions have been designed as a script for groups to use in the context of a Circle Practice. The three questions paired with each main newsletter article are structured in a guided restorative model. The first question allows for a low-stakes primer to warm participants to the conversation by seeking to find empathetic/sympathetic connection between discussion participants and the article subject matter. The Second question engages with key concerns/issues discussed by the article. This

question remains somewhat open ended to allow participants to advance the conversation in a direction that feels most natural. Participants are welcome to respond to these questions with their own questions. The Final question aims at pivoting the issue discussed in the previous question back to the individual asking them to reflect on their personal role or responsibility in this space. You can apply this same question arc when writing your own script for a conversation you would like to lead through Circle Practice. When moderating a circle it can be a good idea to begin and end the discussion with a brief check-in question or temperature check to gauge how participants are feeling and to debrief after the discussion. An opening check-in question may be as simple as asking each participant to contribute in a single sentence or even a single word defining their expectations or hopes for the conversation's outcome. Exit questions can assume a similar format, asking participants to share how they are feeling after the discussion or if they have any questions or follow-up that the conversation has inspired. Using additional low-stakes ice-breaker questions or activities at the start of a sensitive conversation can also be effective as a warm up exercise, especially if your group is not already cohesive or does not have much practice with these sorts of discussions. Opening and closing remarks can also serve as a way to distinguish and elevate the discussion and process. Tips for how to format and introduce ice-breaker or check-in questions and activities as well as strategies for creating more inclusive discussion spaces can be found in the **Circles for Social Change Comprehensive Manual**, through the Restorative Justice Center.

DEI newsletter self-reflection questions have been written to allow for a 1-1.5 hour discussion for groups sizes 10-20. Particularly when discussing topics covered in the newsletter which touch on systemic or overarching societal problems, or transcend easy solutions or levels of expertise expressed within the period of an hour and the limits of participant's experience it may be hard or even impossible to find meaningful closure. Workshops or conversations that focus

Draftsmanship is required for the architecture of any robust conversation or space.



on sensitive topics can open wounds, or generate questions and debate that typically can not be resolved within the confines of a single discussion period. So, the expectation should not be to find an immediate solution but to accept the discussion process as an invitation for further growth and discovery.

This model of exploration can sometimes feel like one-step forward two steps back. As researchers, it's a feeling many of us are well familiar with, as one question or line of investigation tends to lead to more questions than answers. And yet, this is a process that can never-the-less advance truth and understanding, even as it forces us to admit how much we don't know. When considering the direction we progress diversity, equity and inclusion at UC Berkeley it is important that



we distinguish between cosmetic and systemic solutions if we are to create a more inclusive department climate. There is an undeniable solace found in unexamined complacencies when faced with the friction that accompanies genuine forward motion. Conflict or discomfort are often the beginning steps toward growth, which is why it is important to have difficult discussions in intimate and reassuring spaces to help process and guide the department's endeavors, and direct how we as individuals and communities accustom ourselves to confronting systemic challenges. But, the outcome of these conversations will only have sustained benefit if our community is committed to follow-up and continued self-reflection on our progress. Circle Practice, like any practice, is an exercise that improves outcome with repetition.

If you are interested in learning more about how to facilitate dialogues for inclusion, or to meet with a facilitator visit the website for UC Berkeley's **Restorative Justice Center**.

reflection questions:

The following questions are designed to guide you through creating community agreements for your own circle, meeting, or other conversation.

What is something you need in order to feel acknowledged and valued in a conversation?

Follow-up question: What assurance do you need to be vulnerable and honest in a discussion space?

After reading through the suggested community values, is there anything you would change or add to the list? How can you best model these community values during conversation/circle?

Restorative outcomes may begin, but rarely find resolution, in initial conversations. In what ways can you carry forward the momentum and/or what you have built or learned during dialogs with your colleagues?

IB research mixer

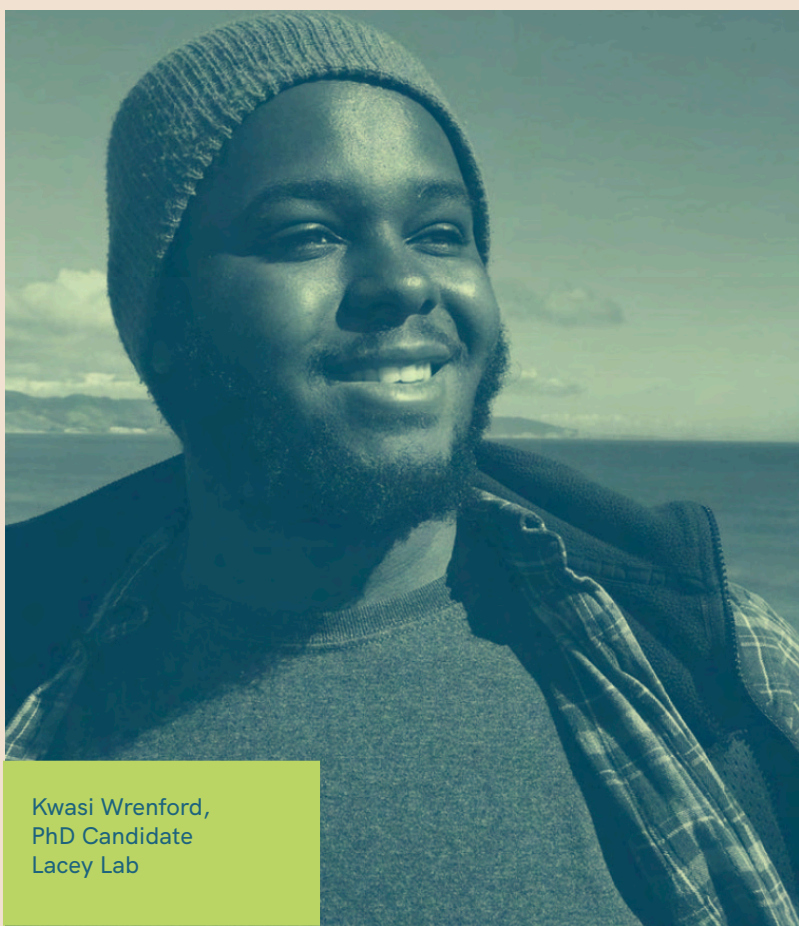
by G. Shallon
IB Staff

If you spent anytime after 5.00pm around the Valley Life Science Building last semester you may have noticed the occasional gathering of undergraduate and IB graduate students, congregating in the VLSB court yard. Beginning Fall 2021, each month, the Department of Integrative Biology has sponsored the IB Research Mixer.

Envisioned, designed and implemented by graduate students Kwasi Wrensford, Lawrence Wang, Peter Kloess, and Kelsey Crutchfield-Peters, the IB Mixers features guest graduate student presenter and refreshments all with the aim of building community in the department and inviting undergraduates, particularly undergraduates of color and first generation college students, to connect with opportunities in research. To learn more about this emerging program which already has proven popular with participating undergraduates we talked with Kwasi Wrensford, PhD candidate in the Lacy Lab and Museum of Vertebrate Zoology who has piloted these events.

Campus and department programs such as the Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program (URAP) and Biology Scholars Program (BSP) aim to connect undergraduate students with research positions and mentorship. How do you envision the IB Research Mixer advancing this mission, particularly for first-generation, EOP and students of color? What need does the Research Mixer fulfill that existing programs don't?

These programs are amazing resources for marginalized students looking for mentorship in research, and academia more broadly in the case of BSP. I envisioned the research mixers to be a supplement to these programs, and in particular a space for graduate students and undergraduate students to mingle, interact, and break down barriers. There are few venues for these two populations to interact in a peer to peer, or near



Kwasi Wrensford,
PhD Candidate
Lacey Lab



"...having access to graduate students in a low-pressure context, particularly grads they can empathize and identify with, will be a valuable resource to anyone, but especially our most vulnerable."

—Kwasi Wrensford

left: Wrensford and an undergraduate assistant working at his field site.

peer context, and graduates I think are valuable mentorship resources for students navigating science and academia. We've been through this all much more recently than our professors, and we can provide a more grounded perspective. In pure functional terms, graduate students are the primary mentors when it comes to day to day research work an undergraduate is likely to be involved in. Hopefully, having access to graduate students in a low-pressure context, particularly grads they can empathize and identify with, will be a valuable resource to anyone, but especially our most vulnerable.

On your website, you mention that growing up in rural Georgia informed your interest in working with animals. But, bridging an interest in the natural world with finding a vocation in the sciences isn't necessarily a clearcut path. What opportunities or mentorship lead you to pursue a PhD, and how has that inspired your own mentorship approach?

It was definitely not always obvious how I could leverage my love of nature and animals into a viable career. The only options presented to me for folks interested in biology were basically medicine, veterinary medicine, and agriculture, but I knew my interests lay elsewhere. I had

the opportunity to volunteer at my small town's small zoo for several of my teen years, and my boss at the zoo was the first person I had met who had gone to graduate school for ecological/environmental research. Once in college, I took every class I could find in ecology and evolution, and with every class I got to interact with a diverse array of professors and potential mentors. The biggest factor in my pursuing a research career was the NSF Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) position I received in 2015. I was paid and financially supported to live at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory in Colorado to work as field research technician, while also completing my own independent research project on the behavior and ecology of these adorable rodents, yellow-bellied marmots. The PI of the marmot lab, Daniel Blumstein, pushed me to see this project through, from the data collection to the writing, and always treated me like a colleague despite this being my first real research position. His mentorship, as well as the mentorship of the many wonderful professors at my undergrad institution, really showed me that I could be a scientist.

As a department we often talk about how we can better engage and include the undergraduate population through mentorship by graduate students,

faculty and staff researchers. As a fourth year, are there areas where you feel that mentorship and academic inclusion could be improve within the department for our graduate students population as well?

I think as a field, academia often takes mentorship for granted, and that's not to say that people don't value mentorship, but more that we don't often appreciate the intentionality required to do it effectively. We often think if we match a talented mentee with a successful mentor, the mentee will be guaranteed success, but time and time again that's proven not to be true. I think mentors and mentees need to think long and hard about the nuts and bolts of mentorship practice, what works and what doesn't, and recognize that mentoring relationships are dynamic, nuanced things. Also, we should continue to prioritize inclusive approaches to mentorship, recognizing the multitudes mentees bring to our communities. Many mentoring approaches, while successful for certain types of mentees, often exclude those who've had to struggle to break into the academy whether it be due to identity, socioeconomic background, personal hardship, what have you, and we end up recapitulating the same patterns and reinforcing the same cultural norms in our communities. An inclusive, and reciprocal, mentorship culture I think benefits everyone in the long run, while also ensuring a space for those left behind by traditional academic culture.

The IB Research Mixer was created through copious organizing and planning by yourself and other graduate students. What suggestions do you have for members of the IB community interested in implementing their own programs to foster diversity equity and inclusion in the department?

The idea for the research mixers was kind of born serendipitously. A group of early career faculty pooled their resources to establish a series of small grants to fund DEI focused projects developed and implemented by grad students. Luckily, my time on IB's DEI committee and the relationships I've formed made it easy for me to find collaborators and get a proposal in quickly. I guess if I have any

advice for organizing in general, it would be to put yourself out there, and make those relationships with like minded folks in the department. It's all too easy to feel isolated as a marginalized person, or as a person doing advocacy work, but finding a support system, as in all things, really makes the difference. When you do have an idea you'd like to implement, it then becomes important to have a good sense of what institutional resources may already be available for you to make use of. It's very easy in the DEI space to do redundant work, rather than support existing structures, so it's critical to think of your work not in isolation, but as an integrated aspect of your community.

5. How can graduate students, staff and faculty get involved in the IB Research Mixer?

It's quite easy to participate, we send out a call every month to solicit speakers for the upcoming mixer. Any graduate student interested in speaking about their work just needs to reach out to myself or any of the other organizers and we'll have them added to the schedule. Graduate students who aren't interested in speaking are also more than welcome to attend and interact with the students as well!

reflection questions:

In the interview, Wrensford mentions how graduate students can often better related to the experiences of undergraduates than faculty or staff. What are some of the challenges that undergraduates face that may be similar to when you were an undergraduate? What are some challenges that may be different?

Do you feel that your approach to recruiting lab and field technicians may bias who you find in your search? What are some ways you can expand awareness of research opportunities in your lab or workspace?

in history: Dr. Nadine Burke Harris

by Emily Bögner
FAVE Lab

In the midst of a pandemic, California's first-ever surgeon general and Berkeley alumna, Dr. Nadine Burke Harris focuses on how childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime. Burke Harris was inspired towards this path after noticing her parents' traumatic experiences were having a negative impact on their present and future health. Her father, a biochemist, and mother, a nurse, raised her briefly in both Canada and Jamaica before moving to the United States when Burke Harris was four. Graduating with a B.A. in Integrative Biology from UC Berkeley in 1996, she would later receive her M.D. from UC Davis, before completing a residency in pediatrics at Stanford. Burke Harris went on to return to school and received an M.S. in Public Health from Harvard and with that served a second residency in Stanford pediatrics. After finishing her education, Burke Harris co-founded the Adverse Childhood Experiences project that effectively treats toxic stress in children. Two years later she co-founded the



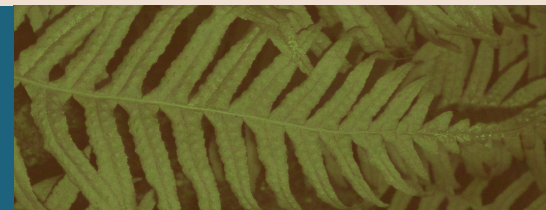
Dr. Nadine Burke Harris
Surgeon General
of California

Center for Youth Wellness which aims to have every pediatrician in the United States screen for adverse childhood experiences by 2028. In her most recent appointment as California Surgeon General, Burke Harris is drawing on past global disasters, like Hurricane Katrina, to understand how children will be adversely affected by the Coronavirus pandemic. Burke Harris' advice on coping with uncertainties surrounding the pandemic include focusing on things you most have control over—your health through exercise and nourishment, limiting media exposure, and mindfulness.

upcoming events + campus resources

- 5 Jan.—Submission deadline: **Gates Foundation Predoctoral Fellowships**, Underrepresented Researchers or Color, openings for Program Analyst, and Social Science Mentor
- 28 Jan.—Night of Bilingual Poetry & Music, **La Peña Cultural Center** 7.30pm, 3105 Shattuck Ave. featuring award winning bay area authors and an open mic event.

Have a story or event you would like to see featured in upcoming newsletters? Email us at DeiNewsletters@gmail.com



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