

[00:00:00.33] ANTHONY SIS: The opinions expressed by the guests and contributors of this podcast are their own, and do not necessarily reflect the views of Cornell University or its employees.

[00:00:09.03] [MUSIC PLAYING]

[00:00:11.86] On today's episode, we'll be exploring the topic of polyamory. According to Merriam-Webster, polyamory can be defined as the state or practice of having more than one open romantic relationship at a time. Polyamory is a relationship structure that is oftentimes not thought of as a form of diversity, which is why we are talking about it on today's show with a special guest named Amanda. My name is Anthony Sis.

[00:00:36.67] TORAL PATEL: My name is Toral Patel.

[00:00:38.02] ANTHONY SIS: And you are listening to the Inclusive Excellence podcast.

[00:00:41.36] [MUSIC PLAYING]

[00:00:59.39] Welcome back. Thank you for joining me and Toral on another episode of the Inclusive Excellence podcast. Toral, how are you doing today?

[00:01:06.86] TORAL PATEL: I am doing great, Anthony. How are you?

[00:01:09.17] ANTHONY SIS: I'm doing pretty good. I'm excited for the semester and what's to come.

[00:01:12.53] TORAL PATEL: Yeah, and the weather is not bad.

[00:01:14.42] ANTHONY SIS: The weather is not bad. It's a little cold. We got snow again.

[00:01:16.94] TORAL PATEL: We did. So as you all know, at the end of each episode, we ask you to email us if you have a special topic that you want us to explore. Well, Amanda was the first person to reach out to us a few months ago because she really wanted us to explore the topic of polyamory. We believe that each and every one of us are experts in our own lived experiences, which is why we invited Amanda to the show to help our listeners understand a little bit more about what polyamorous relationships are all about. So here is Amanda's story.

[00:01:44.92] Amanda, thank you so much for being with us on today's episode. Why don't you start by sharing with our listeners a little bit about yourself and the pronouns that you use?

[00:01:52.76] AMANDA: Hi. So I'm Amanda. I've worked for Cornell for about seven years now, and I use she/her pronouns.

[00:01:58.79] TORAL PATEL: Perfect. Thank you so much for sharing. As usual we're going to start with the question of the day for all of us to answer. And I will be asking today's question. So this is going to be a fun one. And the question is, do you view others as supporting characters in your story or main characters in their own story?

[00:02:18.63] ANTHONY SIS: Ooh. Can you repeat that one?

[00:02:20.38] TORAL PATEL: Right?

[00:02:20.93] ANTHONY SIS: I'm thinking, I'm like, OK.

[00:02:22.43] TORAL PATEL: It's an interesting one. So do you view others as supporting characters in your story, or main characters in their own?

[00:02:28.91] AMANDA: I think people are main characters in their own story. They're driven by their own wants and needs and goals in life. So that's how I view them.

[00:02:37.27] TORAL PATEL: Yeah. And I actually take that entire question and turn it into a statement, that they can be supporting characters in my story, but then they are main characters in their own. I have people that help guide my life, but I'm still ultimately making my own life decisions. So they are kind of the supporting characters that help move me forward, but then in their own life, I also feel like I play a supporting character, and help them make decisions and help them move forward in their own life. So.

[00:03:02.66] AMANDA: Makes sense.

[00:03:03.38] ANTHONY SIS: That resonates with me. That's similarly for me, I would say.

[00:03:06.47] TORAL PATEL: Perfect. Thank you so much for being with us.

[00:03:08.96] ANTHONY SIS: All right, so polyamory. We know the textbook definition. There are several different definitions, with some similarities, but also some differences. But we're also cognizant of the fact that, when it comes to certain identities, each individual defines it in their own way. So for you specifically, how do you define polyamory.

[00:03:28.01] AMANDA: So I define it as being in a type of non-monogamous relationship structure, where people engage in multiple relationships simultaneously. So right now, I have two romantic relationships with two different people, but they're not in a relationship with each other. I've been either ethically non-monogamous, which is the big umbrella term that holds polyamory, open relationships, all that jazz, for about five years.

[00:03:51.69] And so I'm talking about all these things from my experience, which isn't going to be representative of everyone's, obviously. Everyone's experience with poly,

ethical non-monogamy, all these things is really different. And I also have a lot of privilege, being a white and cis person. So I just really want to acknowledge that, that coming out for me is going to potentially be a lot easier because of those things.

[00:04:14.49] ANTHONY SIS: And so I just want to kind of clarify that cis, you said the word cis. So cisgender is somebody whose sex assigned at birth aligns with their gender identity, for our listeners, for folks who may not be aware.

[00:04:25.46] TORAL PATEL: So polyamory is something that I'll be honest and tell you that I actually don't know much about. And I didn't know until we had asked you to join us today. And so I've been doing some research, and it's not actually a form that I would associate with diversity. But as I was reading more and more about it, it's just been something very interesting for me to learn about. And so in terms of polyamory as a whole, there are lots of negative stereotypes and assumptions, right, that people make, some of which are further perpetuated in the workplace. So what do you think are some of the most prevalent ones that affect individuals at work?

[00:05:01.52] AMANDA: Sure. So the ones that I think would sort of be perpetuated in the workplace are probably things like commitment issues. So people who are polyamorous, you know, can't commit to anyone, one person, so they're just going to date everyone. Lack of faithfulness, and just that it's a phase that you're going through. You'll eventually pick one person, so it's sort of youthful exploration. And that might come across in the workplace by thinking about like lack of decision-making skills.

[00:05:30.26] And so if you can't commit to any one person, how are you going to be able to make decisions in the workplace? Or not being a loyal employee. So that commitment thing isn't really true. So you're committed to multiple people, and have like a lot of conversations around that commitment all the time. So that's sort of a myth to be busted right off the bat. And people confuse polyamory with cheating all the time. So there's no lack of faithfulness happening. People are always open and honest in polyamory about the relationships they are pursuing.

[00:06:04.64] The sort of just a phase thing is, I think, a little dismissive and disrespectful of people who are polyamorous. For some, it's really a relationship orientation, part of their identity, sort of likened to a sexual orientation. So something that's really deeply rooted in people's identity. So calling it a phase can be really disrespectful.

[00:06:25.61] ANTHONY SIS: So in terms of, I think, with some of these biases, right, that people who are in polyamorous relationships face, a lot of it has to do with authenticity, right? Like, can people in polyamorous relationships be their authentic selves at work? And so just from your own personal experience, do you feel like you're able to be your most authentic self in the workplace in regards to your identity as a polyamorous individual?

[00:06:48.74] AMANDA: No. No, I really don't think I can be. I've been either ethically non-monogamous, which is like the big umbrella term that encompasses open relationships, polyamory, things like that, or polyamorous for about five years. And I'm guessing, in a lot of that time, my coworkers think I've been single, because it's hard to talk about your partners or what you did over the weekend or things like that, or I don't feel comfortable talking about relationship milestones like anniversaries or what I did with my partners over the weekend.

[00:07:21.83] So I have a lot of friends when I talk about things I did over the weekend, whereas other co-workers get to talk about their kids and their partners on a regular basis. Or just simple things like having pictures. I have no pictures of my partners in my office space, whereas people have pictures of their kids and their husband or wife or something like that in their office.

[00:07:46.55] TORAL PATEL: Even that, right? So like one of the biggest studies out there talks about, like, decorating your personal space. And so even when I started at Cornell, I am also one that does-- I don't necessarily have to decorate my personal space. And I was told that what the research indicates is that, if you don't decorate with personal items, it's a sign that you don't plan to stay. And in this case, in your case, it's that you feel like you cannot share that part of who you are.

[00:08:12.83] AMANDA: Yeah, so it feels like I can't share a lot of my personal life. So it feels kind of isolating that I can't share a big part of who I am at the workplace.

[00:08:21.98] TORAL PATEL: Now, what do you think some of the barriers are that are preventing you from sharing that information?

[00:08:27.83] AMANDA: Yeah. So I'm both queer and poly, so it'd be sort of a double outing of myself. So while I have some pride flags around in my office, I don't want to necessarily have to explain both what queer is and what poly is to people. There's also a fear of prying or inappropriate questions, especially around being poly. It's something that a lot of people don't know a lot about, so there's always a fear of someone asking a question that goes a little too far. And again, it just also gets tiring to educate people.

[00:08:56.66] You just kind of don't want to do that all the time. But then you still want to be your most authentic self at work, so it's balancing that. You know, I want to be able to talk about-- like as an example, one of my partners, his partner is expecting a child soon. And they're finding out the gender next week. And I want to be able to share that with everyone in my office, and be like, you know, this amazing thing is happening in my life. But I feel like I can't.

[00:09:22.46] ANTHONY SIS: Yeah, and in terms of-- so we've talked a lot about the experiences in terms of barriers and biases that people have towards people in polyamorous relationships. So we know there's a distinction between bias and discrimination. And discrimination, I think particularly with polyamorous individuals, what

are some of the fears with discrimination in the workplace that is a very real threat for folks in polyamorous relationships?

[00:09:46.34] AMANDA: Yeah, so relationship status is something that's actually not protected under discrimination laws. So coming out in the workplace as polyamorous, some people really potentially fear reprisal or getting fired or things like that. I actually have a friend who worked previously at a law firm. They were talking about their plans, like seeing a partner, and then one of the lawyers said, you know, you really shouldn't talk about that, it's not safe for work topics.

[00:10:15.65] And they were just talking about their relationships, the same way someone would talk about, oh, you know, I'm going with my husband to go see a play. Luckily, the HR director corrected them and said, they're just talking about relationships. But you know, so really that fear is not unfounded. So like a morality clause is something that an employer puts in an employee's contract that basically says that they can discharge an employee for anything that the employer thinks is not ethically meeting their expectations.

[00:10:46.58] And it paints a really broad brush sometimes. You see it a lot of the times in different faith-based schools or nonprofit organizations, but you also see it in just corporate America. So that means, a lot of the times, that poly people can't have their relationships represented in social media or other places, where maybe they don't want to be out at the workplace, but they feel like they could be out other places because of that off-duty conduct potentially being monitored and having employment consequences.

[00:11:18.83] In Australia in 2015, there was a court case where the federal circuit court said we think polyamory is a behavior, and not an identity. Someone had filed the lawsuit against their employer because they were fired for being polyamorous. But the court said, you know, this is a behavior not an identity status, like sexual orientation might be. So no, that was totally fine, the employer can go ahead and discriminate based on relationship status. So not the US, Australia, but people look around all the globe.

[00:11:48.18] TORAL PATEL: Sure, yeah.

[00:11:48.89] AMANDA: Yeah, the case law in the US is really mostly around legal protection for third parents in poly relationships. So similar to LGBTQ+ people adopting or having a surrogate, those sort of two case law are commingled.

[00:12:04.67] ANTHONY SIS: I will say, I think polyamory, it's a lot more common, I think, than people think. In also preparing for this particular episode and the conversation, I actually had a lot of conversations with people who kind of unintentionally said like, oh yeah, I have a friend or I have a co-worker who has had similar issues in the workplace with disclosing as polyamorous. I just think that the

evolution of what we view as a relationship has just changed so that it's beyond any tie to any other identity.

[00:12:34.85] Like, it's just its own category. Like, if people want to and choose to be polyamorous, like so be it. And so it's an important topic that I'm appreciative that we're having in terms of this discussion because it's more common than people think. Hopefully, this episode just raises that awareness to another level to just say, like, how are we excluding people of different relationship structures, and being mindful of that.

[00:12:55.31] AMANDA: Yeah. I feel like back to the needs, unique needs of polyamorous people, it also applies to people who decide to delay marriage or never get married. Things like bereavement leave policies, sick leave, other things like that, a lot of the time label relationships as marriage or domestic partnerships, whereas a lot of people may not choose to pursue those things. So polyamorous people or people who just choose never to get married or follow traditional structures like that don't fall under those policies. So finding representation in those things is really hard. And then there's also just like less serious things, like if I have multiple partners, who am I going to bring to a work function?

[00:13:35.30] TORAL PATEL: Right. I mean, I wouldn't say that's less serious. I would say that's a consideration for sure. But then it goes back to what you were saying earlier, Amanda, is where most people think that you're single because, one, you don't feel comfortable talking about your partner or partners, and then two, it's like you said, if there is an event going on, others might bring their spouses or partners, but because they don't know your status, how do you bring multiple partners, right? And how do you introduce that? Why do you feel that you're not able to open up? Is it because you don't think that people would be accepting of your relationship status?

[00:14:08.96] AMANDA: Potentially. You know, people's views on polyamory are really varied, and it's actually a lot easier to come out as poly to people who identify as allies to other groups. So when I came out as poly to one of my coworkers-- and there are only two people in my office who know who I'm poly right now-- one of them had an LGBT ally sticker on their door, and very openly would say things to every coworker, you know, my door is an open door, I'm happy to talk to anyone about anything, that sort of thing.

[00:14:41.54] And at one point, one day, I think I was just having a hard day personally, and she said, oh, what's going on? And I said, you know, I'm just going through a rough time, but luckily, I have a good support network. And she's like, oh, who are they? And I was like, well, I've luckily got multiple partners. And she's like, oh, tell me about that. Very nonjudgmentally, very just wanting to understand what my life was like. Because I knew she was an ally to other people in very open ways, it made it easier to come out to her.

[00:15:12.65] It really varies office by office. My girlfriend works at Cornell, and is able to be really open at her office. So again, it varies, again, also person by person.

[00:15:22.55] ANTHONY SIS: Just going off of the conversation we had about allies and coming out to folks in your area, in general, what are kind of some best practices, most inclusive practices that staff and faculty can start practicing for people who are in polyamorous relationships or identify as poly themselves?

[00:15:40.07] AMANDA: If someone comes out as poly, it's going to be a big practice in trust. And then another thing is people practice poly differently. So my poly is not the same as somebody else's poly, is not the same as somebody else's. And people might have different levels of comfort answering questions that coworkers might have. So while I may be super comfortable answering questions, somebody else may just want to disclose that they have multiple partners, or just be able to talk about them, and that's about it. And they don't want to have to answer questions from people. So that comfort in talking about it is really going to vary from person to person.

[00:16:14.97] TORAL PATEL: In an ideal world, right, it would just be that you come in Monday morning, you're able to talk about what you did over the weekend, and just say, you know, this is what my partners and I did, or one partner and I did, just like any other person is able to do, and it's really like no big deal, and the focus is more on what you did, and not necessarily who you did it with, right? And the conversation's like, oh, well tell me more about that, or you went to Syracuse, or tell me more about that this weekend, what play did you see, or whatever it is. And the focus is more on the activities, that would be the most ideal-- it'd just become such a norm, the questions aren't about the relationships, right?

[00:16:48.87] AMANDA: Yeah, the fear is getting questions like, you date how many people? Well, are there more of them? How many people do they date? Do you all get together all the time, or is it just some of you some of the time? You know, the fear of prying questions is a really big thing.

[00:17:04.47] ANTHONY SIS: Well, and I just wanted to add, too, that I think, particularly with polyamorous individuals more so than with some other identities, it's always this what you do personally is also then somehow going to affect you in the workplace, like in a negative context. And so I think, even just going back to the question about what are some of the negative assumptions and stereotypes, like, a lot of those were personal. They weren't necessarily tied to the workplace.

[00:17:26.76] But because it was their assumptions or people's assumptions about not being loyal and cheating, that that somehow is going to also affect your work performance. It's one of the few identities that I can think of where how you identify personally somehow negatively also impacts how people perceive your work ethic and your work performance. And it's hard. It's super challenging to think about coming out, but then not have it affect your work, because that's how other people view it, right, is that somehow, how you identify as a polyamorous individual is somehow then going to speak negatively about your work. And it shouldn't be that way. It shouldn't.

[00:18:00.74] AMANDA: Yeah, or one other thought is that because I have so many partners, or multiple, is that I may not have time to dedicate to my work.

[00:18:09.25] TORAL PATEL: Hm.

[00:18:10.10] ANTHONY SIS: Wow. Like, what? Like, that's so--

[00:18:11.97] AMANDA: People have multiple children and other--

[00:18:14.43] TORAL PATEL: Right.

[00:18:14.91] AMANDA: --lives outside of work. You know, my time at work is my time at work, and I'm a very dedicated employee here. But you know, then my outside time is my outside time.

[00:18:22.93] TORAL PATEL: But we all have-- I mean, when you think about it, we all have multiple people in our life, right? And I've talked about my culture, where we have an extended family concept. And so I don't live with just my spouse and my children, I also live with my in-laws. And then in India, I would live with my uncles and their kids and families and so forth.

[00:18:39.97] And so we take an extended family concept to a whole different context. And so I also am living with multiple people. So if that's not impacting my work, the fact that you have relationships with multiple people, why is that the opposite thought, right?

[00:18:54.81] AMANDA: Definitely.

[00:18:55.68] TORAL PATEL: And Amanda, you mentioned earlier that poly relationships are different for each individual. And so can you talk a little bit with us and to our audience about how your relationships and having the multiple partners that you have, how does that benefit you as an individual?

[00:19:10.14] AMANDA: Yeah. So I get to connect with a lot of people in really deep and meaningful ways. So the way I talk about it is that my heart gets to grow bigger with each person that I'm in a relationship with. And another way is that I get to have a really extended support network or extended group of cheerleaders, and something that's great. So it's really great to be connected with people when things are going well or when things aren't going well.

[00:19:35.55] TORAL PATEL: That's a great way to describe it. Thank you for sharing. What kind of questions do you think are appropriate for faculty and staff here at Cornell to ask other individuals in a polyamorous relationship, and what kinds of questions do you think are inappropriate in a workplace?

[00:19:49.74] AMANDA: Well, the first thing would be a coworker saying thank you for trusting me and telling me this sort of information, I really appreciate that you felt



comfortable talking to me about this. When I first came out to a coworker, them saying that to me made me just instantly feel more calm and at ease.

[00:20:06.38] TORAL PATEL: And you can be yourself.

[00:20:07.86] AMANDA: Yeah.

[00:20:08.13] TORAL PATEL: Yeah.

[00:20:08.43] AMANDA: And then it made me feel more open to answering questions because I knew that it felt like a safe space. And then always prefacing questions with if you feel comfortable answering this. So that way, the person can always say, you know what, I don't feel comfortable talking about that.

[00:20:22.33] So questions like-- one of my partners doesn't live in the area, so things like, oh, do you travel to see your partners, things like that might be appropriate. Some people may not want to talk about how many partners they have. Some people may be happy to talk about that. Questions that wouldn't be appropriate would definitely be-- I've heard people be asked at the workplace are ones that are around sex. It has happened before, unfortunately.

[00:20:47.37] TORAL PATEL: I mean, they wouldn't be appropriate--

[00:20:49.35] AMANDA: At all.

[00:20:49.90] TORAL PATEL: --at all, for anybody.

[00:20:51.46] AMANDA: Yeah, anybody. No, but for some reason, when it comes to like relationships, people feel like it's something that they could potentially ask.

[00:21:00.83] ANTHONY SIS: Amanda, thank you so much for being on this show. I mean, I think this is something that it's really timely, especially because it's approaching Valentine's Day. And so I think it's a very timely conversation that, even as we think about the celebration of that day, intimacy and partners, that we're being mindful of the fact that there might be folks who aren't in monogamous relationships, might be celebrating, you know, with other people, with multiple partners.

[00:21:26.55] And so I think this is a very timely conversation. But I know personally, for me, I've learned a lot about polyamory, and particularly how it applies to the workplace and being more inclusive. So I'm hoping for the listeners out there that they're also taking away a lot from this conversation. So thank you so much for being on today's show.

[00:21:41.06] TORAL PATEL: Thank you. I definitely appreciate that, as well, and second what Anthony said, is I definitely have learned a lot. I appreciate you being here. I know it's not a topic that you feel comfortable talking about, especially since you

mentioned that you haven't been able to come out to a lot of your co-workers. And so we really appreciate you coming here and being open to having this conversation with us.

[00:22:02.30] AMANDA: Yeah, thanks so much for having me.

[00:22:04.09] [MUSIC PLAYING]

[00:22:10.05] ANTHONY SIS: Welcome to this next part of the show that we'll be doing for the new season of the podcast. After each guest interview, Toral and I will share our thoughts and final reflections of the guest interview at the end of each episode. Toral, let's begin the conversation, shall we?

[00:22:24.81] TORAL PATEL: Sure, definitely. I'm ready to talk a little bit more about polyamorous relationships.

[00:22:29.04] ANTHONY SIS: So what were some highlights for you that came about in our interview with Amanda?

[00:22:33.65] TORAL PATEL: I'll be honest and tell you that one of the things that Amanda mentioned that really stood out to me was when she talked about having an open door policy, and really, really reflecting on what that means. I think it was powerful for me when she said that she's only come out to two individuals here in the workplace, and one of them, it's because that individual actually invited her into that space to talk about it.

[00:22:56.91] And so I thought that was very powerful. It's something that all of us can do. We all talk about the concept of having an open door policy, but very few of us actually put that into practice. And I'm glad to hear that is being put into practice here at Cornell by some individuals. It's something that all of us can do.

[00:23:11.96] ANTHONY SIS: Yeah, definitely. I think for me, one of the things that really stood out to me that I was like, oh my goodness, like I had to take a step back and reflect on it, was when she talked about the assumption about being single from people in her workplace that I was just kind of like-- where she talked about it in terms of not being able to be her authentic self in the workplace, she responded with a really quick no, followed by the fact that most people think she's single. And I was like--

[00:23:35.09] TORAL PATEL: Right.

[00:23:35.66] ANTHONY SIS: I guess for me, just the reasons why people might be single, right, or be considered single, like maybe they're not single. And that, for me, really stood out to me as a takeaway to really sit back and reflect on and think, OK, if this person isn't sharing anything about their personal life or who they're dating and stuff like that, it could be for a number of reasons, not just because they're single. It could be maybe because they don't feel comfortable talking about their polyamorous

relationships, if they identify as such. And so I think that, for me, was like an aha, like oh my goodness, I need to check myself in the future.

[00:24:06.83] TORAL PATEL: Yeah, and we all need to think about how we can have conversations that allow for that openness--

[00:24:11.46] ANTHONY SIS: Right.

[00:24:12.17] TORAL PATEL: --where people are able to share the authentic self, that part of their life with each one of us as individuals. So I agree that that was like really hard to hear that she kind of hides that part of herself. It's not something that you want any employee to feel that way, so.

[00:24:26.09] ANTHONY SIS: Absolutely. And I think one of the things that, I think just for the sake of this particular episode, that I wanted to clarify is the difference between polygamy and polyamory, because I think that's something that, as I was thinking back on this particular interview, that people might probably have questions or confuse the two. So just from a textbook perspective, when we talk about polygamy, it's the practice or custom of having more than one wife or husband at the same time, but polyamory is just simply about engaging in multiple sexual relationships or intimate relationships with more than one person. So the differences between polygamy and polyamory is that polygamy is often associated with a gender, right, so it's a wife or a husband, often associated with man or woman, but with--

[00:25:08.99] TORAL PATEL: And religion, to an extent.

[00:25:10.32] ANTHONY SIS: And religion, to a certain extent, too. But with polyamory, we're talking about people who can identify as any gender identity or multiple gender identities. And so I think that's one thing. I just wanted to clarify that for listeners who might have some of those lingering questions about what is the difference between polyamory and polygamy.

[00:25:28.31] TORAL PATEL: No, I think that's a great clarification because I know I had that as a question, as well. So I'm glad that you clarified that for everyone. Another thing that stood out for me, or not necessarily stood out for me, but as we were interviewing Amanda, probably like a lot of other people, that there were lots of questions about the intimacy aspect. And one, we didn't ask any questions regarding intimacy on purpose because we didn't want to pry into anyone's personal life, but it's really thinking about polyamorous relationships as a true relationship, and not necessarily just the intimacy portion, which is what a lot of people tend to think about.

[00:26:02.00] ANTHONY SIS: Right. Yeah, and I think it's a good thing you bring that up, because I think oftentimes when people hear polyamory, they want to ask more questions, right, as she had alluded to in her interview, as well, about the fear for people who are in polyamorous relationships is that they might ask probing questions that might be borderline very personal. And so--

[00:26:20.06] TORAL PATEL: Right.

[00:26:20.31] ANTHONY SIS: --so I think it's something that we all have questions on, and I appreciate you sharing that, but for folks to just be mindful of that if they're asking, or if they're curious about particularly polyamorous relationships, to really be able to understand what is considered appropriate, what is considered more personal, and is that appropriate to ask in the workplace setting.

[00:26:37.76] TORAL PATEL: Right. And Amanda mentioned that people in polyamorous relationships tend to get a lot of personal questions--

[00:26:43.00] ANTHONY SIS: Right.

[00:26:43.64] TORAL PATEL: --and that the general public don't have any qualms about asking those personal questions, whereas if you were talking to another individual, you might not get that personal, right? And so what is it about this particular relationship status that makes people think it's OK to ask intimate questions?

[00:27:01.54] ANTHONY SIS: Exactly.

[00:27:02.90] TORAL PATEL: So Anthony, what do you think, after listening to Amanda's story, what is one action that you think you will take so that you are mindful of individuals in a polyamorous relationship in the work setting?

[00:27:13.93] ANTHONY SIS: That's a great question. For me, as a member of the LGBTQ community-- and that I know that's something that we briefly touched upon in her interview, as well, as how being a person identifies as queer and also polyamorous, I definitely know what it's like to feel outcasted, to not feel like I have a sense of belonging, and in coming out to people, you know, immediately coming out, it's what they say that will have a huge impact in terms of how that person will respond or trust in another person.

[00:27:41.69] So I think for me, just the behavior that I'm definitely going to implement is being more open about being inclusive of people of other identities, so that way people will feel more comfortable to share or disclose. Also my own queer identity, but also that I'm open to any and all identities, which I already try to do, but I think just being more intentional about it when it comes to even relationships structures, that if people do identify as non-monogamous, that they can trust in me and they can confide in me.

[00:28:09.01] So I think just being more explicit and more intentional about my ways in which I approach allyship and practicing allyship to members of the polyamorous community, that's my commitment, and really making it more explicit that I'm here as a form of support, as a person that they can rely on for disclosure and for talking about issues related to polyamory.

[00:28:30.01] TORAL PATEL: That's a great commitment to make. For me, I think what I'm going to do is keep an open mind. As I mentioned while Amanda was sharing her story, that polyamory is something that I didn't know a lot about until we started to do some research for this episode. And so definitely keep an open mind and be aware of my conversations so that if we are talking about weekends and things that everybody did over the weekend.

[00:28:53.59] And if I find that a coworker is maybe not sharing as much information, be a little bit more open-minded and maybe have a one-on-one conversation with them to say, you know, and really point that out to say, I notice that you weren't really sharing a lot about your weekends. You know, I just wanted to let you know that I'm here if you ever want to talk about anything. And just really, truly be mindful of keeping that open door policy in place and creating a space where somebody can come and open up to me about certain aspects of their life, so.

[00:29:22.47] So Anthony and I shared the commitments that we're going to be making personally to be more supportive of individuals in polyamorous relationships within our own workplace. So to our listeners out there, we are now putting this on you to ask you, what are you going to be doing, what kinds of commitments will you make to be more supportive of polyamorous individuals in your workplace?

[00:29:41.50] ANTHONY SIS: And if you feel like you have a great answer, please email us at [ie-academy@cornell.edu](mailto:ie-academy@cornell.edu).

[00:29:48.80] [MUSIC PLAYING]

[00:29:51.17] That's it for this month's show. If you like what you've heard, be sure to subscribe and submit a review on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or SoundCloud. It helps new listeners find the show.

[00:30:01.92] Also, if you or a fellow colleague would like to be interviewed for an upcoming episode, please email us at [ie-academy@cornell.edu](mailto:ie-academy@cornell.edu). My name is Anthony Sis.

[00:30:12.44] TORAL PATEL: My name is Toral Patel. Thank you for listening to another episode of the Inclusive Excellence Podcast.

[00:30:18.20] ANTHONY SIS: This podcast is a production of the Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity, in collaboration with the Cornell Broadcast Studio.

[00:30:30.68] A special shout out and thank you to Bert Odom-Reed, our sound engineer, for making us sound wonderful each and every episode. Thank you, Bert.