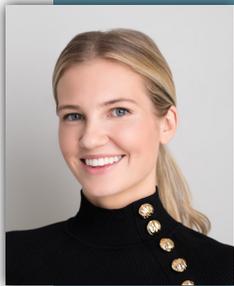


Real Techniques to Promote Diversity and Inclusivity at Your Practice



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Defining Diversity & Inclusion

Diversity is defined as “the collective mixture of differences and similarities that includes, for example, individual and organizational characteristics, values, beliefs, experiences, backgrounds, preferences, and behaviors.”¹ Similar to an iceberg, there is more to diversity than what the eyes can see. For example, when we meet someone for the first time, only a small percentage of the person’s diversity is visible to the eyes. This small percentage is what most organizations focus on when they implement techniques to promote diversity in the workplace.

A person can be diverse in many more ways than just race, gender and age, which lay above the surface. We often know (or think we know) everything about a person based on their observable differences. However, we may forget to take the time to learn and understand their unobservable differences, such as religion, culture, socioeconomic status, beliefs and values (to name a few).

As practice managers, decision makers and leaders, we know that it is not enough just to be diverse. Company advancement and success must come through inclusion, which is defined as: “the achievement of a work environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organization’s success.”¹ A team that is diverse, but not truly inclusive, is not gaining anything from the diversity that they promote. For example, it has been found that inclusive companies are 1.7 times more likely to be innovative and get 2.3 times more cash flow per employee.² In this way, inclusion in the workplace is just as important as diversity and the two concepts must go together in order to improve the culture of your practice.

Diversity Management

It is important that each practice maximizes the potential of all employees by focusing on diversity and inclusion. In fact, in 2021, Deloitte Global found that 74% of millennial employees believe their organization is more innovative when it has a culture of inclusion, and 47% actively look for diversity and inclusion when sizing up potential employers.³ Companies must adopt a commitment and an understanding of diversity in order to promote and achieve it within the practice. This initiative should not be limited to just a single training, or one point in time, but rather should be included in all of the business objectives all of the time.

Since 2020, COVID-19 has exacerbated the already uneven work equity gaps. For example, women's jobs are 1.8 times more vulnerable to this crisis than men's jobs. It has been found that women make up 39% of global employment but account for 54% of overall job losses. Corporations identified as more diverse and inclusive are 35% more likely to outperform their competitors.⁴ Offering flexible work schedules, meaningful work, and absolutely ensuring equal pay and opportunities are only a few ideas on how we can close this gap.

Diversity in Dermatology

Specifically in the field of dermatology, there has been a significant growth in demand for cosmetic procedures among patients of color. In the year 2000, patients of color accounted for 17% of cosmetic procedures. This percentage increased to 32% in 2019. In a recent study, participants reported that the skin of color clinic (SOCC) dermatologists provided uniformly beneficial care to black patients. These findings suggest that the satisfaction of patients who identify as African American "would increase if dermatologists underwent enhanced residency training in skin of color, cultural competency, cost-conscious care, and empathic communication skills, and if there were greater dermatology workforce diversity."⁵ This study shows that diversity and inclusion is pertinent to every aspect of a practice, especially in the field of dermatology.

Practical Techniques to Promote Inclusivity and Diversity in the Workplace

Here are a few effective yet practical techniques to incorporate inclusivity and diversity in your practice:

- Have diverse models on your website, social media channels and all other marketing materials.
- Ensure your before and after photos represent all skin types, gender, skin care concerns and ages.
- Self-check: Does your executive team portray diversity and inclusion?
- Encourage your team to attend conferences that offer trainings in all skin types, such as the Skin of Color Society.
- Survey the staff for feedback on how the practice can improve its efforts and ask your team for input for ongoing changes they feel are needed.
- Ensure regular reading, studying and dialogue around diversity is set-up.
- Designate paid holidays of employee's choice.
- Require a formal yet regular diversity training for all employees, not just managers.
- Host a team dinner at different restaurants to highlight different cuisines. Tip: Ask your employees their favorite types of food and rotate the restaurant choice by the different cuisine types!
- Annually, share the practice's needs, successes, data and commitment to diversity and the specific goals it has to further improve inclusivity and diversity in the workplace.
- Recruit from diverse technical schools' programs and offer strategic internships.
- Create a diversity council and foster diverse thinking.
- Work closely with a legal specialist to regularly review your human resource practices, especially around hiring questions and policies.
- Encourage talent amongst different generations.

- Share your learnings of present-day trending topics or readings on diversity and inclusion with your team, and encourage them to do so, too.
- Strengthen anti-discriminatory policies.
- Debunk common skin care myths to your team via a grand rounds so everyone on your team can correct inaccurate beauty trends.
- Advocate for inclusion research, or share your own case studies, to reflect all skin typing in studies that lack inclusive patient demographic research.
- Advocate for inclusive research and diverse marketing of our aesthetic partners.
- Submit an abstract to your favorite professional conference on the unique ways you and your team have developed a culture or program centered on diversity and inclusion. #PassItOn
- Treating a diverse range of skin colors requires knowledge and skill. Quite simply, different skin colors react differently to the same treatment. Advise your providers to be knowledgeable; not fearful.

Conclusion

While some of these techniques may be new (or not!), these are not all encompassing. Work with your team to customize your diversity program and regularly communicate it together. Set the standard to which medicine, diversity and inclusivity deserves to be continually committed. ■

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