

Promoting a Culture of Inclusivity in Academic and Healthcare Settings

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Inclusive work environments that promote a culture of diversity, equity, and belonging is critical to the success of healthcare organizations. Bringing people together who have diverse backgrounds, lived experiences, and perspectives encourages innovation and creativity in healthcare settings. Organizations that demonstrate a commitment to an inclusive work environment by embodying diversity improve patient outcomes and workforce retention rates (Adjo et al., 2021). This narrative will introduce strategies that could be used to promote inclusive work environments in both academia and healthcare organizations, including highlighting stereotypes and discrimination male nurses face in the nursing profession, and innovative methods to increase recruitment and retention.

Nurses face many challenges while working in the intense healthcare environment. These challenges are a result of many factors, including facing biases and feelings of not belonging, that can be exacerbated by a lack of self-confidence. These feelings may result in dismay with their chosen career in healthcare, causing nurses to exit the healthcare workforce. Mason and Salvage (2021) reported that the average hospital turned over 100% of its workforce of registered nurses in the past 5 years. High turnover increases the financial burden of hospitals. Additionally, high turnover is also linked to other adverse effects that affect the care of patients, such as an increase in medication errors, patient falls, and skin breakdown (Perry et al., 2018). Initiatives that foster a culture of inclusion and teach cultural humility are integral to developing culturally competent nurses (Diaz et al., 2019).

1. Ensure inclusion initiatives are visibly supported by the leadership team.
2. Utilize input from nursing students, faculty, and healthcare staff to set measurable inclusion goals and track progress at regular intervals.
3. Partnerships between academic and healthcare organizations should be solidified to streamline the transition for nursing students to the registered nurse role.
4. Establish policies that foster inclusion and equity, including hiring practices and compensation practices.
5. Promote a zero tolerance for a discriminatory environment.
6. Mandate inclusivity training for all nursing students and new employees.
7. Offer a safe space to foster discussion.
8. Regularly assess the effectiveness of initiatives by soliciting anonymous feedback from staff and other stakeholders.
9. Share results of initiatives and allow staff to address and create solutions.
10. Stay updated with best practices and implement new initiatives accordingly.

This paper highlights the critical importance of identifying and addressing support needs to retain nurses in the workforce. Both nursing programs and healthcare organizations must model an inclusive environment by identifying and addressing embedded biases. Curriculum should include objectives that prepare novice nurses to care for diverse populations. Concepts that support an inclusive work environment should be infused throughout nursing programs, allowing a safe space for nursing students to address biases and dedicated time for

reflective exercises. It is imperative that healthcare organizations create a culture of inclusivity and promote an environment grounded in diversity, belonging, and fairness. ■

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