

***Buliding a Dental Practice for Everyone –
A Diversity and Inclusion Primer***

May 29, 2023

Workshop Overview



WORKSHOP BACKGROUND AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The concept of a dental practice culture encompasses many different characteristics of the business – from how a dental office looks and who works there and, most importantly how it feels to patients, staff and suppliers. Creating a sense of belonging is essential to dental practice success.

This workshop helps dental professionals improve their awareness of diversity and inclusion to improve their dental practice culture and success. People from different backgrounds, cultures, countries, sexes, ages have different approaches to communication, motivation and idea creation. They all belong and they all want to feel included. – by expanding your awareness of diversity, you can create as much opportunity for patients and staff to feel comfortable, cared for, empowered and respectful.

More specifically, it will enable participants to enhance their diversity/inclusion awareness and improve their workplace culture that will lead to:

- Improving the patient experience and attracting new patients
- Providing better patient care
- Increasing employee satisfaction and retention
- Fostering problem-solving skills

PRESENTER – Paul Pelletier LL.B. CAPS PMP

Paul is a ground-breaking expert specializing in workplace respect, diversity/inclusion, leadership, and conflict management. Paul is a corporate lawyer, former executive, workplace respect expert, author, and professional speaker.

He is also the Chair of Diversity and Inclusion at the Attorney General Of BC, Legal Services Branch and both a member of the Métis Nation of BC and of the LGBTQ+ community. Paul uses his skills and experiences as a corporate lawyer, manager and business leader in his work and is a regular presenter at global conferences and events. He is also the author of two books, including [*The Workplace Bullying Handbook*](#).

Paul's websites are: pushingpastimpossible.com and <http://www.paulpelletierconsulting.com>

Key Workshop Points:

1. Where do we begin?

- Each of us contributes to and is responsible for our patient and coworker relationships
- We are all “different”
- You have influence, regardless of role
- Your actions have impact
- You can make a difference

2. Defining “Diversity”

- It means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our individual differences.
- Differences include the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, heritage, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.
- It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment.
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3. What is “Diversity Intelligence”?

It is about understanding each other (including patients) and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.

Diversity intelligence is more than awareness – it encompasses acceptance.

4. Key points about conflicts:

- Conflicts are common and an important aspect of every workplace culture.
- Conflict isn’t bad, wrong or a sign of failure or weakness.
- Conflict resolution is one of the five key skills of emotional intelligence.

5. Positive outcomes from conflicts:

- Relationship improvement (with patients and with staff)
- Improve results
- Improve communication
- Encourage openness/honesty
- Leverage diversity/differences
- Workplace harmony

6. We avoid conflicts because:

- Fear of: retribution, making it worse, causing offence, a complaint
- They don’t know *how* to speak up
- We want to be perceived as “nice”
- We think there’s too much risk and too little reward
- It takes courage and is uncomfortable
- You may have to change because you are contributing to the problem

7. Unresolved Conflicts create:

- Low morale and unpleasant dental practice culture
- Frustration/anger
- Insecurity/resentment
- Health/Stress
- Patients leave
- Staff sick leave

- Staff quit

8. Your Personal Conflict Management Plan starts with you:

- Manage yourself
- Model good behaviour
- Have respectful hard conversations
- Establish policies/notices
- Ask for feedback

9. Preventing conflicts and bad patient behaviour

Do you have the following?

- A Patient Expectation Poster
- A Respectful Workplace Policy
- A Protocol for documenting events
- Training for your staff so they are equipped to deal with disrespect and conflicts

If you don't have these, come and see me after the workshop. I can help.

10. Communications for Conflicts

Communications addressing conflicts are best:

- In person, in private
- if done as soon as possible after the event, after emotions have calmed down
- On the phone, if in person isn't practical
- Via email (as a last resort) – DON'T TEXT!

11. Planning and having Hard Conversations – the approach

If you're comfortable, the best way to address a conflict is to plan and be:

- Brief
- Informative
- Fair
- Respectful
- FIRM and CLEAR
- Silent
- Thank you email

12. Hard Conversation Helpful Tips

- Practice active listening
- Acknowledge each other's perspectives – agree to disagree
- Focus on the future - move away from past positions
- Set behavioural boundaries – stop the conversation if it gets disrespectful
- Be specific about what you need
- Ask the other person to suggest a solution
- Be willing to compromise
- Own your part

13. Hard Conversation “Do’s”

During a hard conversation don't:

- Lose your patience/self-control
- Antagonize the other person
- Respond too quickly
- Focus on feelings/blame

- Treat it like a battle (win/lose)
- If the issue is amongst staff, don't forget you have to still work together
- Misuse social media/gossip

14. What if it Goes Badly?

A conflict conversation can derail because of:

- A failure to listen
- Disrespectful behaviour
- Unwillingness to cooperate
- Unwillingness to compromise
- Failure to reach consensus
- Seeking to WIN so the other person LOSES
- Unwillingness to own our part

15. What if it Doesn't Resolve?

- Don't give up
- Be prepared for more than one hard conversation
- New facts/information are uncovered
- Do a conversation post-mortem and start the planning cycle again
- Do you need help from others (your office manager, dentist, trusted advisor)?

16. Firing a Patient

- If you have a patient that refuses to treat you or the staff respectfully, even after they have been warned, it is perfectly ok to fire the patient
- Follow up the event in writing so you have record
- Ensure you have been reasonable
- Document the history, events, previous hard conversations in writing
- Prepare for the possibility that the patient may respond badly (i.e. file a complaint)
- Check in with the staff, support each other, lessons learned
- Consider if you need help (call the dental association)

17. Principles to Remember

- Maintain integrity and perspective
- Lead with respect always
- Control what you can
- Be courageous
- Accept being uncomfortable

18. My Contact Information – Reach out anytime

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- Linked in: ca.linkedin.com/in/paulapelletier
- Consultant/trainer in workplace culture/respect, conflict management, and diversity/inclusion
- Book: “*The Workplace Bullying Handbook*” (available on-line at Amazon and Barnes & Noble)