

Swimmies and Surfboards



Whether you plan to score a perfect 10 Olympic dive or a belly flop it is time to consciously jump into the exciting and ever-changing world of diversity! Unconsciously, we already swim in diversity every minute of the day and now is the time to be in tune with the currents around us and purposefully educate ourselves about the diversity found in our patients, coworkers, friends, family and even ourselves.

The articles in this edition are like swimmies and surfboards offering advice that helps you stay afloat and successfully ride the up and coming waves diversity brings. But why do you need the personal flotation devices? Why is diversity buoyancy important? Both articles “*Dynamics of Diversity*” and “*Diversity- Fostering a More Inclusive and Open Understanding of Difference*” help to answer these questions by illustrating how harmful cultural incompetent care to patients and cultural insensitivity between coworkers can be.

How do you then improve your understanding of diversity? In “*Shifting Paradigms of Cultural Competency*,” Dr. Alexander presents wonderful information on factors of diversity as well as places to go to get current statistics on vulnerable populations. On a more personal level, Lucia Thornton contributes “*Transcending Differences: A Holistic Approach*” and presents a method called “Engaging your Observer” to help you deal with difficult situations without bias. Simply listening to other view-

points offers insight too. The Q&A styled article entitled “*Transforming Traditions*” gives a voice to the experience of men in the nursing profession.

Examining and expanding your own personal diversity is another important concept. The *reflections* piece shows how an individual’s personal cultural background added to the richness of her nursing practice. Yours does too, so don’t be afraid to share the best parts of yourself! Continually develop your diversity of experience as well. Try mixing up your schedule, exploring new interests, and interacting outside of your comfort zone. It might seem that you don’t have the time to do that in nursing school but it is vital to our mental health to be creative with our time and to learn new things about ourselves in the process of everyday life.

So I have my swimmies blown up and ready to go. They even have colorful little fish decorating them-what about you?

P.S. The question isn’t rhetorical. Please write Letters to the Editor addressing issues/concerns/stories related to diversity - even if writing isn’t your thing this could be one way to get out of your comfort zone!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren Brewer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lauren" and the last name "Brewer" clearly distinguishable.

Lauren Brewer, *Imprint* Editor