

Over the past year I have had the opportunity to read a variety of research articles, listen to podcasts, read books, and watch movies that attempt to address diversity and inclusion in our current society. While I have strived to seek out certain opportunities and media types, I have also found that certain DEI opportunities have also found me. For example, I had the unique opportunity to take part in diversity and inclusion meetings while on a clinical rotation. The meetings were rooted in practical ideas we could apply to patient care. One meeting discussed the disparities often experienced by people of color in relation to how healthcare professionals perceive patient complaints of pain and various symptoms. The article described how many individuals would voice complaints and concerns that were disregarded or passed off as less important. I believe this is an extremely important point for us to consider as health care professionals. We should take everyone's thoughts, fears, and words seriously, and be their advocator as no one knows their body better than they do. I also believe we have to be aware of our own inherent biases, as I know we often can be quick to assume or form a preconceived notion based on a variety of ideals. Understanding and addressing our biases, and holding others accountable to providing equitable care regardless of a patient's skin color, background, race, sexual orientation, and many other factors is one easy step that we can all take to help address inclusion in clinical practice.

One recurrent theme I have noticed is the importance of taking the time to stop and just listen. I have grown to learn that we may not always have the answer, and in most cases are not necessarily supposed to; however, we can listen, admit what we do not know, and reassure others we hear them. As one of the medical providers in an article titled, "Doctors' Unconscious Bias Affects Quality of Health Care Services, Research shows," states, "I just want you to know that I believe you¹." This simple statement made a large impact on me because so often we do not

know what others are experiencing or how their past has shaped them, but we can always reassure people we care, we are here to listen, and we want to be an advocate for their care. This theme remained consistent throughout the novel, “Taking on Diversity: How we Can Move from Anxiety to Respect”, by Rupert Nacoste². Through reading Dr. Nacoste accounts of personal conversations he has had with an array of students, I learned a variety of different strategies and approaches to facilitating positive dialogue with co-workers, friends, and patients while still respecting and acknowledging our differences. We have to first acknowledge, but then work to disassemble these misunderstandings and assumptions that too often infiltrate our thoughts and actions towards others.

1. <https://www.npr.org/2020/10/15/924150401/doctors-unconscious-bias-affects-quality-of-health-care-services-research-shows>
2. Nacoste RW. *Taking on Diversity: How We Can Move from Anxiety to Respect.*; 2015.