



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion—Another Step Towards Wellness

In the preceding six editions of *California Veterinarian*, we featured a series of articles spotlighting wellness in the veterinary profession. That series—entitled “Renew”—was designed to give veterinary professionals tools to combat mental and physical anxiety and stress. The primary inspiration for the series came from our 2019 economic survey, in which both veterinarians and RVTs identified mental health issues as the most significant challenge facing the profession.

If you haven't yet read our “Renew” articles, we encourage you to do so. Topics consisted of (1) Dr. Carrie Journey's presentation on the physiological effects of sustained states of stress, (2) veterinary technician Tosha Zimmerman's discussion of seasonal depression and ways to address it, (3) Dr. Katie Berlin's write-up on the importance of forming positive habits, (4) consultant Josh Vaisman's treatment on how overcoming challenges in life can promote resilience in facing future challenges, (5) Dr. Caitlin DeWilde's advice on navigating social media both personally and professionally, and (6) Dr. Alex Miller's column on the behavioral ramifications of neuroticism. We are thankful to all of our contributors for their time and effort in producing the articles, and to Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health for sponsoring our series.

Also in recent issues of *California Veterinarian*, including the July/August edition of “Director's Corner,” we have highlighted the CVMA's intent to play a more active role in driving the discussion of diversity, equity, and inclusion within veterinary medicine. In addition to the stand-alone importance of these subjects relative to the maintenance of a healthy and dynamic veterinary community, they are also important building blocks of individual wellness, and thus a natural pivot from our now-concluded “Renew” series. The 1970s and 1980s scholarship conducted by persons such as Polish social psychologist Henri Tajfel shows that one's social identity—that is, one's sense of self, derived from membership in a group—is a critical component of a person's self-esteem and confidence.

While group membership can obviously have positive characteristics, it also risks “us vs. them” groupthink, including stereotyping that enhances the self-image of the “us” group at the expense of the “them” group. Affirmative efforts towards diversity from a numerical standpoint, equity from an opportunity standpoint, and inclusion from a participatory standpoint can help counteract such polarization and its consequences, and thus foster professional and personal environments that are more collaborative, more vibrant, and more “well.”

To that end, in 2022, we will present a new series of articles focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion. As was the case with the “Renew” series, our forthcoming articles, set to commence in the January/February 2022 issue of *California Veterinarian*, will feature several different contributors, the first of whom will be Dr. Suzie Kovacs. Dr. Kovacs is an Assistant Professor at Western University of Health Sciences who has conducted a large volume of work focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion within the veterinary profession. After two articles from Dr. Kovacs, we will welcome additional contributors, with an eye towards providing a broad-spectrum treatment of various diversity-related issues.

As we produce these articles, and as you read them, we will welcome and encourage your feedback. Once again, the CVMA wants to be a leader in the discussion of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the veterinary profession, and we are best able to do that when we have input from our members.

As always, we appreciate your readership!

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