

Increasing Diversity and Inclusion in Research: Individual and Relationship Strategies

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HOW DO WE CONTRIBUTE TO SUCCESS?

Establishing a good relationship with prospective participants is vital to the success of the study

Ensuring greater diversity and inclusion in trials requires:

- Informed leadership
- Ongoing cultural and bias education
- Enhanced personal attention
- Heightened awareness of individual behaviors, speech, and environment.

Centers, researchers, and staff are critical to impacting NIH and other federal requirements to address higher levels of clinical research inclusion.

Remember: honoring and including diverse populations ultimately contributes **value to all**, by making medications and devices safer and more available **FOR ALL**.



WHO CAN WE IMPACT BY MODELING FOR SUCCESS?

EVERYBODY!

Affirming and Respecting Cultural Differences
Affirming and Respecting Racial and Ethnic Uniqueness
Affirming and Respecting Age Differences
Affirming and Respecting Gender Differences
Understanding Unique Local Issues

INFORMED LEADERSHIP IS CRITICAL TO CREATE A CULTURE OF INCLUSION

Research participants: Do you feel your research team used more of a “team” or a “top-down” approach?

- Dismissive, or condescending behaviors can lead to fear, discomfort, and distrust, and ultimately, loss of willing participants.
- Marginalized groups generally have strong “radar” for detecting dominating, arrogant, or self-serving behaviors.

Create a diversity climate by promoting and increasing overall awareness of social justice, social imbalances, and health inequities. Encourage open discussion, educate, and model behavior.

Encourage a 'multi-cultural' affirming approach vs. a "color-blind" approach that ignores issues



ADDRESSING ISSUES AS THEY ARISE

Discuss directly any known or observed team bias/behavioral issues that don't promote diversity or inclusion (intentional or otherwise), through **enhanced training** and **honest conversations** about the importance of these behaviors to the success of the research.

Policies and procedures need to be designed to be fair and equal to all, with special attention to those historically underserved. Address deviations that may harm the research culture of inclusion and diversity. **All participants should be treated equally.**

THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANT IS A RESPECTED TEAM MEMBER

LISTEN carefully--let the patient lead in tone and action, especially if you are unfamiliar with their culture or beliefs. Research participants: How important was it for your **FAMILY** to attend study visits?

Encourage and nurture active participation by full and respectful openness to questions and opinions, and by allowing the patient to have a *real voice*. **BUILD IN TIME** FOR THIS STYLE OF COMMUNICATION.

Build trust through mutual respect and shared interest in success of the project. Impaired trust can lead to perceptions of study team incompetence, decrease compliance, and harm any original desire for the project to succeed. Research participants: Do you have an example in which the researcher and/or research staff helped earn or lose your **trust**?

Feeling of psychological safety is incredibly important. This can be achieved by:

- 1) Deeper understanding of the cultures/populations you work with and historical issues;
- 2) Kindness and openness in communication;
- 3) Encouraging sharing of culture or beliefs--but without prying or pushing;
- 4) If possible, by allowing participants to choose a chair or spot at a table;
- 5) Address any non-compliance respectfully and by explaining the reason it is important for them as a real team member

RECRUITMENT, SCHEDULING, CLINICAL ENVIRONMENT

Research participants: How did your first contact with the researcher or research staff contribute to your decision to participate in the study? **Speak to effectively communicate, not to impress or “oversell” the project.**

Speak in plain, clear language and avoid medical jargon or over-talking. **Do more listening. Allow time for questions.** This applies to consenting, and throughout the stages of the project.

Research participants: Did the study materials include pictures of diverse populations and statements that made you feel welcome?

Carefully consider the research environment:

- Objects, signage, symbols, etc. may enhance or detract from feelings of inclusion. For example: Objects should be neutral with regard to religious, gender or social beliefs.
- Make the space feel inviting and more personal, rather than "cold" through color, furniture choices, lighting.
- Signage should be clear but not unfriendly, and use pictures or symbols to avoid language issues

AWARENESS OF UNIQUE EXTERNAL BARRIERS AND CREATING INTERNAL FLEXIBILITY TO ADDRESS THEM

- Transportation—financial, availability, scheduling
- Childcare—scheduling and possible coverage
- Caregiver Concerns—scheduling, additional support
- Religious or Spiritual Practice or Events or Cultural Ceremonies—respect their importance
- Domestic Barriers—domestic abuse, drug use, other
- Physical Limitations and Disabilities (hearing, eyesight, mobility, etc.)
- Mental Illnesses
- Grieving or Losses in the Family—respect practices
- Respect personal appearance and clothing differences

Research participants: Are there other barriers we're missing from this list?

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- Research participants: describe an example of an interaction you had with the research staff that made you feel included or not. What are your suggestions for researchers and research staff to make participants feel included, as a member of the team in research?
- Give an example of how your leadership supports or has supported you and/or modeled strong, inclusive interpersonal awareness in the research environment?
- What types of inclusive interpersonal challenges do you most frequently encounter in your unique research communities?

Thank you!