

Equity & Inclusion in the Workplace: Employee & Physician Stories

September 2020

The journey to end racism and inequity for the black community continues and KP is committed to actions that will spread social justice, inclusiveness, and equity throughout our workplace and the nation. To our black colleagues, please know that we hear you, and we stand with you. We continue to look for ways to support you and create a more equitable workplace.

One way we can start is by sharing experiences to increase everyone's understanding of how words and actions can be discriminatory. The more we hear from each other, the more we learn and grow. Each month, we will spotlight a story on racism or injustice in the workplace. We hope these stories help us reflect and continue conversations on how we can personally create a more inclusive environment within KP and our communities. Thank you to all who have shared their stories.

Roberta Doucet, MD - Anesthesiologist and Director for Women in Medicine



When I was an intern in the surgery department, I worked with an attending surgeon who refused to go into a patient's room if they were black. He collected insurance money from them, yet he would not talk to them. Black patients were disrespected and degraded, and this attending surgeon did not care. As an intern, I felt as if I had no power to speak up.

Another moment of discrimination occurred when I was a pre-partner physician. I witnessed a physician yelling at a black patient who was awake during her C-section. He yelled, "You better damn well never get pregnant again!" Again, I witnessed disrespect of yet another black person.

Being the only black physician in my department for 20 years, I have seen a lot. Occasionally, other black physicians would do paradigm work with us but were not offered a partnership opportunity. Even general surgeons had no black physicians until about 6 years ago, so I had no one who could relate to my experiences and no one to mentor with. I was once told, "Although you are doing projects around here, you can never be the chief because you are not a man and not Jewish." Sometimes it is embarrassing and discouraging that the color of the skin may be held against you despite your intellect and abilities.

Learning Corner – Mitigating Unconscious Bias

1. Assume your decisions are impacted by bias at some level.
2. We tend to prefer people like us, which causes us to miss key information from people who are different.
3. Question your perception of what you see.

Resources

To learn more about racial equity, or if you are experiencing discrimination in the workplace, please utilize the resources listed below:

1. Employee Assistance Program (EAP): Ed Waiskopf, LMFT - EAP Consultant | Phone: (323) 857-4475
2. Equity, Inclusion and Diversity (EID): Mesia Polar - Diversity Coordinator | Phone: (323) 857-4122
3. Compliance Hotline: (888) 774-9100
4. WLA Connection: [Racial Equity Resources and Information](#)
5. LA County Human Relations Commission: [LA vs. Hate](#)