

## Taking Implicit Bias Out of Interprofessionalism Through Clinical Simulation

*By: Norma Davis*

My name is Norma Davis, and I am an Interprofessional Advanced Fellowship in Clinical Simulation (IAFCS) fellow completing my fellowship year at the Durham VA Health Care System (HCS). Over the past year, I sought to integrate clinical simulation with Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) training for health care professional teams at the Durham VA HCS.

Working as a basic Emergency Medical Technician (EMT-B) prior to the fellowship, I was familiar with simulation on an introductory level. However, I was less familiar with its uses in the advanced interprofessional team settings and the importance of the latter to overall health care. While exploring this topic, I witnessed how effective communication between high-functional interprofessional teams was critical to achieving consistent, successful outcomes for the patient. Observing this, I sought to develop a training curriculum that emphasized the importance of diversity and inclusivity to improve the shared mental model of the high-functioning interprofessional team.

Using the VHA Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect and Excellence (I CARE) standards as a guide, I developed a curriculum combating implicit bias in the interprofessional learning environment using bystander intervention training. Utilizing a role-play simulation framework created by a previous Durham IAFCS fellow, I developed a scenario that highlighted areas where implicit bias exists throughout the health care system. Using a medication error simulation scenario, I was able to relate a real-world example of how implicit bias could result in significant harm to patient care. This is one of many clinical situations where the awareness and understanding of implicit bias training could make an enormous difference to patient care.

It has been an honor to serve as an IAFCS fellow at the Durham VA HCS for the 2021-2022 cohort year. I learned many lessons, and the most important one is that to truly be inclusive, it is imperative to first address one's own issues with implicit bias. As a health care system that aspires to achieve excellence in interprofessionalism and in providing outstanding care for our patients, greater training related to matters of diversity, equitability and inclusivity will prove valuable for all future health care professionals.