

WIN 6.1 - Creating a Positive Work Environment

Lesson 2 - Hospital Profiles: Sunnybrook

Shamena Maharaj, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre:

We serve a very diverse population here at Sunnybrook; we serve over 1.2 million patients every year. We have over 10,000 staff. So our HR business partners work with our leaders on our talent strategy. And part of that is to help to engage and ensure that we have the right talent, and we are attracting the right talent.

Dr. Umberin Najeeb, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and University of Toronto:

I became part of an initiative, which was internationally educated health professionals committee. So at that time we had an organizational development expert, and she and I—we collaborated and designed workshops focusing on communication, and focusing on understanding the feedback. And the difference about that workshop was because we were not just talking about communication and feedback in Canadian context, but what is the impact of culture on it. We were surprised by how much interest there was. Like we got people who were working in Sunnybrook for 13 years, 15 years, came to attend our workshops. So this is our fifth year, and we are still holding it, and I think the workshops have gone beyond the boundaries of Sunnybrook because two of the training programs at University of Toronto hospitalist fellowship program—one at Sunnybrook and one at Toronto General—now they send their IMG Fellows to attend our workshops, to understand the soft skills, the culture of what do we mean by Canadian culture, and what do we mean by communication, and those kind of things.

Shamena Maharaj, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre:

And that committee specifically focused on how do we integrate internationally educated health professionals; how do we attract them; how do we integrate them into Sunnybrook culture; and what support do we provide to these individuals.

We have created a leaders' guide on attracting internationally educated professionals to help our leaders be better equipped to help to integrate our new talent.

Dr. Umberin Najeeb, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and University of Toronto:

So I think we can build on their strengths, and of course we want to integrate them so that they can reach their full potential in their healthcare context. But we need to respect what they are bringing: their knowledge, their skills—also the culture piece. It may be the dress or the food, or it may be a language, but it can impact our organization to work better.

Shamena Maharaj, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre:

Our goal is about inclusiveness; it's about integration; it's about respect. And all of our programs are built on that.