



W19 Diversity and Inclusion at the Forensic Science Workplace

Nikolas P. Lemos, PhD, OCME, Forensic Lab Division, Hall of Justice, N Terrace, 850 Bryant Street, San Francisco, CA 94103; Daniel S. Isenschmid, PhD*, NMS Labs, 3701 Welsh Road, Willow Grove, PA 19090; Chinyere M. Williams, BS*, 2527 8th Avenue, Apt 211, Oakland, CA 94606; and Cathy Tobin*, Cathy Tobin, PHR, 525 First Avenue, W, Apt 210, Seattle, WA 98119*

After attending this presentation, attendees will be equipped with the necessary knowledge and tools to reflect on the past, put it into the context of the present, and create the conditions for an inclusive and diverse work environment.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by helping attendees and their organizations better prepare to meet the evolving needs of a diverse and inclusion-focused workplace through the use of emerging trends, data, and practical application methodologies.

Diversity means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual. Inclusion puts the concept and practice of diversity into action by creating an environment of involvement, respect, and connection — where the richness of ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives are harnessed to create workplace, education, or business value.

All organizations need both diversity and inclusion to be successful. Companies with diverse workforces and leadership consistently outperform other companies and it is now more common than ever before for companies to routinely include in their workforce chief diversity officers.

The practice of diversity and inclusion reflects much of what is happening in the United States and the global workforce — it is in a state of constant evolution and flux.

Change is an expectation of the up-and-coming workforce. We, as forensic science educators, researchers, and practitioners, must drive and embrace this change and continue to create a more inclusive, healthier, and engaging forensic science workplace. The American Academy of Forensic Sciences has led the way and continues to encourage and support the membership's effort for a diverse and inclusive forensic workplace.

As workforces continue to become increasingly global, the need to understand and practice diversity and inclusion is ever more pressing.

This program will briefly review the historical perspectives of how societies and organizations have responded to, and were shaped by, human differences. Science has historically acted as an impetus for the political and social action needed to move diverse groups from segregation into mainstream society. The scientific community is often a conduit of change and it is that legacy that compels us to proactively raise awareness and create an inclusive and diverse environment that serves both our employees and the communities in which they live and work.

This presentation will provide tools that bolster diversity and inclusion in the forensic science workplace in order to improve our ability to raise awareness and create the conditions for an inclusive and diverse environment. This presentation will also demonstrate the existing connections between diversity, inclusion, and productivity and examine the nature of privilege in the workplace and how it negatively impacts employee engagement and organizational performance.

Attendees will be offered methods of identifying bias, whether positive, negative, seen or unseen, and will learn best practices for mitigating the all-too-often negative outcome of biases as well as preventing those outcomes by stopping bias at its source. Finally, the presentation will provide attendees with practical techniques in order for them to return to their workplaces and take action.

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