

The Capacity of Diversity

Written by: Omar Guerrero, Dietetic Intern and Masters Student at Florida State University, a Student Member of COGA

The Cultures of Gender and Age (COGA) Member Interest Group of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, is a superb community of Fifty Plus (FPIND), Men (NOMIN), and Thirty and Under (TUND) members, that advocates on age, gender, and culture related issues. Each of these communities address unique needs for education and networking within their communities while also supporting each other to provide a collective voice within the Academy for young practitioners, seasoned members and men in the profession. Taking the diversity mindset of COGA into the field and learning about the diversity of complementary disciplines will be of tremendous value. Whether you decide to become a dietitian, or are a current professional, in the clinical, sports, eating disorders, or food management field, we all will be working with a multidisciplinary team to create better health for our given populations. Learning each team member's role allows for *empathy* and *culture*.



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Empathy

Taking the time to learn and understand the disciplines around you will help you empathize with those on your team. Empathy sets the stage for further development of your organization by allowing you to:

- Appreciate the team's greatest strengths and weaknesses
- Acknowledge the common difficulties they face in their practice
- Support your team members' philosophy
- Understands how the nutrition field integrates and intertwines with their own field

Empathizing with your team members allows for the next benefit of diversity, which is to cultivate culture!

Culture

To create an effective team, understanding the culture is critical. Learning about each other's disciplines and understanding our differences is essential to team efficiency and team growth. The strength of culture creates an environment where everyone is working towards a similar goal and determines a team's ability to adapt to the times. Lastly, by strengthening our bonds with one another through establishing culture and effective communication, we decrease any internal conflicts that arise from a broken team. This internal strength will help the team work through any difficulties the way they should be faced, together!

Tactic

You can talk about utilizing your understanding of diversity of age, culture, and gender in our field by understanding the diversity of our team's disciplines. But how do we go about that? Well in this day and age, most of us have forgotten about one of the simplest methods to building relationships, human communication! I encourage you to take the time to talk to each member of your team about what they do, show your interest in them, and humbly ask them about the difficulties they face and ways they believe your nutrition background can benefit them. These small interactions build bonds, strengthen teams, create empathy, and build culture!

COGA will continue to advocate for diversity and anyone looking for further inspiration can visit our website [here](#).

About The Author



Omar Guerrero is a dietetic intern and graduate student at Florida State University, majoring in exercise physiology with a major in sports nutrition. He has recently developed a passion for writing and sharing credible information to the public and fellow dietetic students and interns. He hopes to spread his passion for nutrition and wellness through his writing. Connect with him on LinkedIn [here](#).