

Dr. Diane Lacaille

Rheumatologist | Vancouver General Hospital

What does it mean to you to inspire inclusion and support gender equity?

For me, inspiring inclusion means constantly asking ourselves who is missing and making space so that everyone has an equal voice at the table. It is creating a culture and an environment where each person's contribution is truly valued, especially when they bring a different perspective, in the belief that this leads to better decisions, more creativity, and a healthier organization.

Inclusion is also learning to be a good ally. It requires doing the personal work needed to recognize one's own unconscious biases and examine how our own privilege has benefited us but not others. We have to be willing to embrace the discomfort. We need to advocate for changes to the systems that maintain the status quo of power dynamics, and rethink systems that are not equitable, rather than raising reasons why they are hard to change.

To support gender equity, we need to challenge societal norms that put different expectations on women and examine the overt and subtle ways in which this affects women in their professional and personal lives. We have to constantly ask ourselves why there are not more women at the table, especially in leadership positions. We have to remove the barriers that prevent women from participating to their full potential. We all have to speak up.

I am a professor in the UBC Department of Medicine, Division of Rheumatology and the Scientific Director of Arthritis Research Canada. I hold the Mary Pack Chair in rheumatology research and do epidemiology and health services research. I am also the Chair of the UBC Department of Medicine Equity committee and have led initiatives to foster women leadership in academia.

