

# How a positive work environment leads to feelings of inclusion among employees

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Fostering an inclusive work environment can lead to higher satisfaction, innovation, trust and retention among employees, according to new research from Binghamton University, State University of New York.

Kim Brimhall, assistant professor of social work at Binghamton University's College of Community and Public Affairs, noticed how the [nonprofit sector](#) generally suffers from high employee-turnover rates, low work performance and deficits among the leadership, and wanted to find out what could be done to break this cycle. She partnered with a large nonprofit hospital in Los Angeles, surveying employees on topics such as leader engagement, inclusion, innovation, [job satisfaction](#) and perceived quality of care. The full study also included one-on-one qualitative interviews, as well as several organizational observations.

Analyzing the data, Brimhall found that leaders who seek the input of organizational members from all job positions and encourage everyone, regardless of [educational background](#) or job responsibilities, to take initiative and participate in work-related processes are more likely to increase feelings of inclusion. This then leads to increased innovation, employee job satisfaction and quality of services in nonprofit organizations.

"When nonprofit organization members believe that they are valued for their unique personal characteristics and are recognized as important members of the organization, employee engagement, trust, satisfaction, commitment and retention improve," wrote Brimhall. "Leader engagement, that is, a leader's ability to actively engage all organizational members in critical decision making, may foster a climate for inclusion and positive organizational outcomes, such as a climate for innovation, job [satisfaction](#) and perceived quality of care."

The implications of these findings have applicability across national settings and for effective management of nonprofit organizations internationally, wrote Brimhall.

She hopes to develop economically practical, evidence-based tools that leaders can utilize to create inclusive work environments. She is

partnering with another large nonprofit hospital to conduct an experimental study testing workplace interventions. These tools could help employees feel included and possibly lead to more [innovation](#) in the workplace and overall improvement in their feelings toward their job, which would then translate to improved quality of care given to clients.

The paper, "Inclusion is Important...But How Do I Include? Examining the Effects of Leader Engagement on Inclusion, Innovation, Job Satisfaction, and Perceived Quality of Care in a Diverse Nonprofit Health Care Organization," was published in *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*.

**More information:** Kim C. Brimhall, Inclusion Is Important . . . But How Do I Include? Examining the Effects of Leader Engagement on Inclusion, Innovation, Job Satisfaction, and Perceived Quality of Care in a Diverse Nonprofit Health Care Organization, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* (2019). [DOI: 10.1177/0899764019829834](https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764019829834)

Provided by Binghamton University

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