

Table 9-3

## STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY EDUCATION

- Be intentional about diversity and inclusion by setting specific goals and talking about them openly during faculty meetings and with students.
- Work with your institution to ensure that diversity and inclusion are also embraced at the institutional level, addressing different levels of the academic system.
- Embed diversity and inclusion topics throughout the curriculum (e.g., working with people with disabilities; individuals from diverse ethnic, racial, and LGBTQ backgrounds; social determinants of health; social justice and equity; power and privilege; health care disparities; racism; and bias). Add conversations about diversity to your professional development lectures/seminars throughout the program of study.
- Define explicit strategic actions in departmental plans related to diversity and inclusion and, when possible, spread accountability across faculty.
- Create a diversity and inclusion committee within the department and assign clear, measurable goals and expectations for this committee.
- Sponsor ongoing conversations about diversity and inclusion with students; ensure a safe space to talk about these issues and bring experts or consultants as needed.
- Bring experts from the disability resource center to speak to faculty about accommodations for students with disabilities.
- Hire a diverse faculty and staff.
- Invite speakers from diverse backgrounds and highlight their strengths during class presentations and encourage SOTA and other student groups to do the same; create a position in student government for diversity and inclusion.
- Use community-engaged learning and target communities and populations where students learn side by side with diverse populations.
- Use inclusive language such as “partner” or “spouse” instead of gendered language, and establish inclusive norms such as asking students and guests their preferred pronouns.
- Represent clients from diverse backgrounds in curriculum case studies. Accordingly, discuss the deeper issues that diversity brings to the case (e.g., inclusion, bias, diverse conceptions about occupation, values, independence, cultural nuances, and cultural adaptations).
- Connect students with multicultural occupational therapy networking groups (see Resources).
- Create opportunity for all students to provide feedback and contribute to class structure and group processes (Thomas & Heath, 2014).
- Provide students with a safe space to have their own student-sponsored conversations about diversity.
- Foster strong collective identity between students (Roberge & van Dick, 2010).

Abbreviation: SOTA, Student Occupational Therapy Association.