



## The Multiple Rewards of Collaborative Workforces

There are several theories that explain why collaborative workforces have become so popular and why they are being embraced by so many spa owners.

A collaborative workforce consists of a cooperative team of professionals that offers diverse strengths and abilities within an esthetic practice. Workforce teams diminish disparities in treatment applications. They support efficiency and high-performance behaviors, and increase the profitability of skin care enterprises. Team members become advocates for one another and provide revealing feedback when warranted. They adhere to agreed-upon treatment practices that include procedural safeguards, and keep each other in

check by ensuring that pre-established caregiving standards are met by all.

### Taking chances

The combination of a slew of active treatment ingredients and the introduction of esthetic devices in skin care centers has placed new demands on solo practitioners, putting them at greater risk than ever before. Working closely with other providers diminishes risk because collaborative efforts require more strategic approaches to esthetic applications.

However, a solid plan is crucial to the successful outcome of teamwork. When therapeutic applications are randomly administered to clients by more than one provider, the potential for mishaps caused by miscommunication is high. Thorough, cohesive protocols of care achieve the maximum level of proficiency, helping to firmly establish client safety.

Every member of the collaborative workforce must believe in the standards that have been set, and adhere to them. Practice goals need to be agreed upon by all members in advance and everyone involved in the caregiving progress must be in sync with each other's approaches. One skeptical member who is resistant to practicing protocol can interfere with the productivity of the overall team, and cause recurring problems that interfere with others accomplishing their objectives.

Skin care practitioners that make up collaborative workforces are unique



in that they enjoy the experience of being a part of a greater effort that involves everyone in the enterprise. Collaborative staff members are exposed to greater complexities because they often address skin conditions that require multi-treatment remedies and must enlist the services of multiple providers.

### **Restore enthusiasm**

Interacting with participating practitioners to achieve mutual treatment goals satisfies an intuitive instinct that is inherent in almost all service providers—to nurture and lend support. Being a member of a workforce team involves a greater obligation and makes you more responsible to your colleagues. Tasks cannot be shifted from person to person—everyone must collaborate. In this situation, there is little time or tolerance for pettiness, gossiping or other derogatory workplace attitudes.

Many cross-caregivers are aware that it is wiser to listen to constructive criticism gingerly offered to them by well-meaning team members

and to correct their behavior patterns, than it is to be defensive, cry persecution, roll their eyes and walk away. Although solo practitioners have more autonomy and are more likely to escape this type of intense workplace scrutiny from coworkers, they are at greater risk of suffering from the consequences of their inappropriate decisions, which are more likely to go undetected until something tragic happens. Esthetic treatment providers who are fortunate enough to belong to a synergetic workforce many times feel more empowered and enthusiastic about coming to work every day because they have the opportunity to showcase their knowledge and skills, as well as learn from others.

### **Benefiting everyone**

Clients benefit from a succinct team approach, too, because a wider spectrum of expertise is available to them. When a problematic condition demands more than one treatment approach, the team is brought together and the appropriate

professionals are assigned. A discussion follows that ends in the formulation of a treatment plan to ensure that the combined therapy does not end up becoming counterproductive. Often, audits are scheduled to monitor improvement or to report the lack of it, and every member of the team is made aware of these developments so that input can be gathered. Because client satisfaction is essential, the individual's expectations also are closely monitored and discussed. If challenges occur that require additional measures beyond the capabilities of the team, outside assistance is sought.

### **Improvement ensures loyalty**

Most employers that go through the trouble and expense of assembling dynamic workforces believe in improvement-centered esthetic practices. They are especially attentive to their staff's ongoing educational needs and interests. Owners know that, to retain staff members, they must provide career stimulation and guard against assigning them to routine procedures

that will evoke boredom and result in the mediocre delivery of treatment services. Spa owners, physicians and medical managers who supervise collaborative workforces constantly query their teams to determine what educational resources they can provide to better streamline their esthetic treatment processes. They are forever searching for ways to adjust glitches in their service delivery, reduce confusion and upgrade their team's efforts to provide the highest quality of skin care applications to clients.

### **A question of accuracy**

Clearly, the outgrowth of new cross-caregiving procedures is producing this new business dynamic, meeting the increasing needs for accuracy. Apportionment of assigned professionals is determined by expected effort and/or priorities that will be allocated to the highest profit-producing operations. Without this new synergetic workforce arrangement, failure of esthetic enterprises in the future is practically guaranteed. ✕