

# ACADEMY OF SPINAL CORD INJURY PROFESSIONALS

## A paramount IDEA: Introducing the Academy of Spinal Cord Injury Professionals' (ASCIP) Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) Committee

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### **Objectives:**

1. Define the individual concepts of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access.
2. Explain the shared importance and dependence between Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access.
3. Describe the IDEA committee in terms of purpose and function.

**Purpose:** Introduce the newly established academy level Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) Committee's mission, purpose, and inaugural projects.

**Background:** Inequality and inequities exist in healthcare. Awareness of these gaps is necessary to inform purposeful actions that achieve continuous progress towards IDEA concepts. As a major professional organization in spinal cord injury/disorders (SCI/D) healthcare, ASCIP is well positioned to embrace and actively promote the incorporation of IDEA objectives in its mission, vision, and organizational functions and educational delivery toward impacting all stakeholders' awareness and implementation of IDEA concepts. With support from the ASCIP Advocacy Committee, Governance Board and members, the IDEA committee was initiated in January 2021.

**Shared Opportunity:** The world is a dynamic system of changes... So too, is healthcare. Hearing different perspectives, listening to new voices, required information validation, incorporation of a wider knowledge database, the bumpiness associated with increased awareness, and inherent responsibility to widen one's lens to broaden the opportunity to improve. Not just grow, not just exist..... but to join in leadership. However, a time comes when it is not enough to stay within the protection of safe topics. To do so, we run the risk of existing by avoiding the difficult. The real risk is such inaction, may actually cause abdicating the very role of leadership.

**Content:** The ASCIP committee's mission is to advocate non-discriminatory and equitable access to opportunity, collaboration, and decision-making. This committee's purpose is to establish organizational culture where IDEA concepts are understood, agreed upon, respected, and applied to enhance opportunities for scholarship, learning, self-development, and action. The committee actively seeks diverse representation across all four professional sections (American Paraplegia Society, Psychologists-Social Workers-Counselors Section, Nurses Section, and Therapy Leadership Council) of the organization. The members meet monthly on video calls and annually at the ASCIP Educational Conference. Inaugural projects include the development of a transparent scoring rubric for the IDEA Award. This award recognizes excellence, innovative, and impactful work that provides an important contribution to advancing our understanding of IDEA concepts and counteracting the practices of disenfranchisement and disempowerment of members of our society. The committee will write two editorials. An introductory editorial will detail the momentum that led to the proposal which established the IDEA committee, its current projects, and future efforts that enable supportive impact dialogue of IDEA themes. An additional editorial will educate our SCI/D community on language.

**Conclusion:** IDEA committee activities seek to pioneer strategies that promote and build upon the key elements of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access for SCI/D professionals, patient/significant others and stakeholder communities through awareness, advocacy, education, and scholarship.



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Handouts are available