

OUR GREATEST ASSET: COLLEGIALITY

As aesthetic physicians, we are lucky to practice in a field that continues to grow and offer new and improved treatment options—from cosmeceuticals to injectables to devices to surgical procedures and more—at a rapid rate. But with growth and innovation come the need to constantly continue training and honing our skills, no matter our experience or current level of expertise. As busy physicians bogged down in the daily routine of running a practice and caring for patients, that can seem an overwhelming feat. It can be challenging to find the time for training or researching every innovation, but there are many educational opportunities we have access to starting with collegial collaboration. In fact, as core aesthetic physicians, there is no greater asset we have than one another. We all have unique approaches and specialty training, and sharing these perspectives with one another will only raise the level of our practices, improve patient outcomes, and help separate us from the less-than-ideal physicians and extended providers promoting themselves as experts.

We must build strong connections and encourage collegiality among our peers—both seasoned and new to the field. Start by attending multidisciplinary meetings. Attend academic sessions for expert tips on new, and often off-label, procedures and technology. And don't miss out on opportunities for “curbsiding” colleagues. Chats at the back of the lecture hall or over coffee in the exhibit hall provide pearls and allow you to make the personal connections necessary to build a reliable network.

This process of network building with similarly minded cosmetic doctors in your specialty and other core specialties who see the value of collegiality is invaluable. There are plenty of chatboards and listservs where you can share cases, but you have no control over the participants and won't necessarily know how to rate their input or whether to trust them with your questions or complications.

Instead reach out to select individuals: set up your own “brain trust” of go-to colleagues.

Many residency programs provide elective time to visit other programs and practices. Once in practice, we rarely get that opportunity. If possible, spend a day shadowing a colleague or mentor, and invite him/her to do the same in your practice. Perhaps you can shadow while in another city before a meeting or vacation. You may find out about a new product or technique or pick up a “trick of the trade.” Reciprocity in patient referrals among core specialties also leads to collegiality. If you do non-invasive, find surgical colleagues to whom you can refer your patients considering surgery and whose offices will not “steal” those non-invasive treatments you can do for those patients. If you don't have the right energy-based device(s) in your office, send the patient to someone who does, with the understanding that s/he will be referred back to your office for surgery or whatever is your specialty. This creates a win-win situation: Patients appreciate when their physician shows s/he wants to recommend the best possible procedure, not just the one that is in her/his office. Along the way we improve the image of core physicians as the true experts.

As the field of aesthetics becomes more complicated and competitive, it is sometimes hard to know what or who to believe. Proactive collegiality is a great way to sort the facts from “fake news.” We hope that as a multidisciplinary publication with an editorial board of core cosmetic experts, *Modern Aesthetics*® magazine can help you in this journey. ■



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