


# ANTI-RACISM TRAINING CHANGED MY PRACTICE



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When Dr. Leanna Dudley of Denver Vision Therapy opened her practice, she had a vision for managing her team with compassion and genuine interest in their personal and professional growth. She felt that she could build a team that delivers high quality patient care on a foundation of trust and respect. Many teams struggle to achieve this, but Dr. Dudley has taken the time to nurture this dynamic within her practice.

When the 2020 civil rights movement began at the end of May, it deeply impacted Dr. Dudley and her employees. As she and her staff took part in open dialogue about racism, it was clear they wanted to make a positive impact. But they knew protesting was risky and they didn't want to compromise staff health. With her team being the driving force for what she did next, Dudley and staff started brainstorming on how to make a

difference. They concluded that the best thing they could do was to educate themselves on racism and so Dr. Dudley set out to find a training while the team consumed podcasts and books to better understand racism and anti-racism.

Through her participation in COA's Equality Committee, Dr. Dudley heard about the Diversity and Resiliency Institute's **free** Anti-Racism Training that was being offered to the public. She made the training optional to her staff and offered a \$75 bonus to each employee who chose to complete the training on their own personal time. Each team member seized the opportunity to complete the training.

But what did the training do for the practice? Dr. Dudley chimes in, "This changed my practice. I wondered if this was my place as a

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business owner to understand, but my practice can be an example. I can take a stand and I realized that if I lose patients it isn't a problem for me. I would regret not speaking up or saying anything. Through this process, I've learned that racism is a white person's problem and it's something we all need education on."

Another educational turning point for the team was understanding covert racism. Each team member stressed the importance of education on "socially acceptable" racism, "Overt racism is just the tip of the iceberg. It's so important to understand covert racism. It's something we all have participated in and we must start addressing it as individuals," says Dr. Dudley.

The team also reports **positive gains in patient care, teamwork, and workplace happiness**. Here is what they have to say...

"As an Asian American, I felt validated and supported when my entire team was willing to take the antiracism training. It felt so great to have a safe space to talk about things that I have experienced and injustices I have observed, along with working through my own biases. I think an important thing to remember is that being an anti-racist is uncomfortable! It takes practice and a continuing willingness to grow and listen. It's important to understand that everyone has bias; but that doesn't make you a bad person."  
- Mia - Certified Vision Therapist

"The information helped me on a personal level with increased knowledge of the pervasiveness of racism. Improvement on a personal level can't help but carry over to patient care and interaction. I am more open-minded and accepting of individuals dealing with

circumstances different from my personal experiences. I highly recommend the class. It was informative, easy to watch and has made me search out additional information and resources."  
- Lori Erickson, COVT

"We already had a close team, and this only helped us grow stronger together. I believe our patients see how we interact with one another through kindness and thoughtfulness. Overall the training helped us understand a lot of biases. When we continue to educate ourselves, people take notice."  
- Henry Le, Administrator and Technician

"I highly recommend doing the training not just for professional reasons, but for personal reasons. This year especially, opened our eyes to more horrific situations that are still going on in this world. Starting the training is a good first step into the right direction for humanity." - Shadaan Singh, OD

Dr. Dudley's long-term plan for the team is continued open dialogue and education. In addition to educating, the initial training has given each team member a strong sense of purpose, like they are part of something bigger when they go to work. "Each person on this team is working to be a better person and I couldn't be prouder of what they're choosing to do. I'm so glad we did this." says Dr. Dudley.

**Recommended Educational Resources:**

-  Diversity and Resiliency Institute's, free online Anti-Racism Training | [www.driep.org/anti-racism-training](http://www.driep.org/anti-racism-training)
-  White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism by Robin DiAngelo
-  How to Be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi

# The Denver Vision Therapy Team

