How to Create a More Inclusive Salon, Spa, or Wellness Business

mindbody

There’s no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach to serving your clients.

Each client is different—with their own unique background and needs. So, it’s up to you to make your salon, spa, or wellness business a welcoming and safe space for all.

Create new opportunities through customised services

One of the best ways to create a more inclusive environment is to provide offerings for a variety of needs. This means expanding your brand to make an even bigger impact.

This guide will help you do just that—consider the needs and preferences of different customers to create a better experience for everyone who walks through your door. The following pages include specific examples you can leverage to better serve your community.

Welcome everyone

Create a welcoming space that supports all, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or anything else.

TO DO SO:

Representation matters. Having a diverse team isn't only good for creativity, productivity, and retention, it's also good for your bottom line. Studies show that more diverse teams lead to more profitable businesses. Make your recruiting process transparent and continue to reinforce the countless benefits of a diverse workplace to your staff.

Pay your staff equitably. Work that requires equal skill, effort, and responsibility should be paid the same, regardless of identity, race, or physical ability. On a regular basis, evaluate your current payroll (or even better, hire a third party to analyse your wages) and close any gaps that exist.

Invest in education for your team. Whether it be bias training, diversity and inclusion training, or a combination of both, continue to provide education and encourage thoughtful conversations among your staff. Diversity training educates on differences while inclusion training helps leverage those differences to create a stronger workplace.

Be conscious of and prevent microaggresions. Microagressions are indirect and often unintentional expressions rooted in biases against marginalised groups. For example, an assumption based on race, use of gender-centric language, or a comment made related to age, ability, or sexuality. It's your responsibility to educate yourself and your team on microaggressions and prevent them from happening in the first place. It's also your responsibility to address them when they arise among your clients or your team. While microagressions may be overlooked or feel harmless, it's their pervasive nature built over time that causes harm to individuals, groups, and businesses.

Showcase diversity in your marketing. Much like the makeup of your team, your marketing speaks volumes about your business. Be authentic in your representation and showcase the unique differences that make up your community, team, and customer base. Remember: Diversity isn't just specific to race, gender identity, or age, it also relates to physical ability and body type, too.

Offer services and products for all hair types. Hire stylists who specialise in working with various hair types, including curly and natural hair. Make curly care and natural texture education mandatory for your entire team. Add products to both your back bar and retail section formulated for a variety of hair types, too.

Stock products for all skin colors. If it's a service you offer, let your team know you expect them to be able to do makeup for all skin colors, and make sure you have top-notch products on hand to do so.

Encourage cultural differences

Welcome differences in language, dress, and religion. Strategies like these show your business services all.

START HERE:

Outline and share your values. Welcome individuals of all cultures and backgrounds into your space and promote your dedication to inclusion through your core values—the foundation of your business. Share your values on your website, in your spa, salon, or wellness business, and, of course, hire and train to them.

Prepare pricing and service menus in languages other than English, especially if your business is in an area where another language is prominent.

Offer consultations and treatments with practitioners who speak other languages. Enabling non-English speaking customers to feel comfortable in your business can make a big difference in serving these groups.

Think about the music you play in your business. **Adding tracks in other languages to your playlist can go a long way to make all cultures feel welcome.**

Support the LGBTQIA+ community

Think of the unique needs of your LGBTQIA+ customers.

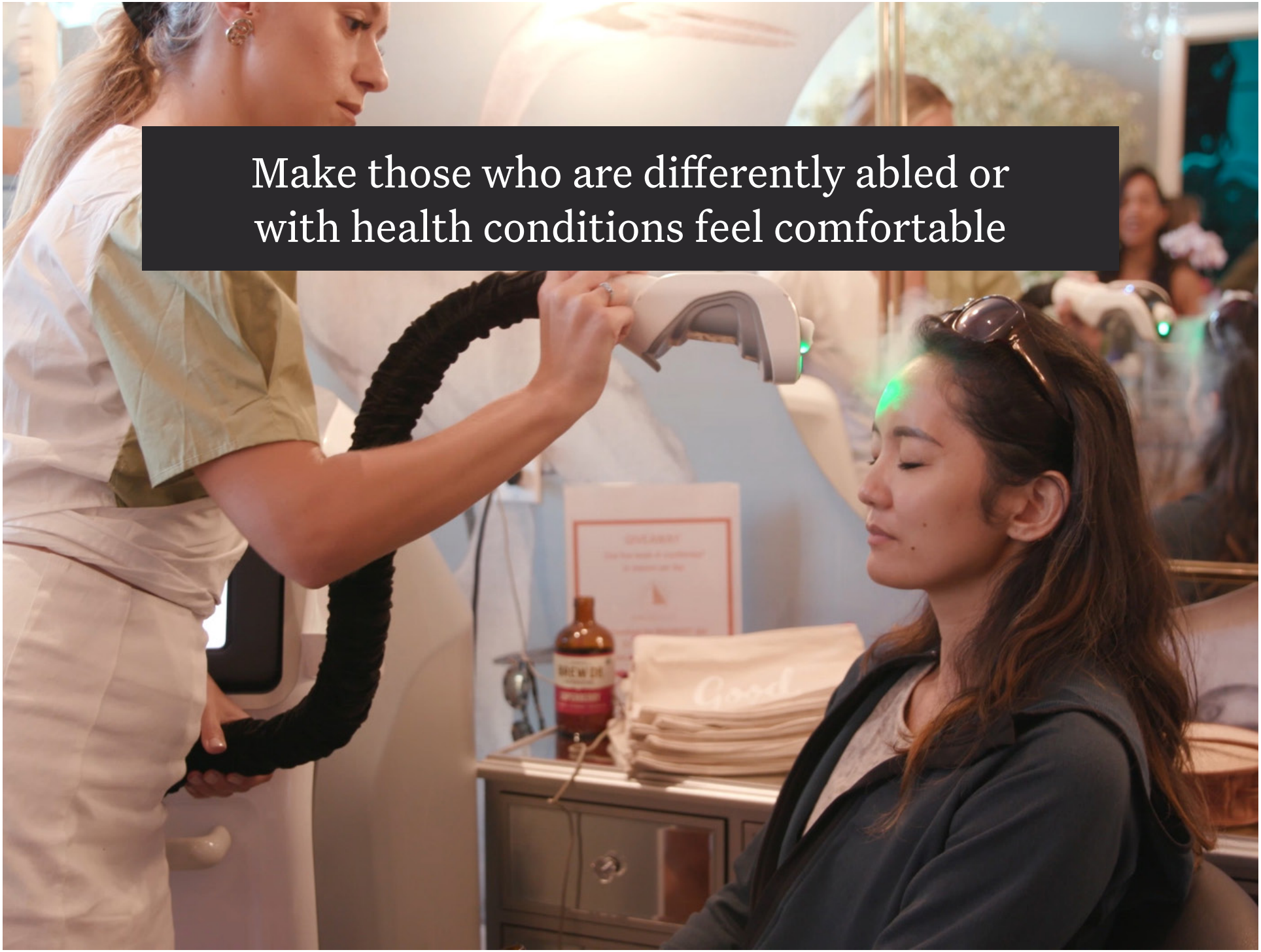
CONSIDER ELEMENTS LIKE:

Create gender-neutral pricing and service menus. For example, salons can base pricing on hair length rather than having distinct prices for male cuts or female cuts, specifically.

Make restrooms gender neutral. More businesses in every industry are making gender-neutral options available for customers, and it's an important addition for your business as well. You'll want to be sure to have partitions in these facilities to provide privacy.

Design services for transgender or transitioning customers. This might include treatments for hair removal and specialised facials, or education related to hair styling, skin care, and/or makeup application.

Provide detailed intake forms. It would be a mistake to assume anyone's needs based on appearance alone. Consider including an area for your new customer to share their pronoun (he, she, they). Also, be sure to include a field for current supplementation/medication and pay particular attention to hormonal therapies.


Make those who are differently abled or
with health conditions feel comfortable

Ensure all individuals can easily access your business and that your services take a variety of needs into account.

HERE'S HOW:

Consider sensory needs. Certain music, noise levels, or lighting could impact a customer's ability to relax. This is where your intake form will be especially helpful.

Update or revamp your intake forms to include areas where clients can detail any specific preferences, allergies, sensitivities, treatments, or other health concerns that might impact treatments or services. With paperless client forms, you can collect this information before the appointment, at your client's convenience.

Consider partnering with local treatment centres to support those being treated and/or recovering from illness. Services like those for stress reduction, cosmetic courses, coping with hair loss, and more could be especially beneficial.

Create a separate area for services. In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, some businesses are creating a separate space for immunocompromised individuals. For example, some salons are doing wig fittings for clients with cancer in a designated area outside to reduce risk. To offer the same experience for all, treat the area like an extension of the business with comfortable chairs and similar décor.

Recognise income diversity

Make beauty and wellness accessible with options for all budgets.

HERE'S HOW:

Offer express services. For those looking for more cost-effective prices, add express options to your service menu. Express facials, scalp treatments, and massages are just a few ways to pamper customers without a big price tag.

Create a community setting. Some wellness services can be completed in a group setting to make them more budget friendly. Community acupuncture, for example, provides treatment in a group setting, at a lower price point. Some practitioners even offer sliding scale pricing based on the customer's ability to pay.

Introduce a layaway program. Expensive services can be a financial burden when paid upfront. This is especially true for services like hair extensions and sew-ins. Consider offering 45, 60, or 90-day layaway programs to help customers finance them.

Stock products at various price points. Professional products can be expensive. To make your retail section more accessible for all, offer effective options at varying price points and educate customers on proper use. Make sure your clients know that, with professional products, a little goes a long way, extending the life of the product.

Welcome older adults

Market your offerings toward the young-at-heart, keeping their needs in mind.

TO REACH OLDER DEMOGRAPHICS:

Welcome older clients and those at greater risk earlier in the day. Just as many grocery stores have a senior hour, welcome your older clientele in a special morning slot to ensure your environment is as clean and safe as possible. Include pregnant women and those with other risk factors as well.

Offer special discounts for those 65 and older. Many older customers have fixed incomes and budget accordingly; a discount may entice an otherwise reluctant person in this age group.

Support families

Parents and those who are about to become parents have their own unique needs and considerations.

TO ACCOMMODATE THESE CUSTOMERS:

Customise pre- and postnatal services. A spa, for example, could create a special prenatal and postnatal massage package. A salon could specifically feature and label products that are safe for pregnant and nursing women.

Create parent-and-me services. For the parent who wants to include their child in the fun, develop tailored packages or in-person or virtual workshops to help mom or dad bond with their kiddos and teach them the importance of self-care. For example, parent-and-me manicures or hair styling workshops.

Reach out to students

Offer specialised deals just for students, especially if your business operates in or near a college town. Many companies provide discounts for people in school, asking them to show their student ID as proof.

OTHER STRATEGIES:

Make your business visible on campus. Work with the local college, high school, trade, or vocational school and promote your business's available student discount, and other specials and services.

Ensure you're mobile-friendly. One study found that college students spend between eight and ten hours a day on their mobile devices. Your website and other features—like the ability to book appointments online—should function correctly on smaller screens.

Create specials around exam time. Offering specials around this time to help students de-stress is beneficial for them and a great opportunity for your business to connect with this audience.

Market your new services and mission for inclusivity

Once you've updated and/or established new services, spread the word that your business has more diverse offerings than ever. Your social media channels and branded mobile app are some of the greatest tools for customer outreach and marketing here.

Depending on who you're marketing to, you'll want to customise your efforts accordingly.

Pro Tip: When putting together any marketing collateral, use language like "we," "us," and "let's" to support your inclusive brand. Also, prioritise diverse imagery that authentically represents your brand in your online and print marketing.

FOR EXAMPLE:

Take to Facebook to reach seniors and older demographics, and read our guide to learn more about making the most of this social channel.

Put together a series of Instagram posts to advertise your new student-centred discounts and offerings. Check out our guide to learn more about Instagram marketing.

Try out social ads, which are extremely targeted options to reach a variety of demographics.

Retain your new customers

Your main goal in offering these services is to provide a safe space for all.

From the start, make sure anyone who walks through your door feels immediately welcome. Train your staff to use positive and inclusive language and establish an accommodating company culture.

These impactful changes will provide a memorable experience for your customers and transform your business.

Mindbody welcomes and celebrates all people, regardless of their unique differences.

To learn first-hand how Mindbody can support your business, schedule a guided tour today.