

## Learning Collaborative Practice Through an Interprofessional Team Partnership Activity

Effectiveness of interprofessional collaboration (IPC) relies on role clarity (Lennen & Miller, 2017; Speakman, 2017). IPC education is challenging at a smaller university school of nursing, particularly for sites without access to additional health professional schools. This activity was designed to explore how students in acute care practice could be introduced to IPC learning in an authentic and creative manner in a small regional acute care hospital.

### IPC Partnership Activity

Second-year nursing students participated in this IPC activity to explore roles and scopes of practice. This activity placed students, who are often preoccupied with skill development, in direct partnership with the IPC team. Goals of the activity were for students to:

- Describe the roles of health care team members.
- Consider how different health care roles contribute to the care of patients in an acute care setting.
- Discuss patient care through various professional and disciplinary lenses.

Students in clinical practice at an acute care medical unit of a regional hospital were assigned to individually interview and observe a member of the health care team in practice. These team members included social workers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, pharmacists, respiratory therapists, charge nurses, health care assistants, and clergy members. Prior to making student assignments, the instructor approached team members to ensure their willingness to be involved in the activity.

Students then coordinated a time with their assigned partner to learn about

their role and perspective in client care. This was challenging as team members often were pulled away for emergencies and client issues. Students were asked to present what they learned about their assigned team member, such as educational background, scope of practice, typical assessment and interventions of team members, focus of care, and biggest challenges; information was gathered by students in interviews and observations.

Students shared a summary of their discoveries in a small group exercise and completed a case study activity constructed as mock patient rounds. Finally, students drafted a one-page written reflection on the process of the collection of activities: interviews, observations, summary work, and mock patient rounds whereby students took the perspective of their IPC partner.

### Student Feedback and Lessons Learned

Experiences with this activity for three different student groups (from 2016 to 2017) provided constructive lessons. Supporting students to meet and interview other health care team members increased their confidence in speaking with team members and established a beginning understanding of the roles and practices outside of nursing. Many students did not initiate the assignment until late in the practice course, which limited time for engagement, comfort, and familiarity with the IPC team. Therefore, it is recommended that the IPC engagement activity be completed early in the practice experience to allow time for the students to integrate their knowledge of the roles of the IPC team while in practice.

Students also desired greater involvement in determining which IPC team members they would be partnered with, and this may be another way of enhanc-

ing student interest in the experience. Finally, different models of the experience could formally test competency attainment with validated tools (Archibald, Trumppower, & MacDonald, 2014), as well as compare different practice sites and student experiences with different members of the IPC team.

### Conclusion

In today's complex health care system, the IPC team is increasingly important in supporting positive health outcomes for patients and families. Activities that foster direct student engagement with IPC team members are valuable early in student practice experiences. Creative ways to achieve IPC team learning in smaller universities and regional hospital settings are essential for understanding the roles of the IPC team and the future success of collaborative practice.

### References

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