



Competency 2 | Interprofessional communication

Interprofessional Practice

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What is interprofessional communication?

Interprofessional communication happens when health professionals communicate with each other, with patients and their families, and with the broader community in a transparent, collaborative and responsible way. This type of communication promotes trusting, respectful relationships amongst patients, their families and health care providers.

Mutual respect is essential for interprofessional communication. Respect helps foster a positive environment in which to set shared goals, create collaborative plans, make decisions and share responsibilities.

How does it work?

Respectful interprofessional communication depends on transparent, honest interactions. This communication helps to demonstrate and build trust.

All team members facilitate good interprofessional communication by:

- actively listening and paying attention to non-verbal communication
- reaching a shared understanding regarding treatment plans
- effectively using information and communication technology
- deciding whether negotiation, consultation, interaction, discussion or debate is more effective.

Example:

A patient from the Renal Unit has required dialysis for some time and has come to a stage in his treatment where he is making the decision to cease dialysis treatment. The patient resides in a rural community and is required to travel to a large regional hospital for his treatment. Apart from the various health professionals in the Renal Unit, there are a number of others involved in his “team” including the patient himself as well as Indigenous Liaison Officers, family members and people from his local community. All of the “team” need to communicate effectively and respectfully with each other across health facilities and locations in order to reach a shared understanding about his future treatment, particularly in sensitively discussing the end of life implications of ceasing dialysis. The patient experiences a transparent, inclusive and respectful communication process with all manner of health professionals, allowing him to make informed decisions regarding his health.

Outcome

Interprofessional communication builds trust and understanding which leads to better patient-centred health outcomes.



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For more information:

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