



Competency 6 | Interprofessional conflict resolution

Interprofessional Practice

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What is interprofessional conflict resolution?

Interprofessional conflict resolution happens when health professionals work as a team that proactively addresses disagreements and responds effectively to all types of conflict.

How does it work?

Acknowledge from the outset that different perspectives (which may involve differing philosophies, values and areas of expertise) – can all contribute to role ambiguity, role overload and goal differences.

High risk situations for conflict include preferring different treatment approaches, differing views on diagnosis, obtaining input from patients and families, setting goals and agreeing on discharge plans. These situations will vary and can require difficult conversations. It is essential for individuals to accept responsibility for addressing conflict in a healthy, respectful way; this is an integral part of interprofessional conflict resolution.

To support interprofessional practice, health professionals need to:

- create a safe environment where differing opinions are welcome
- validate and acknowledge differing perspectives
- communicate positively and constructively
- see conflict as normative but also as having potential for a positive outcome.

Example:

A team of Allied Health students from different professions are placed in a clinical service that offers joint clinics for children with global developmental issues. Under the supervision of their individual clinical educators, students are expected to jointly plan and facilitate Occupational Therapy/Physiotherapy/Speech Pathology sessions. A clinical educator of one profession is particularly critical of students from other professions and creates disharmony in the team by providing unwarranted and inappropriate feedback in a public forum. This information is brought to the attention of the Clinical Education Support Officers from each of the professions involved. Rules around feedback, clinic participation, clinic outcomes and student learning outcomes are subsequently established.

Outcome

A conflict positive perspective incorporates the idea that differences are a part of healthy, constructive interaction. In being self accountable when conflict arises, health professionals can aim to proactively address and/or resolve the conflict. This promotes a healthier environment for everyone.



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