

# Strengthening Collaborative Education using E-Learning Technologies

Creating a Knowledge Exchange Community  
of Learners and Educators to Improve the  
Mental Health of Canadians

## *Tips for Interprofessional Teams*

1. Interprofessional education is one way to help your health care team better understand the roles and responsibilities of other team members. When you clearly understand how every team member can contribute effectively to patient care, you are able to collaborate more effectively and efficiently as a team.

Some of the benefits of IPE include:

- Improved relationships among team members
  - Increased trust
  - Dispelled stereotypes
  - Improved attitudes towards other professional groups
2. For an interprofessional team to function effectively, the team's purpose and goals should be clearly understood and agreed upon by all members. Posting them where they are visible and making changes when necessary are two ways to engage members in living the team's vision and mission.
  3. Members of a successful team should be able to describe and appreciate the expertise and roles of different health care professionals and other team members who provide services.
  4. Members of a successful team should be able to appreciate the various challenges of working in an interprofessional team and develop the necessary strategies to overcome them.
  5. Organization is an essential part of facilitating communication between different health providers practicing collaborative care. Be sure to identify each team member's responsibilities; hold regularly scheduled team meetings; record and distribute action items; and agree on how to communicate progress/changes between meetings.
  6. Discussing process issues related to interprofessional education and working in an interprofessional team environment (such as trust, respect, role clarification and perceptions) helps to address conflicts, miscommunications and role overlap.

7. Learning about the tasks and responsibilities of different professions increases team member appreciation, promotes healthy communication and strengthens collaborative delivery of care. Be sure that your interprofessional education initiative addresses stereotypes and misconceptions, increases awareness of role differences and similarities and acknowledges the unique contributions of each provider.
  
8. For collaborative mental health care strategies to be effective, the relationships among team members must be fostered over time and through shared learning activities (such as IPE).

Examples of ways to enrich collaboration among team members include:

- Knowledge exchange activities centred around the sharing of best practices
- Formal education: courses, lectures, tutorials, seminars, team rounds, clinical rotations, case conferences, clinical placements or locums
- Continuing education: workshops, conferences seminars, symposia or presentations, teleseminars (phone), webinars (internet)
- Educational resources: research papers, treatment guidelines, toolkits, websites, vodcasts (video), podcasts (audio)