

# Interprofessional Education: Bridging the Gap

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## Introduction

Interprofessional education (IPE) is a concept where students are provided an opportunity to learn about, from, and with others from different healthcare disciplines. There is not one singular approach that is deemed best, but rather a wide variety of strategies and opportunities to help with the formation of an interprofessional team. A strong interdisciplinary approach to patient care will strengthen learning from the role of the student far into the role of a clinician. IPE can occur in multiple experiences and learning opportunities that can build upon one another. The complexity of the experience is less important than the opportunity to collaborate and learn from one another with emphasis on promotion of working relationships between healthcare professions, reducing barriers and preconceptions, and promotion of professional competencies.

## Clinical Interprofessional Experiences

### Importance:

- Health care providers must work together to deliver patient centered care
- Decisions are made within multidisciplinary team
- Individuals served often require multi-discipline-based care
- Medical errors have exposed gaps in communication and collaboration
- Considered a key factor in providing patient-centered, high-quality care
- Reduces cost through improved efficiencies and effectiveness
- Facilitates development of professional relationships
- Improved job satisfaction
- Improved patient outcomes

### Examples:

- Care team rounding
- Co-treatment sessions with PT, OT or SLP
- SBAR Communication or other communication between different disciplines
- Physician discussing medication options with a pharmacist
- Surgical team preparing for a case
- School IEP meeting
- Case management conference
- Early Intervention Right Track Program
- PACE Senior Care Services

## Interprofessional Experiences

### Examples of Interprofessional Experiences at University of Mary

Pro Bono Clinic
Community Clinic
Interprofessional Education Course
Baby Lab
IPE Geriatric Community Project
Saint Gianna School of Health Sciences Michael G. Parker Research & Scholarship Colloquium

### Interprofessional Experience Benefits for Students

Learning to work collaboratively to develop the best approach to evaluation
Greater appreciation of individual disciplines
Learn how to manage time and be responsible for communication with faculty, each other, and their client
Further development of professional skills and technical skills to promote best practice as a clinician
Strive for excellence in patient care
Value and learn from errors

### Interprofessional Experience Challenges for Students

Clear and definitive communication
Finding time to plan and complete various assignments
Delegating tasks
Being open to other viewpoints

## Interprofessional Experiences Learning Outcomes

### Learning Outcomes:

- Healthcare educators need to prepare students to work as a team
- Teamwork
  - Communication
  - Effective Collaboration
  - Deeper knowledge of other professions and their practice management, autonomy and awareness of limitations
  - Social and cultural awareness
  - Improved confidence



## Implications and Importance for Rural Areas

### Challenges:

- Almost 60 million people, or one in five Americans live in a rural area.
- Rural residents experience significantly worse health outcomes than those residents living in urban areas.
- Rural residents have higher rates of mortality from heart disease, respiratory disease, cancer, stroke and unintentional injury which are the five leading causes of death in the U.S.
- Rural communities often lack basic health care facilities and face shortages of doctors, nurses, pharmacists and non-physician providers.

### Solutions:

- Schools of Medicine and Health Sciences in North Dakota require students to complete an Interprofessional Education course.
- Students develop interprofessional skills, behaviors and attitudes that will be used in their practices to make sound decisions for patients through the decisions of a healthcare team.
- Areas of practice that are common to all healthcare team members are covered including ethics, moral courage, diversity and communication.
- Students are provided opportunities to practice interprofessional communication and decision-making via small inter-professional group experiences.