

## VICTORIA UNIVERSITY – INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM LANGUAGE ORGANISER

The term 'interprofessional' has gained significant momentum in a relatively short time that it is often poorly understood, misused or replaced by less explicit language. This brief paper is to synergize what terms will be used through VU's IPE(P) so that we practice good communication skills that lead to clearer understandings of our intent and meanings.

### WHAT INTERPROFESSIONAL IS:

- **Interprofessional Education (IPE)** '*Interprofessional Education occurs when two or more professions learn with, from and about each other to improve collaboration and the quality of care*'. The Centre for the Advancement of Interprofessional Education (CAIPE) 2002).

This definition is overwhelmingly the most common definition for IPE used globally. AIPPEN would add that IPE comprises all such learning in academic and work based settings, before and after qualification, and includes the 'professional' status of healthcare support workers.

- **Interprofessional Practice (IPP)** – '*IPP occurs when all members of the health service delivery team participate in the team's activities and rely on one another to accomplish common goals and improve health care delivery, thus improving patient's quality experience.*' (AIPPEN)

IPP or IPW (interprofessional worker) or IPC (interprofessional care or collaboration) are terms that are used to mean the same aspect. Various countries tend to favour one of the others of these terms. For eg. the UK prefers IPW, Canada prefers IPC and Australia prefers IPP (Stone 2009).

- **Interprofessional Collaboration** – '*an interprofessional process for communication and decision-making that enables the separate and shared knowledge and skills of care providers to synergistically influence the client/patient care provided*' (Way et al., 2000, p. 3).

IPC is then both patient-centered and team-based; and maximises the strengths and skills of each contributing health and social care worker to increase the quality of patient care (Hoffman et al., 2007)

### WHAT IP IS NOT

**Interdisciplinary** - 'Interdisciplinary collaboration' was a term used in the 1970s when IPL was emerging from the evidence that suggested lives were saved with better coordination and collaboration in the health services (Yeager, 2005). Interdisciplinary is a term sometimes used by researchers and practitioners, who analyse, synthesise and harmonise the links between disciplines, to create a coordinated and coherent health delivery system (Choi & Pak, 2006). However, 'interdisciplinary' lacks the inherent depth of collaboration implied by the term 'interprofessional' (AIPPEN).

**Transdisciplinary** - Transdisciplinary may be used to describe professional boundary overlap, or health professionals taking on aspects of each other's roles in the absence of the specific health professional. For example, in rural and remote practices which cannot support the full range of health professionals, individuals can be more flexible about their roles and responsibilities. Choi and Pak (2006) describe the concept transdisciplinary as the integration of the natural, social and health sciences in a humanities context, transcending their traditional boundaries.

**Multidisciplinary** - Multidisciplinary is used to describe, for example, types of teams or education and indicates that people from different disciplines are involved in the given activity. It is a term often confused with multiprofessional despite the clear difference between these two descriptors. Multidisciplinary health professionals represent different health and social care professions - they may work closely with one another, but may not necessarily interact, collaborate or communicate effectively (Atwal & Caldwell, 2006).

**Multiprofessional** - Multiprofessional refers to a number of professional practitioners who work in parallel; each has clear role definitions, specified tasks, and there are hierarchical lines of authority and high levels of professional autonomy within the team. The practitioners consult individually with service users and use their own goals and treatment plans to deliver a particular service (Griffin, 1996; Ivey et al., 1988). Multiprofessional, as a term, may not imply optimal levels of collaboration.

## References

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