Team Functioning

What is it?

Health providers/students ensure that they understand the principals of teamwork and effective team practice processes. Whether their team is formal or informal, health providers/students use this understanding to work with every member of the team to achieve effective interprofessional collaboration for the ultimate benefit of the people they serve.

How does it work?

Team development
• Health providers/students understand the process and dynamics of team development.
• They respect the ethical values of their team members.
• They recognize that team practice processes apply to informal working groups as well.
• They establish and maintain effective working relationships with everyone from fellow health providers/students to the people they serve.

Team activity
• Health providers/students work together as a functional team, whether formal or informal.
• They know and respect one another's expertise.
• They respect the input of the people they serve and the expertise people have about their own health, and include them on the team.
• They communicate clearly and frequently, confirming or adjusting healthcare plans and services as needed.
• They participate in the decision-making process and respect the participation of their team members in that process.
• They regularly assess their roles and actions with their fellow team members.
• They respect team ethics, including confidentiality, resource allocation, and professionalism.
• They regularly assess their roles and actions with their fellow team members.

Application and integration

Health providers/students value and practice trust, mutual respect, availability, open communication and attentive listening. They promote safe and effective working relationships with every member of the healthcare team to ensure

that the people they serve receive maximum benefit from the team's collective expertise.

Team Functioning in Action

For example, a person requiring cancer treatment must see health providers in several areas of practice throughout the course of care. Upon diagnosis, he meets with a surgeon, who spends the necessary time to explain the person's treatment, answer all his questions and ensure that he has the information booklets that will help him study further. The person understands the referrals that follow to the medical and radiation oncologists, who read the information inputted by the pathologist and consult with each other to further refine the course of treatment. No further information is needed because all three professionals have maximized their scope of practice and have communicated regularly and expertly with one another and with the person under care. Throughout the person's treatment, his nurse, radiologists and radiation therapists also treat him with dignity and respect, answering any questions he has. The person feels supported, trusts his professional team, and receives the best possible care and outcome.

Outcome

Effective team functioning maximizes opportunities for health providers/students to work within their full scope of practice. In turn, these highly effective teams ensure better quality of person care.

For more information see page 14 of the CIHC National Interprofessional Competency Framework at
www.cihc.ca/files/CIHC_IPCompetencies_Feb1210.pdf

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