

Collaborative Care Principles and Best Practices



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Background Information

In 2016 - 2017, several health regulatory colleges got together as an informal working group to jointly undertake research and discussion with the goal of identifying principles and expectations related to the delivery of collaborative care. The intended outcome was to develop a set of high level principles and best practices on collaborative care.

Definitions

Collaborative care - When a team of health providers and a patient/client work in a participatory, collaborative and coordinated approach to shared decision-making around health and social care.

Collaborative care team - Where the patient/client and their healthcare providers work together to achieve the optimal health outcomes. It could refer to situations where the team is located in the same practice setting and interact closely, or it could refer to providers who work independently but are providing care to the same patient/client.

Principles and best practices for collaborative care

Proposed healthcare-specific principles for collaborative care

1. Collaborative care should be patient-/client-centred.

- The patient/client¹ is a key participant in the collaborative care team.
- Whenever possible, the patient/client should be treated as a member of the team.
- If the patient/client is capable, and has expressed the desire to, they may even act as the team leader.

2. Members of a collaborative care team should have clearly-understood roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.

- Members of a collaborative care team should clearly understand: who is on the team; the team members' roles and responsibilities; and which task(s) each team member will perform (this is especially important when there is overlapping scope or shared authority to perform controlled acts).
- The roles, responsibilities and accountabilities in the team may differ depending on the specific needs of the patient/client, the practice setting, or other relevant factors.
- It may be beneficial to document team members' roles and responsibilities as part of each patient/client's care plan.
- There should be mutual respect and trust in the team, based on a clear understanding of each team member's competencies.

¹ "Patient/client" also refers to the patient/client's substitute decision-maker, family and caregivers.

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3. **Each healthcare provider in the team should be individually accountable for the quality of the care they provide.**
4. **There should be shared decision-making in the team.**
 - Decisions about care should be shared within the team, meaning they should incorporate the knowledge, skills, judgment, and evidence from all team members.

Proposed health-care specific best practices for working effectively in teams

5. **Effective collaboration requires effective communication.**
 - The team should establish a clear process for communicating within the team, and a shared language/lexicon.
 - There should be timely and clear record keeping. The team should establish how this will occur, and who will be responsible for record keeping.
6. **There should be a strategy for conflict management.**
 - The team should establish a clear process for conflict resolution and decision-making in the team.
 - Team members should be able to identify conflict when it occurs.
7. **The team should have a team leader.**
 - In the collaborative care context, the “collaborative leadership” model means that team members collaboratively determine who will provide group leadership in any given situation.
 - It may be beneficial to document who is the team leader as part of each patient’s care plan.
8. **The team should measure and evaluate its performance.**
 - The team should establish a clear process to evaluate whether the team is meeting its goals, and how well the team is functioning.
9. **Each team member should be individually accountable for their contribution to team functioning.**
10. **Team members should receive education and training for how to work effectively in a team.**
 - There may also be opportunities for team members to educate each other based on their respective knowledge-base and expertise.

References

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