Topic 4

Being an effective team player

Patient Safety Curriculum Guide
Multi-professional Edition
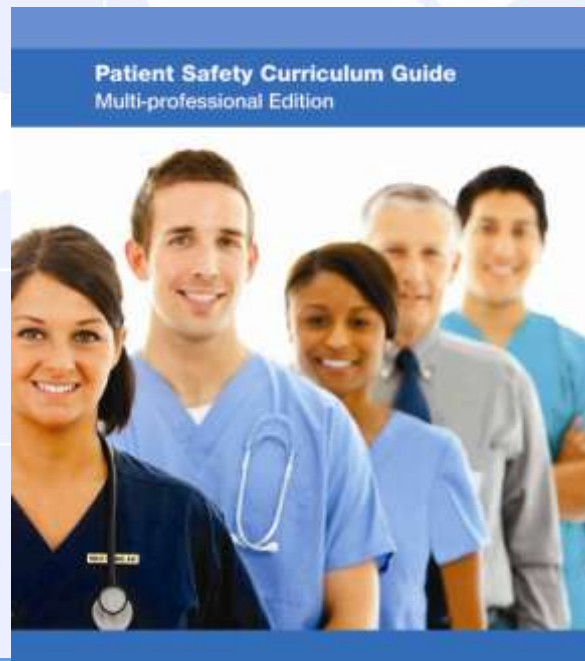
Learning objectives

- Understand the importance of teamwork in health care

- Know how to be an effective team player

- Recognize you will be a team member as a health professional student

Knowledge requirements (1)

Understand:

- The different types of teams in health care
- The characteristics of effective teams
- How people's values and assumptions affect interactions with others

Knowledge requirements (2)

Understand:

- The role of team members and how psychological factors affect team interactions
- The impact of change on teams
- The role of the patient on teams

Performance requirements

Promote effective health care by using the following teamwork principles:

- Be mindful of other's values and assumptions
- Be mindful of how psychosocial factors affect team interactions
- Be aware of the impact of change on teams
- Include the patient and his/her family in the team
- Use appropriate communication techniques
- Use mutual support techniques
- Resolve conflicts
- Be open to changing and observing behaviours

What is a team?

A team is a group of two or more individuals who:

- Interact dynamically
- Have a common goal/mission
- Have been assigned specific tasks
- Possess specialized and complementary skills
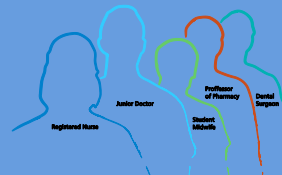
A team is….

A distinguishable set of two or more people who interact dynamically, interdependently and adaptively towards a common and valued goal/objective/mission, who have been each assigned specific roles or functions to perform, and who have a limited lifespan of membership.
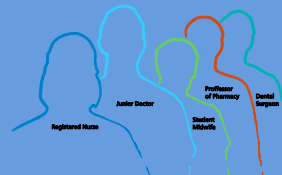
Eduardo Salas
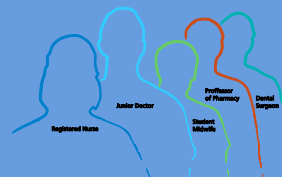
What types of teams do you find in health care?

Many different teams are found in health care:

- Multi-professional/drawn from a single profession
- Co-located/distributed
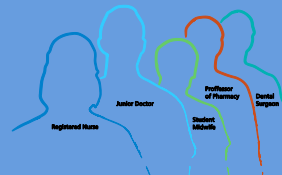- Transitory or long standing

# What types of teams do you find in health care?

TeamSTEPPS ™ identify the following team types in health care:

- Core teams
- Coordinating teams
- Contingency teams
- Ancillary services
- Support services
- Administration

How do teams improve patient care?

- Teams represent a pragmatic way to improve patient care

- Teams can improve care at the level of:
  - The organization
  - The patient – outcomes and safety
  - The team as a whole
  - The individual team member
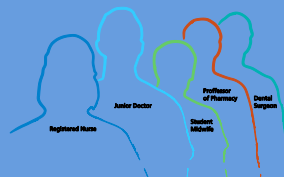
How do teams form and develop?

Tuckmann identified four stages of team formation and development:

- Forming
- Storming
- Norming
- Performing

Source: B. Tuckmann 1965

What makes a successful team?

Effective teams possess the following features:

- A common purpose

- Measurable goals

- Effective leadership and conflict resolution

- Good communication

- Good cohesion and mutual respect

- Situation monitoring

- Self-monitoring

- Flexibility

Leadership (1)

Effective team leaders coordinate and facilitate teamwork by:

- Delegating tasks or assignments
- Conducting briefs, huddles, debriefs
- Empowering team members to speak freely and ask questions
- Organizing improvement activities and training for the team
- Inspiring "'followers" and maintain a positive group culture

Leadership (2)

Effective team leaders coordinate and facilitate teamwork by:

- Accepting the leadership role
- Asking for help as appropriate
- Constantly monitoring the situation
- Setting priorities and making decisions
- Utilizing resources to maximize performance
- Resolving team conflicts
- Balancing the workload within a team

Communication

A number of techniques have been developed to promote communication in health care including:

- ISBAR
- Call-out
- Check-back
- Hand-over or hand-off
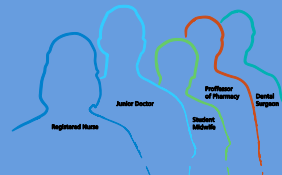
Resolving disagreement and conflict

A number of techniques have been developed to help all members of a team speak out including:

- The two-challenge rule
- CUS
- DESC script

Challenges to effective teamwork

- Changing roles
- Changing settings
- Health-care hierarchies
- Individualistic nature of health care
- Instability of teams

Accidents in other industries

Failures in the following team behaviours have been identified as being responsible for accidents in other industries:

- Roles not being clearly defined
- Lack of explicit coordination
- Mis-communication

Assessing team performance

- Assessing team performance can be carried out:

  - In the workplace
  - In simulated environments
  - Through observing teamwork exercises

- Teamwork can be assessed by external experts or by peer observation

Summary

- Teamwork doesn't just happen, it requires:
    - An understanding of the characteristics of successful teams
    - Knowledge of how teams function and ways to maintain effective team functioning

- There are well documented teamwork principles health-care students should know

- There are a variety of techniques that have been developed to improve communication in teams

How to apply teamwork principles (1)

Health-care students can apply teamwork principles in their interactions with other students and through observing and being part of health-care teams
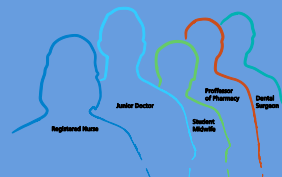
How to apply teamwork principles (2)

Practical tips for health-care students to practise:

- Always introduce yourself to the team
- Read back/close the communication loop
- State the obvious to avoid assumptions
- Ask questions, check and clarify
- Delegate tasks to people not to the air
- Clarify your role
- Use objective (not subjective) language

How to apply teamwork principles (3)

Practical tips for health-care students to practise:

- Learn and use people's names

- Be assertive when required

- If something doesn't make sense, find out the other person's perspective

- Do a team briefing before undertaking a team activity and a debrief afterwards

- When conflict occurs, concentrate on "what" is right for the patient, not "who" is right