OHSU Interprofessional Initiative (IPI)
At OHSU we believe that team-based, collaborative care will result in more effective and safer care for patients, lower healthcare costs, and better outcomes for populations. That’s why collaboration and educating a clinical and scientific workforce that addresses the health of populations in an interprofessional environment are goals of OHSU’s strategic plan, Vision 2020. Since 2012, the IPI has put into action our commitment to fulfilling these goals.

Goal Statement
Interprofessional education (IPE) prepares health professions learners, at all levels, for working together with the common goal of improving our health system. IPE occurs when learners from two or more professions learn about, from, and with each other in order to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes (WHO 2010). Establishing a “common language” enhances interprofessional communication and increases our ability to educate and to learn in ways that prepare a collaborative practice-ready workforce. To that end, the IPI Steering Committee has adopted the following operational definitions.

This glossary is intended as a guideline to facilitate interprofessional communication and should not be considered as conclusive or exclusionary. Because language evolves continuously, we anticipate our Interprofessional Initiative glossary will evolve and expand. We welcome your participation in this process and invite you to contact us at ipe@ohsu.edu.


What’s the difference between a profession, discipline, specialty and role?

Profession refers to an occupation or career that requires considerable training and specialized study. Professions are generally autonomous and self-regulated. Professions are occupational groups who in general provide services to others. Traditionally it has been used to describe the more established professions such as nurses, physicians or social workers. However, due to the on-going expansion of different roles in health and social care, it can also be employed to describe newer occupational groups; thereby providing a more inclusionary definition of this term.

Discipline refers to a distinct body of knowledge or field of study with a particular content, methodology, or skill set. Disciplines are regarded as broad academic fields, with examples including, anthropology, economics, geography, social science and political science.

Specialty refers a branch of medicine, nursing, dentistry, etc. in which the professional is specially qualified to practice by having attended an advanced program of study, passed an examination given by an organization of the members of the specialty, or gained experience through extensive practice in the specialty. For example, orthopaedic surgery, cardiology, neurology in Medicine and periodontics, endodontics in Dentistry are specialties. Subspecialties are even further focused: Examples might include pediatric neurology or pediatric ophthalmology, electro-cardiology, newborn intensive care nursing, and pediatric vascular surgery.
Roles may refer to the demand, function, responsibilities or expectations within a professional situation. The function or responsibility assumed by a person—e.g., a nurse who is responsible for some aspect of a clinical care, with midwifery, nurse practitioner being “roles” in nursing.

How do the prefixes multi-, inter-, intra- and trans- etc. differ?

Common Prefixes
Multi-: Partners working independently towards a common purpose. Inter-: A partnership where members from different domains work collaboratively towards a common purpose. Intra-: refers to activities occurring within a single group. The prefixes of “multi” and “inter” are often used interchangeably, but we choose to use them more precisely.

Common Terms using these Prefixes
Multidisciplinary: Different disciplines working independently toward a common purpose.
Interdisciplinary: Different disciplines working collaboratively toward a common purpose.
Interprofessional: The approach to work and learning that requires integration and collaboration to incorporate the perspectives of more than one profession.
Intraprofessional: The relationships and interactions among colleagues who share a common professional education, values, socialization, identity, and experience. Given the unique strengths and contributions of each profession, intraprofessional learning is most appropriate when that particular approach best supports the growth and development of learners within that profession.
Transdisciplinary practice occurs when an individual from one disciplinary group takes on a roles or tasks of another disciplinary group. While these disciplinary activities are outside their usual scope of practice it is assumed they have the necessary expertise to complete them.
Transprofessional practice occurs when an individual from one professional group undertakes the roles or tasks of another profession. While these professional activities are outside their usual scope of practice it is assumed they have the necessary expertise to complete them.
Unidisciplinary is an activity undertaken by one discipline alone.
Uniprofessional is an activity undertaken by one profession alone.

How does the adjective “interprofessional” (note: one word) impact meaning and how are “interprofessional” terms generally defined and distinct from “interdisciplinary. Multiprofessional,” or other related terms?

Common education and clinical practice terms
Interprofessional education (IPE) occurs when students from two or more professions learn about, from and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes. (WHO, 2010) (Interprofessional courses are recorded as “IPE” on OHSU transcripts.)

Multiprofessional Education (MPE) occurs when learners from two or more professions learn side by side. Intentional interprofessional engagement is not required but it may occur naturally. (Multiprofessional courses are recorded as “UNI” on OHSU transcripts.)

Interprofessional learning is learning arising from interaction between members (or students) of two or more professions. This may be a product of interprofessional education or happen spontaneously in the workplace or in education settings and therefore be serendipitous in nature.

Interprofessional collaboration involves different health and social care professions who regularly come together to negotiate and agree how to solve complex care problems or provide services. It differs from interprofessional teamwork as colleagues do not share a team identity and work together in a less integrated and interdependent manner.
**Interprofessional collaborative practice (IPCP or CP)** occurs when multiple health workers from different professional backgrounds work together with patients, families, carers [caregivers], and communities to deliver the highest quality of care. (WHO, 2010)

**Interprofessional coordination** involves different health and social care professions whose work together is focused on coordinating care tasks between one another. It is also seen as a more ‘limited’ working arrangement than interprofessional collaboration.

**Interprofessional health care** refers to the health system in which interprofessional education and practice take place for the larger purpose of improving quality outcomes and patient safety.

**Interprofessional networks** are loosely organized groups of individuals from different health and social care professions who meet and work together on a periodic basis.

**Interprofessional teamwork** refers to the levels of cooperation, coordination and collaboration characterizing the relationships between professions in delivering patient-centered care.

**Interprofessional teamwork** involves different health and/or social care professions who, for example, share a team identity and work closely together in an integrated and interdependent manner to solve complex care problems and deliver services.

**Interdisciplinary teamwork** is an approach like interprofessional teamwork but differs as the team members are composed of individuals from different disciplines such as psychology, anthropology, economics and geography.

**Multidisciplinary teamwork** is an approach where team members work alongside one another: in other words, parallel rather than interactive work. These types of teams are composed of different academic disciplines (e.g., social sciences, geography, economics) rather than different health and social care professions such as medicine, nursing and social work.

**Multiprofessional teamwork** is an approach where team members work alongside one another: in other words, parallel rather than interactive work. These types of teams are composed of different health and social care professions.

**Interprofessional team-based care** refers to care delivered by intentionally created, usually relatively small work groups in health care, who are recognized by others as well as by themselves as having a collective identity and shared responsibility for a patient or group of patients (e.g., rapid response team, palliative care team, primary care team, operating room team).

**Interprofessional competencies in health care** refer to integrated enactment of knowledge, skills, and values/attitudes that define working together across the professions, with other health care workers, and with patients, along with families and communities, as appropriate to improve health outcomes in specific care contexts. (Note as compared to the term **Professional competencies in health care**: Integrated enactment of knowledge, skills, and values/attitudes that define the domains of work of a particular health profession applied in specific care contexts.)

**Interprofessional competency domain** is a generally identified cluster of more specific interprofessional competencies that are conceptually linked, and serve as theoretical constructs (ten Cate & Scheele, 2007)

**How are other terms used within the OHSU Interprofessional Initiative or in recent documents addressing interprofessional practice and education defined?**

**Collaboration** is an active and ongoing partnership, often involving people from diverse backgrounds who work together to solve problems, provide services, and enhance outcomes. **Collaboration** refers to working together cooperatively, including sharing responsibilities for solving problems and making decisions to formulate and carry out plans for patient care.

**Collaborative patient-centered practice** is a type of arrangement designed to promote the participation of patients and their families within a context of collaborative practice.
Continuing education encompasses all learning (e.g., formal, informal, workplace, serendipitous) that enhances understanding and improves patient care. Continuing professional development is self-directed learning that ensures continuing professional competence throughout one’s health professional career. Entrustable professional activities (EPAs) is a “concept that allows faculty to make competency-based decisions on the level of supervision required by trainees.” (ten Cate, 2013).

One Health recognizes that the health of humans, animals, and ecosystems is interconnected. Quality improvement is “the combined and unceasing efforts of everyone—healthcare professionals, patients and their families, researchers, planners and educators—to make the changes that will lead to better patient outcomes (health), better system performance (care) and better professional development.” (Batalden and Davidoff 2007)

Team-based care is an approach to health care whereby a group of people work together to accomplish a common goal, solve a problem, or achieve a specified result. Workplace learning is different from formal educational activities, and can be viewed as untapped opportunities for learning and change that are part of everyday practice and often go unrecognized as “learning.”

What is the Triple Aim and how does it relate to IPECP?

The Triple Aim is a framework developed by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) that describes an approach to optimizing health system performance by improving the patient experience of care (including quality and satisfaction), improving population health and reducing the per capita cost of care. The National Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education is studying whether a “Nexus,” in which IPE and CP are truly integrated—can positively contribute to the Triple Aim. The Nexus is a concept of the National Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education. The National Center has established the Nexus as a means of connecting health professions education, specifically interprofessional education, and transforming health care practice – creating a true partnership and shared responsibility, conversation, language and learning. In the Nexus, clinical practices in transforming health systems that partner with health professions education programs think and act differently, serving as learning organizations that support continuous professional development while educating the next generation of health professionals.

Other terms/concepts to know

Culture of Patient Safety acknowledges that “to err is human”; supports speaking up, raising concerns and active listening; ensures transparency by identifying human and system factors contributing to error; and engages in interprofessional teamwork to deliver highly reliable excellent care.

A Just Culture has clear, collective organizational understanding of human error, including a clear line between blameless and blame-worthy actions. A just culture recognizes that even competent professionals will make unintentional errors.