
Interprofessional Collaboration In Patient Care

Interprofessional collaboration is essential in ensuring that efficient and high-quality care is provided to all patients. Regardless of the environment or specific discipline, all involved healthcare professionals, including physical therapists, must work together with the patient to maximize care and reach treatment goals. When successful interprofessional collaboration is exemplified, the patient benefits in numerous ways. There are three essential benefits of interprofessional collaboration in patient care and overall physical recovery: high quality, transparent care with optimal outcomes; increased patient safety; and accurate health services and continuum of care.

Due to the complexity of health care and patient diagnosis, the utilization of interprofessional collaboration is necessary to enhance communication and coordination between healthcare professionals. No one discipline can provide the broad spectrum of care necessary to meet each individual patient's total care needs. Combined knowledge and clinical expertise are crucial assets to provide patient care that focuses on the treatment of the patient as a whole, instead of just the disease and independent body functions. Physical therapists are able to work with other disciplines in order to better understand the patient's physical needs in concert with their other medical needs for optimal and functional patient outcomes. Physical therapists provide their expertise, maximizing functional mobility needs and adapting the treatment plan accordingly.

Interprofessional collaboration is an integral safety component during the assessment, planning, intervention, and evaluation of the patient's care. Lack of communication between health professionals can lead to negative patient outcomes. Closing these gaps in communication through the provision of effective interprofessional collaboration leads to significant decreases in accident, regression, and/or patient loss. Assessment, planning, intervention, and case reviews with input and coordination from each discipline guarantee a quality continuum of care. During my previous clinical nursing experience, I have seen first-hand the necessity of interprofessional collaboration between nurses and physical therapists. When patients are hospitalized, nurses are able to provide around the clock assessment of the patient's health status. Nurses are able to communicate assessment findings that indicate acute changes in the patient's cognitive, behavioral, or physical status with the physical therapist. This interprofessional collaboration between the nurse and physical therapist can be crucial in treatment planning and may impact the patient's safety when performing rehabilitation activities. Effective and open collaboration between healthcare professionals ensures timely interventions and cohesive treatment goals.

Interprofessional communication can reflect an improvement in the management of healthcare services which results in the continuum of patient care. When collaboration between professionals is successful, the patient's care is effectively coordinated throughout the healthcare system. Case managers are able to coordinate and facilitate interdisciplinary care with multiple disciplines. Physical therapists work alongside many others in the coordination and collaboration of discharge assessments and outcome planning while keeping in mind occupational and home environmental concerns. Effective patient outcomes rely immensely on collaboration of care for a continuation of optimal wellness for the patient. Interprofessional communication allows multiple disciplines to ensure compressive services.

As an aspiring physical therapist, I strongly believe that interprofessional communication is an integral component in patient care. Rehabilitation involves the interaction of numerous health care professionals. The patient and their family, along with physicians, physical therapists, nurses, and case managers, are all collaborators in the planning and implementation of care that ensures the long-term health and wellbeing of the patient.

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