Interprofessional Education of Collaborative Competencies: Advancing Relational Coordination and Professionalism

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Abstract:
Healthcare professionals are typically educated within professional silos. They leave their academic institutions equipped with valuable knowledge and individualized skill sets, but are then expected to work as interprofessional team members without much guidance. With grant support from the Josiah Macy Foundation and Institute on Medicine as a Profession we designed and are in the process of evaluating an interprofessional curriculum aimed at improving relational coordination and attitudes toward interprofessional collaboration. Relational coordination refers to a network of interrelated personnel who work together to complete a set of interdependent tasks. Jodi Hoffer Gittell studied this concept across diverse industries, including health care, and found a significant positive correlation between relational coordination and positive outcomes, such as employee satisfaction, shorter hospital lengths of stay, and lower rates of infection. In this project, we implemented an interprofessional education program that taught novice practitioners skills needed to effectively collaborate within an interprofessional team. The program helps learners explore together, how to be effective team members, how to improve communication, how to solicit knowledge from each other, how to negotiate a plan of care, how to “speak up” the hierarchy, and how to maximize the strengths of each member in order to deliver quality patient centered care within an atmosphere of respect.

To date, all five sessions of the program have been completed. By February 2016, we will have analyzed the data to determine if there is a correlation among the educational intervention, relational coordination, and attitudes toward interprofessional learning. Anecdotal feedback suggests that these new practitioners find value in sitting together and discussing these collaborative competencies. They appreciate listening to the roles and daily expectations of their professional counterparts. They voice new appreciation for each other’s challenges and frustrations.

Upon completion of this workshop, participants will be able to:
Reflect on the growing need for collaborative competencies among interprofessional healthcare teams.
Assess the inhibiting role of fear of in their own difficult communications and demonstrate strategies to help overcome it.
Articulate critical requirements and anticipated obstacles when designing and implementing a similar program in their own institutions.

The first 20 minutes of this workshop will be an overview of the curriculum we developed, outlining the research aspects, describing the format of the five education sessions, and discussing five core competencies: active listening for meaning, soliciting another person’s perspective, negotiating a transparent plan of care, non-verbal communication, and speaking up in a hierarchical culture. During the next 60 minutes, participants will experience an interactive exercise on speaking up. Participants will analyze the role of fear in the process of speaking up or remaining silent. They will then evaluate their personal physiological fear responses in an effort to construct strategies to overcome those responses. During the final 10 minutes presenters will discuss some of the critical requirements for a successful program as well obstacles participants can expect as they consider replicating a similar program at their home institutions. Lessons from the presenters’ experiences will be shared.