

4.3.2: Interdisciplinary Care Teams

What is an interdisciplinary team?



Team members,
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- All health and human services staff
- Full-time HCH employees
- Part-time HCH employees
- Specialty referrals
- Volunteers to HCH clinics

Interdisciplinary teams gather different types of care providers together in order to provide the holistic care described in the first segment of this module. Interdisciplinary teams in HCH include all kinds of health and human services workers. Some are employed in HCH settings as full-time workers. Others see patients experiencing homelessness on a part-time or specialty referral basis. Still others work in traditional health care settings for most of the time, but volunteer their services to HCH clinics and their patients.

Why Interdisciplinary Care?

- Patient-centered, trauma-informed, and recovery-oriented
- Effective
- Continuum of care



Barbara McInnis, R.N., with nurse practitioner Yoshiko Vann discuss x-ray results reviewed by a doctor. Photo by James O'Connell

Adapted from Rosenfield, 1992

Interdisciplinary team care is one of the practical ways HCH clinics are able to provide person-centered, trauma-informed, recovery-oriented care. Care teams are able to assess a person's needs and then decide on a treatment plan that meets the most immediate needs first. For example, if a person is moving toward receiving services but still has anxiety about actually having a physical exam, the person can meet with behavioral health professionals first to begin working on goal-setting around increasing confidence and maintaining control.

Interdisciplinary care is also more effective. Teams work jointly from discipline-specific theories, concepts and approaches. They make treatment decisions together, and each provider is aware of the other's involvement, avoiding tunnel-vision or duplication of resources.

Interdisciplinary care also allows the patient to experience a continuum of care. Team care brings stability the patient may have not experienced for a long time.

“Making Interdisciplinary Teams Work”

Reading Assignment 4.3.2

The reading assignment for this module is an excerpt from an August 1999 issue of Healing Hands, “Making Interdisciplinary Teams Work.” In it you will read about other advantages, challenges, and suggestions related to interdisciplinary teaming in HCH settings. Afterwards, HCH team members talk about interdisciplinary care from their perspectives.