

Teaching future health professionals: clients' impressions and experiences



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Canadian Collaborative Mental Health Care Conference

Halifax, NS

June 23, 2011

Disclosure

None of the three speakers can identify any potential conflict of interest that could potentially influence the presentation.

Health Mentors Program

An innovative learning opportunity that introduces health professional students to:

1. Patient/client/consumer-centred care
2. Chronic illness and disability
3. Interprofessional team functioning



Key ingredients

● Health Mentors

- ▶ Adult volunteers with chronic conditions and/or disabilities

● Interprofessional student teams

- ▶ Mostly students in first year of professional program
- ▶ Do not provide care, treatment or advice
- ▶ Listen to and learn from their Health Mentors
- ▶ Learn about working as a team

● Long-term relationship with Health Mentor

- ▶ Meet 4 times over the academic year

The *Why* and *What* of Interprofessional Education (IPE)

- “If health care providers are expected to work together and share expertise in a team environment, it makes sense that their education and training should prepare them for this type of working arrangement.” (Romanow *Report on the Future of Health Care in Canada*)
- By interprofessional education or interprofessional learning, we mean “*students in different professions learning about, from and with one another to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes*”. (WHO definition)

Why teach students about interprofessional collaborative care?

Mounting evidence and professional consensus indicates that interprofessional collaborative care:

- Improves outcomes
- Increases accessibility to services
- Keeps the person at the centre
- Improves safety and reduces errors by enhancing communication

Why involve consumers in teaching?

- “Consumer centredness is a key theme of collaborative mental health care. Consumers are experts in their own care, have a responsibility for it and need to be partners in decision-making and goal setting” (Annotated Bibliography of Collaborative Mental Health Care, CCMHI, 2005)
- Consumers should be treated with respect and not expected to “fit” into a prescribed program (Canadian Collaborative Mental Health Charter, CCMHI, 2006)

Health Mentors Program Numbers

- **Faculties: 5**
- **Professional programs: 18**
- **Students: 592**
- **Student teams: 151**
- **Mentors: 151**
- **Supervisors: 41**

Participating Programs

- Audiology
- Clinical Psychology
- Clinical Vision Science
- Dental Hygiene
- Dentistry
- Health Informatics
- Health Promotion
- Kinesiology
- Medicine (Hfx, SJ)
- Nursing (Dal, UNBSJ)
- Occupational Therapy
- Pharmacy
- Physiotherapy
- Respiratory Therapy
- Social Work
- Speech Language Pathology
- Therapeutic Recreation

Mentor Profile

- 151 Health Mentors
- Age range: 19 – 92
- Average age: 56
- Gender: 116 Female 35 Male
- Mentor conditions
 - ▶ Cardiac condition, diabetes, hypertension, chronic pain, brain injury, MS, stroke, MD, mental health issues, COPD, CP, various rare conditions
 - ▶ Many mentors identified two or more conditions

Recruiting Mentors

- Mentors have chronic conditions and/or disabilities
- There was discussion about how inclusive to be
 - would mentors with mental health issues, developmental disabilities or communication challenges present situations too complex for first year students?

Inclusion

- **The qualities we were looking for in a mentor:**
 - ▶ Interested in working with students
 - ▶ Able to communicate well enough to share their story with a team of students
 - ▶ Comfortable talking about their personal lives
 - ▶ Available throughout the year for meetings with their team

Anyone who had these qualities was able to be a mentor – no exclusion based on the chronic condition alone

Recruitment Strategy

- Brochures and posters; general media; family physicians; condition-specific support groups and networks; clinics which follow people with particular conditions
- For mentors with mental health issues – clubhouses, Healthy Minds Co-operative
- But – mentors with mental health issues volunteered through other avenues as well

Mentors wanted to participate because ...

- Volunteering is fulfilling, especially as a chronic condition often decreases the opportunities for such activities
- Have had a good experience with the health care system and want to give back
- Have had a bad experience with the health care system and want to contribute to a better future
- Like the messages regarding patient-centred focus, holistic approach, people are people first, having a chronic condition is not “game over”
- Enjoys working with students

**One mentor's experience –
thanks to Leslie Matheson**

Students – what will they incorporate into future practice – patients/clients

- “setting goals with the patient that apply to their life, not just treatment outcomes”
- “making sure you keep the patient informed and active in decision-making”
- “Clarify information during interviews. I definitely learned that even with four individuals actively listening, we still missed information and collected incorrect information.”

Students – what will they incorporate into future practice – patients/clients

- Never assume you know everything about your patient, or what's going on in their lives just upon meeting them and their first impression”
- “Knowing that there is more to them than just their illness and they have a life outside of this facility that they are in”

THANKS !!

QUESTIONS ???

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