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The Benefit of Interdisciplinary Teams in Healthcare 6/14/2021

There are times when your healthcare requires more than what a single specialist can provide. That's why interdisciplinary teams often work together and share their areas of expertise while working toward a common goal, which of course is taking care of you!



What is an Interdisciplinary Care Team?

A group of experts from various disciplines working together to treat your ailment, injury, or chronic health condition are known as an [interdisciplinary care team](#), or ICT. ICTs can be as small as a close collaboration among a [PCP](#) and a single [specialist involving physicians, nurse practitioners or physician assistants, and nursing partners](#). Or it can involve physicians in more than two disciplines and social workers, therapists or home caregivers.

The team functions in a nonhierarchical manner so that efforts to intervene, assess, diagnose, and create a plan for the best approach to your care are shared by all. This [collaborative](#) and consultative approach is important since your needs may be multiple and complex enough that bringing many disciplines together is the most efficient-and effective-way of forming treatment.

In turn, this works to improve the outcome of your treatments, reduce hospital stays, and avoid duplicate treatments, all of which help boost your level of satisfaction.



There are a few key measures of a successful interdisciplinary team in healthcare, which include:

- **Leadership**

A strong leader with clear direction is imperative to the team's success. This includes the support and supervision of all involved, allowing shared power, and allowing personal development that promotes trust and values contributions. As with any good team leader, communications and the ability to act are highly important aspects of this role.

- **Communication**

Good communications that openly encourage genuine collaboration need to exist across multiple disciplines and providers for a team's success. This allows goal setting that most accurately fits your needs, and prevents breakdowns in communication which are a common reason for errors leading to adverse events.

- **Teamwork**

Not only do health professionals from different disciplines need to work together to ensure the success of the team, as a patient, your collaboration is also necessary. Regular team meetings need to be held, and everyone's goals need to be clearly defined so that shared roles and responsibilities are understood. This, along with good communication, helps the entire team achieve higher levels of innovation.

- **A Focus on You, The Patient**

No matter the expertise of individual interdisciplinary team members, their focus needs to be on coordinated care that's based on YOUR needs. With a well-integrated approach along with strong leadership, communication, and teamwork, there will be less chance of delays in your treatments, duplication, or other errors that may occur without these elements of success.

Interdisciplinary Team vs Multidisciplinary Team

While interdisciplinary teams are made up of various disciplines working collaboratively toward a common goal, multidisciplinary teams involve team members working independently to create plans specific to their discipline. While these plans may be enacted simultaneously, it's done without regard to their interaction.

Your providers may also use a combination of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary teams, which is common for older patients.

The Importance of Interdisciplinary Teams for Seniors

As we age, the likelihood of multiple, chronic, and more complex diagnosis rises, which is why interdisciplinary teams are so important in senior care. They help lower the chance of duplicate assessments, reduce hospital stays, and help create more complete records of care, all of which combine to increase your satisfaction and peace of mind.

Sharing patient data across teams can be a challenge if there are different electronic medical records or non-aligned participants. Your primary treating provider can facilitate access to data with your permission.

And for seniors, this is important since consistent, comprehensive care from coordinated assessments and treatments creates efficiency, reduces stress, and creates a better quality of life.

Questions for Your Provider

While Intermountain Health provides only the best, most compassionate treatments from top providers, there are still questions you may have for your interdisciplinary team.

These may include:

- How often will the team meet?
- As an integral part of the team, will I need to attend all team meetings?
- Does the entire team communicate every aspect of my treatment, or just those that pertain to their discipline?
- Who is the "main" contact on the team that I should be in touch with first for any reason, including emergencies?

You may have more questions than this, which is good! The important thing is that you're not shy, and that you ask away. Your providers are all trained professionals who want you to have the best treatments possible, which includes providing their best answers to all your questions.

In fact, no question is "too small" for them, so again, don't be shy!



When it comes to interdisciplinary teams working toward the common goal of keeping you healthy, it's the quality, competence, and compassion of each team member that counts. That's why [Intermountain Health](#) works to ensure you're getting the best treatment possible. This includes conditions requiring an interdisciplinary team for treatment, as well as routine checkups or anything else you need to come see us for.

And, with our many convenient locations throughout the state, you can rest assured you're never too far from the compassionate, professional healthcare our award winning staff is trained to provide.

For convenient, top quality healthcare services in your region, Intermountain has your back!

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