

Effective inter-professional working is an essential component of good social work practice. To achieve effective outcomes in their work with service users and carers, social workers need to be confident in their communication with other professionals. In order to work with other professionals, work and promote collaborative practice, students will need support to develop interprofessional skills that build upon their core knowledge, communication skills, ethics and values. It is important to acknowledge that collaborative skills, knowledge and values are not inherent or automatically acquired – students need to be actively encouraged and supported to develop this aspect of their practice.

Terminology

There are many different terms to describe the way in which professionals and agencies work together and this lack of clarity can create confusion (Barrett et al, 2005 and Cameron et al, 2012ⁱ). It is important to distinguish between ‘inter’ as in **interprofessional** and **inter-agency** and ‘multi’ as in **multi-professional** or **multi agency**. **Multi** tends to be used when a range of services are provided by professionals from different agencies and, although they may communicate and share information with each other in the support of service users and their families, they may not necessarily work actively together at a strategic level to plan and deliver integrated services (despite the crucial importance of this). The terms **interprofessional** and **inter-agency** imply that there is some active thinking and planning that has taken place, not only about what services are needed, but also about how the services and professionals can work effectively together (often referred to as co-configuration), including working with service users and carers. The term **interprofessional and inter-agency collaboration (IPIAC)** was developed by Whittington et al (2009)ⁱⁱ to convey the importance of **collaboration** at professional and agency level. The term **partnership** is often used interchangeably with collaboration, but **collaboration** may be thought of as the active way of working together with other professionals, service users and carers to undertake assessments and provide integrated services that best support and enable people. The term **interdisciplinary** tends to be used to consider how different disciplines may work together, including, for some, the ‘discipline’ of service user and carer expertiseⁱⁱⁱ.

Where in the curriculum this topic may feature

In curriculum planning opportunities should be given for interprofessional (IP) learning in a range of ways: through discrete modules with students from other disciplines, through the inclusion of learning about IPIAC within social work specific modules and during practice placements. *Shared teaching or learning* occurs when students from different disciplines attend the same lectures and are taught together. *Interprofessional learning* is more about ‘learning with, from and about each other’ (CAIPE 2002, Key Resource 4), often using group and problem based learning. Pedagogical issues associated with IP education have been extensively discussed and evaluated (e.g. Sharland et al, 2007^{iv} and Reeves et al, 2010^v). A range of learning approaches can be used including group work, role play, case studies, problem-based learning, virtual learning environments, service user and carer testimonies and resources such as SCIE and Social Care TV^{vi}. IP learning and working is challenging for students as they are in the process of developing their social work values and identity, so

ⁱ See Barrett et al and Cameron et al (Key resources 3 and 5).

ⁱⁱ See Whittington, C, Thomas, J and Quinney, A (2009) An introduction to interprofessional and inter-agency collaboration SCIE IPIAC e-learning resource available at <http://www.scie.org.uk/assets/elearning/ipiac/ipiac01/resource/text/index.htm> in (Key resource 1).

ⁱⁱⁱ See for example the CEIMH at the University of Birmingham <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/ceimh>

^{iv} Sharland, E, Taylor, I, Jones, L, Orr, D and Whiting, R (2007) Interprofessional education for qualifying social work SCIE.

^v Reeves, S, Zwarenstein, M, Goldman, J, Barr, H, Freeth, D, Koppel, I and Hammick, M (2010) The effectiveness of interprofessional education: Key findings from a new systematic review *Journal of Interprofessional Education* 24(3) pp230–241.

^{vi} www.scie.org.uk/socialcaretv/index.asp

they will need opportunities to critically reflect with supportive educators and peers on the implications for their emerging professional identity, its relationship to other professionals and questioning the emergence and potential for IP identities (see for example chapters by Miers and Keeping and Oliver in Pollard et al, 2010^{vii}). Curriculum planning should include the capability to work interprofessionally embracing all domains of the Professional Capabilities Framework for social work.

Key content issues

• Understanding the context of IPIAC

- The historical, political and legal context of IPIAC as it relates to generic and specialist areas of health and social work.
- What is meant by IPIAC – definitions and the difficulties associated by ‘definitional chaos’. (Leathard, 1994^{viii}).
- The domains of IPIAC – strategic, organisational, professional, service user and carer, how they interrelate and the impact upon service users, carers, their families and communities.
- Different levels of IP practice – structural, organisational and professional.
- The practice evidence which informs the need for IPIAC.
- Organisation of services, structural, procedural and financial barriers to IPIAC, specifically in relation to strategic and organisational domains and culture.
- Social, bio-medical and managerial approaches to working with people.
- Difficulties associated with IPIAC as highlighted in enquiries (e.g. Laming, 2004 and 2009^{ix}) and serious case reviews.

• Understanding the professional context

- The evidence for effective team working within an IP context.
- Different types of ‘teams’, their composition, level of integration and the organisational context of teams and how this impacts upon service delivery and/or professional practice.
- Effective team working across and within professions using group work theory and processes.
- Applying ‘team’ concepts to the wider social welfare arena, e.g. police, voluntary sector, community work, education, social enterprise.
- Being a professional, professional roles and identity and how this relates to the development of an IP identity and team identity.
- Different professional roles, professional discourse, values, ethics, cultures, power, status and professional history and how this impacts upon IP working and professional practice.
- Professional cultures, boundaries and ways of doing and ways of being across different professions, recognising potential for boundary spanning and different models of practice.
- How organisational policies, professional guidance and protocols impact upon practice and IP working.
- Knowledge and skills required for IP working within joint processes, e.g. referral, assessment, care management.
- IP skills and capabilities, e.g. trust, honesty, communication, role clarification, stereotyping, confidentiality, negotiation, understanding, compromise, decision making, conflict resolution, transference and projection. Also skills in understanding professional responsibility, leadership, individual and collective accountability and the ability to recognise and negotiate the challenges of interprofessional working specifically when IP working is at risk of being compromised.
- Examining and understanding issues of professional dangerousness and abuse, awareness of professional dilemmas and tensions across and between professionals and the impact upon service users, carers and their families. Awareness of the use of whistleblowing processes to address poor practice.

^{vii} See Pollard et al 2010 (Key resource 9).

^{viii} Leathard, A (ed) (1994) *Going interprofessional: Working together for health and welfare*, Hove:Routledge

^{ix} Laming, Lord (2003) *Inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié* and Laming (2009) *The protection of children in England; A progress report*. London;The Stationery Office

- The different dimensions of effective partnership and strategies to promote integrated delivery (e.g. West and Markiewicz, 2006^x).
- The process of stereotyping and its impact on IP working. Psychological concepts such as projection and transference and implications of this in terms of relationships with other professionals, service users and carers.
- Issues of professional dangerousness and abuse, awareness of professional dilemmas and tensions across and between professionals and the impact upon service users, carers and their families. Use of whistleblowing processes to address poor practice.
- **Working interprofessionally with service users and carers**
 - Examining the evidence that IP working improves outcomes for service users (e.g. Hammick et al, 2007^{xi}).
 - Working in partnership with service users and carers to ensure their voice is central, understanding issues of consent and the role of advocacy.
 - Values and qualities essential to effective IP working with service users and their families.
 - Developing principles and models for evaluating outcomes at individual and organisational level.
 - Involving service users and carers in a meaningful and realistic way, moving from participation to involvement through to planning of service delivery and decision making.

Links to other curriculum areas including other guides (⊗)

To work in partnership with other professionals, service users, carers, families and communities IPIAC should be at the core of social work training and practice. Consequently this should be integral and embedded into all areas of the social work curriculum. Educators need to consider the teaching of IPIAC within academic and practice elements of the curriculum through specific, generic and/or specialist modules. Connections can be made in the teaching of most theories and IPAIC dimensions should be highlighted within the teaching of law (⊗), social policy, psychology, and anti-oppressive practice (⊗).

Key resources

1. <http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/elearning/ipiac/index.asp> - Social Care Institute for Excellence: Whittington, C, Thomas, J and Quinney, A (2009) Interprofessional and inter-agency collaboration. eLearning resource.
2. <http://www.swapbox.ac.uk/> Search terms interprofessional, inter-agency, collaboration.
3. Barrett, G, Sellman, D and Thomas, J (2005), Interprofessional working and social care: Professional perspectives. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
4. Centre for the Advancement of Interprofessional Education (CAIPE) <http://www.caipe.org.uk/>
5. Cameron, A, Lart, R, Bostock, L and Coomber, C (2012) Research briefing 41: Factors that promote and hinder joint and integrated working between health and social care services. London: SCIE.
6. Hammick, M, Freeth, D, Copperman, J, Goodsman, D (2009) Being interprofessional. Cambridge: Polity Press.
7. Journal Interprofessional Care <http://informahealthcare.com/>
8. Littlechild, B and Smith, R (eds) (2012) A handbook for interprofessional practice in the human services: learning to work together. Harlow: Pearson.
9. Pollard, KC, Thomas, J and Miers, M (2010), Understanding interprofessional working in health and social care theory and practice. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
10. Quinney, A and Hafford-Letchfield, T (2012) Interprofessional social work: Effective collaborative approaches. London: Sage.

^x West, M and Markiewicz, L (2006) The effective partnership working inventory, Working paper. Birmingham:Ashton Business School.

^{xi} Hammick, M, Freeth, D, Reeves, S, Koppel, I and Barr, H (2007) A best evidence systematic review of interprofessional education. Dundee: Best Evidence Medical Education Guide 9. Medical Teacher, 29, 735–751.