

# Areas of Nursing within the Multidisciplinary Team and General Nursing Practice

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## 2.1 Health Care Teams and Team Collaboration

Working as a team in a health care setting has several benefits to health care, not only for the patients but also for the individual health professionals and the health care provider. Kouzes and Pozner (1987) define a **team** as »a group of equally important people collaborating, developing cooperative goals, and building trusting relationships to achieve shared goals«. Good communication, decision-making and problem-solving skills, networking and brainstorming are the staples of a team that delivers good care efficiently.

The expression »**the sum is greater than the parts**« applies to health care teams as well as it does to other types of group work. Each team member contributes his or her expertise to the team and, in sum, the client as a whole person – that is, not just the medical diagnosis or disability in isolation – is considered. In this unit you will learn more specifically about the World Health Organization's (WHO) International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). The principles that underlie the ICF fit in nicely with the holistic approach to health care that teams provide. The ICF is the WHO's framework for health and disability (WHO, 2002). It provides a model for the way that daily functioning and disability depend on and interact with **body function and structure**, a person's **activity** and his or her **participation** in society. Other contextual/environmental and personal factors may influence body function and structure, activity and participation and are also part of the ICF model.

The ICF has several uses at the individual (i.e. client), institutional and social levels. At the client level, for example, the ICF can be used to **drive treatment planning** (e.g. What treatments or intervention can maximise functioning? What intervention can be implemented that would maximise the client's participation in society?) or to evaluate the outcomes of said treatments or interventions (e.g. How useful was the intervention?). Furthermore, it helps **promote communication** between all members of the health care team at various points along the continuum of care. Working together, the health care team can generate solutions or strategies that maximise a client's function, activity and participation.

That said, teams generally meet on a regular basis to identify and set client goals or to discuss goal success and progress. In some facilities clients even actively take part in setting their own goals by attending »**goal-setting meetings**« with relevant team members. The actual structure, goal-setting and goal-attainment strategies that a team adopts depend very much on their philosophy and vary considerably from team to team. In general, teams function as one of three types: multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary.

In **multidisciplinary teams** assessment findings and goals are specific to the individual discipline. Team members achieve goals independent of each other and communicate either via direct or indirect means. The effectiveness of the team is the total sum of their individual efforts.

**Interdisciplinary teams** identify individual goals that are not duplicated or in conflict with another. Once the client's goals are established, each discipline works towards achieving said goals within the scope of his or her practice. When boundaries between involved disciplines overlap, team members collaborate and/or solve problems together.

In a **transdisciplinary team** one team member is the case manager. The other team members contribute to the client's care via the case manager. This approach requires that team members have a good understanding of and some training in the adjunct disciplines. In the transdisciplinary approach, one team member alone is thought to be able to meet client goals, regardless of his or her discipline. Alternatively, several team members may treat one patient, but role extension and overlap between the various health care professionals must still exist.

Today's health care facilities strive to provide »**client-centred**« or »**client-focused**« care. Here, a client's (note: »client« here can also include family or legal guardian) wants or wishes drive medical and rehabilitation goal choices. It is important to note that »client-centred« goals can be met regardless of team type.

Discussion		
<p>Draw on your experience of having been part of a health care team and answer the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What »approach« did the team adopt?</li><li>2. How frequent were team meetings and for how long did the team meet? Did all members attend?</li><li>3. Were goals »client-centred«? Provide an example.</li><li>4. Did individual team members appear to have a good understanding of each other's roles and contributions?</li><li>5. What did your team do well? What might have been improved?</li></ol>		

■ ■ **Exercise/Discussion**

1. Have you ever attended a »team building« seminar or event? If yes, did you find it useful? Describe details of your experience in a short essay (ca. 350 words). Alternatively discuss this topic with your fellow students.
2. What opportunities have you had to learn more about the other health-related professions in your current educational programme? Write a short essay (ca. 350 words) or discuss this topic in your seminar.

► Sect. 1.5 The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)

## 2.2 Health Care Professionals

Nurses and physicians are probably the health care practitioners best known to the general public.

**Nurses** care for people with actual or potential health problems in hospital, nursing home and community. In the United Kingdom there are four main branches of nursing: adult nursing (adult nurse, level 1 (RN1, RNA)), children's nursing (children's nurse, level 1 (RN8, RNC)), mental health nursing (mental health nurse, level 1 (RN3, RNMH)) and learning disability nursing (learning disabilities nurse, level 1 (RN5, RNLD)). In the USA, the various types of nurses include licensed practical nurses (LPNs), registered nurses (RNs) and advanced practice nurses (APNs).

### Note

Normally nurses address patients as Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms unless invited to use their first name. Nurses can be addressed as

- nurse or staff nurse plus or minus their forename,
- nurse or staff nurse plus or minus their surname,
- nurse or staff nurse,
- sister,
- charge nurse,
- forename only or
- Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms plus their surname.

How the nurse is addressed by the patient will depend on the hospital and/or ward policy.

**Physicians** work in primary care or are hospital-based. In the USA, there are two types of physicians: M.D.s (medical doctors with a degree as Doctor of Medicine), and D.O.s (osteopaths with a degree as Doctor of Osteopathy). The training of D.O.s is similar to that of M.D.s though they are specialised in the musculoskeletal system and place a strong emphasis on a holistic perspective.

**Midwives** support mothers and their families throughout the childbearing process, carry out clinical examinations and provide health and parenting education, sometimes together with other health and social care services. Midwifery is an independent university degree programme or a special training course for registered nurses.

**Health visitors** are registered nurses or midwives in the United Kingdom with special training in the assessment of the health needs of individuals, families and the community. In particular, they have a major support role for families with preschool children.

**Health care assistants** (HCAs) assist health care professionals like nurses and midwives in hospitals, clinics and community nursing. They help with basic patient care like washing and dressing, feeding, toileting and bed making.

In the US health care system there is a general trend towards saving costs by relying more heavily on nonphysician health care professionals, who may function as direct primary health care providers and prescribe medications, albeit (in most US states) under the direction and supervision of an M.D. or D.O. For example, **physician assistants** (PAs) were introduced in the US health care system in the 1960s as medical personnel trained to provide treatment and care for primary health care ailments. They handle technical procedures and exercise some degree of medical responsibility. **Nurse practitioners** (NPs) are APNs with specialised training who conduct physical examinations, prescribe medication, diagnose and treat illness, interpret lab tests and counsel patients on health care options.

The term »**allied health professional**« (AHP) is used to classify a large number of health care providers, e.g. occupational therapists, physiotherapists or speech and language therapists. Generally it includes all the health-related disciplines with the exception of nursing, medicine, osteopathy, dentistry, veterinary medicine, optometry and pharmacy. Allied health professionals provide all kinds of services, including primary care, and they work in all types of settings, e.g. clinics, hospitals, laboratories, long-term care facilities, schools, community health agencies.

■ ■ Exercise

What kind of training does a health visitor have? What does a nurse practitioner do? Do some research on the internet to find out more.

■ ■ Exercise: Medical Specialities

According to the Miller-Keane Encyclopedia & Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, & Allied Health (2003) there are 119 different specialities or subspecialities that physicians can be trained in. Physicians work in one or more of several specialities.

Match each type of physician with the right job description. The first one has already been done for you as an example.

anaesthe- siologist	dentist	emergency physician	general practi- tioner (GP)
geriatrician	obstetrician and gynaecologist (ob/gyn)	ophthalmologist	orthopaedist
otorhinolaryn- gologist (or ENT specialist)	paediatrician	psychiatrist	surgeon

1. The general practitioner (GP) assesses and treats a wide range of conditions, ailments and injuries as the first point of contact for ill people. (Medical speciality: general medicine)

## 2.2 • Health Care Professionals

2. The \_\_\_\_\_ specialises in the diagnosis and treatment of mental health problems. (Medical speciality: \_\_\_\_\_)
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ is concerned with the health of infants, children and teenagers. (Medical speciality: \_\_\_\_\_)
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ specialises in disorders of bones, joints and associated structures. (Medical speciality \_\_\_\_\_)
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ treats injury, disease and deformity through operations. (Medical speciality: \_\_\_\_\_)
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ specialises in resuscitation, medical emergencies, pain relief and trauma management. (Medical speciality: \_\_\_\_\_)
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ administers drugs or agents to abolish the sensation of pain in surgical patients. (Medical speciality: \_\_\_\_\_)
8. The \_\_\_\_\_ specialises in the treatment or study of diseases and ailments of old people. (Medical speciality: \_\_\_\_\_)
9. The \_\_\_\_\_ is responsible for general medical care for women, but also provides care related to pregnancy and the reproductive system. (Medical speciality: \_\_\_\_\_)
10. The \_\_\_\_\_ specialises in the diagnosis, medical treatment, and surgical treatment of eye diseases. (Medical speciality: \_\_\_\_\_)
11. The \_\_\_\_\_ diagnoses, treats and restores the teeth, oral cavity and associated structures. (Medical speciality: \_\_\_\_\_)
12. The \_\_\_\_\_ specialises in disorders affecting the ears, nose and throat. (Medical speciality: \_\_\_\_\_)

### ■ ■ Exercise: Allied Health Professionals

Here are some disciplines commonly recognised as allied health professions. Find out the professions that are described by putting the syllables into the right order. Write your answers horizontally in the grid. If a term consists of several words, leave gaps between them. The first one has already been done for you as an example.

1. **ther – a – art – py** = concerned with the creative process of art-making as a means to improve and enhance the physical, mental and emotional well-being of individuals of all ages
2. **gy – di – au – o – ol** = concerned with testing and diagnosing hearing and balance disorders, with aural rehabilitation, hearing aids and other amplification devices



[illegible]

## ■ ■ Exercise

Depending on experience and training there are plenty of opportunities for nurses to manage teams, run wards and even reach consultant level. There are many different roles available in nursing. The following table shows a variety of fields of activity and clinical practice in which nurses work and specialise. Read the different statements below




given by nurses and find out which discipline they are talking about. Write the relevant discipline next to each statement. The first one has already been done for you as an example. (Exercise based on the roles of nurses described by NHS Careers, 2013.)

adult nurse	children's nurse	district nurse
learning disabilities nurse	mental health nurse	neonatal nurse
practice nurse	prison nurse	school nurse
theatre nurse	health visitor	

- »I work with old and young adults with diverse health conditions, both chronic and acute. I juggle numerous priorities and use caring, counselling, managing, teaching and all aspects of interpersonal skills to improve the quality of my patients' lives, sometimes in difficult situations. My work may be based in hospital wards, clinics or, increasingly, community settings and I may do shift work to provide 24-hour care.«  
= adult nurse
- »I chose to specialise in a complex and demanding area of nursing where I deal with patients of all ages who have mental health problems. I work with GPs, psychiatrists, psychologists and others, to help care for patients with conditions ranging from personality and psychological disorders to neuroses and psychoses.« = \_\_\_\_\_
- »I deal with a range of situations, including babies born with heart complications, teenagers who have sustained broken limbs, and child protection issues. Health problems can affect a child's development and it's vital to work with the child's family or carers to ensure that he or she does not suffer additionally from the stress of being ill or in hospital.« = \_\_\_\_\_
- »My patients often have a wide range of physical and mental health conditions. I work in partnership with them and family carers, to provide specialist health care. My main aim is to support the well-being and social inclusion of my patients by improving or maintaining their physical and mental health; by reducing barriers; and supporting them to pursue a fulfilling life. For example, teaching someone the skills to find work can be significant in helping them to lead a more independent, healthy life where they can relate to others on equal terms.«  
= \_\_\_\_\_
- »I visit people of all ages, often in their own homes, GP surgeries or a residential home. Many patients are elderly, others may have disabilities, be recovering after a hospital stay, or have a terminal illness. I may do shift work to provide 24-hour care. This is a rewarding role as I can work one-to-one with patients on an ongoing basis, which enables me to develop a trusting relationship while I improve their quality of life.« = \_\_\_\_\_

6. »I work with newborn babies who are born sick or prematurely. Often, premature newborns have respiratory problems, which can be life threatening if they are not treated promptly and monitored. Also, ill babies need to be fed in a specialised way in a highly controlled environment that is kept warm.«  
= \_\_\_\_\_
7. »I am a registered nurse or midwife who has done further training to work as a vital member of the primary health care team, covering a specific geographical area. My aim is to improve the health of families and children in the crucial first few years of life. Working in the community, I prevent illness and promote health and wellbeing.« = \_\_\_\_\_
8. »I work in GP surgeries as part of a primary care team that is likely to include doctors, nurses, dieticians and pharmacists. In smaller practices, I may be the sole nurse, whereas in larger surgeries, I may share duties with practice nurse colleagues.«  
= \_\_\_\_\_
9. »I am a registered nurse based in prison. I am either employed by the prison service or, increasingly, by the NHS. Many prisoners suffer from substance abuse or have a mental health problem, making nursing in this environment challenging. By improving mental and physical health, I may help to lower re-offending rates, and therefore have a positive impact on prisoners, their families and the wider public.« = \_\_\_\_\_
10. »I am usually employed by the NHS locally or by a school itself. I provide a variety of services such as providing health and sex education within schools, carrying out developmental screening, undertaking health interviews and administering immunisation programmes.« = \_\_\_\_\_
11. »I am a qualified nurse who has completed additional training to be able to provide specialist care to patients of all ages at the different stages of surgery. Based within a hospital, I work primarily in operating theatres and associated anaesthetic/recovery areas, but I may also be involved with certain procedures on wards, clinics or in other specialist areas such as cardiac catheterisation units.« = \_\_\_\_\_

 Audiofile available online

## 2.4 The Multi-Professional Setting within a Hospital in the United Kingdom

Nurses often work in acute general hospitals and in specialised or rehabilitation hospitals. In their everyday working life they deal with a variety of different professions or supportive departments which form an important part of the multiprofessional health care team. Each of these professions or supportive departments forms an independent department and is needed in order to provide good service in the patient care units.

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