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MEDICAL SCIENCES COUNCIL  
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# INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION: *A Guide for Teamwork Within and Across Professions*



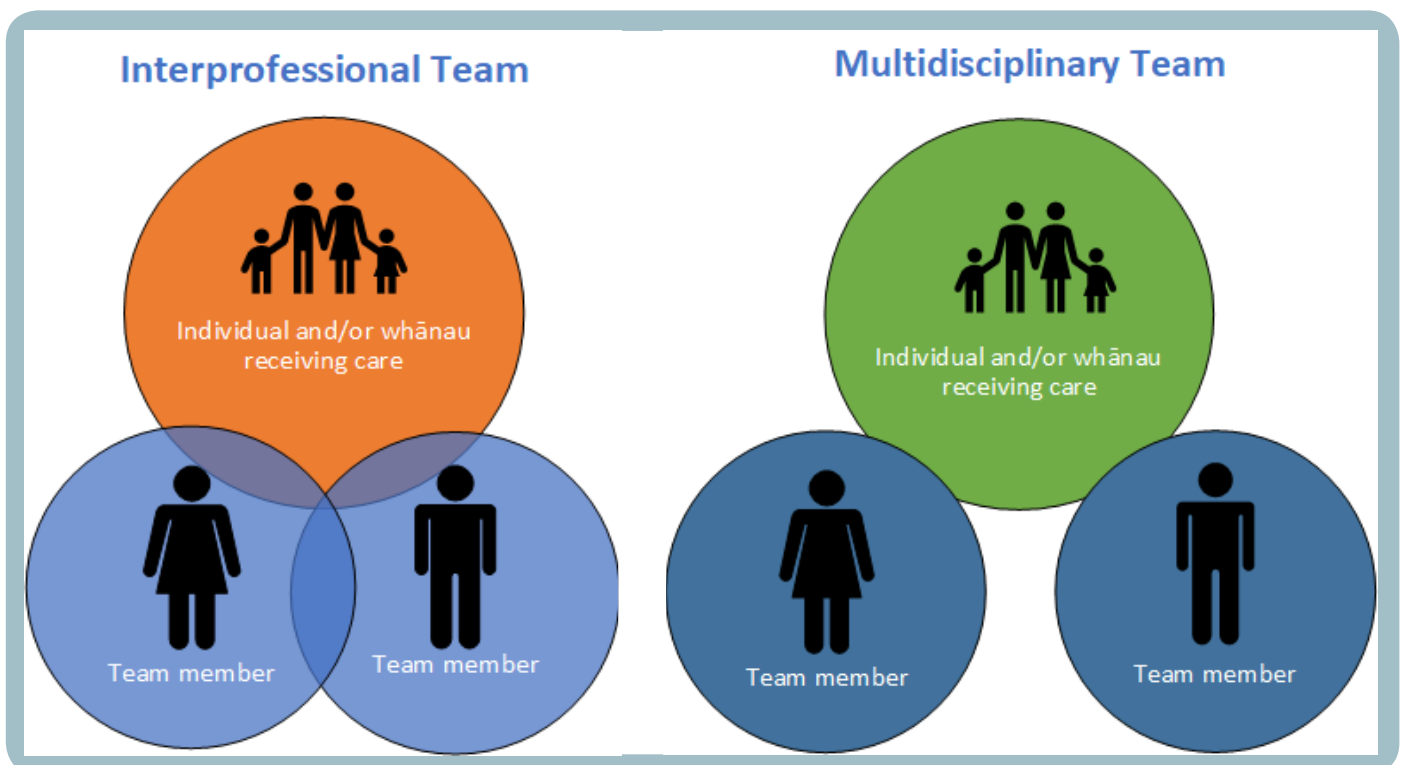
# Interdisciplinary Collaboration

## What is Interdisciplinary Collaboration?

Other terms that are used to describe interdisciplinary collaboration:

- Integrated care
- Interprofessional practice
- Collaborative practice

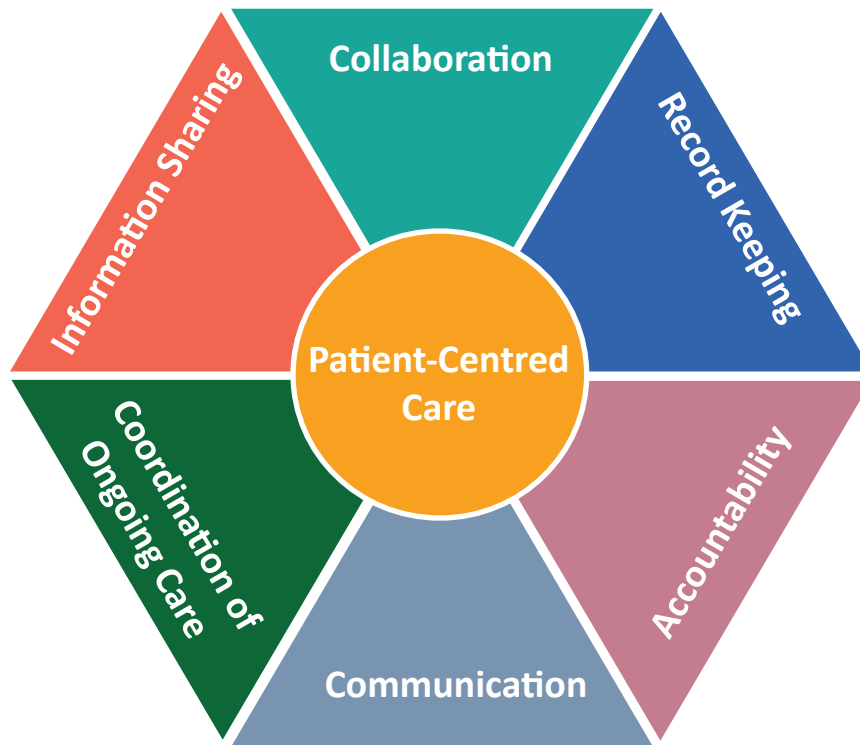
Interdisciplinary collaboration is when multiple practitioners from different professional backgrounds work together with patients, whānau, carers and communities to deliver the highest quality of care. It allows practitioners to engage with any individual within the health sector whose skills can help achieve local health goals e.g. orderlies, aged-care providers etc. This is different from multi-disciplinary teams as seen in the below diagram.



***Collaboration is not limited to practitioners registered under the HPCA Act 2003. Both registered and unregistered providers have a responsibility to cooperate with each other to ensure quality and continuity of services.***

(Anonymous submission).

## How can you apply it?



- **Collaboration** – working together to share leadership, decision-making and responsibilities. It is both patient-centred and team-based.
- **Information sharing** - openness and flexibility in sharing knowledge and care.
- **Coordination of Ongoing Care** – ensuring that each member of the patient’s care team receives the correct and relevant information to achieve the best outcomes.
- **Communication:**
  - Asking questions and raising concerns with each other, across all disciplines including administrators and other staff who may be involved in the patient’s care.
  - Maintaining respect and trust in the expertise of each team member.
  - Ensuring proper transfer of care and handover.
  - Sharing goals to address the needs of the person and delivering the best service possible.
- **Accountability** - having an awareness of your own professional limitations and strengths of other team members. Being proactive with your communication and cooperation within and across teams.
- **Record keeping** – keeping records current and updated – this enhances the coordination of ongoing care and handover to other health care providers.

# How can workplaces support interdisciplinary collaboration?

Work environments can incorporate and support interdisciplinary collaboration through:

- Supportive management practices and shared organisation vision.
- Routine across-disciplinary meetings, and opportunities for sharing ideas and decision-making.
- More face-to-face engagement, with the opportunity to build better relationships between team members and across professions.
- Sharing resources, equipment and workspaces.
- Opportunities to learn from, with, and about other professions - *“learners of two or more health or social care professions engage in [intentionally] learning with, from and about each other to improve collaboration and the quality of care and services.”* - Centre for Collaborative Health Professional Education (CIAPE 2017).



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## Links and References:

- World Health Organisation. (2010). Framework for Action on Interprofessional Education & Collaborative Practice. Health Professions Networks Nursing & Midwifery Human Resources for Health, 7.
- National Centre for Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice (NCIPECP)

With acknowledgment to Te Pou:

- Lai, J. (2019). Developing sustainable interprofessional practice in mental health and addiction services. Auckland: Te Pou o te Whakaaro Nui
- Te Pou o te Whakaaro Nui, (2019). Implementing interprofessional Practice factsheet
- Interprofessional practice and education in mental health and addiction services