Introduction to Learning to Care Together
Learning to Care Together (LCT) is an applied learning partnership between George Brown College and Revera Inc., operator of long term care and retirement living residences.

The learning to care together project was funded for three years by the Interprofessional Health Education Innovation Fund, co-sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities as part of a strategy to develop new approaches to interprofessional education within health care settings.

This initiative brought together students from a number of college programs and staff from various long term care departments. Together, learners participated and interacted in activities which exposed them to collaboration and teamwork in a long term care context. Learners were also exposed to the perspectives of many different disciplines regarding the care of those living in long term care settings.

This 9 week initial program took place at the Harold and Grace Baker Centre, a long term care and retirement living centre in Toronto, which is managed by Revera Inc. Participants included students and faculty representing a number of George Brown programs and interprofessional staff members selected from the Baker Centre.

What is Interprofessional Education (IPE)?
Interprofessional Education (IPE) occurs when two or more professions learn with, from and about each other to improve collaboration and the quality of care.

Source: CAIPE 2002, UK Centre for the Advancement of Interprofessional Education (www.caipe.org.uk)

Program Format

This inter-agency IPE program mainly involved faculty and students from GBC and staff members of Revera Inc., the piloting and evaluation of the ‘Interprofessional ethical decision-making’ training component of the program also involved community-based health services agencies through the involvement of the Toronto-area Community Ethics Network (CEN). The Interprofessional Ethical Decision-Making learning module was piloted with a cohort of 23 participants in May 2008 and key lessons learned from the pilot phase were incorporated into the full program.

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Learn to Care Together Program Description

1. Introduction to Learning To Care Together
   - Pre-program data gathering (Research & Evaluation Team)
   - Getting to know one another
   - Introduction to the program and learning materials
   - Introduction to Long Term Care
   - Introduction to the concepts of interprofessional education and collaborative practice

2. Interprofessional Ethical Decision-Making
   - The values, attitudes and beliefs regarding interprofessional ethical decision-making and the resident-centred perspective
   - The nature of interprofessional practice, ethical issues in everyday practice, ethical values, principles and theoretical perspectives

3. Interprofessional Non-Abuse Behaviours
   - Interprofessional differences between personal, professional and therapeutic relationships
   - The nature of interprofessional practice, effective communication and interprofessional understanding in everyday practice
   - Therapeutic relationships and effective communication within the context of interprofessional practice.
   - Recognizing indicators of client abuse and dealing with abusive situations
   - Case study: application of the STOP prevention tool to prevent and/or respond to an abusive situation

4. Creating Safe Environments
   - Understanding codes of conduct from various perspectives when faced with
     - Environmental safety issues in providing resident/patient focused care
     - Introduction to hand hygiene, germ transmission and resident falls from an interprofessional perspective
     - Identifying environmental safety issues related to germ transmission, the hands and community level threats to falls
     - Case study: develop a collaborative and resident/patient focused action plan regarding environmental safety concerns

5. Healthy Living
   - Identifying your own healthy living issues
   - Introduction to interprofessional practices and healthy living
   - Healthy living, aging and fitness
   - Healthy living: chronic disease management through oral health measures
   - Case study: dealing with healthy living and smoking

6. Interprofessional End of Life Care
   - Attitudes and beliefs regarding the meaning of end of life and interprofessional, resident-centered care principles that affect end of life care planning
   - End of life decision-making
   - Case study: end of life care from the family members’ perspective
   - Clinical management for end of life care: pain, oral care, post-mortal
   - Interprofessional planning for end of life care

7. Interprofessional Teamwork
   - Introduction to interprofessional teamwork
   - Observation of an actual interprofessional team meeting
   - Post-meeting debriefing and discussion

8. Putting it All Together
   - Comprehensive case study including concepts and tools from all previous topics
   - Simulated team meeting with a twist

9. Celebrate Caring Together
   - Interactive presentation about seniors’ living by a local seniors theatre group HATS
   - Presentation ceremony for program completion certificates and celebration of learning
   - Post-program data gathering (Research & Evaluation Team)

Program Evaluation

A formal evaluation of the program aimed at capturing both the outcomes generated by this IPE project and the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors that affect those outcomes is underway. Issues for learners, facilitators, module developers and leaders linked to learning about, developing, implementing, teaching, practicing and sustaining IPE/IPC will generate new knowledge and scholarship specific to joint IPE programming by a community college health science training program and a long-term care organization. The evaluation will help us inform about next steps, changes that are required and how we can continue to utilize the learning products together and within each organization.

Key Principles for IPE

1. Works to improve the Quality of Care
   - No one profession working in isolation, has the expertise to respond adequately and effectively to the complexity of many service user’s needs, and so, to ensure that care is safe, seamless and holistic to the highest possible standard

2. Focuses on the needs of service users and carers
   - Puts carers interest at the centre of learning and practice

3. Involves service users and carers
   - Active participants in the planning, delivering, assessing and evaluating IPE

4. Encourages professions to learn with, from and about each other
   - Introduces shared concepts, skills, language and perspective that establish common ground for practice

5. Respects the integrity and contribution of each profession
   - Grounded in mutual respect

6. Enhances practice within profession
   - Gains a deeper understand of its own practice and how it can complement and reinforce that of others

7. Increases professional satisfaction
   - Cultivates collaborative practice where mutual support eases occupational stress

Source: CAIPE 2002, UK Centre for the Advancement of Interprofessional Education (www.caipe.org.uk)