Create a Vision for Interprofessional Team-Based Care

Making the transition to interprofessional work will require a new vision for your team as you explore new ways of working together. Creating a new vision for your team will provide an opportunity for team members to discuss their personal views, and clarify and come to a consensus about what interprofessional teamwork will look like in your organization. Shared vision is a common vision built in a context of shared leadership, with the participation of all team members working through a process of consensus and empowerment (Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Nanus, 1992; Parsons, Clark, & Cornett, 2007).

Why create a vision statement?

- A vision statement outlines the team’s purpose and provides guidelines for fulfilling the purpose, along with a vivid description of what success looks like.
- The vision statement is a compass to guide the direction of the interprofessional team.
- Having a vision creates alignment within the interprofessional team so that everyone is working towards the same goal. It gives everyone on the team clarity about where the team is headed, what they need to be doing, and why they should do those things.
- The vision statement is also useful in guiding decision-making, so that each decision contributes to movement in the direction of the shared vision for interprofessional care.
- As goals are accomplished, the vision provides direction for what is next. Vision is a long-term stance (i.e. creating what we want) as opposed to a short-term stance (getting rid of what we don’t want). Vision helps members of the interprofessional team understand how individual goals contribute to a larger context.
- Vision articulates shared beliefs and values of interprofessional team members. When these are shared by all team members, they can generate energy, momentum, a feeling of belonging and making a difference, along with helping to build trust and respect. Also, when everyone is clear on the vision and direction, each team member can be personally responsible for making the vision a reality. Personal responsibility creates space for creativity and allows each team member to make contributions in line with his/her strengths (Blanchard & Stoner, 2004).
Create a Vision Statement

Creating an interprofessional vision statement involves the following four steps:

1. Doing background work;
2. Drafting the vision;
3. Getting feedback;
4. Creating an implementation plan.

Background Work

The interprofessional team needs to gather information about the larger organization and emerging opportunities and trends to complete the background work required for creating an interprofessional vision (Soule, 2002).

Below is a list of questions to consider while completing your background work as well as suggestions for sources of information.

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Suggested Resources for Information</th>
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| What are other interprofessional teams in your area doing?               | • Talk to other people: opinion leaders, patient groups.  
• Do an Internet and library search.  
• Scan websites of national organizations that have written statements outlining future directions (e.g. Health Canada, [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/hhr-rhs/strateg/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/hhr-rhs/strateg/index-eng.php)). |
| What current local, national and international events in policy, research, finance and other areas impact on your work? Consider population trends in the patients you serve. | • Scan Ministry of Health websites, professional journals, meetings and conference proceedings for topics.  
• Investigate census information for your community ([www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca)).  
• Talk to community leaders for their ideas.  
• Scan local/national newspapers to investigate how current events are impacting your team. |
What are the potential opportunities for your team?

- Funding organizations often identify theme areas for projects that they are interested in funding ([www.chsrf.ca/research_themes](http://www.chsrf.ca/research_themes)). Investigate these to see if there are any matches between these theme areas and priority issues for your interprofessional team.
- Scan websites/resources of specific interest groups (local, provincial and national) such as the Canadian Cancer Society or the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Are there any opportunities for your team’s vision to align with a funding organization?

What are the strategic directions of your larger organization, if you belong to one? In order for your team’s vision to be accepted and supported, you need to clearly demonstrate how and what your team wants to accomplish will support the larger organizational plan.

- Examine the strategic plan of the larger organization.
- Talk with organization leaders to get increased insight into the strategic direction.

Along with collecting background information about the context in which your team operates, have each team member reflect on the following:

- Why do we do what we do?
- What drives our practice? Consider the impact of: population health factors, the national health agenda, patient/providers beliefs and regulatory requirements.
- What are our strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats (SWOT)?

**Drafting the Vision**

After your team has completed the background work, plan a meeting to draft the vision. When creating your statement, you need to include the following three sections: 1) purpose, 2) picture of the future, and 3) values/behaviours (Blanchard & Stoner, 2004).
Purpose – Describes what the team does, along with why you do it.

- Clarify team activities from the point of view of your patients and stakeholders.
- Describe the meaning of your work. How is that connected to what you want to create?

Optimally, the purpose is to inspire and unify interprofessional team members, and is something that team members feel committed to creating.

Picture of the Future – Defines a vivid picture of the end results you want to create.

- Focus on creating the clearest picture possible of what you want the future to look like.

The process of how you will accomplish these results will follow later in the implementation plan.

Values/Behaviours – Describe key values and the matching behaviours to demonstrate that these values are being acted on consistently.

- Keep the list to a maximum of three to four values.
- Rank order the values to aid decision-making when there might be possible conflict in values.
- Define the behaviours that demonstrate the values. Behaviours are observable things team members do that demonstrate they are living the values. For example, if your team values open communication, you will see team members talking to each other, consulting each other, meeting to discuss issues, and engaging in conflict resolution.

Getting Feedback

Once you have a draft vision with which all interprofessional team members feel comfortable, get feedback from others outside your team to ensure the team vision is on the right track.

Stakeholders you may want to approach for feedback include:

- leaders in your organization,
- professionals you work with in other organizations such as community care and referring agencies, and
- academic contacts at universities and colleges.
Ask the reviewers their perceptions regarding:

- What are the greatest unmet needs of the people you serve?
- Is the vision on track?
- Is the vision easily understood?
- Do they find the vision statement compelling?

Use the feedback collected to modify your draft (Perrin, Lewkowicz, & Young, 2000).

**Create an Implementation Plan for the Vision Statement**

When the interprofessional team has finalized the vision statement, the next step is to turn that vision into an actionable work plan. The plan will be a map that will help direct your team from where you are presently to where you want to go.

Steps to Create an Implementation Plan:

- Identify priorities about what needs to change in order for the work of the interprofessional team to match your stated vision.
- Once priorities are identified, rank them by importance.
- Develop an implementation plan for the number one top priority. An implementation plan consists of measureable goals, along with a list of activities to support goal achievement, and a timeline in which these will be completed. Through the implementation plan, the interprofessional team will demonstrate movement in the direction outlined in the vision.
- Examples of activities you might include in an implementation plan for the priority “improve team collaboration” include:
  - Schedule sessions to complete team building exercises.
  - Create an outline of what team members expect of each other. This might include such things as effective communication, positive attitude and accountability.
  - Using a paper survey, assess team member’s understanding of the roles represented on the interprofessional team.
• Measurements used for evaluation of goals can include:
  • Patient and staff satisfaction surveys.
  • Countable outcome indicators (i.e. measuring wait-times, numbers of referrals, etc.).
  • Financial indicators.
  • Measures of team or community collaboration such as scores on teamwork or communication surveys can be used (Nanus, 1992).

• In the implementation plan, outline how the interprofessional team will focus energy for a fixed period of time (i.e. the next 6 months) to work on the top priority.

• To ensure that focus and regular attention are given to implementation of the plan goals during the 6 month period, make them a standing agenda item for team meetings, where progress can be briefly, yet regularly, reviewed (Parsons, Clark, & Cornett, 2007).

• After the specified time period, make a plan to evaluate progress in achieving your goals. If required, refocus strategies and/or modify goals. If goals were achieved, move on to the next priority (Blanchard & Stoner, 2004).

In implementing your vision consider reaching out and seeing how you can involve others who are interested and aligned with your vision.

• Who do you work with outside of your interprofessional team upon whom you have an impact (i.e. patient groups, care providers in the community, educational institutions)?

• How can you communicate your vision to these groups?

• What are the interests of these groups and how do those interests align with your vision?

• How can you invite these groups to participate in fulfilling your vision (Nanus, 1992)?
Creative Thinking Tools

Your interprofessional team may find it helpful to use some of the following techniques when creating a vision to help draw out ideas, opinions and issues. These techniques can also be useful when your team is facing a block, since examining issues from a different perspective can lead to insights previously unseen (Soule, 2002).

- Use expansive or divergent thinking. If anything were possible, then what could we do? If we couldn’t think (insert issue/perspective) then how would we make sense of this? Using this process, team members share ideas and possibilities without judgements or barriers.

- Promote brainstorming, generating as many thoughts and ideas as possible. This strategy requires thinking without limits, sharing openly, and being receptive to the ideas of others.

- Participate in mind-mapping to guide creative thinking.

- Assign team members to a different aspect of thinking by using different perspectives. Issues can be examined from a number of perspectives in one discussion by assigning different perspectives to each team member. The different perspectives include: aspects of thinking, information and facts, feelings and intuition, caution, benefits and values, creativity and ideas, and facilitation.

- Use visualization, or thinking in pictures, to make sense of connections, relationships and interactions.

- Use opposing thought to examine issues from an opposite perspective. For example, rather than bringing students on site for education, you can deliver education to each student’s home through online methods.

- Conduct a gap analysis by examining where you are and your vision of the future, and examine the gap in between present and future to determine what needs to be done to get from here to there. How big is the gap? What can be done to build a bridge?

- Explore measurable outcomes. To what degree do the strategies need to be accomplished? What are the targets (quantitative and qualitative)?

When using any of these activities to generate ideas, appoint one or more record keepers to keep track of the key points made during discussion. Once all of the ideas are identified, work to organize them into categories based on ideas that complement each other in order to identify a workable number of major themes that can be used to move the process forward.