

INTERPROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION IN RESPIRATORY CARE

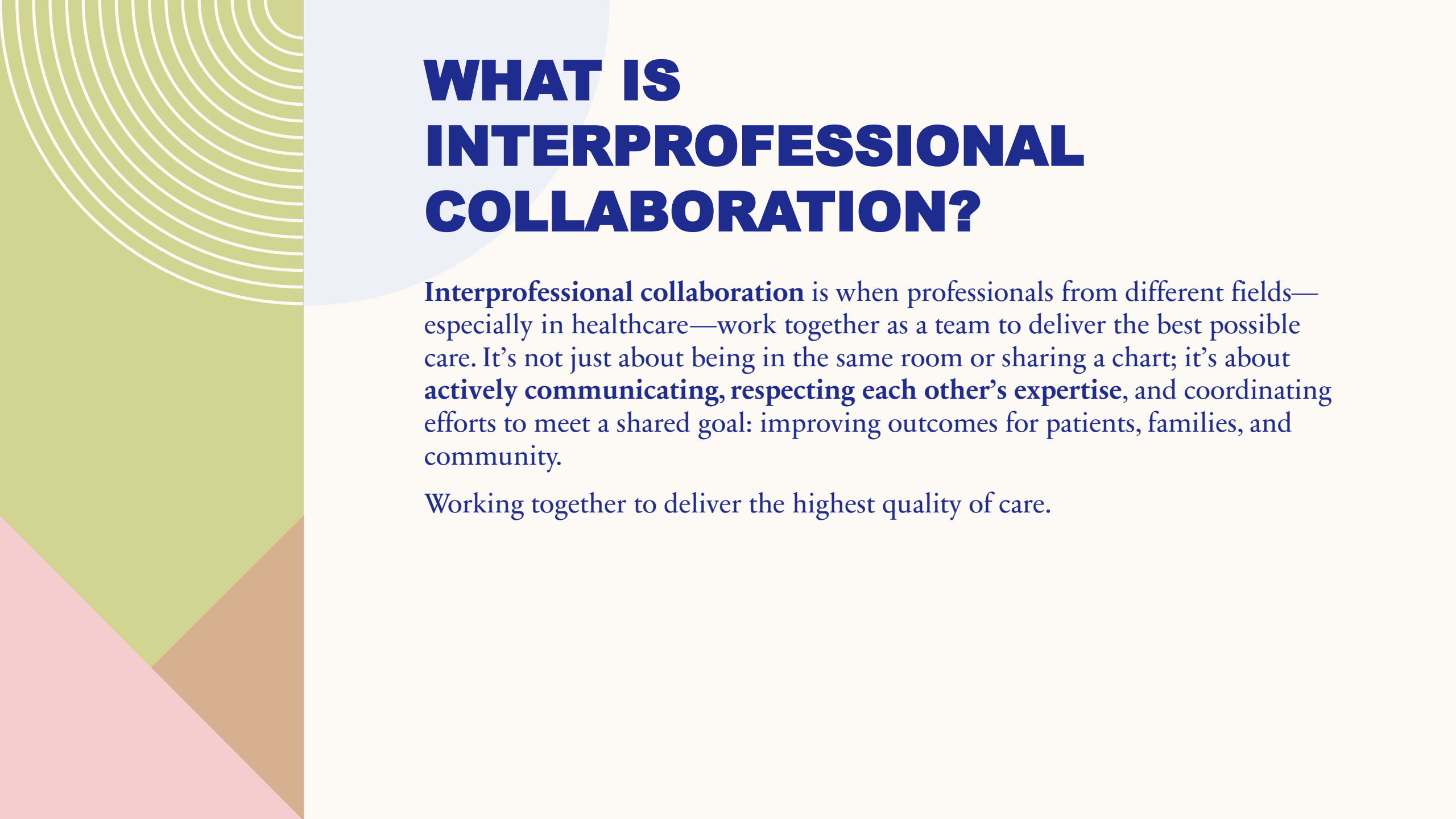
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AGENDA

- What is Interprofessional Collaboration
- Why is Interprofessional Collaboration Crucial
- The Power of Effective Communication
- Benefits for Respiratory Therapist through IPC
- Benefits for other healthcare professionals through IPC
- Over Coming Barriers to effective Collaboration



THE COMPLEXITY OF RESPIRATORY CARE

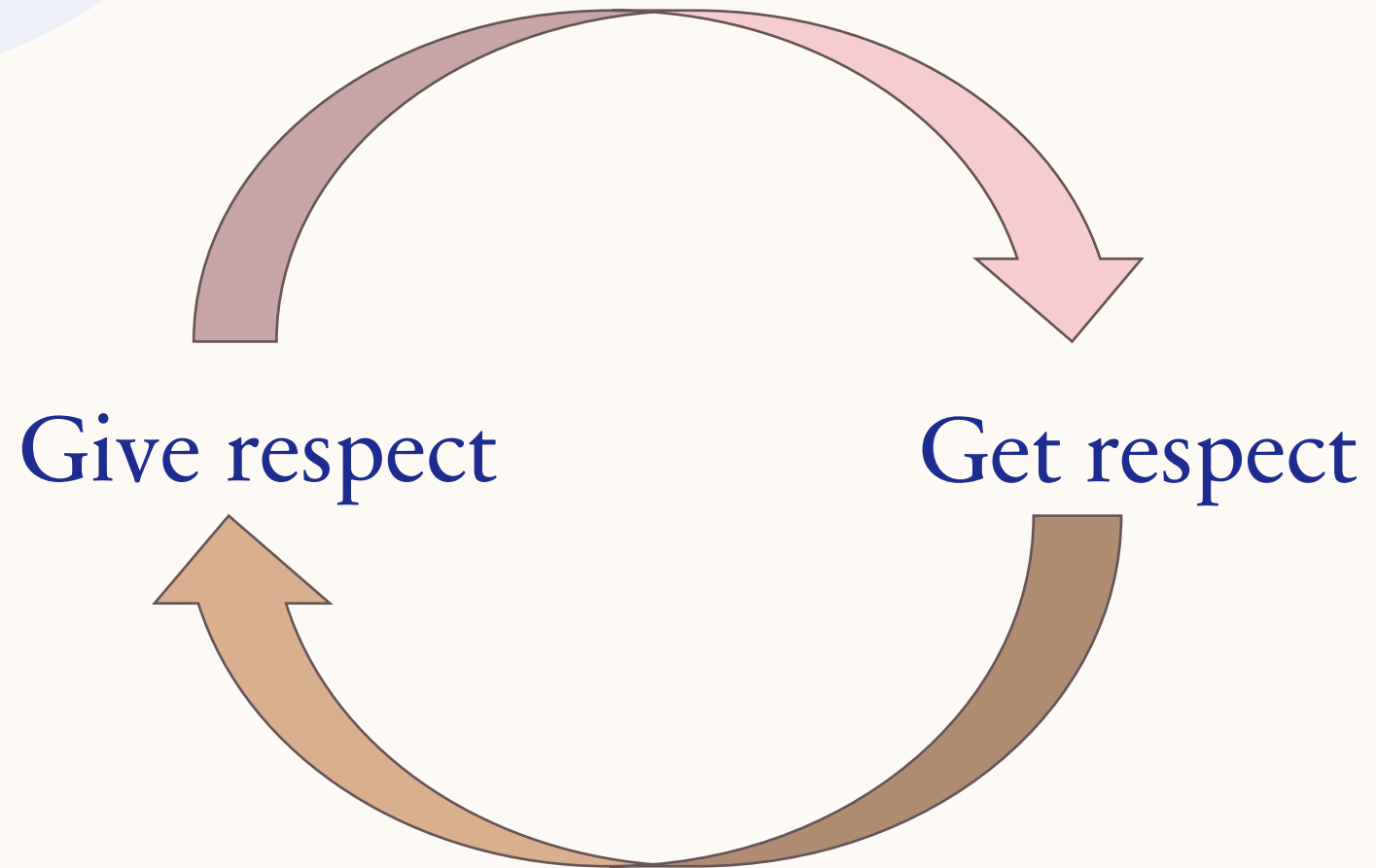


WHAT IS INTERPROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION?

Interprofessional collaboration is when professionals from different fields—especially in healthcare—work together as a team to deliver the best possible care. It's not just about being in the same room or sharing a chart; it's about **actively communicating, respecting each other's expertise**, and coordinating efforts to meet a shared goal: improving outcomes for patients, families, and community.

Working together to deliver the highest quality of care.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK



COMMUNICATION: THE LIFELINE OF COLLABORATION

- Several studies support the importance of interprofessional collaboration and communication, with poor communication among nurses and physicians being associated with increased mortality, length of stay, and readmission rates (1, 2). A recent Cochrane review on the effects of interprofessional collaboration suggests that practice-based interprofessional interventions can improve health care processes and outcomes. However, the key elements of interprofessional collaboration: team communication, leadership, coordination, and decision making (3, 4) need further testing (5) to demonstrate effectiveness in critical care environments.

COLLABORATION: A SHARED BENEFIT

Collaboration allows teams to quickly identify patterns or emerging threats and develop more effective protocols. In fact, research has found that forming interdisciplinary collaborations in intensive care units led to a 25% reduction in MRSA infections, while a routine of interdisciplinary daily team huddles resulted in a 20% decrease in HAIs. The collaborative culture was also shown to improve hand hygiene compliance and faster response to infection outbreaks in long-term care facilities.⁶

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COLLABORATION: EMPOWERING RESPIRATORY THERAPIST

PROVIDE CONTINUING EDUCATION & TRAINING

- **Specialized Training:** Offer opportunities for RTs to specialize in different areas (e.g., neonatal respiratory care, pulmonary rehabilitation, sleep medicine). Continuing education helps them stay up-to-date with the latest techniques and technologies.
- **Certifications & Workshops:** Encouraging RTs to pursue advanced certifications (e.g., NPS) or attend workshops and seminars boosts their expertise and confidence.
- **Access to Research & Evidence-Based Practices:** Make sure RTs have easy access to the latest research, clinical guidelines, and treatment protocols. This enables them to provide evidence-based care.

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10



INVOLVE RTs IN DECISION-MAKING

- **Multidisciplinary Team Meetings:** Involve RTs in daily rounds, care planning, and case discussions. Their input can be critical, especially when managing complex respiratory cases.
- **Autonomy in Treatment Decisions:** Empower RTs to make clinical decisions within their scope of practice, such as adjusting ventilator settings or managing oxygen therapy based on patient needs.
- **Leadership Roles:** Encourage RTs to take on leadership positions, such as becoming charge RTs or leading respiratory care committees. This helps develop leadership skills and fosters a sense of ownership in the workplace.

RECOGNITION AND ADVOCACY

- **Acknowledge Their Impact:** Regularly recognize RTs for their contributions. Public recognition, awards, or shout-outs in meetings can enhance morale and motivate them to continue their great work.
- **Advocate for Role Expansion:** Ensure hospital leadership understands the full scope of an RT's role. Advocate for policy changes that allow RTs to expand their responsibilities in areas such as patient education, chronic disease management, or post-acute care.

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES IN COLLABORATION

IMPROVE COMMUNICATION

- **Standardize Communication Tools:** Implement standardized communication protocols (e.g., SBAR — Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation) for handoffs and updates between RTs, nurses, and doctors. This creates a common language and ensures critical information is passed on effectively.
- **Clear Role Expectations:** Clearly define the roles of each team member so everyone knows what is expected from them. This minimizes misunderstandings and confusion, especially during complex cases.
- **Daily Team Rounds:** Include RTs in multidisciplinary rounds, where doctors, nurses, and respiratory therapists can discuss the patient's progress, adjust care plans, and address concerns. This fosters collaboration and ensures that everyone is on the same page.
- **Open Lines of Communication:** Encourage a culture of open communication where team members feel comfortable expressing concerns or asking questions. Tools like team huddles or “open door” policies for supervisors can promote transparency and quick resolution of issues.

BUILDING A COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENT

Promote Mutual Respect and Understanding

- **Acknowledge Each Team Member's Expertise:** Recognize the unique expertise that each profession brings to the table. RTs are the experts in respiratory care, nurses in patient monitoring and support, and doctors in diagnosis and treatment planning. Mutual respect for these roles enhances teamwork.
- **Cross-Training:** Offer training programs where nurses can learn basic respiratory care skills and RTs can better understand nursing roles. When everyone has a clearer understanding of each other's responsibilities, it leads to more effective collaboration.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Recognize that each profession may have its own culture, work style, and approach to care. Promote sensitivity to these differences and foster an inclusive work environment where each team member feels valued.

ADDRESS POWER DYNAMICS

- **Flat Hierarchy:** Encourage a team-based approach where all members, regardless of their position, are encouraged to contribute ideas. Acknowledging that RTs, nurses, and doctors are all integral to patient care promotes a sense of equality within the team.
- **Leadership Support:** Hospital leadership should actively support the equal participation of all team members in patient care discussions and decisions. Leaders can model inclusive behavior by making it clear that all contributions are valuable.
- **Create Opportunities for Leadership:** Give RTs and nurses leadership roles in collaborative settings, such as chairing rounds, coordinating interdisciplinary teams, or leading quality improvement initiatives. This empowers them to take ownership of their role in patient care.

ENHANCE COORDINATION AND WORKFLOW INTEGRATION

17

- **Shared Goals:** Align the goals of RTs, nurses, and doctors. For example, everyone should be focused on improving patient outcomes, reducing hospital readmissions, or improving respiratory function. By ensuring that everyone is working toward the same objectives, collaboration becomes easier.
- **Care Pathways:** Develop and implement clear care pathways or clinical protocols that all team members follow. This can streamline decision-making, reduce confusion, and create consistent approaches to managing patient care, especially in critical areas like ventilation management or respiratory distress.
- **Integrated Technology:** Use electronic health records (EHRs) or other digital tools that enable easy sharing of information between RTs, nurses, and doctors. This allows team members to track patient progress and treatment plans in real time, facilitating better decision-making and reducing potential errors.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

18

- **Address Conflicts Early:** When disagreements arise between team members, it's important to address them early before they escalate. Encourage open, respectful discussion of issues and seek a collaborative resolution. If necessary, have a neutral third party (e.g., a supervisor or team leader) mediate the conversation.
- **Role Clarification:** Conflicts often arise from overlapping roles or misunderstandings about responsibilities. Clear role delineation, as mentioned earlier, can prevent many of these conflicts.
- **Feedback Loops:** After addressing a conflict or misunderstanding, have a feedback session to discuss what worked and what could have been handled better. This reinforces a learning culture and helps prevent similar issues in the future.

ENCOURAGE SHARED DECISION-MAKING

- **Collaborative Treatment Plans:** Involve RTs in the creation of patient care plans, especially when respiratory issues are a primary concern. RTs are experts in their field, and their input can be invaluable in making decisions regarding ventilation, oxygen therapy, and weaning protocols.
- **Interdisciplinary Committees:** Set up interdisciplinary committees that include representatives from nursing, respiratory therapy, and medicine. These committees can focus on specific issues (e.g., improving respiratory care protocols, addressing patient safety, etc.) and provide a structured space for collaboration.
- **Case-Based Discussions:** Encourage case-based learning, where doctors, nurses, and RTs review complex cases together. This encourages learning from each other's experiences and perspectives, leading to better outcomes and more cohesive teamwork.

DEVELOP TEAM BUILDING AND TRUST

- **Regular Team-Building Activities:** Foster trust and camaraderie through regular team-building activities, such as off-site retreats, workshops, or social events. Trust between RTs, nurses, and doctors is critical for effective collaboration.
- **Recognize and Celebrate Team Successes:** Celebrate team accomplishments, whether it's a successful case or the completion of a quality improvement project. Recognition reinforces the idea that everyone's contribution is valuable.
- **Foster Empathy:** Encourage team members to put themselves in each other's shoes. RTs, nurses, and doctors all have stressful, high-pressure roles. Fostering empathy for each other's workloads and challenges helps improve working relationships.

PROVIDE ADEQUATE SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

- **Leadership Training:** Provide leadership training for RTs, nurses, and doctors so they can better manage collaboration and guide team efforts. Effective leadership within multidisciplinary teams can significantly improve collaboration.
- **Support Systems:** Ensure that team members have access to mental health and stress-management resources. A well-supported workforce is better equipped to work collaboratively under pressure.
- **Time and Space for Collaboration:** Ensure that team members have the time and space to engage with one another. Sometimes, in busy hospital environments, team members are pulled in multiple directions. Scheduling protected time for collaboration can help ensure that teamwork thrives.

FOSTER A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- **Quality Improvement Initiatives:** Encourage teams to engage in quality improvement initiatives that focus on improving communication, workflows, and collaboration. These initiatives can be data-driven and outcome-focused, which motivates teams to work together toward common goals.
- **Involve RTs in Evidence-Based Projects:** Involve RTs in hospital-wide initiatives or studies related to respiratory care, which can enhance their integration into the larger healthcare system and provide them with a sense of purpose and impact.

THE IMPACT OF COLLABORATION

Focus on interprofessional collaboration in healthcare to help reduce HAIs and PIs, as well as to increase staff satisfaction and retention. The key elements of successful collaboration rest on building communication and trust by taking blame out of the process, making informal conversation meaningful and seeking leadership education when necessary. Using a change model and keeping track of improvements help sustain the benefits of collaborative practices.(6)



WORKING TOGETHER FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE

Traditional medical education emphasizes the importance of error-free practice, utilizing intense peer pressure to achieve perfection during both diagnosis and treatment. Errors are therefore perceived normatively as an expression of failure. This atmosphere creates an environment that precludes the fair, open discussion of mistakes required if organizational learning is to take place. In the early 1990s, Donald Berwick wrote about patients needing an open communication system instead of experiencing adverse events stemming from communication failures.⁷ More than a decade later, this concept still has profound implications on our method of health care delivery.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

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