Interprofessional Mental Health and Addictions Education Initiative

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• A task force of senior University of Calgary faculty and representatives of the Calgary Health Region identified three main concerns: 1) students require enhanced mental health and addictions competencies to prepare them for the complexities of professional practice, 2) students require significant interprofessional (IP) competencies to work effectively in interprofessional settings, and 3) insufficient numbers of potential service providers were being trained in mental health and addictions competencies.

• The Task Force recommended the establishment of an educational initiative aimed at integrating education and practicum experience in MHA across the helping professions faculties and departments in full partnership with Alberta Health Services.

1. The Calgary Health Region subsequently was unified with all health services in the province under Alberta Health Services. All inpatient and outpatient care is delivered through this unified system.

2. Mental health and addiction services are often delivered by teams with members from diverse professions. Most team members receive little or no training in effective interprofessional functioning. Few educational programs provide students with interprofessional education within the context of core course content in the field of mental health and addictions. This initiative’s certificate and diploma program courses are among the first.

• The intent of the program is to enhance collaborative learning and foster mutual respect amongst students from various schools of thought, while facilitating the development of mental health and addiction practice skills in an interprofessional context. In addition, courses are intended to have a strong consumer component in content development and delivery. The program courses are currently targeted at students within the Faculties of Medicine, Social Work, Nursing, the Departments of Psychology and Applied Psychology, Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies and various professionals presently working within the field of mental health and addiction services.

Purpose

• The certificate and diploma programs are designed so that they can be completed in one year each if a student is highly motivated. However, a student can elect to complete these courses over three to four years, depending on individual circumstance.

• Courses were deliberately chosen to provide skills in assessment and service delivery as well as to allow development of expertise in specialty areas such as children and youth, the elderly, the role of trauma. Specialized course topics will be delivered on-line to facilitate involvement of practitioners in rural and remote locations and to allow for greater uptake in specialized areas.

Certificate Program Course Requirements

1. Introduction to Interprofessional Issues in Mental Health
2. Introduction to Interprofessional Issues in Addictions
3. Assessment: Interprofessional Practice in Mental Health and Addictions
4. Option (1)

Diploma Program Course Requirements

The diploma builds on – and requires – completion of the certificate. The following courses must also be taken at the diploma level:

1. Interventions: Interprofessional Practice Mental Health and Addictions
2. Practicum: Interprofessional Practice Mental Health and Addictions
2. Options (2 courses)

Option Courses for Certificate and Diploma Program

1. Children’s Mental Health (available online)
2. Treatment of Older Adults: Interprofessional Practice in Mental Health and Addictions
3. Community Based Recovery: Interprofessional Practice in Mental Health and Addictions
4. Clinical Impact and Therapeutic Interventions for Trauma: Interprofessional Practice in Mental Health and Addictions

1. Project Initials:

2. Practicum: Interprofessional Practice Mental Health and Addictions

3. Interventions: Interprofessional Practice Mental Health and Addictions

4. Clinical Impact and Therapeutic Interventions for Trauma: Interprofessional Practice in Mental Health and Addictions

• Introduction to Interprofessional Issues in Mental Health, Introduction to Interprofessional Issues in Addictions, and Children’s Mental Health (available online) are currently being offered as option courses within the aforementioned participating faculties and departments.

• The entire course package that comprises the certificate and diploma program is in the final stages of approval at the University of Calgary’s Faculty of Graduate Studies, with hopes that approval will be granted in spring of 2010. The participating faculties and departments have all endorsed the certificate/diploma program and courses.

• Current program efforts include tailoring courses to be made accessible through online delivery, allowing the program to be widely available to students both within Alberta, nationally and internationally.

• Preliminary identification of practicum sites.

Project Partners:

University of Calgary
Faculties of Nursing, Social Work & Medicine, Departments of Psychology, Applied Psychology and Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies, and Alberta Health Services