



Creating Supportive Interprofessional Peer Spaces: An IPE Lunchtime Peer Support Initiative

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Background

Interprofessional Education (IPE) lunchtime peer support sessions were established across three hospital sites to provide an inclusive, low-burden forum for students from diverse professions to connect, share experiences, and develop confidence in interprofessional practice. Sessions were informed by peer-led learning principles (Boud et al, 2021) and supported by the Cardiff Metropolitan University IPE coordinator in partnership with placement educators from Dietetics, Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy.

Aim

To create and evaluate a supportive interprofessional peer-learning space that enhances students' confidence, understanding of professional roles, and readiness for collaborative practice

Methods

Nine lunchtime sessions were delivered between May and October 2025 across University Hospital of Wales, Llandough Hospital, and St David's Hospital. Sessions followed a consistent structure: group guidelines, icebreaker, facilitated discussion, collaborative problem-solving, reflection, and feedback. Delivery was shared between clinical placement educators and the IPE coordinator. An online Padlet resource hub supported session continuity and signposting. Forty-one students attended the sessions, with 31 valid evaluation responses. Participants represented Dietetics (n=12), Nursing (n=6), Occupational Therapy (n=7), Speech and Language Therapy (n=8), Podiatry (n=1), and other professions

Results

Student /Learner experience:

All respondents (100%) described the sessions as supportive and inclusive, and 100% felt comfortable sharing experiences. 97% reported increased confidence in interprofessional work. Qualitative feedback highlighted the value of safe space, cross-professional connection, and renewed engagement with IPE

“Nice chatting to different cohorts.”

“I haven't interacted with other professions this much for a long time.”

“The opportunity to discuss with other professionals... gives me a better understanding of their roles.”

“I feel I am beginning to understand why IPE is useful.”

Discussion

The sessions strengthened students' communication, reflection, and collaborative problem-solving skills, supporting preparedness for multidisciplinary practice. By deepening understanding of professional roles and fostering psychological safety, the initiative promotes behaviours essential to coordinated, person-centred care. Students reported improved confidence, greater role clarity, and enhanced readiness to contribute to interprofessional teams.

Future plan

Success was driven by strong clinical practice educator leadership (Speech and Language Therapy), shared ownership across professions. Facilitation support was provided by the Cardiff Met IPE coordinator. A flexible, low-resource format enabled integration into busy clinical environments. Future plans include establishing a rolling programme of lunchtime IPE peer support sessions, delivered collaboratively by practice educators and placement leads across multiple Health Boards, with the ambition to scale this model across Wales

References

Boud, D., Cohen, R. and Sampson, J. (eds.) (2001) Peer Learning in Higher Education: Learning from and with Each Other. London: Kogan Page.



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