

Developing an Educational Model to Support the Care of Aboriginal Populations in Continuing Care in Remote Northern Communities

Report February 2016

Background

Based on ICCER's Community Needs Driven Research Network report from 2012, education related issues and staff retention/recruitment were two of the top ten themes identified by front line staff in the continuing care sector. In addition, a special theme identified by providers in Northern Alberta was First Nations and challenges related to confusion over funding of healthcare, jurisdictional issues impeding collaboration across agencies and economical viability of health professionals moving to remote outlying communities, as examples.

Purpose

The purpose of this pilot project was to use a community consultation and engagement process to develop and evaluate an educational model focused on aboriginal health for patients in continuing care living in remote northern communities. This educational model was designed to: 1) create capacity in instructors from Keyano College to develop interprofessional simulation scenarios; and 2) develop knowledge and skills in pre-diploma students at Keyano College and practitioners in Fort McMurray and Fort Chipewyan through delivery of the simulation scenarios.

Project Activities to Date

An *Interprofessional Simulation Development Workshop* was developed and delivered by two members of the Health Sciences Education and Research Commons (HSERC) team. Workshop participants included instructors from the nursing and social work programs from the School of Health, Wellness and Human Services at Keyano College, the Director of the Long Term Care Facility- Fort Chipewyan and the Aboriginal Liaison from the Regional Hospital (December 8, 2014). The daylong workshop introduced participants to the interprofessional (IP) competencies, steps to developing IP simulations and strategies to implement the simulations into curriculum. Two simulation scenarios were developed; one for early learners and one for more senior students. Each scenario focused on providing care to an indigenous community member in need of continuing care support. One scenario was a patient assessment, the other a case conference. It was agreed at the workshop to pilot the two scenarios in the winter semester.

Interprofessional Simulation Day was held on March 9, 2015 at Keyano College. One scenario was delivered in the morning and the other scenario in the afternoon. Simulated patients interacted with the students in each scenario.

The scenarios highlighted or emphasized the following issues:

- Residential schools – fearful that they (the patient) are moving into a similar setting if move into a continuing care facility, which relates to colonialism;
- Not being able to eat the traditional foods, practice traditional ceremonies in a facility;
- Decrease in access to family/community, which relates to strength and health;
- Loss of independence and decision-making;
- Lack of connection to the land;
- Related risk for depression.

The instructors emphasized to the students during the debrief, the importance of showing respect for the elders and the need to build a relationship with the patient, and the value of story-telling, rather than jumping immediately into the assessment or meeting.

Student Survey

The survey included 12 questions related to the IP competencies, confidence in providing care in continuing care environment and knowledge about Aboriginal health issues. The scoring was on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A score of 5 was the highest score achievable.

Group Interviews

Students were interviewed as a group immediately after the simulation. Instructors were interviewed at the end of the simulation day.

Evaluation Results

There were two components to the evaluation: 1) surveys and group interviews with students, and 2) group interviews with instructors.

There were a total of 17 students (Social Work n=6; Practical Nursing n=11) participated in one of the two IP simulation scenarios. Their overall average age was 25.8 years and 100% were female. Four of the PN students said they had previous IP experience due to their clinical practicums. Five SW students said they had done role plays in class before and all PN students had participated in the simulation lab before.

Student Survey Results

Table 1 provides the detailed results of the student surveys. Overall, the students rated the learning experience as meaningful. The questions related to IP competencies (understanding IP teamwork, IP communication, role clarification) were rated the highest for both disciplines. The SW students rated the question 'I learned more about Aboriginal health issues' as the lowest at 4.2 and overall, this was one of the lowest scores for both disciplines (4.4). For the question 'I feel more confident to provide care to an Aboriginal person in a continuing care environment' both disciplines rated that as 4.5.

Table 1. Results of Student Survey Post-Simulation

Survey Question:	SW	PN	Overall
This learning experience has enhanced my understanding of interprofessional teamwork.	5	4.5	4.7
This learning experience has enhanced my understanding of interprofessional communication.	5	4.5	4.7
I learned a great deal about the role of my discipline on an interprofessional team.	4.8	4.5	4.6
I learned a great deal about the role and expertise of other health disciplines.	4.7	4.5	4.6
I increased my confidence in providing care in a continuing care environment.	4.3	4.5	4.4
I learned more about Aboriginal health issues.	4.2	4.4	4.3
I feel more confident to provide care to an Aboriginal person in a continuing care environment.	4.5	4.5	4.5
The following activities were useful in facilitating my learning:			
• Briefing (prior to simulation)	4.2	4.3	4.2
• The simulation	4.7	4.5	4.6
• Feedback from the facilitators	4.8	4.5	4.6
• Feedback from my fellow students in the debriefing after the simulation	4.8	4.5	4.6
Overall, this was a meaningful learning experience.	5	4.6	4.8

Student Group Interviews

Both disciplines expressed surprise in the other disciplines scope of practice and holistic view of the patient. Stereotypes that each held of the other discipline were dispelled. The experience also dispelled stereotypical views each group had of indigenous people, as they often hear many negative comments about working with the indigenous population. The Nursing students mentioned that having a real Aboriginal patient instead of simulation mannequin was a great learning experience for them. Although, the SW students were nervous about an IP simulation, they expressed that it was very useful experience.

The majority of students from both disciplines expressed a desire to stay in the Fort McMurray area or at least work in a smaller community and thought the learning experience provided a good networking opportunity. The experience also gave the students more confidence to speak up and ask questions of other disciplines.

The students had mixed responses to the question related to learning more about Aboriginal health. This may be due to the fact that the SW students take a cultural sensitivity course early in their first year. In addition, the SW students have previous opportunities to practice their communication and interview skills, so they appeared more comfortable interacting with the patient.

Instructor Feedback

The instructors were pleased at the level of knowledge that their respective students were gaining for the simulation activity. The instructors observed that the Nursing students learned a lot from working directly with the SW students. One instructor commented that SW students don't often have the opportunity to do a simulation with a 'live' client or someone that they don't already know, so this presented a unique learning opportunity. Interesting aspect to note, at the beginning of the simulation the Nursing students were focused on the physical assessment until redirected to focus on building a relationship with the patient.

The instructors in both disciplines mentioned that they experienced a clearer understanding of the expectations and potential for the simulation activities as the day progressed.

Project Activities Remaining

There are two key project activities remaining, a visit to Fort Chipewyan and consultation with Aboriginal elders. At this time, the two scenarios are situated in a northern community like Fort McMurray that has certain resources available in the community. The next phase is to shift the scenarios so they are situated in a remote northern community. This requires a visit to the Fort Chipewyan community where instructors from Keyano College have strong connections. The project team also needs to hold meaningful consultation with the elders in the community. This type of relationship building and consultation takes time and cannot be rushed. Members of the project team from Keyano College have the experience in developing and strengthening these types of relationships required by this project. The delay in completing this work is due to the need for respectful relationship building with the community.

After the visit and consultation, the scenarios will be revised to fit a remote northern community continuing care context with the intent of using them to support staff at the continuing care centre in Fort Chipewyan and pre-diploma students in post-secondary institutions.