

# **Topic 4**

## **Being an effective team player**

# Learning objectives

- o understand the importance of teamwork in health care
- o know how to be an effective team player
- o recognize you will be a team member as a medical student

# Knowledge requirements

Understand:

- o the different types of teams in health care
- o the characteristics of effective teams
- o how ones values and assumptions affect interactions with others

# Knowledge requirements

Understand:

- o the role of team members and how psychological factors affect team interactions
- o the impact of change on teams
- o the role of the patient on the team

# Performance requirements

Using the following teamwork principles to promote effective health care:

- o using communication techniques
- o resolving conflicts
- o using mutual support techniques
- o changing and observing behaviours

# What is a team?

A team is a group of two or more individuals who:

- o interact dynamically
- o have a common goal/mission
- o have been assigned specific tasks
- o possess specialized and complementary skills

# **A team is....**

a distinguishable set of two or more people who interact dynamically, interdependently and adaptively towards a common and valued goal/objective/mission, who have been each assigned specific roles or functions to perform, and who have a limited lifespan of membership.

**Eduardo Salas**

# What types of teams do you find in health care?

Many different teams are found in health care:

- o multiprofessional/drawn from a single profession
- o co-located/distributed
- o transitory or long standing

# What types of teams do you find in health care?

- o TeamSTEPPS identify the following team types in health care:
  - o Core teams
    - o coordinating teams
    - o contingency teams
    - o ancillary services
    - o support services
    - o administration

# How do teams improve patient care?

- o teams represent a pragmatic way to improve patient care
- o teams can improve care at the level of:
  - o the organization
  - o the patient – outcomes and safety
  - o the team as a whole
  - o the individual team member

# How do teams form and develop?

Tuckmann\* identified four stages of team formation and development:

- o forming
- o storming
- o norming
- o performing

\*Tuckmann 1965

# What makes for a successful team?

Effective teams possess the following features:

- o a common purpose
- o measurable goals
- o effective leadership and conflict resolution
- o good communication
- o good cohesion and mutual respect
- o situation monitoring
- o self-monitoring
- o flexibility

# Leadership

Effective teams leaders coordinate and facilitate teamwork by:

- o delegating tasks or assignments
- o conducting briefs, huddles, debriefs
- o empowering team members to speak freely and ask questions
- o organizing improvement activities and training for the team
- o inspiring “followers” and maintain a positive group culture

# Leadership... continued

Effective teams leaders coordinate and facilitate teamwork by:

- o accepting the leadership role
- o calling for help appropriately
- o constantly monitoring the situation
- o setting priorities and making decisions
- o utilizing resources to maximize performance
- o resolving team conflicts
- o balancing the workload within a team

# Communication

A number of techniques have been developed to promote communication in health care including:

- o SBAR
- o call-out
- o check-back
- o handover/handoff

# Resolving disagreement and conflict

A number of techniques have been developed to help all members of a team speak out including:

- o the two challenge rule
- o CUS
- o DESC script

# Barriers to teamwork

- o changing roles
- o medical hierarchies
- o individualistic nature of medicine
- o instability nature of teams

# Incidents in other industries

Failures in the following team behaviours have been identified as being responsible for accidents in other industries:

- o roles not being clearly defined
- o lack of explicit coordination
- o miscommunication/communication

# Assessing team performance

- o assessing team performance can be carried out:
  - o in the workplace
  - o in simulated environments
  - o through observing teamwork exercises
- o teamwork can be assessed by external experts or by peer observation

# Summary

- o teamwork doesn't just happen
- o there are well documented teamwork principles medical students should know
- o there are a variety of techniques that have been developed to improve communication in teams

# Performance requirements

- o Medical students can apply teamwork principles in their interactions with other students and through observing and being part of health-care teams

# Performance requirements...

**Practical tips medical students can start practising now to improve teamwork include:**

- o always introducing yourself to the team
- o reading back/closing the communication loop
- o stating the obvious to avoid assumptions
- o asking questions, checking and clarifying
- o delegating tasks to people not to the air
- o clarifying your role
- o using objective (not subjective) language

# Performance requirements...

**Practical tips medical students can start practising now to improve teamwork include:**

- o learning and using people's names
- o being assertive when required
- o if something doesn't make sense, finding out the other person's perspective
- o doing a team briefing before undertaking a team activity and a debriefing afterwards
- o when conflict occurs, concentrating on "what" is right for the patient, not "who" is right