

Interprofessional Collaboration

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INTRODUCTION

The College of Licensed Practical Nurses and Health Care Aides of Alberta (CLHA) has the **authority** under the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) to carry out its activities and **govern** Health Care Aides (HCAs)¹ in a manner that protects and serves the public interest.

Healthcare professionals must provide safe, ethical, and high-quality care. They do this by understanding their roles, recognizing shared responsibilities, and working together to meet the needs of their **clients**.

Terms found in the definition section are **bolded** where they appear for the first time in this document.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this guideline is to highlight the importance of teamwork among HCAs and other health professionals. By collaborating and sharing their knowledge, skills, and expertise, team members can enhance client care, improve communication, minimize errors, support client safety, and foster strong workplace relationships.

DISCUSSION OF EVIDENCE

According to the World Health Organization, **interprofessional collaboration** involves healthcare professionals working with clients, families, caregivers, and communities to deliver quality care across different settings. Interprofessional collaboration strengthens the healthcare system and contributes to the delivery of high-quality, safe, **person-centered care**.ⁱ

Teamwork is a collaborative approach that enables healthcare professionals to communicate effectively and make informed decisions. It supports an environment where everyone's knowledge and skills come together to enhance results and ensure client safety.

HCAs play an important role within the healthcare team. They work together with nurses, physicians, and other healthcare professionals to achieve shared goals and demonstrate values such as **accountability**, mutual **respect**, collaboration, and effective communication. When

¹ "In this document, "Health Care Aides (HCAs)" has the same meaning as "regulated member(s)" in the *Health Professions Act*.

everyone works as a team, it enhances client safety, improves health outcomes, and fosters a positive work environment.

INFORMED PRACTICE

HCAs are expected to understand their roles and collaborate effectively with other healthcare professionals to provide safe, high-quality care. This collaboration fosters mutual respect, strengthens communication, and supports a positive team environment.ⁱⁱ Research shows that effective teamwork improves the quality of care and client safety, strengthens health systems, and leads to better outcomes for clients.ⁱⁱⁱ

Interprofessional Collaboration Framework

The interprofessional collaboration framework below shows four core foundational competencies supported by six enabling competencies that promote collaborative practice. Together, these competencies support effective teamwork and recognize clients and families as essential partners in delivering high-quality, person-centered care.^{iv}

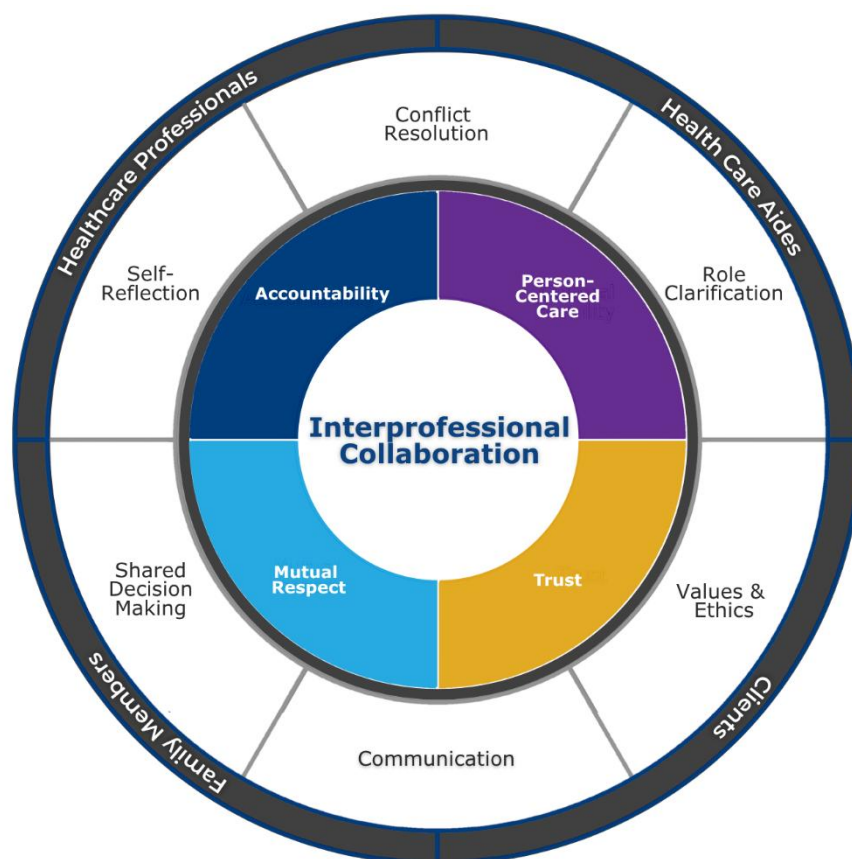


Fig. 1 Interprofessional collaboration framework



Accountability

- Complete assigned tasks and take responsibility for actions taken.
- Report to the supervisor if an error happens or if care was not delivered as per the care plan.



Person-Centered Care

- Understand and respect each client's needs, preferences, and choices.
- Advocate for and inform the larger healthcare team of the client's wishes.
- Learn from other healthcare professionals to improve teamwork and client outcomes.



Trust

- Keep your promises and do your part.
- Communicate openly, honestly, and respectfully.
- Ask for help and offer support when needed.
- Respect the knowledge, skills, and contributions of other team members.



Mutual Respect

- Appreciate and respect each team member's knowledge, training, scope of practice, and experience.
- Treat others the way you want to be treated.
- Listen actively and consider the opinions of clients, family members, and health professionals.



Conflict Resolution

- Address concerns early using **non-accusatory** statements like "I feel" rather than "you" in a private, safe space. This helps keep conversations open and positive.
- Respect everyone's ideas and contributions.
- Work together to find solutions.



Role Clarification

- Clearly communicate your role and responsibilities and educate others where necessary.
- Maintain accountability to your professional standards, regulatory requirements, and employer expectations.
- Recognize and respect the different roles, competencies, and contributions of other healthcare professionals.
- Acknowledge limits; seek help when needed.



Values & Ethics

- Respect and trust each other's roles, training, and professions.
- Create a safe space where all voices are heard.
- Consider organizational, regulatory, and personal values in discussions.



Communication

- Share clear and honest information in a timely manner.
- Identify and notify the appropriate team member who needs to receive or provide information.
- Use respectful, simple language, and avoid using medical terms when speaking with clients or families.



Shared Decision Making

- Follow person-centered care plans and work together on shared goals as a team of healthcare professionals.
- Contribute to shared tasks based on the team's role and scope, making decisions that benefit clients.
- Plan and make decisions together to achieve the best outcomes for clients.



Self-Reflection

- Participate in team discussions about what's going well and what can be improved.
- Reflect on your work together, share feedback, and look for ways to improve teamwork with other team members.
- Celebrate successes and give credit where it is due.

Benefits of Interprofessional Collaboration

- **Client satisfaction:** when healthcare professionals work well together, clients get quality care, clearer communication, and a person-centered approach, leading to more satisfaction and trust.^v
- **Family satisfaction:** when the team collaborates, families notice how well the care team communicates and works together and feel reassured that their loved ones are getting safe and proper care, making them happier.^{vi}
- **Staff engagement:** when staff feel part of a respectful and coordinated team, they feel more positive about their work and are satisfied with their jobs. Good teamwork reduces stress and builds better relationships at work.^{vii}
- **Supportive work environment:** working together creates a positive workplace, reduces stress, and encourages learning by sharing knowledge and skills.

- Client safety: teamwork leads to clear communication and timely care, reducing mistakes and improving client safety.
- Quality assurance: notifying others of safety incidents helps identify gaps and strengthens the team dynamics to prevent future risks.
- Efficiency: collaboration improves planning, defines processes, reduces delays, and helps clients receive care in a timely manner.
- Trust and accountability: building trust within the team is essential for shared responsibility and overall success.
- Enhance communication: teamwork promotes timely and accurate information-sharing, contributing to safer client care.^{viii}
- Promote professional development: collaborating with other healthcare professionals helps career growth, skill-building, and increases knowledge by learning from experienced team members.^{ix}

CONCLUSION

Effective teamwork among HCAs and other team members is essential to providing safe, high-quality client care. Through collaboration, shared knowledge, and mutual respect, teams improve communication, strengthen relationships, reduce errors, and create a more responsive, effective care environment for both clients and providers.

Continuous reflection and a commitment to learning foster trust, accountability, and professional growth, creating a safer, more responsive care environment and a stronger healthcare system.

Documents are updated frequently. For the most current version and access to the related documents and resources, please visit the Knowledge Hub on clha.com.

If after reading this document you have questions, please contact the Professional Practice Team via practice@clha.com or 780-484-8886 or 1-800-661-5877 (toll free in Alberta).

DEFINITIONS

Accountability: the duty to answer for the professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities of one's actions.

Authority: the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience. It can also mean the appropriate person to give orders or make decisions.

Client: an individual who receives a professional service from the HCA. The term client is interchangeable with patient and resident, depending on the work setting.

Govern: to lead, control, or manage an organization or group, often by creating rules and making decisions that guide their actions.

Non-accusatory: communicating or acting in a way that is free from blame, faulting or pointing fingers. It focuses on neutral facts, observations, and personal feelings to prevent the listener from feeling defensive.

Person-centered care: providing healthcare in a way that focuses on advocating for clients and respecting their choices, opinions, values, independence, and involvement in decisions. It also includes supporting their physical, mental, social, emotional, thinking, cultural, and spiritual needs.

Respect: treating clients and their families with dignity, considering their personal choices, and ensuring they have control over their own care while keeping their private information safe.

Self-reflection: the process of thinking about and examining your own thoughts, feelings, actions, and experiences to gain insight and improve one's practice.

REFERENCES

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- ^{viii} Xpress health, *The Importance of Teamwork for Health Care Assistants in Hospitals*, (2024), [Importance of Teamwork for Health Care Assistants in Hospitals](#)
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