**Interprofessional Education**

There is a big push for the inclusion of “interprofessional education” in all health sciences programs. For PT and PTA students, it is a CAPTE (accreditation) requirement.

**So, what is interprofessinal education (IPE) exactly?**

"Interprofessional education occurs when students (and/or professionals) from two or more professions learn about, from and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes"  
- [World Health Organization](http://www.who.int/hrh/resources/framework_action/en/), 2010

**Why is interprofessional education so important for my student?**

All health care professionals understand the importance of working in collaboration with other professionals to enhance continuity for the patient and improve overall outcomes. Learning the scope of practice of other health care professionals, the contributions other practitioners can make to patient care, and how to work together as a team are important skills that should not be withheld until students are licensed clinicians.

Students must have the opportunity to learn from other professionals and paraprofessionals while engaged in clinical education.

**How can I incorporate interprofessional education into my student’s clinical experience?**

**If there are other types of health care professionals onsite:**

* Utilize “down time” for the student to observe other professionals at work.
* Allow the student to observe you or other health care professionals collaborating in patient care.
* Schedule patient co-treatments that include your student and another professional.
* Include your student in Patient Care Conferences, Team Meetings, and Interdisciplinary Meetings, or Rounds. Allow them to report findings, as appropriate.
* Allow the student to review concepts with professionals from other specialties.
* Ask students to interview other clinicians about their profession (e.g. year of schooling, whether Assistants are used, primary scope of practice, entry-level qualifications, current “hot topics” in their profession,…).
* Don’t be an intermediary. Task students with going directly to other health care professionals to ask questions or report information related to a patient’s care.
* Allow the student to practice leadership skills by having the student delegate or “pass-off” certain tasks to other professionals or paraprofessionals, as appropriate.
* Schedule for your student to meet with other professionals to discuss collaboration in treatment planning and continuity of patient care.
* Challenge your student to identify when a consult from another health professional would be appropriate or necessary.
* **\*\***You can also utilize any of the suggestions below to enhance your student’s understanding of interprofessional care.

**If there are no employees from other health care professions:**

* Discuss the concept of “shared scopes of practice” between health professionals with the student. Explain how decisions are made regarding the roles of each professional in the care of a patient when this occurs.
* Even when co-treatment is not available or permitted, challenge the student to come up with ideas for developing a co-treatment for a particular patient (i.e. what would be the student’s role / what would be the other professional’s role in the patient’s care?)
* If there is another student at the clinical site, allow your student to discuss the role of other professionals with that student, regardless of whether the other student is from the same or a different profession.
* Schedule for the student to observe in a “sister facility” if that facility has more access to other professionals.
* When working with patients, discuss the potential usefulness of other health care professionals in the care of your patient. This could lead to the realization that a true need exists to refer a patient to an outside professional.
* Allow the student to observe your communications or ask them to communicate directly with Dr’s offices and / or insurance companies regarding patient issues.
* Ask the student to research information about the scopes of practice of other professionals and have them reflect upon how they can be a useful part of the rehabilitation team.
* Discuss with your student opportunities you have had to work with other professionals, and explain each professionals’ role.