

Barriers and Solutions

Interdisciplinary education in palliative care has traditionally been limited by a number of factors. These include:

- Logistics – complex asynchronous academic schedules
- Crowded curricula
- Geography – Learners in the health professions work at multiple sites and centralized space for interprofessional work typically does not exist
- Clinical sites with willing and training preceptors are limited
- Centralized leadership – health science leadership is most focused on individual schools or institutes. Who is empowered to cross the boundaries?
- Dedicated staff to coordinate the complexity across multiple disciplines schedules
- Trained faculty

Yes, cultural differences exist among the disciplines but we've found these are managed in true team fashion over time. The desire, and necessity, to implement interdisciplinary learner is a growing force against traditional silos.

Through the design and implementation of iCOPE we've found many solutions to these barriers.

- An interdisciplinary leadership council directs the program, encourages compromises in designs and structures, and keeps the goals to the forefront
- A dedicated staff member is the central administrative coordinating point
- Efficiency for learners
 - Use on-line methodologies for didactic, content-based learning
 - Make all learning case-based
 - Minimize learner inefficiencies in scheduling
 - Use focus groups to continue dynamic redesign on both content and structure
 - Use the precious and limited shoulder-to-shoulder time of learners effectively – to plan care of virtual patients in an interdisciplinary fashion
- Efficiency for faculty
 - In faculty development emphasize facilitation over teaching
 - Produce facilitator guides with all materials including tips and notes
 - Spread the facilitation load over all disciplines and minimize faculty preparation per session
- Continually nurture clinical sites and explore new ones
- Avoid curricular redundancy – you don't need to have all learning in your program. Fill the gaps.