‘Talking Walls’
Learning Resource Pack

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The RVC project team:
Tierney Kinnison, Perdi Welsh, Rachel Lumbis, Hilary Orpet, Sue Gregory, Sarah Baillie
Within the health care professions, we are becoming increasingly aware that working well interprofessionally may be key for treating patients effectively. The General Medical Council’s Tomorrow’s Doctors standards (2003) now includes the following in its curricular outcomes:

“Working with colleagues:
  a. Know about, understand and respect the roles and expertise of other health and social care professionals.
  b. Be able to demonstrate effective teamworking and leadership skills.
  c. Be willing to lead when faced with uncertainty and change”

Veterinary educators also realize the importance of advancing their students’ interprofessional skills, hence the creation of three resources which can be used separately or together as a unit. We define interprofessional skills as those abilities that allow professionals to work efficiently and effectively in a multi-professional team. CAIPE (Centre For The Advancement Of Interprofessional Education) in 2002 defined Interprofessional Education (IPE) as

“Occurring when two or more professions learn with, from and about each other to improve collaboration and the quality of care”

Interprofessional skills centre around good communication and an appreciative knowledge of the skills and roles of other professions, this can be seen in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Characteristics of an effective health care team (Sargeant, Loney and Murphy, 2008).
‘Talking Walls’ as a Technique to Enhance Interprofessional Learning

Resource Type: Small interprofessional group activity to improve the knowledge of roles and responsibilities of other professions.

Talking Walls was first described by Parsell, Gibbs and Bligh in 1998. The paper is entitled ‘Three Visual Techniques to enhance interprofessional learning’ and can be accessed via PubMedCentral. The following information comes from this paper.

Talking walls is a simple technique adapted from commercial situations of exploring issues, analyzing problems or developing action plans. It is used in this case to encourage students to explore the roles of other professions and start discussions with members of professions they will work closely with in future, but have little contact with during their separate educations.

The technique has been used by several studies, including the following;

- Parsell, Spalding and Bligh (1998) in their ‘Evaluation of a multiprofessional course for undergraduate students’
- Coster et al. (2008) in their paper ‘Interprofessional attitudes amongst undergraduate students in the health professions: A longitudinal questionnaire survey’
- Heath et al. (2008) in their paper ‘Building interprofessional primary care capacity in mental health services in rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador: An innovative training model’
- The Quality Improvement and Innovation Partnership (2009) for ‘Supporting Ontario’s family health teams’ in the module ‘Clarifying roles and expectations’
Equipment

- A room big enough for the class to spread out around the outside in small groups and sit in the middle as a large group

Set up the room as follows (e.g. for a class of approx 30):

- Computer and projection for introduction, with PowerPoint
- Per sub-group (see guidelines for sub-group size below):
  - Two flipcharts or ‘wall-pad’ sheets with the name of each profession written on top
  - Two red marker pens and two blue marker pens (or any neutral plus bold colour combination)
  - A4 paper and pen
Method

Summary Session Plan:

- Introduction to the session and split into sub-groups: 20 min
- Intra-professions create flipchart of other profession’s roles and duties: 15 min
- Intra-professional correction of their own profession’s flipchart: 10 min
- Sub-group discussion and compilation of misconception list: 10 min
- Whole group discussion of common misconceptions, inaccuracies, missing items, comparison with practicing professionals, overlapping of roles, diversity of the professions, benefit of IPL: 25 min

Therefore a session would last approximately 90 minutes

The PowerPoint presentation below can be used to introduce your class to the session. It can be accessed on the Royal Veterinary College’s LIVE Centre website, under the activity Professionalism [http://www.live.ac.uk/html/activities_professionalism.html](http://www.live.ac.uk/html/activities_professionalism.html). The notes beside the slides will instruct you how to carry out the session.
Although in practice vets and veterinary nurses will work with other professions (receptionists/practice managers for example) in this case, the resources concentrate on the most frequent interaction i.e. that between the vet and the nurse. The production of these resources was one of the first attempts to use IPE in veterinary education, whereby veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses actually train together.
Overview of the session
A quick run through of what the students will do, the following slides will go over it in more detail

A sub-group must consist of both veterinary students and veterinary nursing students
It is unadvisable for only one student from a profession to be in a group, as they would have no one to discuss ideas with during the first task
The sub-group size should preferably not exceed 8
However, this is likely to be difficult in the vet/vet nurse situation e.g. at the RVC 200 vet students: 60 VN students in a year
Hence the 7:2 ratio in a subgroup indicated on the slide (3 groups in a class = 21 vets, 6 nurses -> 10 classes for a year group)
Split the students into the sub-groups now

Task 1.
The sub-groups must again split, into the two professions
Ask the veterinary surgeon students to stand by the VN board, and vice versa
The set up for the room is as shown in the Equipment section above
In their professional groups, the students must decide what are the roles and duties of the other profession
They can be broad or specific and they do not have to be exclusive to that profession i.e. both professions may have the role ‘discharge patients’
They write these on the board in blue/green or black
They are allocated 15 minutes for this task
Task 2. Room set-up does not change
Ask the students to swap round so that they are standing by their own profession’s flip chart
They should now go over what the other students have said and delete any misconceptions (with a single red line so it is still legible), make amendments and add other roles or duties
They are allocated 10 minutes for this task

Task 3. See below for room set-up
The veterinary surgeon students and VN students come back together in their sub-groups
They are given a piece of A4 paper and a pen
Ask them to go over what they have written on the flip charts with each other
Ask the VNs to start with their chart. They should comment on things the vet students got right and wrong
Add the misconceptions to the A4 paper as a list
Then the vets have their go
The students should ask each other why they thought certain things, they have the chance here to overcome prior assumptions and learn about each other
They are allocated 10 minutes for this task
Task 4. See below for room set up
As a whole class, go over the sub-group’s misconception lists

Also ask about general outcomes from the groups’ chats, such as minor amendments or completely missing roles

Ask them to consider if the professional’s suggestions were any different to their own

This may help them to understand the other profession’s role, as well as practicing vets’/VNs’ idea of their own profession’s role

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### Points to discuss:
- Did you have any misconceptions about each other?
- Try to explain to each other why the misconceptions are not true
- How about inaccuracies and missing items?

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### Practicing Vets’ & VNs’ view of a VN’s Role

Are these suggestions any different to yours?

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### Practicing Vets’ and VNs’ view of a Vet’s Role

Are these suggestions any different to yours?
Task 5. See below for set up
Ask them to reflect upon the diverse nature of vet and VN roles
Ask them to consider if vets and VNs have many common roles
Ask them about the benefits of interprofessional learning

To encourage participation, you could go around the circle, asking for any new misconceptions etc. Or you could ask a sub-group rather than individuals
You are allocated 25 minutes for the group discussion
Interprofessional Skills ‘Talking Walls’ Session

An Introduction to the Concept of Interprofessional Skills

The veterinary clinic is a multi-professional health-care team consisting of veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses along with receptionists, a practice manager etc. Each profession works closely with the others to achieve the common goal of patient care. It is becoming increasingly evident that in order for a multi-professional team (for example veterinary surgeons and nurses) to work in an efficient and effective way, maximising the benefit to their patient, they need to have good interprofessional skills. These skills should be developed as early as possible during academic studies.

Interprofessional skills centre around good communication and an appreciative knowledge of the skills and roles of other professions (Figure 1).

Today’s session will bring veterinary students and veterinary nursing students together to enable you to find out how much you really know about each other’s profession.

Learning Objectives:
1. Appreciate the role of other professions within a veterinary clinic
2. Identify common misconceptions with regard to professional roles
3. Describe your own role within a veterinary clinic
4. Improve communication skills with members of a different profession
‘Talking Walls’ Activity
‘Talking Walls’ is a visual technique to understand and enhance interprofessional learning and was described by Parsell, Gibbs and Bligh in 1998.

Session Plan:
- Introductory Presentation
- Divide into small groups of both vets and vet nurses
- ‘Talking Walls’ activity, see PowerPoint slide below:

![Talking Walls](image)

- To understand and enhance interprofessional learning – Parsell, Gibbs and Bligh (1998)
- Two Flipcharts – ‘The Veterinary Surgeon’ ‘The Veterinary Nurse’
  Write the **roles and duties** of the other profession on their chart
- Go over your own profession’s chart – deleting, amending and adding
- Mini group discussion – creation of misconception list
- Large group discussion

References:
References


