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# AN INTER-PROFESSIONAL APPROACH TO DOMESTIC ABUSE AND CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING

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## INTRODUCTION

Domestic abuse (DA) and Child Protection (CP) are complex inter-related issues requiring multi-professional expertise. High profile policy reviews published by The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) persistently identify training deficiencies among frontline primary health and social care professionals. Inter-Professional Education (IPE) has shown benefit in certain healthcare settings and it was proposed to promote domestic abuse awareness through collaborative learning.

An IPE event was therefore organised at postgraduate level amongst a group of General Practice Registrars, Social Workers, Health Visitors, Midwives, and School Nurses through a workshop overseen by GP Programme Directors and Educators from Canterbury Christchurch University.

## METHODS

Retrospective evaluation study of the IPE session using questionnaires to explore the perception of 4 facilitators and 120 multi-professionals including Social Workers, GP Trainees, School Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors.

The day consisted of formal presentations including facilitation of interactive group discussions using:

- Mixed tables
- Videos
- Discussion and Debates

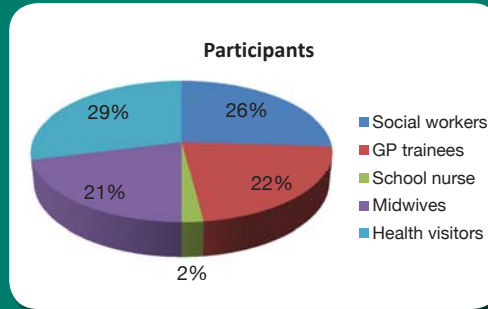


We evaluated the following:

- The IPE approach to training on Domestic Abuse and Child Protection
- Their experience of the IPE training
- The impact of the training on their future practice

## RESULTS

Number of learners in attendance at the workshop



### Increased Awareness of Domestic Abuse and Child Protection

Participants were more knowledgeable about Domestic Abuse and Child protection. There was increased recognition of their roles and that of other professionals. They were also more aware of how to access resources and support services available.

### Collaborative Learning

All participants agreed that a collaborative approach enabled learning with, from and about one another. It fostered the opportunity for sharing experiences and joint practice to improve patient outcome. It also highlighted the significance of inter-professional education.

### Opportunity for Networking with Other Professionals

95% of participants felt that the opportunity for inter-professional networking was excellent. When asked if the session should have been organised differently, F1(Facilitator 1) gave this comment:

*"The session would still be relevant but would lose richness of sharing different perspectives, fears and concerns. The networking that took place during the day was invaluable"*

### Positive Impact on Future Clinical Practice

For majority of participants, there was motivation to actively tackle the issues of Domestic Abuse and Child protection in their individual clinical practice. One of the action points generated from the session:

General Practitioner Trainee:

*"Ensure information on domestic abuse signposting is readily available at work - including my surgery"*

### Challenges of an Inter-Professional Educational Event

Participants recognised variances in knowledge and experience of Domestic Abuse and Child protection among one another and also variances in quality and expertise of facilitation and that such educational events require intensive preparation and high quality facilitation

## OVERALL PERCEPTION

Comments from participants to sum up their experience of the day include:

*"Excellent, valuable and informative day. Very good multi-professional approach"*

*"A welcome refresher on the subject, feel more equipped!"*

*"The inter-professional group discussion was most useful. Thank you!"*

## CONCLUSION

Inter-professional learning is increasingly becoming an important integral part of many health and social care professional programmes throughout the United Kingdom.

Broad recognition for IPE in bolstering knowledge of domestic abuse was evident in the study. Furthermore, the group anticipated IPE would break inter-professional barriers. This will contribute toward transformative care for victims of domestic abuse through enhanced, collaborative, professional working which would likely reflect in key outcome measures. It was deemed relevant and effective within the scope of domestic abuse training among primary care givers and educators.

The group's negative perceptions were based upon variances in knowledge, experience and attitude of fellow group-members, and the requirement of intensive preparation and high quality facilitation. Facilitators need to be trained adequately to provide learning in an IPE environment.

Recommendations for further research and practice on an IPE approach to Domestic Abuse and Child Protection, should focus on ongoing creation and sustainability of collaborative learning and behaviour in the workplace.