Enhancing Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Team-Based Care in the Times of COVID-19
The Role of Relational Coordination

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Disclosures

The following speakers disclose no actual or potential conflicts of interest in relation to this program/presentation:

• Brigid Connelly
• Heather M. Gilmartin
• Christine D. Jones

The contents of this presentation do not represent the views of the Department of Veterans Affairs or the United States Government.
Workshop Objectives

Interactive

Relational Coordination

Relational Coordination in Practice
Introductions
Interdisciplinary Collaboration & Team-Based Care

Christine D. Jones, MD, MS
Investigator, Hospitalist
Rocky Mountain Regional VAMC
University of Colorado
What is a Team?

• A team is a group of individuals working together to achieve common goals.
• Ideal teams consist of members with complementary skills that generate synergy through a coordinated effort.
• Allows each member to maximize their strengths and minimize their weaknesses.

Gittell, 2016; Edmondson, 2014; Salas, 2013 & 2013
Independent v. Interdisciplinary Work

**Independent Work**
- Solo Activity = Triathlete
  - Tasks and projects are completed
  - Every person in the job performs the same tasks – standardized and structured work
  - Individual success is primarily due to individual effort
  - How one person performs has no direct effect on others

**Interdisciplinary Work**
- Medical Team = Soccer Team
  - No important task can be accomplished without the help of another
  - People specialize in different tasks (hospitalist, nurse, lab tech, housekeeper)
  - Success of every person is bound to the success of the entire team
  - No medical team, no matter how talented, has ever cared for a hospitalized patient alone

Salas, 2019; Baker, 2006; Hughes, 2016
Impacts of High Performing Teams

• High performing teams can collaboratively:
  • Increase productivity
  • Efficiently implement resources
  • Make better decisions
  • Actively problem-solve
  • Provide better quality service
  • Successfully innovate
  • Contribute to the personal well-being and growth of its members
  • Deliver high quality and safe patient care

Gittell, 2016; Edmondson, 2014; Salas, 2013 & 2013
Challenges to Interdisciplinary Collaboration

• COVID-19 as an example
  • Inability to meet
    • No in-person meetings = fewer chances to collaborate
  • Anxiety, Stress & Grief
    • Multifactorial causes + uncertainty + loss of control + security concerns
  • Real-time recognition of interdisciplinary teams
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

**Before COVID-19**
- **Self-Actualization Needs**: Leads and motivates, subject matter expert, independent
- **Esteem Needs**: Recognition, feeling of accomplishment
  - Recognition in regular in-person group meetings
- **Belonging Needs**: Co-operative colleagues, supportive bosses
  - In-person group meetings with colleagues, mentors
- **Safety Needs**: Stable employment, safe work environment
  - More dependable, consistent, external stressors present. More predictable
- **Physiological Needs**: Salary, basic mental health

**After COVID-19**
- **Self-Actualization Needs**: Motivation is compromised due to limited infrastructure and communication channels
- **Esteem Needs**: Challenges with real-time, in-person recognition. Esteem needs compromised
  - Communication flow compromised – no impromptu chats/coffees
- **Belonging Needs**: Co-operative colleagues, supportive bosses
- **Safety Needs**: Stable employment, safe work environment
  - Multifactorial anxiety, uncontrollable stressors (stop the pandemic?!?), job security concerns, grief

Case Presentation

Small prior strokes

Moderate dementia

Aspirin

Statin

Could benefit from PT/OT

Wife has a progressive medical condition
Open Discussion

Does this case sound familiar?

What team members would you work with to support this Veteran?
- Inpatient
- Outpatient

What challenges do you anticipate?
Relational Coordination

Brigid Connelly, BA
Professional Research Assistant
Program Manager
Denver/Seattle Center of Innovation
Relational Coordination

Relationships

- Shared Goals
  - Shared goals for the work process
- Shared Knowledge
  - Understanding the role of others in the work process
- Mutual Respect
  - Valuing and respecting the role of others in the work process

Communication

- Frequent Communication
  - Perceived as sufficiently frequent
- Timely Communication
  - Perceived as on time & received when needed
- Accurate Communication
  - Perceived as accurate
- Problem-Solving Communication
  - When problems arise, solutions are sought over placing blame
A Relational Theory of Performance

RC matters most for work that is complex, uncertain and time constrained
Relational Coordination for High Performance

- Culture that supports process improvement
- Visualization of connections
- Relationships = positive emotions
### Performance Outcomes

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<th>Efficiency</th>
<th>Worker Engagement</th>
<th>Client Engagement</th>
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Impact of relational coordination on staff and patient outcomes in outpatient surgical clinics

This study sought to explore relational coordination (RC) as it relates to job satisfaction and retention in a military context. RC levels within and between roles were significantly positively associated with job satisfaction and a higher intent to stay. Authors recommend hospital leaders in MTFs explore interventions to strengthen RC as part of any strategy to retain military healthcare professionals.

Family well-being in a participant-directed autism waiver program: the role of relational coordination

Parenting stress
Service environment
Primary caregiver health
Behavioral problems
Impact on family functioning

Open Discussion

What do you like about the relational coordination framework?

What do you wish you knew more about?

How do you see relational coordination being used in practice?
Thank you for working with Mr. Smith in your primary care practice. I am an attending hospitalist at the Denver VA. The goal of this email is to coordinate care for Mr. Smith as we are planning to discharge him with home health care services tomorrow.

During this admission, [medical information]

Problems we anticipate post-discharge include:
- The family's uncertainty about their ability to continue caring for him at home long-term for his wife is having her own healthcare issues.
- They want to honor the patient’s wishes to go home.
- They will need support with a Medicaid application for possible nursing home placement

To address these issues:
- Our social worker met with the family and reviewed the Medicaid paperwork

If you have additional ideas or concerns, please send me a Teams message (Christine.Jones17@va.gov).

I appreciate your help and look forward to working with you to ensure a safe transition for Mr. Smith.
Relational Coordination in Practice

Heather M. Gilmartin, PhD, NP
Investigator, Nurse Scientist
Denver/Seattle Center of Innovation
University of Colorado
Relational + Structural Interventions = Outcomes

Relational Interventions
- Relational assessment
- Assess current state
- Identify desired state
- Experiment to close the gap
- Coaching/facilitation

Structural Interventions
- Relational Job Design
- Select for Teamwork
- Train for Teamwork
- Shared Accountability
- Shared Rewards
- Shared Conflict Resolution
- Boundary Spanner Roles
- Shared Meetings & Huddles
- Shared Protocols
- Shared Information Systems

Outcomes
- High fidelity
- High relational coordination
- Increased access to care
- Increase Veteran satisfaction
- Increased provider satisfaction
- Mortality Reduction
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### Relational Coordination Survey

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<th>Question</th>
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<td>Frequent Communication</td>
<td>How <em>frequently</em> do people in each of these groups communicate with you about [focal work process]?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timely Communication</td>
<td>Do they communicate with you in a <em>timely</em> way about [focal work process]?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate Communication</td>
<td>Do they communicate with you <em>accurately</em> about [focal work process]?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>When there is a problem in [focal work process], do people in each of these groups blame others or work with you to <em>solve</em> the problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Goals</td>
<td>Do people in each of these groups <em>share your goals</em> for [focal work process]?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Knowledge</td>
<td>Do people in each of these groups <em>know</em> about the work you do with [focal work process]?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Respect</td>
<td>Do people in each of these groups <em>respect</em> the work you do with [focal work process]?</td>
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Effectiveness of the rural transitions nurse program for Veterans: A multicenter implementation study

Study Findings (n = 3,001 TNP, 6,002 controls)

- Positive impact TNP enrolled Veterans:
  - Greater 14-day follow-up
    - [OR 2.24, 95% CI 2.05-2.45]
  - Reduced 30-day mortality
    - [HR 0.33, 95% CI 0.21-0.53]

- No impact between TNP and controls:
  - 30-day ED visits
  - 30-day readmissions
Opportunity for VAMCs to improve care transitions using relational coordination – email Christine.jones@cuanschutz.edu or Christine.jones17@va.gov to learn more!
Relational Coordination

Relationships
- Shared Goals
  The extent to which other workgroups are seen as having shared goals for the work process.
- Shared Knowledge
  The extent to which other workgroups are seen as understanding the role of others in the work process.
- Mutual Respect
  The extent to which other workgroups are seen as valuing and respecting the role of others in the work process.

Communication
- Frequent Communication
  The extent to which communication from other workgroups is seen as sufficiently frequent.
- Timely Communication
  The extent to which communication from other workgroups is seen as on time, received when needed.
- Accurate Communication
  The extent to which communication from other workgroups is seen as accurate.
- Problem-Solving Communication
  When problems arise, the extent to which other workgroups are seen as seeking solutions more so than placing blame.
Relational Coordination in the VA

Now Accepting Applications to Use Survey Through End of 2022!

Is your workplace like this?

PATIENT: Why hasn’t anyone told me when I’ll be discharged?

PROVIDER: Why hasn’t this patient been discharged yet?

Or is it like this?

PROVIDER: I’m really happy to be a part of this team!

CAREGIVER: My mom’s care team has been so coordinated!

Performance Outcomes of Relational Coordination

Quality  Worker Engagement  Financial  Patient Engagement  Safety  Learning and Innovation

To Learn More Visit:
https://www.seattledenvercoin.research.va.gov/education/rc/
THANK YOU
References


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