

Public Health Association of BC Intersectoral Competency Statements

Introduction

In 2008, the Public Health Association of British Columbia (PHABC) conducted an extensive needs assessment to identify the workforce competencies required to implement the BC Ministry of Health's *Framework for Core Functions in Public Health*. The needs assessment identified several competencies (referred to as "BC priority competencies") in addition to the national Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada. One of the identified priority competencies was **intersectoral action (ISA)** (a.k.a., intersectoral collaboration). Since 2008, extensive work has been done to support the BC public health workforce achieve the core and BC priority competencies. This includes development of tools and resources for a number of the priority competencies, as well as an analysis to ensure the needs assessment findings were still relevant with the BC Ministry of Health's *Guiding Framework for Public Health* (2013).

More recently, to support ISA competency, a process was undertaken to develop ISA competency statements. This included:

1. A scan of existing public health competency frameworks related to ISA. Four relevant frameworks were identified (see appendices A to D).
2. A review of the four frameworks by two focus groups comprised of diverse BC public health practitioners and scholars (N=10). Of the >100 competency elements mentioned in the framework, the focus group participants indicated 66 elements they felt were most important and relevant to the BC context (see appendix E).
3. A comparison of the 66 competency domains derived from the focus group data and the environmental scan and the Core competencies for public health. The results are utilized below to develop a draft set of ISA competency statements.
4. A focus group with Northern Health, including front line and manager/director level staff, (N=10) to finalize the competency statements.

Definitions of Intersectoral Collaboration/Action

Intersectoral Action: "A recognized relationship between part or parts of the health sector with part or parts of another sector which has been formed to take action on an issue to achieve health outcomes...in a way that is more effective, efficient or sustainable than could be achieved by the health sector acting alone" (WHO 1997, p.3.).

Intersectoral collaboration in a population health approach includes the horizontal management of health issues. Horizontal management identifies common goals among sectoral partners. It then ensures coordinated planning, development and implementation of their related policies, programs and services" (<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/collab/index-eng.php>).

Interprofessional	Intersectoral
Work in a defined place	Sectors where public health does not have a defined place.

Work with someone within the broad discipline of the health sector i.e. doctor, nurse, nutritionist, physiotherapist	Work with people in other spheres that impact public health i.e. city planners
Multi-disciplinary. Disciplines have their own culture and conceptual understandings.	Moving beyond the domains we have control and influence over.
Multi/inter/disciplinary approach	Different professional designations as well as community members.

Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada: Release 1.0

All the competency areas identified in the *Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada: Release 1.0* (<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ccph-cesp/pdfs/zcard-eng.pdf>) are relevant and required when working on intersectoral collaboration. The following themes emerged from our focus group consultation and environmental scan: Principles, Knowledge and Values; Communication Skills; Partnership and Collaborative Practice; Patient-Centred and Family-Focused Care; Analysis and Assessment; Policy and Program Development; and Leadership and Team Functioning.

Please note

An intersectoral lens can be applied to all the public health core competences. The set of competency statements identified below highlight the competencies considered to be essential for the health sector to work with other sectors.

Public Health Principles, Knowledge and Values

Able to:

1. Establish a safe environment for expression of diverse opinions with respect, reciprocity, and multiplicity across sectors.
2. Develop and implement processes for working together that respects the values of members from all sectors.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of how health equity is associated with the social determinants of health and able to communicate this knowledge to other sectors.
4. Understand and apply a population and determinants of health approach, using equity and social justice practices to improve the health and well-being of communities and populations while working with outside sectors.

Communication Skills

Able to:

5. Be self-reflective about one's own position and how that may impact partnership and collaboration with other sectors and be open and receptive to outside sector values.
6. Use common language and best practices to articulate public health values in framing and communicating with outside sectors.
7. Use multiple media tools and communication modalities (including social media) to communicate and enhance intersectoral work.

8. Be attentive and ready to engage in active listening and collective learning.

Partnership and Collaborative Practice

Able to:

9. Cultivate vital collaborative relationships and increase connectivity with other professionals, organizations, the public, both within and outside the health sector.
10. Gather and mobilize knowledge and information to encourage an open exchange.
11. Articulate and utilize the strengths/assets that the public health and other sectors can bring to intersectoral collaboration.

Analysis and Assessment

Able to:

12. When working with other sectors, ensure community is an equal partner and contributor in information collecting and analyzing processes.
13. Think critically at a systems level, recognizing the interrelationships among and between factors that affect the health of populations.
14. Use knowledge, data, and evidence to anticipate and meet challenges, and to influence decision-making in a range of political and partnership environments.

Policy and Program Development

Able to:

15. Understand and influence political and policy agendas across sectors and recognize priorities, linkages, and synergies.
16. Connect with relevant stakeholders to collaboratively set goals and priorities to operationalize strategies and programs for improving population health and wellbeing.
17. Engage government, non government organizations, and community in the design and development of Public Health services.

Leadership and Team Functioning

Able to:

18. Understand and navigate unequal power relations in collaborative work.
19. Collaborate in identifying and maintaining appropriate leadership and supportive roles for all partnership members.
20. Contribute to and work towards transformation and positive change that will advance intersectoral collaboration.
21. Understand other organizations and help partners move initiatives through their own organizational cultures.