

The interdisciplinary approach



Context

- People who acquire a brain injury may present with a broad range of symptoms.
- Traditional treatment approaches to brain injury rehabilitation have involved specialists working in isolation and focusing on their area of expertise.
- This approach can be fragmented and fail to address the interconnected nature of brain functions and their impact on the wellbeing of the person served.
- Acquired brain injury (ABI) rehabilitation requires a holistic multi-faceted approach, best achieved through interdisciplinary teamwork.



What is an interdisciplinary team?

- An interdisciplinary team brings together specialists from various backgrounds to **combine** their expertise to provide a more comprehensive and cohesive experience of rehabilitation for the person served, which should lead on to better rehabilitation outcomes.
- It goes beyond multidisciplinary working (professionals working in parallel) by integrating skills, knowledge, and perspectives to provide coordinated, holistic, person-centred services.
- It means that the rehabilitation professionals work together as a team **with a degree of overlap** of their traditional discipline boundaries.



Why do we use an interdisciplinary approach?

- It is widely considered the gold standard in community-based rehabilitation.
- The interdisciplinary CARF standards are the foundations for our rehabilitation programmes.
- The person served is central to all processes.
- It is an efficient way to deliver services.
- The shared team learning fosters collaboration for optimum service delivery.



Many of the first steps in rehabilitation include fatigue management, establishing structure and routine, activation and goal management. These fundamental steps are not the preserve of a single discipline, and indeed should be competencies of all rehabilitation professionals. (Dr Brian McClean)



What does an interdisciplinary approach look like in practice?

- Each member brings their unique perspectives and skillsets to the team.
- All contributions are valued and respected.
- There is collaborative team decision making throughout the processes.
- If consensus cannot be reached in the team, the issue is escalated to the National Service Manager for support.
- The team can provide rehabilitation that addresses a variety of needs
- The person served does not have to navigate multiple avenues to access support from different disciplines, if those disciplines are all on the one clinical team.