



## Five ways for educators and practitioners to use the complex care core competencies in education

October 2020

In 2020, a diverse interprofessional working group convened by the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers' National Center for Complex Health and Social Needs (National Center) developed the first ever set of **core competencies for the field of complex care**. The core competencies provide a framework for the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that every complex care team member, regardless of discipline, needs to have.

The National Center will be developing additional content independently and with partners to put the core competencies into practice, including curriculum, standards, and other resources, in the months and years ahead. The complex care community has an opportunity to drive field development grounded in the perspectives of teams providing and of individuals receiving complex care. We look to organizations and programs providing complex care and individuals receiving complex care to collaborate and fuel the development of a full curriculum over time.

In the meantime, we believe the competencies themselves are a valuable tool that educators and practitioners can use to advance their own work and support their patients/clients and those individuals' caregivers and families, as well as students, colleagues, and employees. We are excited to see how you use the competencies to advance your own practice at the individual, team, and program levels and are interested in using those insights to further advance the field of complex care. Please share with us how you're using the competencies and what tools you would like to see at

[www.nationalcomplex.care/core-competencies](http://www.nationalcomplex.care/core-competencies).

Here are five ways that educators can use these competencies in training the future complex care workforce:

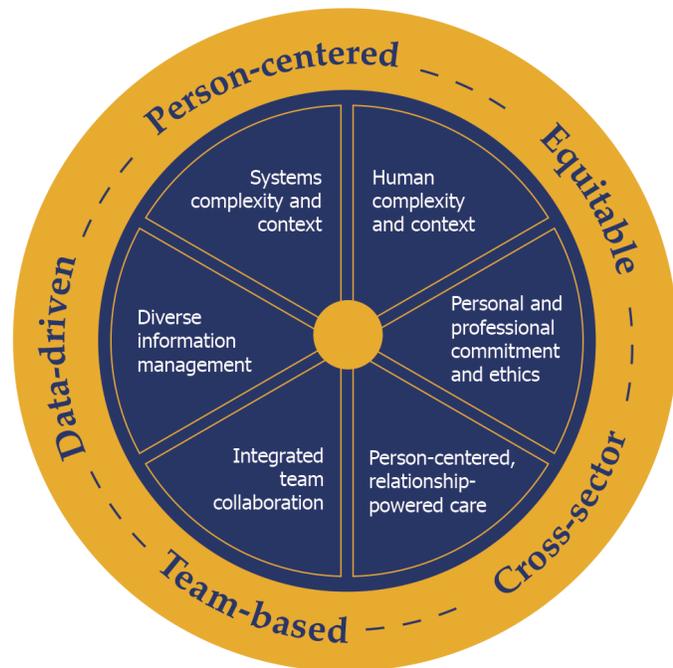


Figure 1. The principles of complex care and the domains of the complex care core competencies.

## 1. Integrate into curricula

While health professions education programs are paying increasing attention to the social determinants of health and other core elements of complex care, the standard curriculum does not address many of the complex care competencies. Educators who teach entry level or preclinical courses may want to introduce elements of the core competencies, while those who teach upper level courses can compare these competencies to their current curriculum and identify gaps. These gaps can be opportunities for additional lectures, discussions, activities, and clinical experiences focusing on populations experiencing complex needs and the competencies necessary for providing complex care.

The Camden Coalition's **Interprofessional Student Hotspotting Learning Collaborative** is an annual program that trains interdisciplinary teams of professional students from schools around the country to learn to address complex medical and social needs using a patient-centered approach. This program is anchored in health professions schools and enhances curricula by offering a standardized and experiential way of teaching future complex care team members and other practitioners the competencies they need to succeed.

Alternatively, educators may consider developing new courses or clinical teaching methods focused on complex care competencies where they aren't covered by existing courses. Examples could include understanding and treating individual and community level trauma, leadership skills in community health, patient-centered outcomes research methods, and quality improvement projects. If you are interested in partnering with the National Center on curriculum development, please let us know at [www.nationalcomplex.care/core-competencies](http://www.nationalcomplex.care/core-competencies).

## 2. Integrate into existing experiential education

Experiential education is a core component of complex care education. Experiential education opportunities, including practicums, as well as leadership, residency, internship, and fellowship programs, exist in all types of settings - not just universities. Educators and practitioners who lead and teach these programs can assess their programs for gaps in the curriculum and accreditation requirements based on the complex care core competencies. The competencies can then provide a framework for integrating complex care knowledge, skills, and attitudes into existing didactic and experiential education.

## 3. Learn from people with lived experience of complex health and social needs

A deep understanding and respect for the resilience and strengths of people living with complex needs is central to the field of complex care and its associated competencies. Educators can guide competency development and accentuate the value of lived experience by partnering with the National Center's **Amplify: A consumer voices bureau** or connecting to local organizations who can identify individuals receiving complex care for grand rounds or lectures. People who have participated in complex care programs, are currently experiencing complex needs, or who have served as advocates for their communities and loved ones provide a critical perspective for future complex care providers and help explain the impact good complex care practice can have on health and well-being.

## 4. Learn from cross-sector partners

Future complex care workforce members will closely collaborate with cross-sector partners. Educators can invite leaders and frontline practitioners from organizations in other sectors (e.g., a social work program might bring in someone from healthcare, public health, or criminal justice; a nursing program might bring in someone from social services, child welfare, or supportive housing) to share with students how their complex care work intersects with other sectors and how they partner with and coordinate workflows across organizations. Foundations in cross-sector education will support the future workforce in building and practicing in a more seamless, supportive system of care delivery.

## 5. Communicate the practice of complex care

The complex care core competencies can be used as tools for communicating within educational institutions regarding how complex care practice is different from traditional care. The core competencies outline how a complex care team differs from other care teams in the level and type of care provided. The competencies can be used to articulate why complex care and the investment in complex care education has benefits for patients/clients, practitioners, and systems.

### About the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers

We are a multidisciplinary nonprofit working to improve care for people with complex health and social needs in Camden, NJ, and across the country. The Camden Coalition works to advance the field of **complex care** by implementing person-centered programs and piloting new models that address chronic illness and social barriers to health and wellbeing. Supported by a robust data infrastructure, cross-sector convening, and shared learning, our community-based programs deliver better care to the most vulnerable individuals **in Camden** and **regionally**.

The **National Center for Complex Health and Social Needs** (National Center), an initiative of the Camden Coalition, connects complex care practitioners with each other and supports the field with tools and resources that move complex care forward. The National Center's founding sponsors are the Atlantic Philanthropies, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and AARP.

For more information about the Camden Coalition, visit [www.camdenhealth.org](http://www.camdenhealth.org).