

Fear in a Hat

Fear in a Hat is a teambuilding exercise that promotes unity and group cohesion. Individuals write their personal fears (anonymously) on sheets of paper which are then collected in a hat and read aloud. Each person tries to describe his or her understanding of the person's fear. This leads to good discussion centered on the fears.

For the purpose of Interprofessional Team Building in a health care setting, instead of a personal fear, write down a fear that a patient may feel or encounter when they come to hospital or are in the care of your team. This exercise is a good lead in to discussion around patient and family centered care and the role of the IP team.

Required Items/Time:

This teambuilding exercise requires writing utensils, sheets of paper, and a hat (or container of some sort). Allow about five minutes of writing time, plus one to two minutes per participant. The recommended group size is at least six, but no larger than 20.

Setup for Fear in a Hat:

Distribute a sheet of paper and a writing utensil to each person. Instruct them to anonymously write a fear or worry that they have (or in our case, that they can imagine their patients having). Tell them to be as specific and as honest as possible. After everyone is done writing a fear/worry, collect each sheet into a large hat.

Running the Fear in a Hat Teambuilding Activity

Shuffle the sheets and pass out one per person. Take turns reading one fear aloud, and each reader should attempt to explain what she thinks the person who wrote the fear means. Do not allow any sort of comments on what the reader said. Simply listen and go on to the next reader.

After all fears have been read and elaborated, discuss as a whole group what some of the common fears were. This teambuilding exercise can easily lead to a discussion of a team contract, or goals that the group wishes to achieve.