

**The National Center for Integrative Primary Healthcare - Enhancing Interprofessional
Integrative Health Education**

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Abstract:

Background: Clinical and cost effectiveness evidence for integrative healthcare (IH) is accruing; however a shortage of trained IH providers exists. The National Center for Integrative Primary Healthcare was established to address this need. The goal is to transform primary care education to include an emphasis on providing an interprofessional IH approach to patient care.

Method: A 45-hour online interprofessional IH course, Foundations in Integrative Health (FIH) was pilot-tested in primary care training programs. Units include: Introduction to IH; Prevention and Lifestyle; Healthcare Professional Wellbeing; Addressing Patients through an Integrative Lens; Integrative Interventions; and Community Settings and Systems. A unit evaluation survey assesses met objectives, educational depth, clinical utility, helpfulness of resources and reflections, and technology. A final evaluation assesses interest in applying IH principles in practice, desire to seek additional IH education, course enhanced educational experience, recommend course, incorporation of self-care practices, and site leader support for completing and relating course to training. Items are rated on a 5-point scale.

Results: 647 completed the course. Units were highly rated: met objectives (4.4), technology (4.2), clinical utility (4.1), resources helpful (3.8), reflections helpful (3.8), educational depth (3.7) and sharing reflections helpful (3.2). A majority (60-73%) recommended incorporating the units. Final survey ratings were also positive: interest in applying (4.5), seek additional IH education (4.3), course enhanced educational experience (4.3), recommend to others (4.2), and leader support for course completion (3.8) and integrating material (3.7). Two-thirds reported incorporating new self-care practices.

Conclusions: The FIH course can serve as a foundation in transforming health education. Online courses address time, cost, and curriculum consistency challenges and can be widely disseminated.

Public Health Implications: Public health is a clinical profession that contributes to IH with a history of embracing interactions between society, culture, medicine and community health. This course provides a foundation on which to build an IH training program.

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