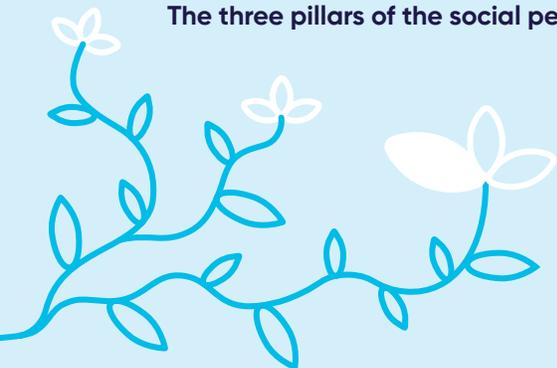


# Interdisciplinarity

The three pillars of the social perinatal care approach explained



## The social perinatal care approach

Social perinatal care is based on three pillars of intervention that best support parents and their children in vulnerable contexts. **Interdisciplinarity, portage/empowerment** as well as proximity work – all strongly interconnected – are the essence of La Maison Bleue's teams' daily interventions. These pillars reflect a responsiveness to the diverse needs of families during the perinatal period.

### What is interdisciplinary work?

Interdisciplinary work is the **close and continuous collaboration** between professionals from **different fields of practice** who come together to jointly achieve a common objectives. Beyond a simple juxtaposition of disciplines where each remains focused on their specialty, interdisciplinarity encourages **co-responsibility** and co-management of files.

In the context of social perinatal care, interdisciplinary work contributes to an **ecosystems approach** that recognizes the role of all factors at multiple levels of influence that bearing on a person's or family's life and its overall health and wellbeing.

**"Here, I am followed by a midwife and a doctor. They work together and talk about our situation, so I think it's good, it allows them to better understand the patients."**

– A mother followed at La Maison Bleue. Posture Podcast, Episode 2: *Accueil et structure*. 2022

### Why choose interdisciplinary work?

Families living in vulnerable situations face multiple complex challenges affecting different aspects of their physical and psychological health. By sharing expertise, not only are these **different facets** taken into consideration, but the team also offers care that is truly tailored to each unique reality. Focusing on **collective intelligence** rather than working in silos allows for more **coherent, concerted and complementary** interventions.

Also, interdisciplinary work encourages **referral proactivity** to professionals involved as well as **early screening** of conditions that require specific interventions.

Interdisciplinary work is beneficial for many reasons, including:

#### Benefits to the person being followed

- Travels to one location to receive the majority of services;
- Does not need to repeat their story, which can be traumatic, to each new professional they meet;
- Experiences fewer turnaround times for support, evaluation, *monitoring* and referral;
- Feels continuity in the care received while having the support of an entire team.

#### Benefits to the team

- Deepening the understanding of complex patient/family realities;
- Collectively managing and owning cases while reducing feelings of helplessness;
- Better discerning the strengths and limitations of each discipline, their complementarity and where they overlap;
- Providing creative and innovative solutions to address challenges;
- Promoting the preventive approach through interdisciplinary knowledge, frequency of file updates, and the speed with which needs are met.

# A professional approach

## to promoting interdisciplinary work

Interdisciplinary work is refined as team members work together. Colleagues need to trust each other and remain open to appreciate each other's expertise. Professionals working in interdisciplinary settings can feel threatened when they are forced to step outside their professional framework and the technical language of their profession. The co-responsibility and co-management of cases invites everyone to be transparent and humble.

Here are a few tips for adopting an approach that promotes interdisciplinary work:

- **Share your knowledge and experience**, as well as the norms and values associated with your discipline;
- Demonstrate a sincere intention to **learn from others**, to listen and to respect diverging opinions;
- **Accept constructive criticism** and show **humility**;
- **Have confidence** in your colleagues' clinical and personal judgment as well as their ability to intervene;
- **Tolerate disagreement** and respond positively to debates;
- **Adapt and align interventions** with the needs of families so that it is **consistent** with the overall approach.

# Organizational factors

## supporting interdisciplinary work

To be successful, interdisciplinary work requires the roll-out of mechanisms and structural conditions by organizations, for example:

- **Frequent and regular contact** between team members, such as:
  - Daily meetings at the beginning of the clinic opening;
  - Weekly case discussion and coordination meeting;
  - Team training.
- **Physical proximity** of workers:
  - As much as possible, have everybody's offices under one roof, on the same level, so that clinical professionals and management team are close to each other.
- A healthy **balance** between **formal/casual talk** in discussion spaces:
  - Too few moments dedicated to casual communication can prevent the creation of a strong trusting bond between members and hinder the fluidity of exchanges;
  - Conversely, too many casual discussions can lead to the exclusion of some professionals, which could in turn impact the contribution of one or more disciplines and enforce a hierarchy.
- Have effective, easy-to-access **interdisciplinary tools** for sharing information, such as a single shared medical record, an interdisciplinary meeting template and an interdisciplinary intervention plan;
- A person dedicated to the **coordination of the interdisciplinary team** that promotes the sharing of expertise and openness to the diversity of viewpoints;
- Designate a **Patient navigator** who can also coordinate interventions depending on the nature of the issues in the situation;
- Define terms around **legal/medico-legal liability** for medical procedures and interventions in a co-management context.

## Distinction between interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary

The concepts of interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary are often confused. While both involve collaboration and coordination of services between different disciplines, interdisciplinarity is more of an intervention approach that **addresses complex issues**. Also, multidisciplinary is based mainly on the division of tasks and occurs more sporadically, while interdisciplinarity is aimed at **co-responsibility** and applies **continually** (Payette, 2001).

**"What we manage to weave together is greater than the sum of our individual actions."**

– Empreinte, La Maison Bleue.



### Read more

La Maison Bleue (2020). [L'interdisciplinarité à La Maison Bleue. Capsule vidéo.](#)

Coordination des associations pluralistes de professeurs (CAPP). [Le travail interdisciplinaire: concepts, conditions de réussite et organisation.](#)

Payette, M. (2001). [Interdisciplinarité: clarification des concepts, Université de Sherbrooke.](#)

La Maison Bleue (2016). [L'empreinte de La Maison Bleue: Fondements et guide de pratiques.](#)

### Other summary sheets to read



Social perinatal care



Portage/empowerment



Proximity work