

2026-2027 UBC Interprofessional Health Mentors Program Information for Students

1. What is the UBC Health Mentors Program?

In the interprofessional Health Mentors (HM) program, students from different disciplines learn *together, from* and *with* a mentor (patient/client) with a chronic health condition or a disability, or their caregivers. Over the 9 months of the program students (4 per group) will meet with their mentor (face to face or, if needed, virtually) 2-3 times a semester; each meeting focuses on specific learning goals and interprofessional (IP) competencies. The program starts in October 2026 and ends in May 2027. It is expected there will be about 50 health mentors and 200 students from the following health professions: audiology, dentistry, dietetics, genetic counseling, medicine, nursing, occupational therapy, pharmacy, physical therapy, social work, and speech-language pathology. The program is coordinated by the Patient & Community Partnership for Education in the Office of UBC Health.

2. What are the goals of the HM program?

- To help students learn about the experience of chronic disease and the range of work involved in its management from the perspective of the patient or caregiver. Students will explore their roles (as individual practitioners and interprofessional teams) in supporting chronic disease self-management, addressing psychosocial as well as biomedical needs.
- To provide learning relevant to all 6 IP competency domains in the National Competency Framework for Interprofessional Collaboration, especially patient/client-centred collaborative practice.
- To permit students to meet discipline-specific objectives in related topics.

3. What do students do?

Students are expected to take part in all activities of the program as follows:

In-person Orientations (~2 hours):

- Vancouver: Wednesday, October 7, 2026, Italian Cultural Centre (6:00–8:00 PM)
- Kelowna: Tuesday, September 29, 2026, UBCO (5:30-7:30 PM)
- Prince George: Thursday, October 1, 2026 at UNBC (5:15-7:00 PM)
- Victoria: Monday, October 5, 2026, UVic (5:15-7:00 PM)

All mentors and students will attend an orientation session. Each group (4 students and mentor) will meet to get to know each other, discuss ground rules such as confidentiality and disclosure, plan how they will work together and fix a date for their next meeting.

Meetings / Learning Sessions with Health Mentor (6 x 2 hours = 12 hours)

There are 6 sessions, each focusing on a broad cluster of topics (see section 4).

There are questions and tasks to guide discussions at each session. Students are also encouraged to bring their own questions and experiences to the group. Sessions are discussions, not simply students interviewing their mentor. Groups are responsible for scheduling the time and place of sessions. Groups are encouraged to meet in person when possible, with virtual meetings available when needed. Sessions typically occur outside scheduled class time (e.g., evenings or weekends) and at a location convenient for the mentor.

Web-based Reflective Journals (8 x 30 minutes = 4 hours)

Students will write and submit a brief reflection after each meeting. Students will receive feedback intended to help them develop reflective skills, as well as provide comment on the content.

Symposium (4 hours)

After 5 sessions the group will prepare a poster board display to summarize the story of their learning journey together. At a symposium at the end of March / early April groups will share their learning. Learning from the symposium is expected to inform group discussions in the final session.

4. What are the topics for discussion?

- *Words and meanings – and why they matter:* what do we mean by health, disease, disability; patients, clients, consumers; coping, normality, recovery, self-management, quality of life? Experiences of stigma, stereotypes, culture and generational differences.
- *Living with chronic disease / disability and its management:* the illness journey of the mentor. What's involved in managing chronic illness / disability. How the mentor manages everyday life: e.g. money, work, social relationships, home and family life. Competition for resources (time, energy, money). Achieving a balance.
- *The health care team:* Roles of different health care providers including informal and formal (professional) care providers. Mapping the mentors 'care team'.
- *Patient/client-centred care:* Experiences of patient / client centred care. Factors that promote or hinder patient-centred care. Examination of an example from the mentor's experience.
- *Finding, managing and sharing health information:* how do you find and share health information? Internet, social networking, peer support, community resources. What is expertise? Information, knowledge and power.

- *Partnerships, shared decision making and the future*: what does it mean to work in partnership with patients and other health professionals? How are decisions made? How is patient autonomy enhanced (or not)? Looking to the future: dealing with uncertainty; how have we grown as people and professionals?

5. How will students be assessed?

Students will be graded Pass/Fail/Incomplete at the end of the program. A passing grade will be based on: i) attendance at each session; ii) respectful participation in discussions; iii) completion of a web-based reflective journal entry after each session; and iv) collaboration with group members to complete a presentation at the symposium. All students who complete the program will receive a certificate of completion that they can include in job applications, resumes, etc.

6. How are students prepared and supported?

- Students accepted into the program will attend the orientation to get detailed information. They will receive an electronic handbook with guidelines for accomplishing their roles and tasks.
- Overall supervision will be provided by Dr. Angela Towle (Office of UBC Health & Faculty of Medicine), including ensuring students arrange and attend sessions and complete program requirements, and answering questions and addressing concerns.
- Each student will be co-supervised by a faculty member in their participating program who will facilitate students sharing their learning with their classmates, and will read and provide feedback on reflective journals. Students will receive contact information for people that they can go to with questions or concerns.
- Sensitive information shared with the group will be confidential to the group and the co-supervisors.

7. Who are the Health Mentors?

Mentors have a wide range of chronic conditions. Some may also be caregivers who provide long-term care to a loved one with a chronic condition. They are all 'experts' in their lives and in managing their conditions. They have wide experience with the health care system and different health professionals.

8. What will students get out of participation in the HM program?

Students have an opportunity to develop a long-term relationship with a person with a chronic condition or caregiver, and also with a group of students from other programs. They will learn knowledge, skills and attitudes related to patient-centred care. They will receive academic credit for their participation (details will vary according to the specific

program). Participation will be recognized by a certificate of completion that certifies that the student has developed competencies in interprofessional patient-centred care.

For more information, please contact the HM Program Coordinator: pcpe.isdm@ubc.ca

Register here: [Student Registration Link](#)

Visit our website: [Health Mentor Program](#)

Watch Symposium Highlight Video: [Symposium Highlight](#)