

QUICK TIPS FOR CONDUCTING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT:

The goal of continuing professional development (CPD) is to improve patient outcomes by changing the practice behaviors of physicians. Evidence has demonstrated that CPD programs that are based on well-conceived and well-conducted needs assessments are more effective in changing physician behavior.

The needs assessment process entails the gathering of information to identify the learning needs of the target audience. The needs assessment must identify the current state of the target group’s knowledge, competence and performance areas and identify gaps in those areas. The most useful needs assessments are those where multiple methods are utilized to identify educational needs linked to improvement in patient care.

Needs assessment consists of identifying perceived needs, as well as unperceived needs, by collecting data and other information from a number of sources.

The Scientific Planning Committee should determine the following:

- How common is the need among the target audience?
- How many different assessment sources indicated this need?
- How significantly will the unfulfilled learning need hinder health care delivery?
- How directly is the need related to actual physician performance?
- How likely is it that a CPD activity will improve behavior?
- Are sufficient resources available to effectively address this topic?
- How receptive will the target audience be to a session on this topic?

Types of learning needs:

1. Self-recognized or perceived needs: I know what I want and need to know.
2. Unknown to the learner or unperceived needs: I don’t know what I don’t know.
3. Miscalculated or misperceived needs: I think I know something I don’t.
4. Emergent needs: Now I have some new information, I realize I want or need to learn something else instead of or in addition to what I am learning now.

The more you are able to learn about your target audience and what their everyday problems in practice are in relation to the topic you wish to deliver, the more effective your program will be in changing physician behavior.

Here are some possible strategies for defining learning needs:

PERCEIVED NEEDS	UNPERCEIVED NEEDS
Consultations with Scientific Planning Committee members Surveys Focus group interviews Evaluations/questionnaires of previous CPD activity Direct requests from the target audience Expert advisory groups Meetings with colleagues (formal or informal)	Knowledge/self-assessment tests Chart audits Chart-stimulated recall interviews Direct observations of practice performance Quality assurance data from hospitals Patient feedback Published literature/Provincial databases

Needs Assessment Summary:

- Identifying the learning needs of the target audience
- The needs assessment must identify the current state of the target group’s knowledge, competence and performance areas
- Collecting data from a number of sources will contribute to identifying perceived and unperceived needs.

Mainpro+ certification: The needs assessment should also include how the CanMEDS-FM competencies will be address

The below mentioned resources where consulted in creating this document:

- [RCPS - Needs Assessment](#)
- [CFPC - Mainpro+ -Certification Guide](#)