

Quick Tips: Initiating a Learning Needs Assesment - Gap Analysis of Health Care Issues



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Quick Tips: Gap Analysis of Health Care Issues

There are two complimentary steps to assessing the learning needs in preparation and planning of a Continuing Health Education intervention:

- 1) Gap Analysis of Health Care Issues; also known as environmental scan, review of objective data, or general needs assessment
- 2) Targeted Needs Assessment of anticipated audience/participants; also known as review of subjective data. Techniques for this form of assessment will be discussed in a separate "Quick Tips for Needs Assessment"

What is a Gap Analysis?

Basically a tool used to identify and define current health care issues. A Gap Analysis clarifies the discrepancy between current reality in health care and the desired or optimal health care situation and identifies an opportunity that may be addressed in a CHE intervention. A Gap Analysis helps define the curricular goal of the CHE intervention.

When to conduct a Gap Analysis?

A Gap Analysis often is conducted as one of the very first steps in preparation for an educational program. The Gap Analysis of Health Care Issues will help focus the curricular goals, specify the appropriate target audience, help identify faculty, and inform the more specific needs assessment of the target audience.

How to conduct a Gap Analysis.

Step #1 – Identify/clarify what is currently happening with patients or health care professionals in a specific therapeutic area

Step #2 – Define the "Gold Standard" – or what is defined as Best Practices in this therapeutic area.

Step #3 – Clarify the gap/discrepancy between Step #1 and Step #2- these are the Health Care Issues. Are these gaps related to knowledge, skill, attitude or practices?

Step #4 – From the identified gaps or health care issues-decide on the curricular learning goals for your anticipated CHE endeavours



Methods, resources, or techniques used to conduct a Gap Analysis include:

- 1) Insight, experience, and expertise of the faculty or planning committee
- 2) Medical literature search and review
- 3) Review of proceedings and program of national and international meetings or conferences
- 4) Population health data, i.e. hospital admissions, length of stay
- 5) Government policy
- 6) Clinical Care Guidelines
- 7) Public opinion of hot topics in the lay press

When planning and developing effective CHE interventions, there is value in preparing a brief summary of the resources reviewed in conducting a Gap Analysis and commentary on how that focused the curricular goals of that CHE program.

Often, but not always, data collected from such an analysis provides the basis for information on unperceived learning needs of the target audience.

Contacts:

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Do you have examples, comments, information or references you would like to share and see added to CEPD Quick Tips? Please contact Jane Tipping or Kate Hodgson, Education Consultants with the Office of CEPD.

References

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