

FOCUS ON: Addressing Barriers to Change

*In order to prepare providers for the changes in accreditation/certification requirements related to Mainpro+ we will be providing a series of communication pieces to help familiarize providers with the Quality Criteria requirements. The second in this series will be **Quality Criterion 4, Addressing Barriers to Change**. Our aim will be to address common questions and concerns we have heard regarding the criterion and to provide context for its inclusion in the certification requirements.*

Why Address Barriers to Change?

The goal of continuing professional development is to improve patient outcomes by changing the practice behaviours of physicians. While the needs assessment process is an important step in identifying the physician behaviours or competencies that need changing or improving, equally important is the identification of any barriers that may exist which would inhibit that change from occurring. Effecting change in health care is therefore a complex process with many potential barriers to effective adoption of new attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and processes. CPD programs which address barriers to physician change are more likely to impact a change in practice.

What are Barriers to Change?

Barriers to change range from negative personal and professional beliefs (aversion to change; lack of belief in the scientific evidence to support change, etc.); to financial disincentives; to lack of institutional support (not valued by leaders, failure to invest in necessary resources, etc.). Mainpro+ certified programs should, where possible, recognize and address these and other barriers with learners.



Identifying Barriers to Change

The needs assessment process plays an important role in identifying potential barriers to physician change. This process should include an analysis of the gap between the recommended practice and the current practice of the target audience. In identifying the gap the barriers to implementation of the recommendation may become evident. Methods which can be used to identify barriers to change are as follows:

- Learn from key individuals with knowledge, authority and skills to speak to implementation of the innovation.
- Observe individuals in practice, especially for routine behaviours.
- Use a questionnaire to explore individuals' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour.
- Brainstorm informally in small groups to explore solutions to a problem.
- Conduct a focus group to evaluate current practice and explore new ways of working.

Common Barriers to Change

Type of Barrier	Description
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness or lack of familiarity with the content of guidelines or recommendations. • Lack of awareness of recent findings, evidence, techniques
Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disagreement with new recommendations or guidelines • Lack of outcome expectancy • Lack of motivation to change • Lack of belief in one's ability to perform a behaviour
Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to recall proposed intervention when needed • Little to no opportunity to use new intervention due to patient profile/case-load
Organizational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare system prevents change due to process related barriers • Financial constraints on implementing change • Lack of time or opportunity to implement recommendations



Overcoming Barriers to Change

Once barriers have been identified, the CPD activity should address and propose interventions for overcoming these barriers which will help to ensure that the learning objectives of the CPD activity are not only met but carried into practice. Below are some examples of interventions that may be used.

Interventions to Overcome Barriers to Practice Change

- Educational outreach
- Academic detailing
- Reminder systems (chart reminder, follow up communications, feedback requests)
- Audit and Feedback
- Patient-mediated interventions
- Practice tools
- Timed follow-up
- Informal consultations



Quality Criterion 4: Addressing Barriers to Change

Programs seeking Mainpro+ certification must meet the following requirements in regards to the addressing of barriers to practice change in program design and delivery.

Credits per Hour	Certification Requirements for Criterion
1 credit per hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Educational design includes discussion of commonly encountered barriers to practice change
2 credits per hour	Must meet 1 credit per hour requirements and include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Educational design includes discussion on approaches to overcoming these barriers
3 credits per hour	Must meet 1 and 2 credit per hour requirements and include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Solicits barriers to change from actual participantsDiscusses barriers and approaches to overcoming barriers

References & Further Reading

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