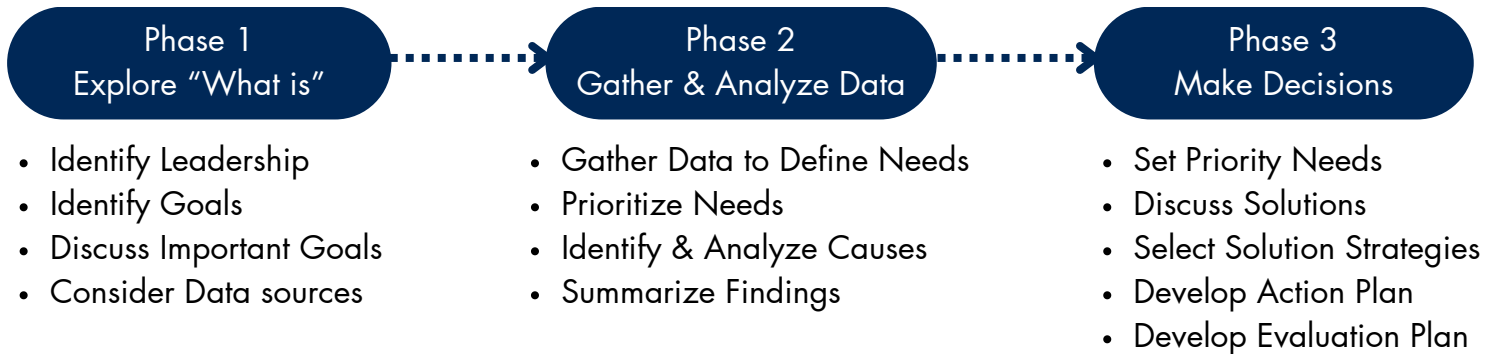


# PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT NEEDS ASSESSMENT



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A needs assessment is a set of tools and processes used to collect information about the target audience's learning needs. These learning needs can include gaps in the target audience's knowledge, skills, performance, and/or health outcomes that need to be addressed or improved. A needs assessment looks at the current state of affairs - "what is" - to determine the goals of a training program/activity - "where we would like to be."



## Importance and Purpose of a Needs Assessment

A needs assessment ensures that you develop training that:



Accurately targets the intended knowledge, skill, and/or experience gaps



Focuses on high-priority issues and is an effective use of existing resources



Appeals to that target audience, their needs, learning styles, experience level, and schedule

## Questions to Ask Your Planning Committee

- What is the gap in knowledge, skills, performance and/or health outcomes that we want to address?
- Why is it important to address this gap? What are the stakes/implications of not addressing it?
- Who is the target audience? What level of knowledge and/or experience do they have?
- What is the best way to teach this content to the target audience?
- What data (and how much data) indicates this need?
- How directly is the need related to actual physician performance?
- Are sufficient resources available to effectively address this topic?



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## Perceived and Unperceived Needs

Accreditation of CEPD Learning Activities by the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada requires exploring both perceived and unperceived needs.

**Perceived needs:** “I know what I want and need to know.”

**Unperceived needs:** “I don’t know what I don’t know.”

## Completing a Needs Assessment

The process involves collecting and analyzing data that will help the planning committee a) clarify the need for the training; b) set the goal(s) of the training; c) determine the most effective way to deliver the training.

### Potential Data Sources

#### Perceived Needs

- Surveys/Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Focus Group Interviews
- Key informants
- Physician/Faculty/Target Audience Requests
- Evaluation Data from Prior Events/Training
- Meetings with Colleagues (Informal or Formal)
- Scientific Planning Committee Minutes/Discussions

#### Unperceived Needs

- Patient feedback/outcomes
- Critical incident reports
- Chart audits
- Advisory Groups
- Emerging Trends
- Health Population Data
- Peer Reviewed Literature/Research Findings
- Direct observation of performance

**For further assistance in completing a needs assessment, see our “Needs Assessment Phase 1, II, and III” templates which will walk you through the process.**

