
THE 6 SKILL DIMENSIONS *Summary*

(Source: [The College of Family Physicians of Canada: *Defining competence for the purposes of certification by the College of Family Physicians of Canada: the evaluation objectives in family medicine 2011*](#))

Patient-Centered Method

- ▶ **Actively explores the illness experience** by inquiring about patient's feelings, ideas, impact on function, and expectations (**FIFE**)
- ▶ **Attempts to acquire a whole person perspective by asking about context** (who is in patient's life – partner, children, family; social supports; work/finances/education) (**Context**)
- ▶ **Integrates the patient's context with his or her illness experience** in a clear and empathetic way while moving toward a management plan (**Context Integration**)
- ▶ **Works with the patient in coming to a shared understanding of the problem** and each person's role in addressing it by:
 - *Encouraging discussion*
 - *Providing opportunities to ask questions*
 - *Inviting feedback*
 - *Seeking clarification and consensus*
 - *Addressing disagreements*(**Finding Common Ground**)
- ▶ **Incorporates relevant health promotion and prevention** around the management of a problem.
- ▶ **Approaches the patient's problems with a realistic and longitudinal view**, which respects and appropriately balances the priorities of the patient and physician and considers the resources of individuals and the community.

Clinical Reasoning Skills

- ▶ **Gathers and discriminates appropriate data** from relevant sources (ie. patient history and physical, patient chart, investigation results and the literature)
- ▶ **Integrates and interprets data**, including matching current situation to past situations with this patient or others, to make logical inferences and formulate an initial set of hypotheses about the patient's current condition
- ▶ Uses hypothetico-deductive reasoning to **prioritize a differential diagnosis** and **identify a definitive diagnosis** of a patient's problem (**Diagnostic Reasoning**)
- ▶ Considers the diagnosis, the therapeutic evidence as well as the individual patient context and values, and **recommends a course of action**; including the risks and benefits, to address the diagnosis (**Therapeutic Reasoning**)
- ▶ **Evaluates the effectiveness** of the selected treatment and **revises diagnosis and treatment plan**, as needed

Professionalism

- ▶ Day-to-day behaviour reassures one that the physician is **responsible, reliable, and trustworthy**.
- ▶ Day-to-day behaviour and discussion reassures one that the physician is **ethical and honest**.
- ▶ **Knows his or her limits** of clinical competence and seeks help appropriately.
- ▶ Demonstrates a **flexible, open-minded approach** that is resourceful and **deals with uncertainty**.
- ▶ **Evokes confidence without arrogance**, and does so even when needing to obtain further information or assistance.
- ▶ Demonstrates a **caring and compassionate** manner.
- ▶ Demonstrates **respect for patients** in all ways, maintains appropriate boundaries, and is **committed to patient well-being**. This includes time management, availability, and a willingness to assess performance.
- ▶ Demonstrates **respect for colleagues and team members**.
- ▶ **Practices** evidence-based medicine skillfully. This implies not only critical appraisal and information-management capabilities, but incorporates appropriate learning from colleagues and patients.
- ▶ Displays a **commitment to societal and community well-being**.
- ▶ Displays a **commitment to personal health** and seeks **balance** between personal life and professional responsibilities.
- ▶ Demonstrates a **mindful approach to practice** by maintaining composure/equanimity, even in difficult situations, and by engaging in thoughtful dialogue about values and motives.

Selectivity

- ▶ **Sets priorities** and focuses on the most important items
- ▶ **Knows when to say something and when not to**
- ▶ **Gathers the most useful information** without losing time on less contributory data
- ▶ **Distinguishes the emergent from the elective** and intervenes in a timely fashion
- ▶ **Acts when necessary**, even though information may be incomplete
- ▶ **Determines the likelihoods, pertinence, and priorities** in his or her differential diagnoses
- ▶ **Selects and modifies a treatment** to fit the particular needs of a patient and a situation
- ▶ **Distinguishes the sick from the not sick**
- ▶ **Does something extra** when it will likely be helpful
- ▶ **Uses both general and active listening skills** to facilitate effective communication with a patient or colleague.

Communication Skills

- ▶ Demonstrates **adequate verbal skills to be understood by a patient or colleague**, converses at an appropriate level for the patient or colleague's age and educational level, and employs the appropriate tone to ensure good communication and comfort
- ▶ Demonstrates **adequate skills to communicate clearly** with a patient or colleague **in a written fashion** (e.g. in a letter to a patient, educational materials for the patient, test requisition for colleague, follow-up orders)
- ▶ **Conscious of the impact of body language** on communication with the patient or colleague and **adjusts it appropriately** when it inhibits communication
- ▶ **Aware of and responsive to a patient or colleague's body language**, particularly feelings not well expressed in a verbal manner (e.g. dissatisfaction, anger, guilt)
- ▶ **Adapts communication to the individual patient or colleague** for reasons such as culture, age, and disability (e.g. a young child or teenage patient, a colleague from a different cultural background, or someone with speech deficits, hearing deficits, or language difficulties)
- ▶ Demonstrates the **ability to hear, understand, and discuss an opinion, idea, or value that may be different from their own** while maintaining respect for the patient's or colleague's right to decide for himself or herself.
- ▶ Demonstrates **effective charting skills**.

Procedural Skills

- ▶ **Decides whether or not to do a procedure** after considering:
 - A. *The indications and contraindications to the procedure*
 - B. *Their own skills and readiness to do the procedure (e.g., level of fatigue and any personal distractions)*
 - C. *The context of the procedure, including the patient involved, the complexity of the task, the time needed, the need for assistance, and location*
- ▶ Before deciding to go ahead with a procedure:
 - A. **Discusses** the procedure with the patient, including a description of the procedure and possible outcomes, both positive and negative, as part of obtaining their consent.
 - B. **Prepares** for the procedure by ensuring the appropriate equipment is ready.
 - C. Mentally **rehearses** the following:
 - *The anatomic landmarks necessary for procedure performance.*
 - *The technical steps necessary in sequential fashion, including any preliminary examination.*
 - *The potential complications and their management.*
- ▶ During performance of the procedure, **keeps the patient informed** to reduce anxiety and always **ensures patient comfort and safety**
- ▶ If a procedure is not going as expected, **re-evaluates the situation** and stops or seeks assistance as required.
- ▶ After completion of a procedure, **develops a plan with the patient** for after care and follow.