

## Sentinel Habits

Originally developed by the Department of Family Practice at the University of Alberta in response to requests to make field notes more relevant to daily clinical practice<sup>1</sup>, the “Sentinel Habits” are the key skills of a good family physician derived from the CFPC’s skill dimensions and the CanMEDS–family medicine roles.

While these skills are intended to be learned and developed until they become habitual behaviours in residency training, they have consistently proved useful and useable by clinicians providing assessment and feedback in the clinical workplace; they provide a foundation for any workplace-based assessment of competence. Workplace-based assessment, even when it is primarily summative, must provide and document the feedback that justifies the final decisions. Therefore, the use of Sentinel Habits as guides for formative feedback using field notes is appropriate for PRA-BC.

The Sentinel Habits have been adopted by the College of Family Physicians of Canada<sup>2</sup> and the National Assessment Collaboration - Practice Ready Assessment (NAC-PRA) Committee<sup>3</sup>, which is set out to establish national standards and recommended guidelines in PRA-Family Medicine for programs across Canada.

The eight **Sentinel Habits** have been adapted by UBC CPD in collaboration with PRA-BC to form the basis of clinical assessment of IMG candidates.

1. Incorporates the patient’s experience & context into problem identification & management
2. Generates relevant hypotheses resulting in a safe & prioritized differential diagnosis
3. Selects & attends to the appropriate focus & priority in a situation
4. Manages patients using available best practices
5. Uses generic key features when performing a procedure
6. Demonstrates respect and/or responsibility for colleagues/team members/patients
7. Verbal or written communication is clear & timely
8. Seeks out & responds appropriately to feedback

### References:

1. Competency-Based Achievement System Using formative feedback to teach and assess family medicine residents’ skills. Ross, S. et. al. Canadian Family Physician September 2011 vol. 57no. 9 e323-e330
2. Defining competence for the purposes of certification by the College of Family Physicians of Canada: the evaluation objectives in family medicine. The CFPC Working Group for the Certification Process
3. National Assessment Collaboration. Practice Ready Assessment – A Future Pan-Canada PRA Process Design. Family Medicine PRA Standards Working Document. June, 2014. Version 4.1.