

Case Studies

Purpose

In the CPC Curriculum, case studies are used in several diverse settings, each of which has a slightly different purpose. The two most prominent are the *Case-Based Learning (CBL)* small group discussion meetings and the *Synthesis and Integration* large group sessions

Case-Based Learning (CBL)

Each case study used for the CPC Case-Based Learning (CBL) groups is constructed to:

- provide a meaningful conceptual framework to enable students to explore the essential biomedical and psychosocial elements underlying a clinical encounter;
- illustrate the relevance and application of concepts, facts, ideas, clinical procedures, and values addressed by the enabling objectives identified for the clinical presentation under discussion;
- familiarize students with the format of patient (case) presentations as a means of organizing and communicating to colleagues information emerging from patient encounters;
- provide students with opportunities to develop skills in collaborative, collegial learning;
- motivate students to develop their own sense of curiosity about medical issues – i.e. to go beyond the instructor-defined discussion questions and to identify areas of investigation that will enhance their knowledge base.

Synthesis and Integration (S&I) Sessions

Case studies used in the weekly S&I sessions are designed to challenge students to apply their knowledge and critical skills to an undifferentiated case of a patient with a clinical presentation identical to that of the CBL cases they discussed during the previous week.

Individual Case Study Analysis

5-Step Process

- Step #1:* Confirm that the case study diagnosis represents an *important and/or common example** of the *clinical presentation* under discussion;
- Step #2:* Ensure that the case study contains (or directs the student to explore) all appropriate information pertaining to history, physical exam, and diagnostic studies outlined in the *Standardized Clinical Behaviors* related to the clinical presentation under discussion;
- Step #3:* Review the *enabling objectives* identified for the clinical presentation under discussion and select those that are *most relevant* to or are *illustrated most effectively* by the patient case study selected;
- Step #4:* Construct a series of *discussion questions* whose responses require students to master the identified relevant enabling objectives while simultaneously nurturing the development of their communication and collaborative learning skills within the group discussion;
- Step #5:* Compose a *case summary* consisting of:
- a brief (5-6 sentences) paragraph outlining in *broad terms* the key features of the case study;
 - a bulleted list of the *challenges (learning issues)* the case is designed to direct students to address. These challenges may be most easily identified by using the *educational goals identified for the module*).

*The case should be written from the perspective of a primary care provider.

Does this case study ...

- ... include all essential data for a complete clinical encounter, as outlined in the *Standardized Clinical behaviors (SCB)* for this presentation?
- ... comprise a good mix of basic *biomedical science* and *clinical* discussion questions?
- include discussion questions that integrate *psychosocial issues, cultural competencies, public health motifs, Osteopathic principles, and medical ethics* challenges wherever possible?
- ... provide CBL facilitators with adequate cues and information to help guide student discussion?
- ... conclude with a concise *Case Summary*?