

# New Year's Resolution: Improving Practice with BPGs

By Daniela Acosta BSc., BScN, RN



Welcome to 2017! With a new year comes new beginnings and it is always exciting to imagine the endless opportunities that come along with a fresh start. As healthcare professionals, our New Year's resolutions have the ability to improve the health and well-being of the resident's we care for. This is an honour and a responsibility. Improving personal practice also improves confidence, competency and job satisfaction, making this resolution more meaningful and easier to keep than most.

As a nurse, the moment I graduated was the moment I committed myself to a life-long learning career. Initially, that sounded easy to me, maybe even fun. In reality, it often feels near impossible. What nurse in which universe has the time to swim through the vast sea of knowledge and pick out the exact facts that are accurate and applicable to their practice? In addition, how many nurses can pay for access to these articles that are not usually available for free? Unfortunately, not very many can.

This is precisely why the Best Practice Guidelines (BPGs) are so useful to busy professionals, clients and families who are trying to expand their knowledge around a particular care topic. BPGs are systematic literature reviews published by the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO). They are created through a vigorous process by an elite team of experts and stakeholders in their respective fields. The documents include a simple list of care recommendations for health professionals to easily understand and utilize; these recommendations are based in the evidence and research. All guidelines are built according to standardized guideline creating tools and evaluated by multiple partners, ensuring they are reliable and sound in their reasoning. They are becoming world renowned.

Personally, I like BPGs because they bring the evidence to all of us working at the bedside instead of sending us searching. They are convenient, but they are also free and available online for absolutely anyone. It has never been easier to improve practice through evidenced based knowledge. It only takes reading the recommendations and integrating them into your work. It is important to note that Best Practice Guidelines are not rules that limit practice. On the contrary, they are meant to work in conjunction with your care, enhancing the decisions you make and not limiting them.

In the "Screening for Delirium, Dementia and Depression" BPG, it was recommended that health care professionals maintain a high index of suspicion of delirium in the older adult, especially in those with a diagnosis of dementia. This is simple, and by actively integrating this into my practice I feel that I have been able to detect delirium faster and get treatment quicker, improving client outcomes. I now also have a new reason for why I am caring in this way: Because the evidence says it works!

There are many ways to improve professional practice, especially here at the Perley Rideau. From education sessions to learning plans to joining quality improvement initiatives, there is something for everyone. Grounding your actions in research and evidence with BPGs is an easy place to start. To access the BPGs, check out the "RNAO LINK" on any staff desktop, which takes you straight to the BPG main page. You can also go to [rnao.ca/bpg](http://rnao.ca/bpg) or download the RNAO BPG app to your smart phone.

As we restart our calendars this year, I encourage all of us to take a fresh look at our practices and recommit ourselves to evidenced based care. Try implementing BPGs to improve your practice with the same energy you had as a new graduate stepping into a new world. The Best Practice Champion network is available if you need any support. You have nothing to lose but bad practices and there isn't any better time to do this than with the spirit of a new year upon us. Welcome to 2017!