

Learning how to learn

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

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In the world of today, professional duties have become so knowledge-intensive and information demanding, rendering life-long learning a necessity rather than a luxury. Learning needs to be examined across the lifespan of a person because previous notions of a divided lifetime- education followed by work- are no longer relevant ⁽¹⁾.

Definition of CPD

CPD is defined as a systematic, ongoing, self-directed learning; it is an approach or process of how you plan or manage your whole working life ⁽²⁾. Continuing medical education (CME), as organized learning activities, is considered to be part of CPD.

Why taking CPD?

- To keep abreast of new changes in methods and technologies
- Desire to develop professional knowledge and skills
- To keep your membership in a professional society or to conform to service or educational requirements.
- To demonstrate your professional standing and competency to clients and employers
- To assist you with your further career development

CPD activities/modalities

- Professional and work meetings
- Workshops and conferences
- Training courses
- Coaching and mentoring
- Peer support/discussions
- Networks

- Journals and periodicals
- Research and investigations
- Internet surfing

CPD cycle

It consists of four steps centered on documentation and portfolio development

Step 1: Reflect, meaning self-assessment to identify personal training needs

Step 2: Plan, designing of a personal development plan including both formal and informal learning activities

Step 3: Act, putting plan into action to meet identified needs and goals

Step 4: Evaluate, assess plan implementation and whether objectives have been achieved

The portfolio is central to the CPD cycle representing a comprehensive record for the whole process of learning and personal growth.

Features of CPD

- Practitioner-centered and self-directed: individual learners need to be motivated.
- Practice-related: focused on improving work through new knowledge and skills gained.
- Outcomes oriented: CPD activities planned to achieve personal and work development objectives.

The hallmark of CPD is to ensure professional competence. Next to integrity, competence is the first and most fundamental moral responsibility of all health professions ⁽³⁾. Competence is defined as "the ability to perform one's duties accurately, make correct judgments, and interact appropriately with patients and with colleagues ⁽³⁾. Professional

competence is characterized by good problem-solving and decision-making abilities, a strong knowledge base, and the ability to apply knowledge and experience to diverse settings and situations”.

References

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