Professional Development For Practitioners: Critical Issues In Continuing Education And Lifelong Learning

Dedication to continuing education (CE) and lifelong learning (LL) are professional givens. A wide variety of constituents, from consumers to regulatory agencies demand it.

Different constituents have different roles and responsibilities. Regulators , for example, promote initial and continued competence.

There are also ethical guidelines that support efforts to maintain professional competence. But currently, there is no clear link between competence needed and CEs attended

In addition, creative CE models need to be established that are flexible and relevant

And tailored to individual learning styles and needs.One model in this regard is the Self Assessment Guide (SAG) and Professional Development Plan Used in Ontario, Canada, which includes:

- A personal and private self evaluation tool
- A professional development plan based on identified needs in current and intended areas of practice – 2 years
- A declaration of completion, an attestation that they have completed this requirement
- The complete guide can be found at www.cpo.on.ca
- The model relies on accurate self-evaluation which itself needs to be evaluated in some way.

Diversity
Needs to build on science of culturally competent practice. Current competence

Based on when one trained and how one trained, this may be more or less familiar and thus the extent to which one may have a foundation differs

The Affective component is valuable for this training, as is the cognitive component

Diversity needs to be defined broadly – and operationally defined

Value of Dialogue methods including:

- Inter-group dialogues
- Case and experientially based

- Discussions about novels or films
- Importance of engagement in a process that is not threatening and is a learning context
- Coaching when in the room with a patient
- Real-time teaching and supervision
- Generating diversity diaries and discussing these

We have an obligation to promote diversity and follow the guidelines as part of our ethical responsibility.

Our models need to incorporate telecommunication or the internet, particularly if an applied component

Ethics
Much of the discussion of Diversity applies to Ethics, as well.

We need to have safe groups to discuss and dialogue about ethical challenges and effectively managing these. This includes holding Ethics consultations , Cross-disciplinary dialogues, Case discussions regarding novel and thorny issues , sse of technology for skyped discussion groups .

Implications for different developmental periods in one's career
Different developmental stages mean different things in different times. The need to consider continuing education as qualitatively different at each developmental level. The process needs to be different potentially

- ECPs may need more Consolidation and integration or greater practical application
- For mid- and senior psychologists we may need new avenues, roles, and responsibilities, and more depth in what we learn.
- For senior and retired psychologists, more Involvement and giving back .

Promising Practices to Promote Life-Long Learning

List of Life-Long Learning practices that might be considered for CE:

- Supervising
- Reading journal articles
- Preparing for and giving a presentation
- Peer group supervision
- Journal article reviewing
- Case discussions
    - With experts
    - With peers
    - With trainees
    - With colleagues from other disciplines
- Case consultations
- Write up case that demonstrates consultation and what learned
- Developing a Lifelong learning plan

We need to take advantage of various kinds of relationships to promote greater LLL. Opportunities for experiential learning include:

- Consultant
- Mentor
- Shadow
- Being shadowed

Emerging technologies will play an increasingly important role in LLL and in CE and we need to study them and better understand the effects of their utilization.