



YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – MAKING IT WORK

SECTION 4

Here are some strategies that registrants have used to help make the Plan more useful:

Set Priorities

Although you may identify a number of learning needs during Self-Assessment, it helps to choose a few priorities each year. Then you can realistically focus precious and limited resources on the most important goals. If you also identify learning needs through another process (for example, a performance appraisal), it may help to integrate those goals. Include learning needs following review of the answers to PREP Modules, if you've identified any. You can track learning needs you won't address this year by listing them at the bottom of your PDPlan, or in the right hand column. Then you won't lose sight of goals that are not current priorities.

Write “SMART” Learning Goals

Just as you do when working with clients, make sure your goal is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-limited (SMART). This will help you accomplish the goal and demonstrate that you've done so. Break long-term goals into a series of smaller goals that you can accomplish within a year.

Strategies: “SMART” and Creative!

Strategies are “how” you will reach your goal. The thinking process you use to analyze activities and help clients plan how to reach goals can be applied to your own PDPlan. Write out the very specific series of steps you need to take en route to your goal. Well-defined strategies, with specific timelines, can become a “to-do list” that is more easily incorporated into your routine. Next year, you won't dust off your PDPlan and suddenly realize you didn't get around to meeting your goal!

Creative strategies? Think about non-traditional, lower cost, learning methods that may be more effective or easier to implement than formal courses or workshops. Consider reading, professional interest groups, and peer mentorship.

What evidence of progress will there be at the end of the year?

Think about this as you write your plan. There may be natural evidence when you've completed a goal (e.g. client education materials, a course certificate). Or maybe you need to create a simple tracking method, such as a log, on which to record completed strategies and applications to your practice. Next year when you review your plan, you'll be able to put in a completion date and add the "evidence" to your Professional Portfolio. If it's not quite complete you'll have evidence of your progress and will know exactly what you still need to do to meet your goal.

A final word....

It's tough work to create a useful, living Professional Development Plan. Why not exchange Plans with a colleague and advise each other? It's often easier to help someone else than to be objective about your own Plan. With experience, you'll likely write better plans. So, reward yourself for your hard work... and persevere!