Professional Development Plans

Professional Development Plans allow you to record your learning accomplishments over a period of time. Your commitment to lifelong learning comes in many forms and it is important to identify your learning and capture it in written form (a portfolio). You may be surprised to see how much you accomplish in your educational process.

Developing and maintaining your portfolio has another purpose. The development of your portfolio requires reflective thinking, self-awareness, and self-evaluation. It forces you to identify your knowledge gaps…what do I need to know that I don't know in order to be a successful practitioner? A portfolio keeps a tangible record of your ongoing professional development and is evidence of your commitment to continuing competence in your practice.

Your professional development is a fluid process of self-direction and self-reflection in response to various opportunities and situations. Your portfolio is your tool that reflects your accomplishments and goals, demonstrates your commitment to ongoing learning, and provides you with the opportunity to shine a light on your accomplishments.

This self-reflection allows you to:

a. Identify gaps in the information, skills, values, and attitudes that you currently possess

b. Identify your strengths…the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that you already possess in a given area of dentistry

c. Develop and implement a learning plan to assist you in meeting your learning goals and closing your gap

d. Assess your accomplishments

Here are steps to take to develop a Professional Development Plan:

1. **Reflect on and assess your knowledge, skills, etc.**
   - What are my strengths?
   - What are areas that require improvement?

2. **Set your development goals/outcomes**
   - What do I want to achieve?
   - What areas would I like to focus on for professional development?
   - What strengths would I like to develop further?

3. **Develop a plan to meet your goals**
   Your plan should outline specific learning activities, such as:
   - Mentoring, shadowing
   - Attending continuing education presentations
   - Internet research, literature searches (PubMed, IADR abstracts)
   - Reviewing notes, textbooks
   - Allocation of specific time for study, development, etc.

4. **Implement the Professional Development Plan**
   - Implementing your plan can be done individually or in conjunction with colleagues, faculty, advisors, tutors, or other health professionals.

5. **Evaluate the results of your Plan**
   - Did I meet my development goals?
   - How can I demonstrate that I met my learning goals?
   - Was the outcome valuable to me? Why or Why not?

6. **If the goals of your Plan have not been met, reflect on why**
   - What circumstances influenced the implementation of my learning plan?
   - Was my Plan realistic and doable?
   - Are there alternative ways that I could meet my development goals?
   - Do I need to re-assess my learning needs and revise my goals?
   - How will I revise my Plan?

Professional Development Plan

Name		**Date**	
Learning Goal (What knowledge, skills, values, or attitudes do I need?)			
Strengths (What knowledge, skills, values, or attitudes do I possess?)			
Learning Plan (How will I reach this Learning Goal?)			
Required Resources (What resources do I need to achieve this Learning Goal?)			
Outcome Evaluation (How can I demonstrate to myself and others that I have achieved this Learning Goal?)			
Other Observations			

The preceding learning plan can be copied and used as you identify your personal gaps and develop a plan to overcome those gaps.