

What are the best approaches for Professional Development for Healthcare workers?

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Introduction

Professional development for those working in healthcare is of utmost importance in order to ensure all interdisciplinary teams up to date on the most current evidence based practice. Within the rapid paced environment of healthcare today it can be a great challenge to foster professional development among staff due to the ever growing demands on healthcare workers. It ends up feeling like one more demand on top of an already very heavy load. What are the most effective ways to approach professional development with healthcare works so that it doesn't feel like as heavy of a lift? Professional development presented and encouraged the right way motivates staff to improve their current practices and in turn improves patient outcomes. Working within a culture that promotes professional intrigue can also have a positive impact on retention rates and work satisfaction. Staff report feeling less workplace anxiety when they have a greater confidence in the work they do each day.

What fosters Professional Development?

According to Mlambo, Silen & McGrath (2021) who did a metasynthesis on nursing perspectives on professional development the following are the most important themes. These overlapped greatly with a similar study that focused on providers.

- Organizational Culture
- Supportive Environment from Leadership
- Attitudes and Motivation
- Perception of Barriers
- Perceived Impact on Practice as a core values

What hinders Professional Development?

According to Hanlon, Prihodova, Russell, et al (2021) the following barriers hinder professional development among providers. These overlap significantly with the previous study that focused on nurses.

- Staff Burnout
- Culture of Anti –Intellectualism
- Lack of Leadership Support
- Lack of Time
- Lack of Incentives
- Lack of Recognition

What are the best ways to fill the gap?

Professional development for healthcare workers needs to be made a priority within organizations. Leadership support and recognition that fosters a culture of learning is essential in order to increase engagement in lifelong learning. Encouraging staff by openly discussing the perceived impact of professional development within their work environment needs to be a modeled behavior. Staff of all levels of experience need to be held to the same professional development standards. There is a great focus on professional development of those who are new to the profession. Maintaining professional development throughout ones career across all interdisciplinary groups should be highlighted as well as celebrated within organizations. Targeting what hinders the ability to engage should include allowing for dedicated time that is protected. Recognition, incentives and support to seek out opportunities for professional development could greatly improve the workplace culture as well as heighten the awareness of this core value for any work environment.

References

- Hanlon, H. R., Prihodova, L., Russell, T., Donegan, D., O'Shaughnessy, A., & Hoey, H. (2021). Doctors' engagement with a formal system of continuing professional development in Ireland: a qualitative study in perceived benefits, barriers and potential improvements. *BMJ open*, *11*(11), e049204. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2021-049204>
- Mlambo, M., Silén, C., & McGrath, C. (2021). Lifelong learning and nurses' continuing professional development, a metasynthesis of the literature. *BMC nursing*, *20*(1), 62. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-021-00579-2>