

Professional Development

Aim of the Professional Development Module

The aim of the module is:

To raise awareness of the professional nursing status. It therefore addresses topics which, when applied in conjunction with nursing roles, project the art and science of nursing in a professional perspective.

Following completion of this module you will be able to:

Analyse the theory and practice of nursing.

Evaluate the impact of current legal, ethical and political development on professional practice.

Evaluate your own personal skills and qualities in relation to the formation, maintenance and closure of helping relationships with individuals and groups.

Life long education - history

The importance of education has been proven since ancient times and Plato (429 - 347 BC.) attributed power and politics to education. He said that

"education is power and knowledge should rule".

The concept of life long education has been stressed over and over again.

Whitehead (1932) said,

"knowledge keeps no better than fish."

Jacobi (1976) mentions that knowledge becomes obsolete within 5 to 8 years and regular updating is necessary.

Life long Training – Why?

There is an increasing demand for retraining as structured shifts in the economy make some jobs redundant and create new ones. This is particularly significant in the caring sector where advances in technology and medicine ask for regular updating so as to have competent carers.

If continuing education is not sought, this could translate into redundancy.

Added to this, is the increasing stress on quality management and quality care, which puts special emphasis on staff development programmes and continuing education.

Andragogy

Life long education gave rise to the philosophy of Andragogy as opposed to Pedagogy.

Andragogy = the learning of adults

Pedagogy = the teaching of children

Knowles (1973) described andragogy as based on four main assumptions. These are
(1) Self - directness contributes to growth of self - concept.

- (2) Experience is central to learning.
- (3) Learners learn what they need, as opposed to what they ought to learn.
- (4) Adults are problem - centered in relation to their learning rather than subject centered.

Continuing Professional Development - Nursing

Continuing professional development CPD and continuing professional education CPE are often used interchangeable.

CPD = "The systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skills, and the development of personal qualities necessary for execution of professional and technical duties throughout the individual's working life" (Friedman et al 2000).

Maintenance role = lifelong learning

Survival role = ongoing competence

Mobility role = increase a person's employability

Maltese Code of Ethics for Nurses and Midwives (1997)

The code states that nurses and midwives have the responsibility to

"- seek to maintain and improve their professional knowledge and competence in their field and should take every opportunity to achieve this;

- participate in activities that contribute to the ongoing development of the professional body of knowledge, e.g., through research;

- recognise their responsibility to participate in activities that contribute to the ongoing development of their profession;....."

Benefits of professional development

Benefit the employer, the employee and ultimately the patient.

PD increases staff motivation, morale and staff retention.

Organizations benefit from an increased number of qualified personnel who can then continue to develop the organization.

May prevent redundancy.

Maintaining competence thus promoting quality care.

Without continuing education, the theory practice gap will widen.

Barriers (difficulties) to Professional Development

- Inability to leave place of work, at least skeleton staff must be provided.
- Staff shortages (sick leave, vacation leave) making it impossible to leave the ward.
- Inconvenient days.
- Family commitments.
- Financial constrains.

Continuing Professional Development - How?

In this time of "the budget crunch" with resultant down sizing in all areas of health care, staff must be able to use adult learning principles effectively to facilitate quick and efficient learning.

Systems giving importance to life long education and learning (UK based):

PREP = Post Registration Education and Practice

APL = Accreditation of Prior Learning

APEL = Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning

Some examples of professional development:

1. Reading
Reading books, journals and other articles related to nursing.
Before reading, set targets and aims. Be sure of your source of reading.
2. Attending to presentations and discussions (seminars, workshops and conferences).
3. Reflective Practice.
Reflection encourages learning from experience.
One can reflect on a particular incident.
Could reflect alone or in-groups (group discussions).
4. Working in groups so as to implement change and improve practice.
5. Attending lectures, study days and other courses.
6. Portfolios
Portfolios have been seen as a way forward in the support of PD
The objective of portfolios is for students and qualified staff to be able to plan their learning so it relates to their practice and then to choose educational activities that are accessible and relevant.
The portfolio should be a medium for integrating the learner's self-assessment with the practitioner's assessment.
They are open to question whether documented abstracts are reliable and valid accounts of learning that has taken place in relation to the learning that is required for professional competence.

Conclusion: All professionals have a moral obligation to life long education and a professional who does not keep up to date is a disgrace for that profession (Wayne 1995).