

PD Practice #5: Follow Up

Audio Descriptive Text

Title: Professional Development 101: The Basics; PD Practice #5: Follow Up. Image of PD practices with an icon for each: Sustain, Design, Promote, Deliver, Follow Up, and Evaluate. Image of CDC logo. Follow Up icon. Image of a calendar with listings for follow-up events after different time periods. Image of continuum for follow-up support that shows low cost, minimal time options on the left and high cost, time intensive options on the right.

Video Summary

Follow-up support provides an opportunity to strengthen participant knowledge and skill levels. The range of options for follow-up support depends on available resources in cost and time.

Audio Script

We have now come to the fifth PD Practice: Provide **Follow-Up** Support. It's not over when your participants leave the PD event! This is when you have the opportunity to strengthen their knowledge and skill levels with continued, targeted follow-up support.

Follow-up support should be intentional and systematically planned during the Design phase and should not include any new information.

An effective follow-up support plan helps ensure transfer of learning and includes four components:

1. A summary that includes a brief time line.
2. A detailed description of support activities to be conducted before, during, and after your PD event.
3. An action plan for implementation of new skills that captures next steps and assigns responsibilities.
4. A detailed time line that includes intervals of when support activities will be conducted.

Do you remember the range of options when we discussed the Promote practice? Likewise, there is a range of options for your follow-up support as well, depending on your available resources in cost and time.

Looking at the continuum, you can see a range of options—from low-cost, minimal time investments to costly, time-intensive efforts. Starting on the left, low-cost examples include sending e-mail reminders or motivators to your participants or sending "*Letters to Myself*" that are generated by your participants during your PD event. Moving toward the middle, you can see how time and cost investments increase in examples like moderating an online discussion group or providing a podcast. The examples on the right represent high-cost, time-intensive options, such as on-site coaching, advanced levels of training, or establishing professional learning communities.

Let's go through a hypothetical 14-month plan for follow-up support.

- At two weeks: An initial e-mail encourages participants to begin implementation, provides resources, and lists highlights from the training. Technical assistance is offered at this point.
- At one month: A website provides information and easy access to tools that participants can use to begin implementation.
- At three months: Action plans resent to participants remind them of their intentions and commitment.
- At six months: A post-event evaluation seeks to find trouble spots.
- At seven months: A “booster” event provides additional resources and training on specific trouble spots that participants have identified in post-event evaluations. Booster events do not introduce any new information; they only reinforce content from the initial event.
- At ten months: Another e-mail reinforces content and continues to address the barriers identified at seven months. This is also a good time to reoffer technical assistance and send self-assessment tools that were used during the PD event.
- One year later: Phone interviews with team leads provide an opportunity to share successes and discuss needs.
- At 14 months: Commendation letters allow participants to celebrate if they kept their commitments and accepted your offers for technical assistance.

These intervals may differ, but what is important is to have consistent, continued, and intentional contact during a specified time frame.

Key Strategies

Key strategies for follow-up support in group settings include:

- Plan for follow-up support prior to each event;
- Share expectations prior to and during the event; and
- Provide support at appropriate intervals.

The strategies are similar for technical assistance:

- Plan for follow-up support during the initial provision of technical assistance;
- Schedule follow-up support; and
- Provide intentional follow-up support.