What is Professional Development?

Audio Descriptive Text

Title: Professional Development 201: From Basic to Dynamic. Introduction; What is Professional Development? Image of PD practices: Sustain, Design, Promote, Deliver, Follow Up, and Evaluate. CDC logo.

Video Summary

Professional development is a systematic process that strengthens how professionals obtain and retain knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Professional development offerings follow a systematic process, from planning to evaluation.

Audio Script

Before we explore adult learning theory, let’s review “What is Professional Development?”

Professional development, commonly referred to as PD, is a systematic process that strengthens how professionals obtain and retain knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It consists of intentionally designed processes and activities developed to improve organizational approaches.

The CDC Professional Development Practices are based on research and previously identified best practices that provide optimal conditions for implementation to occur.

As you’ll recall from PD101, there are six professional development practices:

- Sustain a professional development infrastructure,
- Design professional development offerings,
- Market professional development services,
- Deliver professional development,
- Provide follow-up support, and
- Evaluate professional development processes.

Although not a completely regimented process, the PD Practices do follow a logical flow, from one practice to the next. They create the framework for providing professional development offerings.

Professional development offerings follow a systematic process from planning to evaluation. Offerings are:

- Events such as trainings and workshops
- Information and presentation sessions, and
- Technical assistance

This course will focus on events. A professional development event, such as a workshop or training, is a set of skill-building processes and activities designed to assist individuals in obtaining new knowledge and skills. The purpose is to reach specific goals and improve workplace performance. Events can be face-to-face training, distance learning, workshops, train-the-trainer sessions, or webinars.
All events have three things in common. They are:

1. Targeted to a specific audience,
2. Centered on the learner, and
3. Contain a call to action.

The fact sheet, *Understanding Professional Development*, provides an overview of professional development and types of professional development events.

For this training, we will explore webinars as the primary PD event.