



Reflection

Identification of learning needs

A key part of CPD is the identification of your learning needs through reflection on practice. If you don't identify the right needs it doesn't matter how well you subsequently manage your learning, you will not see the changes in your practice that you might have hoped for.

You are the person best placed to identify these needs. Always remember that the best means of identifying your learning needs is to be honest and open in reflecting on your practice.

Reflection is thinking about what you've done, how you've done it and how you could do it better or differently next time. Reflection helps you to identify your learning and development needs.

“If you don't know where you are going how do you know when you have arrived?”

Methods of identifying your learning needs

There are a variety of methods that you can use to help you reflect and thereby identify your learning needs. These include:

1. Critical incident analysis

– this is basically learning from your own experiences. In a situation that did not go as well as you hoped, think about what went wrong and why and what you could do differently in the future. In order to perform differently you may need to develop a skill or knowledge. For example, if a patient requested simvastatin and you were unsure of the information that you needed to know in order to supply the product appropriately - you have identified a learning need.

2. Feedback from others

– do not overlook the value of discussing your practice and learning needs with colleagues, your line manager, friends, or users of your service. Their opinions can be very useful – our perception of ourselves or events often differs from that of others. Their input may take the form of appraisal, peer review or an informal conversation. For example, a colleague casually mentions

the amount of satisfaction she has got from participating in the substitute prescribing service. You were recently approached by a local GP to offer the service to patients and you weren't keen but now you think that you may like to get involved. You need to know more about the service - you have identified a learning need.

3. Reading and other learning activities

– reading publications, and participating in workshops, study groups and locality groups will also introduce fresh ideas and help you to reflect on your learning needs. For example, having read a report by the LHSCG, you notice that local care homes are not adequately serviced and you would like to get involved but need to be better informed regarding issues that commonly arise in care homes – you have identified a learning need.

4. Personal SWOT

(Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) analysis

– you may wish to undertake a personal SWOT analysis to help identify your strengths and areas that need developing. For example, training to become a supplementary prescriber has been identified as an opportunity in your SWOT analysis. What are the skills and knowledge that you need to develop in order to become a supplementary prescriber? – you have identified a learning need. A blank personal SWOT analysis form can be found in Appendix 1.

5. Personal development plan

– drawing up a personal development plan (PDP) can be useful in helping you identify career goals. For example, you may be a community pharmacist who wishes to work in hospital pharmacy. Hence, whilst many of your skills will be transferable, you may need to develop further skills - you have identified a learning need. It is useful to complete a PDP at the start of the year although it can be refined throughout the year as your role develops or changes. A blank personal development plan form can be found in Appendix 2.

REFLECTION



A diabetes information stand set up for National Diabetes week generated great interest in the pharmacy. During this time I referred a patient to their GP with suspected diabetes after learning that they were suffering from several of the warning symptoms (thirst, polyuria and tiredness). This particular patient has since been diagnosed and returns regularly for medication and advice.

I would like to become involved in providing an early identification (screening) service for diabetes in the future.

I need to learn how to initially go about setting up a screening service.

I specifically need to know the risk factors associated with developing diabetes so that I would know who to target.

REFLECTION



I am involved in the care of a new patient suffering from pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH). I need to improve my knowledge in this area.

I specifically need to gain up to date knowledge on the diagnosis and monitoring of PAH. I need to learn about the genetic predisposition to PAH and tracking strategies. I also need to up date my knowledge on drug management of PAH.

REFLECTION

What do I need to record?

In your records you should answer the following questions:

What do I want to learn? (Make it specific)

Why do I want to learn about this?