



Completing Your CCP with Others: Lessons Learned from the CCP Workshops

ELLEN KAMPF, M.S.W., RSW, PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE ASSOCIATE

specific
measurable
**SMART
GOALS**
realistic
attainable
timely

Now in its fifth year, the *Continuing Competence Program* (CCP) is mandatory for all members of the College. The CCP is an adult education model, which is intended to promote quality assurance with respect to the practice of the professions of social work and social service work, and to encourage members to enhance their practice in an ongoing way. This is one way in which the College fulfils its mandate of public protection.

In an effort to support members' participation in the program, the Professional Practice Department has developed a number of resources, including webcasts and articles on a variety of themes which can be accessed on the College website at www.ocswssw.org. Recognizing that members were also looking for more interactive ways to learn about the program and learn from other members, workshops and webinars were also offered, both at the College (remotely and in-person) and in other settings.

Below are some of the themes which emerged from the workshops:

A TIME FOR REFLECTION

It's hard to know where you want to go, what you want to learn, or how you can develop if you don't first reflect on your practice. Reflection is a necessary, important, and often-overlooked aspect of practice and of continuing competence.

Both the *Optional Worksheet* (which is the first step of the CCP) and the *Self-Assessment Tool* (which is the second step of the program) are intended to give you the opportunity to reflect on your practice. Reflection is a cornerstone of social work and social service work practice. The *Worksheet* is an opportunity to reflect on your current responsibilities, any new responsibilities, and any knowledge and skills you wish to enhance. The *Self-Assessment Tool* requires you to reflect on your practice with respect to the eight principles in the Standards of Practice. (If you are not currently practising, consider what areas you want to focus on in order to maintain your competence and/or prepare for your return to practice).

The CCP workshops offered a structured opportunity for reflection. Perhaps most importantly, participants indicated that the opportunity to get feedback from others was invaluable, and provided a stronger foundation upon which to formulate their learning goals. Sharing reflections and insights about one's practice and getting feedback from a group is also an important way to overcome any blind spots or tendencies to overlook gaps or areas that are more challenging. If you haven't sought feedback from others or tried completing your CCP in a group, this might be something you want to consider.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES & SHARING STRATEGIES

The group setting also provided members with an



Completing Your CCP with Others: Lessons Learned from the CCP Workshops

ELLEN KAMPF, M.S.W., RSW, PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE ASSOCIATE

opportunity to discuss barriers and challenges that they have faced when completing their CCP. Some of the barriers identified have been a shortage of time and money; the inability to access professional development resources; lack of employer support; and little time for the perceived luxury of reflecting and planning. Group discussion quickly gave way to sharing strategies to overcome these barriers. Technology was frequently identified as one way to transcend limitations such as time and distance. Members were surprised to hear about the many free podcasts, courses and webinars offered through university and college continuing education programs, for example. Others reconsidered how they might use their local public library as a resource. Those considering more experiential learning activities discussed ways that remote meeting platforms might assist them in connecting with supervisors, colleagues and others. Members also recognized that they can access articles and other information online at no cost. You can find more examples of *Learning Activities* on the CCP pages, under the Professional Practice tab on the College website, or on page 17 of the *CCP Instruction Guide*.

SETTING GOALS

Members identify their goals in the *Self-Assessment Tool* and then further develop them in their *Professional Development Plan* (Step 3 of the CCP). The CCP Workshops revealed that setting “SMART” goals (or goals and objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely) can be challenging. Members may also set an unrealistic number of goals, or think that they need to set goals in relation to every principle in the standards of practice. Group feedback in the workshop setting was invaluable in helping members to formulate realistic, achievable and meaningful goals. Members commented that they got ideas from others and found it easier to distinguish between goals and objectives. If you have been having difficulty breaking your goals down into meaningful parts within your *Professional Development Plan*, you might want to consider working with one or more other people to complete this part of the CCP.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

The feedback from the CCP workshops has been very positive. Members have reported that, in addition to providing an

opportunity for structured self-reflection and an opportunity to learn more about goal-setting, the workshops:

- Increased their understanding of the program;
- Provided them with an opportunity to meet, and gain valuable insights from colleagues;
- Gave them an opportunity to work on their current CCP (or, in some cases, to complete their CCP from the previous year);
- Assisted them in becoming better at reflecting on their practice and more prepared to plan their professional development according to the learning needs they identified. (This was especially true for new graduates, who reported that the CCP is similar to the learning contracts they are required to complete as students);
- Promoted discussion between new graduates and more experienced members. (There are areas of practice younger workers may never have been exposed to. More experienced practitioners, on the other hand, may have graduated at a time when standards - particularly in the areas of privacy and technology - were different or non-existent); and
- Encouraged them to consider ways that they might complete parts or all of their CCP with others, or how they might seek out feedback from supervisors, colleagues or others in order to get more out of the program.

The CCP workshops have demonstrated that there is great value in completing all or part of your CCP with others. This approach may not be for everyone, but as you work on your 2013 CCP, consider whether you might like to integrate this approach into your own plans. You may decide to seek out another member, or to get a group together to view one of the CCP webcasts or a webinar on a topic of shared interest. However you do it, remember that self-assessment and reflection can often be enhanced when done with others.

For more information on the CCP, please visit the CCP pages on the College website at www.ocswssw.org, or contact the Professional Practice Department at ccp@ocswssw.org.