

Public Health Online Learning Companion Guide



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www.cphce.org

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Purpose of Companion Guide

This guide provides suggested activities to allow groups of professionals to further their understanding and skill development related to a particular public health topic. It is designed to be used in conjunction with distance learning or online training, particularly where training is offered in a group setting. It could also be used if individuals participate in an online training separately and then come together to discuss it as a group. You may consider using this guide with:

- Public Health Live webcasts (live or archived): www.phlive.org
- Interactive, online courses (self-paced): <http://www.empirestatephct.org/learning/pages/catalog/>

There are many benefits to using this guide. It can be used to:

- Facilitate dialogue and discourse among colleagues, especially where experiences and background are diverse
- Engage professionals before, during and after training/informational sessions
- Orient new staff and encourage professional development among current staff
- Allow the sharing of ideas and to build consensus around important issues
- Increase knowledge and skills on a specific topic
- Explore ways in which new information can improve work and personal outcomes
- Generate new ideas for funding, publications or presentations
- Identify topics for further research
- Review and revise current policies and procedures
- Facilitate quality assurance and improvement
- Assist in strategic planning
- Enhance evidence-based projects

Using this Guide

The companion guide is designed to be used by a single person or a group who desire to facilitate the continued learning process for a given topic. It is the responsibility of this person (or group) to facilitate the activities upon completion of the online training. Facilitators may include health educators, supervisors, team leaders, administrators, section chiefs or anyone who wishes to take on the role. Facilitators can choose to coordinate a shorter session with one of the suggested activities or coordinate a longer session with multiple suggested activities.

Role of facilitator:

- Identify or recruit participants
- Identify goal or expected outcomes of activity
- Provide materials and resources needed to conduct activity
- Coordinate logistics (room, time, etc.)
- Identify timeline for completion of activity and submission of work
- Explain activity directions
- Set expectations
- Maintain an environment where participants are free to express their ideas
- Debrief activity
- Conduct evaluation of activity
- Summarize and document lessons learned

Do:

Encourage participation

Keep discussion focused and flowing

Ask open ended and thought provoking questions

Don't:

Allow one person to dominate the discussion

Let the discussion wander

Ask questions that can elicit a yes or no response

Suggested Activities

Note: There may be some activities that are more relevant to a specific public health topic. Choose an activity that best meets your needs.

A. Large Group Discussion

Purpose: To create open dialogue and share ideas among public health professionals with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Choose a question or several questions to pose to the group. You can give participants the question(s) before and/or after the online learning activity.

Sample Questions:

1. Where does this topic fit within the 10 Essential Services of Public Health?
2. How does this topic relate to our organization's mission, vision, policies or procedures?
3. How does this topic relate to the social determinants of health?
4. Did this confirm or challenge any ideas you had about this public health topic? Explain.
5. What stood out as a "take home message" to you and why?
6. What questions or issues surfaced that you would like to know more about? What can we do to get answers to these questions?
7. Describe how this topic affects the population we serve?
8. How can we engage our partners in addressing this public health topic?
9. Is there anything we can do in our organization to incorporate what we have learned?

You may also choose to make up your own questions that are specific to the topic or more relevant to your organization.

B. Quick Write

Purpose: To assess the change in knowledge about a specific public health topic before and after distance learning or online training opportunity.

Challenge the participants to see how much they know about the topic before the online learning activity by turning the objectives into questions. Give them 5-10 minutes to complete this activity. After the online learning activity, allow the participants to answer the questions again. Engage in a discussion about how the answers changed after the activity.

Examples:

Topic: Teen Pregnancy

Objective: Describe how the epidemiology of teen pregnancy has changed over the last several decades.

Question: How do you think teen pregnancy has changed over time?
Think about: who? when? where? how? why?

Topic: Chronic Disease Self-Management

Objective: Compare and contrast self-management programs with patient education

Question: How do you define chronic disease self-management? How do you define chronic disease patient education? What is similar? What is different?

C. Create a Toolkit*

Purpose: To find and organize additional resources on a specific public health topic.

Challenge the group to create a “toolkit” on a specific public health topic. A toolkit can include additional resources, websites, articles and/or training opportunities. Encourage the group to establish a timeline for identifying items or materials to be included in the toolkit and assign one person or a small group to pull it all together and post it for others to review, update and utilize.

Your toolkit might include:

- *Evidence-based research findings and/or peer reviewed journal articles*
- *List of stakeholders or partners and contact information*
- *Outreach materials*
- *Best practices or model programs*
- *Guidelines*
- *Lessons learned*
- *Templates, forms or sample documents*
- *Orientation education and/or training materials*
- *Resources with additional information*

* If you would like us to post your toolkit on the www.cphce.org website to share with others, please email coned@albany.edu.

D. Breakout Groups and/or Debate

Purpose(s):

- *To allow for individual sharing and discussion*
- *To give participants an opportunity to work with different people*
- *To help participants gain a deeper understanding of the topic or to explore diverse viewpoints.*

1. Identify the expected end result of the group work first – for example you may want them to accomplish a specific task or have a directed discussion about a particular topic. You can ask each group to work on the same task or discussion topic or have each group work on a different task or discussion topic.

Tip: If you plan to use this format for a debate, make sure to have at least two opposing viewpoints on the topic. You can engage the large group to help you with this.

2. Split the group into the desired number of groups (e.g., if you want three group, you can ask participants to count off 1 through 3 and then group them according to their number).

Tip: Provide directions before they split up into smaller groups as it can be hard to command attention. It is best if you provide both verbal and written instructions so everyone is clear on the directions and expected results.

3. Ask each group to designate a timekeeper, note-taker and reporter. Provide sufficient space, time and resources for the groups to accomplish their task.
4. At the end of the group work, ask the reporter from each smaller group to present to the larger group. You can use some of the questions below to help facilitate the report-out.
 - What did you learn from your group members?
 - What did you learn from other groups?
 - What recommendations might you have to the larger group?
 - What problems did you identify and did you discuss any solutions?
 - What are some common themes among each group?

E. Organizational Self-Assessment & Action Plan

Purpose: To identify opportunities to strengthen your organization's current internal systems and processes related to a specific public health topic or issue.

Engage the group in a discussion about the following questions or create a self-assessment tool (e.g., survey) using the following questions and distribute to members of your organization.

1. Do we have written policies, procedures or guidelines related to this public health topic?
2. Do we have an evidence-based practice, program or intervention related to this public health topic?
3. If we have implemented a program or intervention, do we have a process to evaluate it?
4. Are staff properly trained or have knowledge related to this topic? What is the process for training newly hired staff?
5. Do we have an internal expert?
6. Do we have a process for identifying new information or resources related to this topic?
7. Do we have stakeholders or partners to collaborate with?

Once you have completed the self-assessment, your next step is to develop an action plan. You can use the following chart to help develop an action plan.

| What Actions we need to take? | Who is Responsible? | Date to be Completed? |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |
| 4. | | |
| 5. | | |
| 6. | | |
| 7. | | |
| 8. | | |
| 9. | | |
| 10. | | |

G. Post-It!

Purpose: To creatively share public health related information.

A poster, flyer or brochure is a great and easy way to share an important message. In fact, they can be a key component in public health campaigns to prevent disease and promote good health. They can also be used to propose new ideas. When creating a poster, first identify team members and then discuss and give specific assignments. Don't forget about setting a deadline!

1. Identify the audience for which you want to develop the poster. For example,
 - Colleagues
 - Management
 - Partners
 - Stakeholders
 - Clients
 - Vulnerable populations
 - Public
 - Etc.
2. Identify the different sections of the poster. For example, if you are creating a poster to share information about a specific disease or condition, you may consider including information such as:
 - What is the problem?
 - Who is affected?
 - What are the signs and symptoms?
 - How can you treat or prevent it?

When creating your poster, don't forget:

- A picture is worth a 1000 words.
 - Do some research to see what has already been created.
 - Take into consideration populations that are culturally diverse or of lower health literacy.
 - Test your poster with the target audience to make sure it is relevant and well-received.
3. After your poster has been completed, share it! Some suggestions are below:
 - Upload it to your website
 - Post in a place where it is viewable by your target audience (e.g., lobby, waiting area, elevators, meeting rooms, etc.)
 - Send it via fax, e-mail or regular mail
 - Present at a conference or regularly scheduled meeting

Additional Resources on Public Health & Training

Center for Public Health Continuing Education Public Health Live Archived Webcasts: www.phlive.org

Empire State Public Health Training Center: www.empirestatephhc.org

The Community Guide (a guide to community preventive services)
<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/index.html>

Area Health Education Centers:
<http://www.nationalahec.org/Directory/AHECDirectory.asp#NewYork>

CDC Learning Connection: <http://www.cdc.gov/learning/>

Public Health Training Center Network:
<http://www.publichealthtrainingcenters.org/>

Association of Schools of Public Health: www.asph.org

New York State Department of Health Learning Management System
www.nylearnsphtc.com

Public Health Foundation Train National: www.train.org

Are there other public health resources that should be listed here? If so, email us at coned@albany.edu.

Evaluation

Evaluation is an important component of any learning or training activity. Information from an evaluation can help you determine what worked best, what needs to be improved and ultimately if the activity was a valuable experience for participants.

You can choose to set aside a few minutes at the end of the activity to debrief in a large group setting or you can distribute a short paper-based evaluation. There are pros and cons to each so see what works best for your organization.

Sample evaluation questions are provided below. You can use these questions or create your own. It is best to use a combination of both close and open-ended questions.

Sample Evaluation Questions

The following questions are close-ended (participant chooses an answer).

1. The activity was a valuable experience for me.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly disagree
2. I would participate in this type of activity again.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly disagree
3. The purpose of the activity was clearly defined.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly disagree
4. The activity was well organized.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly disagree
5. This activity has increased my knowledge or understanding of the public health topic.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Disagree

d. Strongly disagree

The following questions are open-ended (participant writes in their answer). These questions can also be used during debriefing in a group setting.

1. What did like best about this activity?
2. How would you improve this activity?
3. What did you gain from participating in this activity?
4. Do you have any other general comments about this activity?

Feedback Form

We would like your feedback to improve this Public Health Online Learning Companion Guide. This should be completed by the person responsible for facilitating or organizing the use of this companion guide in your organization. Please complete the questions below and fax, email or mail it to:

Center for Public Health Continuing Education
SUNY Albany School of Public Health
One University Place
Rensselaer, NY 12144
518-402-1137 (fax)
coned@albany.edu (email)

You may also complete this feedback form online at:
<http://www.informz.net/survistapro/s.asp?id=5196>

Part I. Please rate the companion guide based on the following criteria. Put an X in the column that best describes your rating.

| Criteria/Rating | Very Good | Good | Average | Poor | Very Poor |
|---------------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|-----------|
| Quality of guide information | | | | | |
| Usefulness of guide information | | | | | |
| Completeness of guide | | | | | |
| Organization of guide | | | | | |

Part II. Please write your responses below each question. Please be as specific as possible. You may use additional paper if more space is needed.

1. What did you like best about this companion guide?

2. How would you improve this companion guide?

3. Are there additional activities that should be added to this companion guide?
4. Was there anything in the companion guide that was unclear or confusing?
5. Do you have any general comments on how this guide can be more useful for public health organizations?
6. Do you have any general comments on how this guide can be better incorporated with online training opportunities for public health professionals?