

FAQS

Why is Continuing Professional Development being required?

In 2009 the Colorado State Legislature passed HB09-1086 entitled "Concerning Continuing Professional Competency of Certain Mental Health Professionals." This bill was introduced by four mental health professions (Addiction Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists, Professional Counselors and Social Workers) and supported by DORA (DORA supports continuing professional development as a whole). Prior to the introduction of the bill, the mental health professional associations met to discuss support for this bill.

Who is required to participate?

Certified Addiction Counselors II and III
Licensed Addiction Counselors
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists
Licensed Professional Counselors
Licensed Social Workers
Licensed Clinical Social Workers

Continuing Professional Competence *is*
Professional Development. Many of the
activities you are already doing on a day-to-
day basis will count as credit.

When does the Continuing Professional Development program go into effect?

The Colorado Legislature mandated that the Continuing Professional Development program begin on January 1, 2011. This means participation will be required for the renewal cycle ending on August 31, 2011. Because the program starts during the current renewal cycle, the Board/Director will allow licensees to complete the program requirements in two parts. The Self-Assessment, Practice Survey and drafting of the Learning Plan (Steps 1 – 2) must be completed before August 31, 2011. The implementation of the Learning Plan and all Professional Development Activities as well as their required documentation must be completed during September 1, 2011 to August 31, 2013. During a normal renewal cycle, Steps 1 - 5 would all be completed during the term of the cycle. For example, licensees will be required to complete Steps 1 – 5 during the renewal cycle that runs from September 1, 2013 to August 31, 2015.

How often do I need to participate in the Continuing Professional Development program?

You will need to attest upon each renewal that you have complied with the Continuing Professional Development program requirements. The Continuing Professional Development cycle coincides with the existing license cycle. You have the full timeframe between two renewal cycles to complete your Professional Practice Survey, Self Assessment, Learning Plan, Professional Development Activities, Documentation and Self-Evaluation. Typically the two-year timeframe begins and ends on odd numbered years.

How do I know that the Board/Director won't evaluate me based on how I rate myself on the Professional Practice Survey and Self Assessment tools?

The purpose of the Continuing Professional Development program is consumer protection achieved by promoting high standards and quality assurance with respect to the mental health professions. The intent of the program is one of enrichment rather than remediation. The Board/Director's objective is not to police the profession to discover the "bad apples."

The CPD program is based upon the assumption that both internal factors (interest, job promotions, etc.) and external factors (new technology, law, etc.) offer the opportunity to further develop knowledge and skill. Professional Development Activities develop your professional skill and must be directly relevant to your competence in the mental health field. PDA must enhance, improve or develop your competence as a licensee by providing new knowledge or

skills or by sharpening or honing existing skills by synthesizing new knowledge. Within these guidelines, you should be the judge of your learning goals and achievement. The Board/Director will verify that you have completed the requirements of the CPD program by ensuring you have finished the Professional Practice Survey, Learning Plan, and the 40 PDH required each renewal cycle. In the event of an audit, the Board/Director will also require you to submit documentation of the PDAs on your Learning Plan.

Is the information I submit through the Continuing Professional Development program confidential?

By statute, all the records of assessments or other documentation developed or submitted in connection with the CPD program are intended to be confidential and not subject to inspection by the public or discoverable in connection with a civil action against a licensee unless specifically ordered by a Court. However, the records of assessments or other documentation developed or submitted in connection with the CPD may be used by the Board/Director for the purposes of determining whether a licensee is maintaining continuing professional competency to engage in the profession.

Licensees should be aware however there may be circumstances where information regarding your failure to participate in the program and any subsequent disciplinary action may be reported to the public or other inquiring parties. For the full statute text refer to §12-43-605(2)(a), C.R.S.

DO NOT SEND YOUR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE SURVEY, SELF ASSESSMENT, SMART GOALS, OR SELF-EVALUATION TO THE BOARD/DIRECTOR.

These tools are provided to help you develop a meaningful Learning Plan. It is not necessary to share the details of these documents with the Board/Director or DORA.

Can I share my Continuing Professional Development materials with my employer?

You may find it beneficial to use the CPD program as the basis of employee reviews and performance planning. You may choose to print, share or otherwise disclose this information at your will and discretion. Employers may not require you to disclose any CPD materials or make such disclosure a condition of employment. By statute, all the records of assessments or other documentation developed or submitted in connection with the CPD program are intended to be confidential and not subject to inspection by the public or discoverable in connection with a civil action against a licensee unless specifically ordered by a Court. Please see the full statute text for more details.

Why should I complete the Self-Assessment? I'm already competent.

Continuing competency is an ongoing process. By completing the Professional Practice Survey and Self-Assessment you will be able to assess your strengths and identify the areas that you can enhance. This will enable you to develop a Learning Plan based on your personal learning needs. By developing your own Learning Plan, you have a greater chance of attaining the goals you have set for yourself.

How soon do I need to start my Learning Plan?

The Board/Director recommends you draft your Learning Plan immediately after taking the Survey and Self-Assessment. The reason for this is that you are probably already focused on professional development and actively thinking about your interests. Planning early is important to help you accomplish your goals. By starting early, you will also assure there is ample time to change your Plan if something comes up.

Can I change my Learning Plan?

Yes! Your Learning Plan is open to changes or updates during the licensure cycle. Your Learning Plan may not always be open to changes though. There are two events that may cause your Learning Plan to close, after which you may not make changes or updates.

1. Once you renew your license, your Learning Plan will be locked. You will not be able to make changes to your previous Learning Plan. Because Continuing Professional Development is a requirement to renew your license, you must complete the Survey, Learning Plan and Documentation prior to renewing your license. When you renew your license your Learning Plan will become subject to an audit for compliance.
2. All open Learning Plans will be closed to further changes or updates the day after the grace period ends for licensure renewal. That day falls on November 1 of odd numbered years.

The last day to change your Learning Plan for the current cycle is November 1, 2013 **or** the day you renew your license, whichever comes first.

How long should I keep my Documentation forms?

Board/Director Rule requires you keep your Documentation materials, which may include certificates, programs, letters, presentations or copies, for at least 5 years after the expiration date of your license (for example, if your license expired on August 31, 2013, you should retain your documentation demonstrating your CPD compliance until August 31, 2018). Because audits are rolling, this documentation may be required of you either before or after your renewal period. An audit of your participation in the Continuing Professional Development program occurring before your renewal date for which you are accruing credit will take into account the possibility that all professional development hours may not be completed at the time of the audit.

Can I take Continuing Education courses?

Yes, Continuing Education coursework can be counted toward your Professional Development Hours. In fact, you can use several types of coursework to accrue PDH. This includes academic coursework, attending conferences, lectures, and seminars. For a full list of eligible coursework activities, please refer to the PDA guidelines in the Portfolio.

I have more than one role. Do I need to complete the Survey for each role I occupy?

No. It is only necessary to complete one section of the Survey. If you occupy more than one role, you do not need to take all respective sections of the Survey. Choose one of your roles to focus on for this CPD cycle. The choice of which role you will assess is based upon your sole discretion. You may choose a role that you do not currently occupy but which you would like to develop and achieve for promotion or professional development reasons. For example:

Sally works as a Professor as well as a Direct Service Provider at the clinic at the University. She does not need to take both the Educator and Direct Service Provider sections of the Survey. Sally decides to assess herself on the Direct Service Provider role as this is the area that most interests her.

If I am under stipulation or a Final Agency Order that requires me to complete continuing education coursework, can I count those hours towards my PDH accrual and CPD compliance?

No. Stipulations and Final Agency Orders utilize continuing education to remediate sub-standard practice or other practice act violations. This type of discipline is strictly separate from the requirement to demonstrate continuing professional development through the accrual of PDH. If you are under Stipulation or a Final Agency Order which

requires you to complete continuing education coursework, you must do so *in addition to* the CPD program requirements.

What do I submit to DORA?

Not all CPD materials need to be submitted to DORA. Many are supplemental tools and for your private records. Use the list below to help navigate the program requirements:

1. **Professional Practice Survey:** Complete online through your user account on www.dora.state.co.us/mental-health/cc. DORA will track your completion of the Survey. Results will be compiled aggregately by license type. For this reason, you will not be able to access your results after you have completed the Survey. If you have not completed the Survey, you will not be able to renew your license.
2. **Self-Assessment:** Complete the Self-Assessment Worksheet provided for you in the CPD Portfolio. Do not send your Self-Assessment to DORA or the Board/Director. Retain your results for your personal records. The Self-Assessment is **not** subject to an audit of CPD compliance.
3. **SMART Goals:** Complete the SMART Goals Worksheet provided for you in the CPD Portfolio. Do not send your SMART Goals Worksheet to DORA or the Board/Director. Retain your results for your personal records. The SMART Goals Worksheet is **not** subject to an audit of CPD compliance.
4. **Learning Plan:** Complete the Learning Plan online through your user account. Your Learning Plan is subject to an audit to verify your participation in the CPD program. Completion of the Learning Plan is required in order to renew your license. If you have not completed your Learning Plan, you will not be able to renew your license.
5. **Documentation:** Retain the proper documentation of your PDAs according to the guidelines found on page 9 - 11 of the CPD Portfolio. It is suggested you complete the corresponding documentation after completing each PDA on your Learning Plan and save them in a file. Should you be selected for an audit, you will be notified at which point this documentation will be required for submission to DORA. Your documentation should match the details on your Learning Plan by the time you renew your license.
6. **Self-Evaluation:** Complete the Self-Evaluation Worksheet provided for you in the CPD Portfolio. Do not send your Self-Evaluation Worksheet to DORA or the Board/Director. Retain your answers for your personal records. The Self-Evaluation Worksheet is **not** subject to an audit of CPD compliance.

CPD Step:	Submit to DORA?	Where can I find it?	Subject to Audit?
Professional Practice Survey	Yes	Online User Account	No
Self-Assessment	No	CPD Portfolio	No
SMART Goals	No	CPD Portfolio	No
Learning Plan	Yes	Online User Account	Yes
Documentation	Yes (if selected for audit)	Retain according to guidelines in CPD Portfolio.	Yes
Self-Evaluation	No	CPD Portfolio	No

Licenses should be aware however there may be circumstances where information regarding your failure to participate in the program and any subsequent disciplinary action may be reported to the public or other inquiring parties.

By statute, all the records of assessments or other documentation developed or submitted in connection with the CPD program are intended to be confidential and not subject to inspection by the public or discoverable in connection with a civil action against a licensee unless specifically ordered by a Court. However, the records of assessments or other documentation developed or submitted in connection with the CPD may be used by the Board/Director for the purposes of determining whether a licensee is maintaining continuing professional competency to engage in the profession. Please refer to the full statute text for details.

What is Deem Status and how do I qualify?

Note: Deem Status is **NOT** an exemption. Licensees who are participating in a program of Continuing Professional Competence that is mandated by a different Department or Division within the State of Colorado may be deemed to have satisfied the requirements of the CPD program requirements. Deem Status is intended to eliminate the duplication of requirements enforced by the State. For this reason, a licensee seeking Deem Status should assure the program in which they participate is substantially similar to the requirements set forth through the CPD program. This includes 40 hours of ongoing training, education, and development every two years.

If the State Department or the agency contracted by a State Department by which you are employed alters their requirements for Continuing Professional Competence, licensees are encouraged to re-evaluate their Deem Status.

The burden of proof lies with the licensee and not with the employer.

At this time, the Boards/Director will not be publishing a list of programs that qualify for Deem Status. It is up to each licensee to determine if they qualify for Deem Status. To make this determination, please review your Statute and Board or Director Rules. Licensees should know:

(1) To be eligible for Deem Status a State Department Continuing Professional Competence program must satisfy the definition of Continuing Professional Competence pursuant to statute. Employees and contractors of qualifying programs in State Departments shall be deemed to have met the CPC requirements.

(2) Licensees deemed to have met the CPC requirements are subject to an audit. The audit shall review the program for which the licensee has justified their Deem Status to ensure that it meets the definition of CPC outlined in statute and shall verify the Licensee's successful completion of the program.

(3) Licensees found to have falsified their Deem Status or who attested their fulfillment of CPC requirements for an unqualified State Department program, are subject to discipline by the Board/Director.

It is recommended licensees also ensure the program of Continuing Professional Competence in which they participate is substantially equivalent to the standards set forth in the CPC program including approximately 40 hours of training, education and development every two years.

I am dually licensed/certified. Do I need to participate in the program for each license/certificate I hold?

The Board/Director may grant an exemption from the CPD requirement if a licensee has fulfilled the CPD requirements set forth in: §12-43-411, C.R.S.; §12-43-506, C.R.S.; §12-43-605, C.R.S.; or §12-43-805, C.R.S. This is established in rule. The Boards/Director have not developed policies to manage these types of exemptions. They will be considering the topic at their regularly scheduled meetings in January and February, 2011.

At this time, individuals that are dually licensed or certified need to complete the CPD program requirements for every license or certificate they may hold. This includes participating in the reflective practice tools, drafting a Learning Plan, and completing 40 PDH for every license.

**The word "license" is used as a general term. While most of the professions and occupations are licensed, others may be registered, certified, or listed. For precise terminology and requirements related to a profession or occupation, please consult the website of the appropriate board or program.*

***Licensed Social Workers and Licensed Clinical Social Workers must participate in the same Continuing Professional Development program as other mental health licensees; however some of the program tools have unique titles. Please use the following substitutions when reading the above requirements:*

Other Mental Health Professions

Social Work

Professional Practice Survey

Professional Practice Rubric

Self-Assessment

Practice Description

SMART Goals

SMART Goals

Learning Plan

Learning Plan

Self-Evaluation

Self-Evaluation

For specific requirements, please download the appropriate version of the CPD Portfolio for your profession. Specific rules or requirements may vary.