

Get the most out of your investment in a training experience.

Let's face it, we are all busy. We run from one thing to the next hoping to get all of our work done effectively without missing deadlines. As a result, we spend less time planning and preparing for developing our professional capabilities, and we often miss great opportunities to invest in our future.

Below are some tips to help you make the most of your training experience so that you can improve your performance in the workplace and make progress toward your career goals.

Plan for Lifelong Learning: Your individual development plan is the place to start, because if you don't know what training you need, then any training will waste your time. Create your individual development plan (IDP) to focus your efforts. A good plan starts with an accurate assessment of where you are. Assess yourself using available competency assessment tools from the Public Health Academy or ask your colleagues and supervisor what abilities you need to meet your goals.

Talk with your supervisor about your plans for professional development. Make sure your plan is consistent with your performance improvement plan in your performance appraisal. Demonstrate how you can get your work done while you attend class. Obtain your supervisor's commitment and support, then discuss how you can find new opportunities to apply your new skills when you return from training.

Get the Right Training: The good news is that you have many choices for training. The bad news is that it can be difficult to make choices among your many options. Make your choice based on your needs for competency development, and then look for the best training to enhance your knowledge and skills based on needs for doing your job, not because the training is simply convenient, less expensive, or from your favorite school. Training is a significant investment of your time, energy, and your organization's money, so seek the highest quality training experiences you can afford given your situation. There are hundreds of resources available to you online, through AHECs, through the NCIPH, UNC, ECU, and many others. The Public Health Academy website can help you navigate your way to the best choices for you.

Getting Training at the Right Time: Like many things in life, timing is important for learning. Seek your training at www.sph.unc.edu/oce

the right time, before you need to use the knowledge and skills you seek. Information from your performance review, your colleagues, future job descriptions, and professional associations can be helpful. Also, accreditation requires that you document that you have received the necessary training for licensure. For example, public health nurses are now required to have a portfolio that demonstrates how they are upgrading their competencies.

Make the Most of Your Learning Experience:

The key to creating a lasting learning experience is to prepare for the class and participate fully. Prepare questions in advance. The more you engage both the instructor and your fellow classmates, the more the experience will imprint in your memory for use back at work.

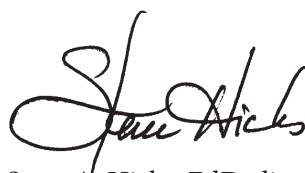
Take notes, review them when you return from training, and look for any opportunities to use what you have learned. When you return to work, share your experience and materials with others to refresh your memory and promote organizational learning.

Be the Master of Your Fate: Take charge by planning your career development. If you want to do a better job for your agency, take steps to find out the types of training experiences, work experiences, and education you will need to move ahead. Contact the NC Public Health Academy (info@ncpublichealthacademy.org) for assistance with your individual professional development plan.

We in the Office of Continuing Education work closely with our partners, the Division of Public Health and the Area Health Education Centers to make high quality training more accessible to you, and we will help you find the right training that will enhance your job performance for the betterment of the public's health.

Suggested websites:

Office of Continuing Education www.sph.unc.edu
NC Public Health Academy ncpublichealthacademy.org
Area Health Education Centers www.ncahec.net



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